



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

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.