The Family Mentor Program is one way to join existing EL families with newer EL families in the community (preferably both families would have the same first language). The mentor family serves to help the new EL family acclimate and assimilate to the school environment. Mentor families are also advocates for these families. This may mean communicating with the school on the behalf of the family.

**Replication of Program**

The steps outlined here will help you successfully replicate this program.

- Solicit mentor families (see “Letter for Potential Mentor Families”).
- Advertise through school communications, back-to-school nights, and parent-teacher organizations.
- Provide potential families with an overview of requirements/obligations (see “Mentors”).
- Invite potential families to training and program overview meetings.
- Hold training (see “Mentor Training Presentation” and “Mentor Training Tip Sheet”).
- Conduct evaluations (see “Evaluation of Training Sessions”).
- Match families (see “Mentee Information Sheet”).
- Hold initial meet-and-greet for mentor families and mentee families.
- Consider quarterly meet-and-greets to assess the effectiveness of the program and to evaluate the progress of relationships. Solicit feedback (See “Program Evaluation Survey”).
- Revise program as needed.

Consider adding some kind of incentive for mentor families. This could be a pizza night, school gear, water bottles, or other giveaways. Additionally, consider offering some type of special recognition at the end of the school year, in the form of a certificate or other type of public acknowledgement.
Mentors

A mentor is an advocate, a coach, a supporter, and a listener. In your program, you may wish to have an entire family mentor another family, or an individual of a family mentor an individual of another family.

Things for You to Consider

- Establish how often mentors should check in with mentees. In the beginning, it is advisable that mentors check in once a week. As the year progresses, mentors should check in every other week.

- Establish a reporting system of mentor/mentee meetings and correspondences.

- Understand that some mentees may not feel comfortable with additional paperwork.

- Consider having mentors write down dates and any issues that need to be resolved. See sample table.

- Consider hosting Family Mentor Program receptions before or after school events to build a community of mentors/mentees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting Time/Place</th>
<th>Concerns/Topics to Address</th>
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<tbody>
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Mentor Responsibilities

- Complete training

- Encourage attendance at school events: Invite mentees to all events

- Make mentee aware of resources available: Share school and local community resource lists with mentees

- Seek out other resources, if needed: If mentees are new to the neighborhood, they may be in need of services, such as public services related to housing or utilities

- Establish a line of communication between mentee family and school

- Advocate for mentee family
Mentor Training Tipsheet

When generating effective training sessions, it is important to:

1. Consider how to effectively communicate the goal of the mentoring program.

2. Identify successful strategies for cross-cultural conversations.
   a. During training, try an ice-breaker like the nondominant hand activity, in which everyone takes notes using their nondominant hand. After a period of time, 10–20 minutes, ask participants how it felt. They may describe how they felt during the experience as “painful, child-like, unintelligent, annoyed, impatient, uncomfortable…” Let them know that this is how many EL families feel using their nondominant language.
   b. Other tips for cross-cultural conversations:
      i. Smile.
      ii. Use gestures.
      iii. Give an appropriate wait time after asking a question.
      iv. Consider drawing terms that may be unfamiliar to the mentee.

3. Anticipate questions from mentors.
   a. Where can I go to get information on literacy programs? Citizenship classes?
   b. How can I best advocate for a child if I am not their parent?
   c. If the parents feel their child needs additional services, how can I assist with that?

4. Follow up with mentors with resources for any questions they may have.

5. Determine ways to build the confidence of mentors.
   a. Ensure mentors have all training materials.
   b. Ensure mentors are familiar with resources available to EL families.
   c. Encourage mentors to collaborate with one another, teachers, and school personnel.
   a. Adults want to see a reason for learning.
   b. Adults are goal oriented.
   c. Adults should have sufficient background knowledge of those they will be working with. Carefully read the Mentee Information Sheet. Ask your Program Coordinator any questions you may have.

7. Customize materials for your population. Create an “About Our Program” handout that includes your history, mission, and goals. Add in key staff members, contact information, policies, and requirements.

8. Create a comfortable learning environment, include relevant content, use humor.

9. Model mentoring (make eye contact, be a good listener, restate key ideas, facilitate problem-solving).

10. Give feedback and ask for feedback.

**Mentor Matching**

When matching mentors, establish a matching process. Will families be paired by grade level? Language or culture group? Neighborhood? (See “Mentor Match Worksheet”)

Typical criteria for matching include race, gender, common interests, and similar schedules for ease of setting meeting times. A popular strategy is also the “natural” approach. This involves all potential mentors and mentees meeting in a relaxed, social environment. Create a setting where mentors move around and speak to all potential mentees. At the end of the session, survey mentees regarding the top three mentors they enjoyed speaking with. Matching in this manner allows for a very natural and comfortable first meeting and gets both mentors and mentees involved in the process. If there are an unequal number of mentors or mentees, consider group mentoring. One mentor family could meet with two or three mentees.
**Mentor Training**

Sample

**Mentoring**

- Make sure you understand what is said
  - "Did you mean that..." or "What I heard you say is..."
- Respond neutrally without approving or disapproving
- Show your mentee that what he or she says is valued

**Working with Problems**

When your mentee presents a problem:
- Be sure the problem is defined
- Brainstorm options with the mentee
- Seek out resources to help resolve issue
- Next meeting, check to see if problem has been resolved

**An Effective Mentor ...**

- Shows commitment
- Demonstrates empathy and understanding
- Has a good understanding of school and community resources
- Listens actively
- Engaged in surroundings
- 3 R's: Respectful, responsible and ready

**Challenges with Mentoring**

- You don’t have to respond right away. If you don’t know the answer, give yourself time to find it.
- Set boundaries. Agree to call or meet at certain times.
- Contact school for answers to questions you may not have.

**Stages of Mentoring**

- Build a rapport
  - Listen
  - Repeat what you hear
  - Use positive language and gestures
- Build trust
  - Show interest, be consistent, withhold judgment, keep things confidential
- Build Support
  - Find resources, share resources, evaluate the effectiveness of the resources for mentee family

**Meeting**

- Set a meeting place, somewhere easy for both parties to get to
- Be sure to reiterate the purpose of the mentoring program
- Have some questions ready
  - Think about What or How questions rather than Yes/No
- Keep the conversation going by asking follow-up questions

**Benefits of Mentoring**

- Meet new people
- Experience a new culture
- Make a difference
- Encourage diversity
- Be a steward of the school and community
1. What did you find to be most useful in the training workshop?

2. What did you find to be least useful?

3. Was there anything you felt was missing from this session—anything you would have liked to know more about?

4. In what other ways could we improve this session?

5. Please rate the following: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)
   
   _____ Effectiveness of training
   
   _____ Training content
   
   _____ Training activities
   
   _____ Training materials
   
   _____ Overall rating
Dear Parents,

Family, school, and community each play a vital role in your child’s education. We are implementing a Family Mentor Program for our English learners to better acclimate them into our school and community, and we would like to invite you to participate in the program as a mentor. The Family Mentor Program pairs our school families with new families. As a mentor family, you will play an instrumental role in making our community and our school stronger.

We are hoping you will attend the meeting outlined below to find out more about the program, the time commitment, and the role of the mentor family.

Meeting date:

Time:

Location:

Thank you for your consideration,
MENTOR MATCH WORKSHEET

Name: ________________________________________________

Phone: (_______)___________________

When being matched with a mentor/mentee, rank the following 7 items in order of importance, 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important.

   ____ Have a prior relationship
   ____ Have same first language
   ____ Children in the same grade
   ____ Children in the same class
   ____ Children have similar interests
   ____ Live in same neighborhood
   ____ Available during the same time of day

Preferred meeting day(s): __________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Preferred meeting time:  ○ Morning  ○ Afternoon  ○ Evening

Preferred method of meeting:  ○ Face-to-face  ○ By phone  ○ Skype/Facetime
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The mentoring program was helpful.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a better understanding of the school and community resources available to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am more likely to attend school events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee was able to answer my questions, or find the answers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee was on time, courteous and helpful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, I would recommend this program to a friend.</td>
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</table>