



A CHECKLIST FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS

To be used in conjunction with
*Guidelines for Mentoring and Supporting
Students (2005)*



Definition of mentoring

Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time (Active Community Unit, Home Office, UK).

Mentoring - additional support for students

Comments from the report *Fade or flourish** describe mentoring as “an extremely valuable means of providing additional targeted support.” The report also states that “mentoring can be used in a variety of ways - from improving behaviour to reading skills and easing transition to secondary school. Most importantly, successful mentors are those which bridge the gap between pastoral care and academic support, and who visibly promote the interests of their students in the school.”

**Fade or flourish: how primary schools can build on children's early progress by Claudia Wood and Julie Caulier-Grice (2006).*

A CHECKLIST for Mentoring Programs

The following criteria should be included to meet the requirements for a mentoring program:

length of relationship

For mentoring programs to be effective, the mentoring relationship needs to run for a **minimum of six months**. However, research shows that more effective results are achieved with relationships of one year or more (Jean E Rhodes, 2001).

contact time

Regular and frequent contact over the period of the mentoring relationship is important.

ratio of mentees to mentor

Mentors need to be paired with mentees preferably on a one-to-one basis, or a maximum of two mentees with an experienced mentor if absolutely necessary.

training of mentors

A minimum of ten hours (preferably over two non-consecutive days) of training for mentors should occur prior to the commencement of the program.

Training should include:

- information on the background and purpose of the program
- nature of the mentoring relationship, including roles and responsibilities
- input relating to the student group eg developmental issues
- skills used eg communication, strategies for managing behaviour, social and learning skills, problem solving and limit setting

- boundaries of the relationship and confidentiality
- child protection issues
- procedures and protocols.

Training provides an opportunity for the mentoring coordinator to determine if the volunteers are ready to be mentors.

mentor screening and commitment to the program

Adult mentors must provide proof of identity and complete:

- a *Prohibited Employment Declaration* stating that they are not a person prohibited from undertaking child-related employment and
- b the *Consent to employment screening* if contact with children is not directly supervised.

It is important that mentors understand the significance of and show commitment to the mentoring program. One way to gain commitment is to have mentors sign a [Statement of Commitment](#).

For more information refer to page 11 of *Guidelines for Mentoring and Supporting Students* (2005) at the internet site <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/mentoringguidelines.pdf>

mentor-mentee match

The process of matching mentors with mentees and monitoring the matches is important. Criteria for matching may include gender, interests, personalities, career choices, cultural or language backgrounds. Teachers and year advisers might also suggest suitable matches. *Mentor Interest Cards* and *Mentee Interest Cards* may be used to ensure the compatibility of mentors with mentees. Examples of *Interest Cards* are available on pages 6-7.

Before mentors are paired with mentees initial sessions may be organised to provide opportunities for mentors to interact with mentees to explore the best match combinations.

“getting to know you” phase

This can ease tension and create a relaxed, non-threatening introduction to the program. It provides mentors and students with opportunities to work together in small groups and is important in developing strong positive relationships between mentors and mentees.

structured activities

A mentoring program needs to be based on age-appropriate activities with outcomes that are clearly defined. Each session will follow a similar outline eg introductory activity, skill, game or reading time, and concluding activity.

Time should be provided for mentors to review materials and ask questions related to the teaching activities prior to each session.

support and supervision of mentors and mentees

A trained supervisor or mentoring coordinator is needed to support and monitor the mentoring program. Critical to the success of the mentoring process is regular opportunities for mentors to debrief after each session (if possible).

The role of a volunteer mentor will be a new experience for the majority of adults. Mentors will need guidance and positive feedback to help them develop confidence in their role.

For more information refer to pages 6-8 of *Guidelines for Mentoring and Supporting Students* (2005) at the internet site <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/mentoringguidelines.pdf>

monitoring and evaluation

Every program needs to have a process in place to monitor the progress of the mentoring relationships and whether the identified goals are being achieved.

Schools should consider the types of data that can be collected to evaluate the success of the program in meeting student outcomes. As mentoring programs operate within a clearly defined time frame, a process for evaluation needs to be established prior to the commencement of the program. This will set out the time line and types of documentation to be collected prior to, during and after the program.

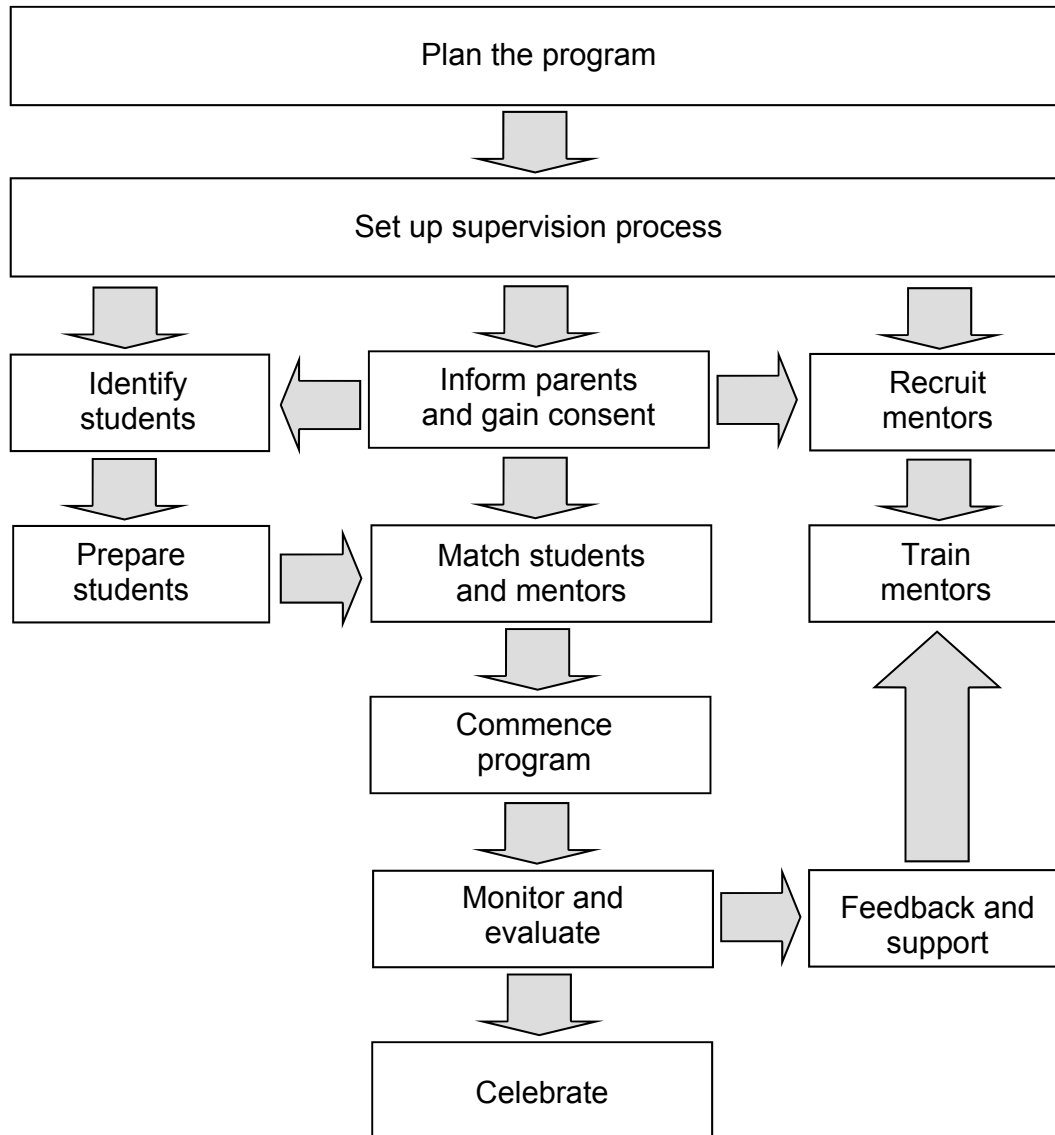
parental involvement

Parental support and involvement in the program will strengthen student outcomes. An information night and/or brochure can be used to inform parents of the aims, objectives, benefits and anticipated outcomes of the program.

Consent must be obtained from parents and they must be informed of the right to withdraw their child, at any stage of the program. Parents need to be kept informed about the progress of their child and encouraged to participate where possible eg skills learned by mentees during the program are shared with parents, so that these skills can be reinforced at home.

If your mentoring program addresses all areas in the checklist, you are ready to implement the program.

Steps for implementing a mentoring program



For more information refer to pages 14-16 of the *Guidelines for Mentoring and Supporting Students* (2005) at the internet site <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/mentoringguidelines.pdf>

Useful links

- ◆ Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, United Kingdom <http://www.mandbf.org.uk/>
- ◆ National Mentoring Partnership, USA <http://www.mentoring.org/>