

Durham Early Childhood Educator Associate Degree Apprenticeship Program

Mentor Role Description and Application

About the Apprenticeship Program: The Durham Early Childhood Educator Associate Degree Apprenticeship Program supports current and aspiring early childhood educators pursuing higher education while working full-time in classrooms with children. Apprentices may be brand new to the field, or may have years of work experience but still in the process of completing their Associate Degree in early childhood. By enrolling in the apprenticeship program, participants have the opportunity to strengthen their learning and professional growth through: 1) college coursework and 2) structured on-the-job learning supported by an experienced teacher serving as a mentor.

Goals of Mentors in Apprenticeship Program:

The mentor-apprentice relationship is the foundation for a successful apprenticeship program, as the mentor plays a crucial role in facilitating meaningful on-the-job learning, reflection, and professional growth with the apprentice. A positive mentoring relationship also increases the likelihood that an apprentice will feel supported, listened to, and cared for in the midst of a very demanding profession - hopefully supporting greater longevity and growth in the early childhood field. Goals include:

1. Promote reflective practice and professional growth of early childhood apprentices by pairing apprentices with experienced, high-quality educators willing to share their expertise
2. Promote leadership skills and career development opportunities of early childhood mentors by providing meaningful training and professional support to mentors

Based on the scope of the apprenticeship program in the pilot year, CCSA will be supporting apprentices and mentors using two models, depending on the needs and capacity of the partnering employers:

1. **On-site mentors** are qualified staff working at the apprentice(s)'s place of employment who are interested in serving as mentors and recommended by their Director for this role.
2. **Cohort mentors** are experienced educators working in a different center than the apprentice(s) with whom they are assigned as mentors. When a qualified mentor is not available at the apprentice's place of employment, a cohort mentor will be engaged to provide professional mentorship to the apprentice, in coordination with on-site supervisory feedback.

Expectations & Commitments of Mentors:

- Promote reflective practice, professional growth, and on-the-job learning with early childhood apprentice(s) as either a:
 - On-Site Mentor through modeling, observation, clear objectives, reflective conversations, constructive feedback, and regular review of/completion of an On-the-Job learning checklist with apprentice.
 - Cohort Mentor through goal-setting, clear objectives, reflective conversations, constructive feedback, and regular review of an On-the-Job learning checklist completed by on-site supervisor.

- Build a supportive, growth-oriented relationship with apprentice(s) by providing ongoing communication and support. Mentors are expected to meet at least once per week with apprentice(s) to check in, review progress/questions, and offer guidance/support. For mentors serving apprentices at multiple sites, expectation is to meet at least 2 times per month in person, and to connect by phone/virtually in alternate weeks.
- Ensure apprentice(s) have the support and resources they need to succeed by lifting up any concerns, challenges, or barriers they may be experiencing to program staff to request additional support
- Attend required initial on-boarding for mentors and participate in virtual monthly Communities of Practice sessions to share resources and discuss best practices
- Complete mentoring log and submit to CCSA monthly
- Communicate with CCSA about any issues or concerns
- Uphold confidentiality agreements and respect the privacy of apprentice(s)

Qualifications of Mentors

- At least a Bachelor's degree in child development, early childhood education, or related field (according to DCDEE guidelines), and/or Birth-Kindergarten Licensure
- At least 3 years of experience working as an early childhood educator (infant/toddler or preschool teacher)
- Experience demonstrating a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, anti-bias, evidence based teaching skills and strategies.
- Enthusiasm to mentor, coach, and support new or earlier-career early childhood educators
- Bilingual candidates encouraged to apply

Compensation, Professional Development & Support for Mentors

CCSA provides mentors with:

- Stipend of \$400 per apprentice, per semester the apprentice is enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program (pro-rated for shortened summer semester)
- Leadership development through training and professional support to grow leadership skills and capacity
- Initial training for all new mentors, including training in cultural competency and skills related to practice-based coaching
- Receive free professional development through CCSA in topics of your choice
- Monthly virtual Communities of Practice session with apprenticeship program mentors (both in Durham and statewide)
- Personal career development support from the CCSA team for you as a mentor - aligning your engagement in this program with your professional goals and aspirations
- NAEYC/NCAEYC Digital Membership
- Opportunity to apply for professional development grants to attend conferences, courses, trainings, etc.

For On-Site Mentors, the employer will be asked to provide mentor(s) with paid release time to meet with apprentice(s) on-site in your center (if applicable), and to attend virtual monthly Communities of Practice sessions.

To Apply to Serve as a Mentor:

[Complete the application form, available here](#). Email completed application and a copy of your resume to maggiew@childcareservices.org.

With any questions, please contact Maggie West, Durham PreK Workforce Support Program Manager for Child Care Services Association at maggiew@childcareservices.org or 919-403-6950 ext. 6853.