



Career Mentoring Guide

Career Mentoring Fact Sheet

A fact sheet that provides a definition and learning objectives for the activity.

WBL Connector Checklist

A checklist of steps to guide WBL Connectors in creating successful career mentoring activities for all parties.

Learner¹ Checklist

A checklist for learners participating in career mentoring that facilitates deeper learning from the work-based learning experience.

Teacher/Faculty Tip Sheet

Tips for teachers/faculty that describes ways to connect the experience to the larger curriculum.

Employer Tip Sheet

Tips for employer volunteers participating as a career mentor to support their engagement.

Employer Fact Sheet

Facts about career mentoring to help employers decide whether their company or organization can participate.

Implementation Tools

Career Mentoring Research Activity

A worksheet for learners to complete before the activity.

Career Mentoring Learner Reflection

A worksheet and discussion guide that supports learner reflection after the activity.

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Career Mentoring Fact Sheet

Career Mentoring

Career Mentoring is a Career Exploration activity in which a learner² is matched one-on-one with an adult professional to explore potential careers and related educational issues. Different than programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the career mentor serves as a *career* resource by sharing insights and providing guidance about the workplace, careers and postsecondary education/training. This is accomplished through formal and informal meetings organized at the school, in the workplace or online, but never in an unsupervised environment or the home. Some career mentors may work with and support a small group of learners.

Building a trusting relationship between the learner and the mentor is the key to a successful experience. Designed to meet specific learning objectives, career mentoring is educationally rich, is tied to the curriculum, and helps learners connect what they're learning in school or training with the workplace.

Career mentoring is one activity in the continuum of authentic work-based experiences provided to all learners engaged in career-related programs or course of study in the Earn & Learn community.

Career Mentoring is designed to:

- Give learners exposure to jobs, careers and industries.
- Help build a relationship with a caring and knowledgeable adult.
- Offer a chance to practice communication skills and develop professional skills.
- Help make the connection between school and the workplace.
- Inform career planning.

Career Mentoring is structured to:

- Build self-esteem, self-worth, confidence and flexibility.
- Build occupational knowledge.
- Enable learners to identify areas of career interest.
- Allow for the mentor and mentee to select each other.
- Build knowledge about the education and training needed for a particular job, career path and entry into the industry.

Career Mentoring is supported by:

- Classroom preparation and reflection upon the experience verbally and in writing.
- A long-term commitment from an adult role model (generally at least a year).
- A focus on building trust and respect with each other.
- Clear and reasonable expectations for learners and their career mentor.
- Meetings or communication with enough regularity to develop a strong relationship.

Career Mentoring is connected to:

- Individual career development/training plans.

What is a Career Mentor?

A career mentor is:

- A role model
- A guide
- A coach
- An advisor
- Experienced
- Reliable
- Approachable
- Relatable
- Invested in outcomes
- An additional resource

A career mentor is not:

- Assigned
- Any employer partner a learner happens to interact with
- A teacher
- A worksite supervisor or internship host (though a mentor/mentee relationship may evolve during or after the experience)
- A counselor or case manager
- Paid to be there

² Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

- A continuum of future work-based learning activities that build over time.
- The learner's next steps.

Career Mentoring Models

Below are some sample mentoring models that can be used alone or in combination to offer learners and mentors a range of opportunities.

- Traditional mentoring (one adult to one learner)
- Small group mentoring (one adult to as many as four learners)
- Team mentoring (several adults working with small groups of learners. Adult-to-learner ratio is no greater than 1:4.
- Large group mentoring (one or two adults to seven to ten learners)
- Peer mentoring (older learners mentoring other learners)
- E-mentoring (mentoring via email and the internet combined with another model from the list above.

Career Mentoring Support Materials

Checklists, Tip Sheets and Fact Sheets:

- Connector Career Mentoring Checklist
- Learner Career Mentoring Checklist
- Teacher/Faculty Career Mentoring Tip Sheet
- Employer Career Mentoring Tip Sheet
- Employer Career Mentoring Fact Sheet

Implementation Tools:

- Career Mentoring Research Activity
- Career Mentoring Learner Reflection
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Remote Note

Learners who are currently paired with a Career Mentor may continue to receive support via telephone or some other technology if the necessary permissions, protections and guidance are in place to promote learner safety.

Tips for Success Work-Based Learning Essential Elements

Effective Career Mentoring includes structured activity before, during and after the experience.

Pay attention to these tips to ensure meaningful experiences that result in enriched learning.

- ✓ Conduct Effective Planning
- ✓ Prepare for Success.
- ✓ Identify Learning Objectives.
- ✓ Create Authentic and Engaging Experiences
- ✓ Connect to Careers
- ✓ Support Learner Growth
- ✓ Ensure Activities are Safe and Legal
- ✓ Provide Ongoing Support
- ✓ Provide for Reflection, Presentation and Feedback.
- ✓ Connect to the Learner Next Step
- ✓ Assess and Document the Experience

Sustaining and growing Career Mentoring and all other work-based learning activities depend on maintaining positive relationships with the participating employers. These employers should be treated as valued customers and partners with frequent check-ins to address their needs and support their participation.

Work-Based Learning Connector Career Mentoring Checklist

Quick tips for Work-Based Learning Connectors³ to ensure successful career mentoring.

Before Career Mentoring

- Identify all interested teachers/faculty and help them plan for career mentoring. Share the Teacher/Faculty Tip Sheet.
- Select and design the appropriate career mentoring model with a focus on career exploration, training and related education.
- Assess potential mentors and select those who are compatible with the learners⁴.
- Conduct background checks and fingerprinting if required. Determine costs and who will bear expenses.
- Support teachers/faculty in selecting appropriate learners and creating learning objectives.
- Match learners with potential mentors. Allow the mentor and mentee to select each other.
- Onboard mentors with an orientation and training. In training, reinforce that there is to be no face-to-face meeting outside of supervised activities. Remind mentors to keep equity issues in mind, ensuring that one mentee isn't offered many perks while another receives few.
- Define how much face-to-face time is desirable. (Early in the experience, the more the better.)
- Explore alternative forms of connecting, such as ZOOM, email and other social media.

During Career Mentoring

- Share the Work-Readiness Competencies with the mentor.
- Share the current focus of classroom activities on a regular basis.
- Provide ongoing support and training for career mentors. Encourage them to share their story of the pathway to their current position. Support them in helping learners build their personal traits. Help mentors understand issues of confidentiality.
- Provide ongoing support for learners. Encourage them to share interests, concerns and ideas with their mentors. Suggest they invite mentors to school activities. Have learners share assignments and study topics with their mentors.

After Career Mentoring

- Document the career mentoring. Review feedback from mentors, teachers/faculty and learners and summarize results. Make recommendations for improvements.
- Help learners update their career development plan and think about any next steps they would like to take to further their career goals.
- Send thank-you notes to mentors.
- Publicize the career mentoring and the businesses that participated by placing a story in the local newspaper or posting on the school or agency webpage.
- Consider other potential public relations benefits and opportunities.

Sample Career Mentoring Timeline

Phase 1: Identify interested teachers/faculty, mentors and learners. Select career mentoring model.

Phase 2: Match learners with mentors (or assist them in choosing each other).

Phase 3: Prepare teachers/faculty and learners.

Phase 4: Provide orientation and training to career mentors. Arrange mentoring events.

Phase 5: Provide ongoing support to learners and career mentors.

Phase 6: Use feedback to document effectiveness of program and help learners update their career development plan.

³ This includes work-based learning connectors and others who facilitate, arrange and support work-based learning activities for learners.

⁴ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

Learner⁵ Career Mentoring Checklist

Career mentoring is a great way for you to get one-on-one support from a professional in a field that interests you. You and your mentor will make a long-term commitment to work together (generally, at least a year). During that time, you'll regularly communicate, giving you the chance to get answers to your career questions and practice professional behavior.

Use this checklist to help you get the most out of your career mentoring experience. Read through the list and check off things when you complete them.

Have you done all you can to prepare?

- Fill out and turn in any required forms.
- Participate in pre career mentoring activities in your class.
- Meet with a Teacher/Faculty or Connector about what you want to get out of your career mentorship (e.g. communication skills). These are your learning objectives.
- Research your mentor's company. Check out their website and write at least three questions that address what you'd like to know about the mentor and his/her job.
- If the career mentorship requires traveling, make sure you have transportation arranged.

Have you thought about what you can do to make career mentoring a big success?

- Dress appropriately and arrive on time, every time.
- Be respectful. Make sure your phone is off during meetings/activities.
- Pay attention to what your mentor shares with you and the advice you receive.
- Be engaged. When you hear something that interests you, ask if it's okay to take notes.
- Work toward your learning objectives.
- Try to make connections between what you're hearing and what you're learning in class.

When the career mentoring is over, how will you keep moving your career forward?

- Reflect on the experience. Talk to your classmates and teachers/faculty about the mentoring and whether you're interested in pursuing a career in your mentor's industry.
- Participate in classroom activities that help you think about the value of the career mentoring.
- Update your career development plan and think about next steps in moving your career plans forward.
- Give feedback about the mentoring experience. If you feel it wasn't a good match, let your Teacher/Faculty or Connector know so you can be matched with someone else.
- Send a thank-you letter to the mentor for taking the time to work with you. Think about staying connected on LinkedIn or elsewhere.
- Ask your career mentor if you can use them as a reference.
- Share your experience with your peers on social media. Perhaps a blog post?

Are you Ready for Game Day?

Have you...

- Completed all required forms?
- Set your learning objectives?
- Researched your mentor's company?
- Prepared your questions?
- Arranged transportation?
- Thought about what you'll share at you first session?

⁵ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

Teacher/Faculty Career Mentoring Tip Sheet

Note: If you're coordinating a career mentoring program, have a look at the Connector Career Mentoring Checklist.

Career Mentoring is designed to:

- Give learners⁶ exposure to jobs, careers, and industries.
- Offer the opportunity to build a relationship with a caring and knowledgeable adult.
- Offer a chance to practice communication skills and develop professional skills.
- Help learners make connection between school and the workplace.
- Inform career planning.

Before Career Mentoring

- Review the Career Mentoring Fact Sheet and this tip sheet.
- Identify interested and qualified learners and help the Connector select career mentors who are compatible with the learners. (When possible, let them interview and select each other.)
- Assess how career mentoring can support classroom activities and help meet curriculum goals.
- Identify desired learner learning objectives. These should include personal, academic, occupational and work-readiness objectives.
- Regularly provide the mentors with information about what learners are studying or learning about so they can better support key concepts.
- Have learners research the career mentor's employer website and prepare at least three meaningful questions to ask during their first meeting.

During Career Mentoring

- Provide opportunities for learners to share in the classroom—verbally and in writing—what they're learning through their career mentorship.
- Encourage learners to share current study topics, interests, aspirations, and ideas with their mentor.
- Suggest that learners invite their mentors into the classroom for specific events or activities.
- Set regular check-ins with the learners.

After Career Mentoring

- Thank the career mentor and together identify follow-up activities for the learners.
- Provide opportunities for reflection through discussions, presentations, and/or projects. Help learners make the connection between the classroom and the workplace.
- Help learners update their career development plan and think about any next steps they would like to take to further their career goals.
- Assess the impact and value of the career mentoring with the Connector and utilize mentor, teacher/faculty and learner feedback to improve future career mentoring activities.
- Document and archive information about the career mentoring activity.

The Classroom Connection: Preparation and Reflection

Before Career Mentoring

Set learners up for success by having them.

- Research mentor's company and industry.
- Discuss how career mentoring can help them meet learning objectives.
- Help learner craft questions and develop goals

After Career Mentoring

- Spark learner reflection with an activity.
- Ask, "What new things did you learn about the workplace and careers?"
- See if they want to find out more or further explore careers in the mentor's industry.

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Employer Career Mentoring Tip Sheet

Thanks for agreeing to be a career mentor! As you think about how to best prepare for the experience, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before Career Mentoring

- Commit to stay engaged for a minimum of one year and possibly longer.
- Attend the career mentoring orientation.
- If you have questions or concerns, discuss them with the Connector or Teacher/Faculty.
- Provide Teacher/Faculty with website link(s) about your company, industry and profession to help your mentee prepare questions and know a bit about your workplace.
- Find out what your mentee is currently studying so you can link the classroom with the workplace and support key concepts.

During Career Mentoring

- Meet or communicate regularly with your mentee. Some activities will be organized by the Connector and some contact will be generated by your mentee or yourself via email or telephone.
- Follow all school and company rules, including volunteer policies and boundary/equity issues. Make sure there's no face-to-face connection outside of supervised and approved activities. (The orientation you attend will help you with this.)
- Regularly review the information on what your mentee is studying and ask questions about it. Provide feedback on their work.
- Pay attention and show your mentee that you're listening.
- Make it real. It's all about the relationship you're able to develop with your mentee.
- Help your mentee focus on learning about and practicing professional skills.
- Share the educational and career path you took to your current position.
- Talk about how school subjects (such as math and language arts) and good habits (such as punctuality and consistent attendance) are important skills in the workplace.
- If possible, share mistakes you've made and how you have addressed problems.
- If you can no longer be a mentor, give as much notice as possible, try to recruit someone else, and make sure your mentee knows why you need to stop and that it has nothing to do with him/her.

After Career Mentoring

- Provide feedback to the Connector to improve future career mentoring experiences. Complete the WBL Activity Evaluation.
- Consider how you might use the career mentoring experience to promote your company's visibility in the community.

Go Deeper

- Consider having your mentee shadow you at work for a day.
- Arrange an internship at your company for your mentee. Check in regularly around his or her progress.

Why is Career Mentoring Important?

- Research shows that career mentors help learners stay in school, stay focused on their career options and pursue their goals.
- A career mentor lets a young person know that someone cares, that they matter and can have a bright future.
- A career mentor can help a young person see the connection between what they learn in the classroom and the real world.
- A career mentor can help their mentee better communicate with and relate to adults.

Employer Career Mentoring Fact Sheet

In career mentoring, a learner⁷ is matched one-on-one with an adult professional to explore potential careers and related educational issues. Different than programs such as Big Brother, Big Sister, the career mentor serves as a *career* resource by sharing insights and providing guidance about the workplace, careers and education. This is accomplished through formal and informal meetings organized at the school, in the workplace or online, but never in an unsupervised environment or the home.

Program Level: All Grades or Ages
Employer/Learner Ratio: Usually 1:1 but sometimes 1 to small group
Duration: Usually 1 year
Frequency: One time
Location: Varies
Costs: Staff time
Special Considerations: Employee selection. Company volunteer policies and practices.

The development of a trusting relationship between the learner and the mentor is the key to a successful experience. Designed to meet specific learning outcomes, career mentoring is educationally rich, is tied to the curriculum, and helps learners connect what they're learning in school with the workplace.

Why is career mentoring important for learners?

- Research shows that career mentors help learners stay enrolled in school, stay focused on their career options and pursue their goals.
- A career mentor lets a young person know that someone cares, that they matter and can have a bright future.
- A career mentor can help learners see the connection between what they learn in the classroom and the real world, as well as the education needed for entry into certain positions.
- A career mentor can help their mentee better communicate with and relate to adults.

What are the benefits to my company?

- Exposes potential future workers to job opportunities and careers with your company, as well as the required skills and education to be successful in your industry.
- Introduces learners to one or more of your employees.
- Helps your employees understand how to communicate with the next generation of workers.
- Provides an efficient way to introduce and engage multiple employees with your commitment to education and connect your company with the community.

What do I need to do next?

- Contact the work-based learning connector.
- Arrange for a presentation to those employees who will participate as career mentors.
- Distribute the Employer Career Mentoring Tip Sheet to interested employees.
- Consider any impacts on company policy.

Resources

- Review the Employer Participation Options Fact Sheet to learn more about how to get the most out of your partnership with Earn & Learn,

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Career Mentoring Research Activity

Complete the following research assignment as part of your preparation for your upcoming career mentoring experience. This research will be the basis for in-class discussion and presentations prior to the tour.

Your name:
Your career mentor's company:
Company's web address:
Company's physical address:
Company's mission statement:
What is the company's primary business?
What departments exist within the company?
What companies do you think are in competition with your career mentor's company?
After researching the company, what are some questions that you will ask your career mentor?
Based on your research, what do you think you will like most about your career mentoring experience?
Based on your research, what is your biggest concern about your career mentoring experience?
If you could leave the career mentoring experience having learned one thing, what would that be?
Anything else you learned while doing your research that you'd like to share with your Teacher/Faculty or the class?

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Career Mentoring Learner⁸ Reflection

Now that you have completed your career mentoring, take some time reflect on what you experienced and how the mentoring might inform your college and career plans in the future.

Learner Name:

School:

Career Mentor's Company:

Mentoring date range:

What aspects of the career mentoring were interesting? Which were not? Why?

What did you like about the career mentoring? What would you change?

Would you consider a career in your mentor's field? Why or why not?

What was the most memorable aspect of your career mentoring experience? Why?

What did you learn about your mentor's company and its employees? Please explain.

Describe ways that technology is used at your career mentor's workplace.

⁸ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

If you wanted to work where your career mentor works, what might you do to prepare in the next five years, both in high school and afterwards?

What knowledge and skills are you learning in school that might be used at your career mentor's workplace? Please explain.

What knowledge or skills do you need to strengthen to be successful at the mentor's workplace? Please explain.

Would you recommend that other learners have a career mentoring experience? Explain.

Anything else you'd like to say about the career mentoring experience?

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