

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION - MENTOR**

The Pilot Professional Mentoring Program for Early Childhood Teachers offers an opportunity for experienced early childhood teachers to mentor new or professionally isolated teachers, to help develop their practice.

The program will create an environment that values and facilitates reflective practice enabling the sharing and challenging of knowledge and understandings. It is envisaged that this environment will be one where all participants will feel empowered as they discuss their own practice, and in the process gain insight into their roles as early childhood professionals.

The program is delivered through face-to-face workshops (Shared Learning Days), purpose built online forums, informal contact as arranged by Mentor and Mentee (email/telephone), and personal visits by the Mentor to Mentees worksites. Mentors will themselves be supported by University Colleagues, who will act as sounding boards to mentoring issues as they arise, and will also facilitate discussion between Mentors (online forums / informal contact).

It is anticipated that each Mentor will be assigned up to 5 Mentees to support throughout the program. Where possible Mentors will be matched to Mentees in their local areas so there will be awareness of the impact of local issues / or in similar settings (i.e. Mentor with experience working in Long Day Care (LDC) matched with Mentee working in LDC). However, Mentors may also be matched with Mentees in different service environments, and should be willing to adapt their approach to the particular challenges of the Mentee's service environment.

It is expected that the Mentor will participate in all activities as outlined in this Description for the duration of the program (**August 2011 until June 2012**).

The total time commitment for Mentors is expected to be the equivalent of 10 full days. Expected time commitments for Mentors are outlined below:

- 1 day of Mentor training on Friday 26 August 2011 (see below for details of this training).
- 2 Shared Learning Days (weekdays) and one half day Celebration Day (Saturday) - dates to be advised.
- 4 visits to each Mentee of at least one hour's duration each, ie. 20 hours of meetings if Mentor is allocated 5 Mentees (may be undertaken during the Mentee's working hours, or outside working hours, by arrangement with the Mentee). Travel time is excluded from meeting time.
- Engagement with a website forum dedicated to the project (six times throughout the program).

Applicants for a Mentor position will need to be able to meet the time commitments outlined above. Currently employed early childhood teachers who apply for the position would need to ensure that the time commitments could be met without adverse impact on the capacity of their service to deliver the early childhood program. Currently-employed teachers who are applying for a position as a Mentor, should indicate in their application their current employment time fraction, as well as any potential limitations on their capacity to meet the time commitments indicated above. This will inform the allocation of an appropriate number of mentees that the teacher can realistically mentor while continuing to meet the responsibilities of their current role.

Participation in the program as a mentor may contribute to the teacher meeting some of their professional development requirements under industrial and/or service agreements subject to employer approval.

The Mentors will receive a full day's training at the beginning of the program where they will be introduced to mentoring and what this entails. Roles, relationships and key mentoring skills will be outlined along with discussion about the proposed Mentee list.

Mentors will receive \$2300 to deliver the program (based on an allocation of 5 mentees) with an additional provision for travel cost reimbursement. A second cohort of mentoring will occur from February – November 2012 and interested mentors may be involved in both cohorts.

In regards to employment arrangements for mentors, three different options are available:

1. Mentors can be employed directly by Victoria University;
2. Mentors can elect to work as a contractor and invoice the project through provision of an ABN;
3. Should a mentor decide to perform the mentoring task as professional development approved by their employer, then this amount would be allocated to the service, minus compensation for any agreed out of hours work undertaken by Mentors such as participation in the Celebration Half Day.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION – MENTEE**

The Pilot Professional Mentoring Program for Early Childhood Teachers offers an opportunity for new or professionally isolated early childhood teachers to be mentored by experienced early childhood teachers, to help develop their knowledge and practice.

The program will create an environment that values and facilitates reflective practice enabling the sharing and challenging of knowledge and understandings. It is envisaged that this environment will be one where all participants will feel empowered, as they discuss their own practice and in the process gain insight into their roles as early childhood professionals.

The program is delivered through face-to-face workshops (Shared Learning Days), purpose built online forums, informal contact as arranged by Mentor and Mentee (email/telephone), and personal visits by the Mentor to Mentees worksites. The workshops and online forums will enable Mentees to discuss issues with other Mentees in the program.

Teachers wishing to participate in the program should ensure that they have discussed the opportunity with their employer, including the time commitments and the impact on delivery of the early childhood program. The program design reflects evidence of the long term benefits of effective teacher mentoring programs, including enhanced teacher professional practice and increased retention of teachers in the sector. Participation in the program as a Mentee may also contribute to the teacher meeting their professional development requirements under industrial and/or service agreements subject to employer approval.

It is expected that the Mentee will participate in all activities as outlined in this Description for the duration of the program (**August 2011 until June 2012**).

The total time commitment for Mentees is expected to be the equivalent of at least 4 full days. Expected time commitments for Mentees are outlined below:

- 2 Shared Learning Days (weekdays) and one half day Celebration Day (Saturday) - dates to be advised.
- 4 visits from the Mentor of at least one hour's duration each (may be undertaken during the Mentee's working hours, or outside working hours by arrangement with the Mentee).
- Participation in online forums with assigned Mentor (six times throughout the program).

Support is available to employers of teachers participating as mentees to cover the cost of backfilling the teacher to enable their participation in program activities at a cost of up to \$360 per day. Employers who wish to support a teacher to participate in the program and who have queries about backfill funding or other aspects of the program can contact Jenni Beahan, Project Coordinator, 03 9919 7511 or [ec.mentoring@vu.edu.au](mailto:ec.mentoring@vu.edu.au).

A second cohort of mentoring will occur from February – November 2012. Teachers who do not receive a place in the first cohort may re-apply for the program in 2012.

### **Who are the mentors?**

Mentors in the program will be experienced early childhood teachers recruited throughout Victoria. Where possible, Mentees will be matched to Mentors in their local areas so there will be awareness of the impact of local issues / or in similar settings (i.e. Mentor with experience working in Long Day Care (LDC) matched with Mentee working in LDC).

The Mentors in this program will have been through a screening and training program ensuring that they are knowledgeable about the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Framework and have experience working in the field. Their commitment to the program and to nurturing the next generation of early childhood teachers will be a determining factor.

### **How to apply?**

Application forms for Mentors and Mentees can be obtained by contacting the Project Coordinator:

Ms Jenni Beahan  
Project Coordinator  
Ph: 9919 7511  
Email: [ec.mentoring@vu.edu.au](mailto:ec.mentoring@vu.edu.au)

**Closing Date** for the first cohort: Friday 19th August, 2011