

**Early Education and Intervention Network of  
NH (eein)**

**Mentorship Program**

**Final Report**

**July 2004 – June 2005**



Submitted by Pam Miller Sallet, Mentorship Program Coordinator  
July 2005

***Funded by:  
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What is the Mentorship Program?

***“Mentorship was an excellent way to learn quickly and efficiently!”***

***-a mentee (04-05)***

The Early Education and Intervention Network of NH (eein) has completed its eighth year of providing mentorship, a professional development opportunity funded by the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Developmental Services and the NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education. Funds used to support this grant come from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, parts B and C, under its mandate to provide professional development opportunities for personnel working in NH Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) and NH preschool special education. Also included in mentorship are personnel from Head Start, Maternal and Child Health, and child care settings who work with children and families with special needs.

eein’s Mentorship Program has continued to focus on the goal set forth in the pilot year: “*to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children with disabilities and their families through provision of a statewide, high quality, intensive mentorship program.*” Since the beginning, mentorship has provided flexible and self-directed learning through a one-on-one relationship between the mentee (the personnel seeking knowledge) and the mentor (the personnel providing the skill and experience the mentee is seeking). For the past three years, eein has provided a topical mentorship option, which uses one or more mentors for a small group of people interested in exploring the same topic. In the topical mentorship, participants still received the opportunity to meet with a mentor for up to a few hours of individual time, thus maintaining one of the strengths of mentorship—the individualization. In addition, the mentors allow for questions, specific examples, and learning from peers during the small group presentations.

eein’s Mentorship Program Coordinator, in collaboration with an advisory board, refines the mentorship process, markets the program, oversees the dyads, and evaluates the success of the program. The advisory board provides invaluable guidance and direction through regular meetings with the program coordinator, the grant manager, and funding agencies’ representatives. Advisory Board members have represented a variety of perspectives, and the most current membership list is attached to this report.

### How was the Mentorship Program marketed?

***“I love this model! I wish that I had a mentor in my earlier years. Pediatric therapists are often very isolated. We both gained from the give and take of information shared.”***  
***--a mentor (04-05)***

The program coordinator markets the program to both potential mentors and mentees in an ongoing manner. Over the past eight years, many people have heard about mentorship or experienced it first hand. Methods used to advertise the program include:

- a display board at early childhood conferences and meetings,
- word of mouth from past participants,
- regular newsletter columns,
- a Fall letter to supervisors of early childhood programs,
- collaborations with many early childhood agencies,
- representation at key ESS and preschool meetings,
- contact with past mentors to suggest they encourage potential mentees to apply, and
- linking new ESS and preschool coordinators to the program as part of their staff development plan.

The pool of potential mentors is maintained from year to year, but new people are sought that have expertise and experience, in addition to an understanding of the NH ESS system and/or the NH preschool special education system. The program coordinator works closely with the advisory board to seek appropriate mentors for each mentee, looking at goals, location and desired mentor skills. There is a balance of matching mentees with existing mentors and seeking new mentors. Regretfully, there are wonderful mentors that go unmatched due to the lack of appropriate applicants, the location of the mentor, or scheduling conflicts.

Mentees are sought from all regions of the state, and both seasoned and novice professionals are encouraged to apply. The program coordinator and advisory board members constantly seek connections between personnel in the field expressing interest in training opportunities and the mentorship program. Applicants are encouraged to share information with their colleagues and give direct testimony regarding their experiences. Supervisors who are aware of the benefits of the program are more likely to have personnel involved with mentorship than those who are not aware of the program.

Mentees in the program this year reported that they heard about the program through:

- supervisor recommendation,
- colleague recommendation,

- reading a newsletter that highlighted the program,
- direct contact with the program coordinator or advisory board member, and
- seeing the display at a meeting.

This was consistent with past years' findings.

## Who Participated in the Mentorship Program?

***“I consider myself a seasoned educator and was delighted to be able to learn and gain new ideas. A great opportunity!”***

***--a topical mentee (04-05)***

The total number of people who received one-on-one or small group learning as part of mentorship (mentees) was fifty-eight professionals from this fiscal year, far above the grant goal of thirty-five. Additionally, there were three classrooms of early childhood education students who were impacted by mentorship. Four applicants were not able to begin mentorship after applying due to job changes or personal issues. Due to work and family demands, several participants were not able to complete all of their mentorship as intended, however received some information that assisted them in their work with children and families.

The disciplines represented by the fifty-eight mentees included:

- twenty-two from ESS,
- twenty-five from preschool special education,
- two from Head Start,
- three from child care,
- one from higher education,
- two from community mental health centers, and
- three from health agencies.

There was a mixture of novice and experienced personnel involved as mentees in the program. Thirty two of the mentees were part of the topical mentorship option, while twenty-six mentees worked one-on-one with mentors. Most of the topical mentees also had individual time with a mentor. Participants in mentorship came from all around the state, representing many regions with their unique qualities, strengths, and issues. Some were direct service staff while others were administrators. Additionally, all of the mentees’ supervisors were aware of the mentorship program and their staff’s participation.

There were thirty-four mentors who provided guidance, expertise, and support to these mentees, some taking on multiple mentees. Twenty-three mentors were supervisors, administrators, or consultants. Eleven were direct service educators or therapists. The mentors participating in the program this year included five from ESS, fourteen from preschool special education, and fifteen from other areas of employment. These “others” worked for Head Start, Bureau of Special

Medical Services, community mental health centers, SERESC, Kidzplay, and themselves as private consultants. Mentors can be paid as individuals or as part of the agency they are representing. They were compensated \$50 per hour for individual work or \$100 per hour for small group facilitation, and in some instances knew the mentee prior to the mentorship. Some of these mentors were new to the program, while others have been mentors in the past. There was a consistently positive response to the experience by the mentors, and most have expressed interest in being a mentor again in the future. A few of the mentees from this year also expressed interest in being a mentor in the future.

### How was the Mentorship Program implemented?

***“Professionally, it is a great opportunity for growth and to be recognized for my expertise from many years in this field. I am passionate about my topic and eager to share. This helps motivate me to keep learning!”***

***--a mentor (04-05)***

Applications from mentees were accepted throughout the year, and upon receipt of the application, the program coordinator contacted the mentee to refine goals and determine a suitable match with a mentor for the individual option. Using the database of mentors and personal contacts of advisory board members, matches were made to meet the needs of the mentees. If the mentee sent in an accompanying mentor application, contact was made with this mentor to confirm their willingness to mentor the individual. Once identified, mentor and mentee dyads were given orientation packets, developed an Individual Mentorship Plan that served as the framework for the mentorship experience, and began work together as their schedules allowed for the individual option.

Topical mentorships were determined by the advisory committee with input from the funders, other training agencies, and feedback from surveys that were sent out the previous Spring to eein membership. Topical mentorship mentors, location, and dates were predetermined for the small group time, two starting in the fall, while two began in January. Participants had the option of scheduling their individual time at a mutually convenient time with the mentor. Most mentees took advantage of this option. There was an additional mentorship that was structured similarly to the topical mentorship with one small group session followed by individual time with the mentors. This was a creative use of an individual slot to address a topic that many mentees were requesting.

Each mentor was asked to provide a variety of resources to their mentee(s), who in turn were asked to provide this information to the Family Resource Connection at the state library and share with their colleagues. During the mentorship experience, mentees and mentors were expected to submit progress notes and were encouraged to contact the program coordinator or with questions or concerns. Contact was maintained by the program coordinator through phone and email communication.

Upon completion of the program, all participants were asked to complete an evaluation. Information provided in evaluations will be reflected in this report and will form the foundation of discussion with the advisory board on how to improve the program. All mentees were asked to share what they learned in their mentorship, and were asked to contribute to staff development activities and share information with colleagues within their agencies. In addition, some expressed

interest in presenting information at a workshop, mentoring another colleague, and writing an article.

**What were the topics explored during mentorship?**

***“This model has really been wonderful for me. It allowed flexibility of scheduling and I was able to receive exactly what I was looking for! I looked forward to each session and have been able to use strategies that are applicable to my role.”***

***--a topical mentee (04-05)***

Individual mentorship topics requested this year included:

- Role of ESS coordinator, especially working in a rural area of the state;
- Innovative club foot therapies for a physical therapist;
- Swallowing and trach care for infants and toddlers;
- Infant feeding issues (multiple requests);
- Nutrition options for young children with sensory issues (multiple requests);
- Role of new preschool special education coordinator, especially regarding paperwork, modifications, curriculum, IEP process (multiple requests);
- Consulting to preschool settings;
- The use of DC 0-3 with DSM IV for Diagnosing Children (multiple requests);
- The Creative Curriculum, implementation strategies (multiple requests); and
- ESS and preschool systems and resources (multiple requests);.

As noted, some topics were requested by multiple mentees, resulting from advertising or conversations with mentees that inspired similar needs. Some of the popular topical mentorship topics from past years have been incorporated into individual options for this year. Some individual mentorships used more than one mentor to provide additional information, experience, and perspectives to the mentee. The response to this option was very positive. A primary relationship was developed and maintained, while supplemental information was accessed. Attempts to link workshops and conferences with mentorship as a follow-up were made and in some cases proved very beneficial to using mentorship time for more advanced information. There were other requests from mentees that were unable to begin mentorship due to family and work situations for science and math curriculum, child find coordinator role, speech and language consultation, and working with children with Autism. These applicants were encouraged to apply again next year.

Topical mentorships were offered in the following areas this year:

- Visual bridges to communication;
- Improving social interaction for children with ASD or other sensory issues;
- Creating and maintaining quality preschool programs; and
- Improving social-emotional outcomes for Children 0-3 years.

In three of the topical mentorships, the audience was mixed from ESS, preschool special education, Head Start, child care, and other areas such as mental health and public health. There were both experienced and novice mentees participating in these mentorships, which allowed for additional information offered by the experienced mentees, but challenged the mentors to present information that met the needs of all participants. In all of the topical mentorships, more than one mentor was used to give different perspectives and areas of expertise. The response to this was very positive and gave participants a choice for a mentor to meet with for their individual time. In one mentorship, the sessions were not linked by a common mentor, and participants felt this was not optimal. Response to the topical mentorships offered this year was good in three of the four areas. The “creating and maintaining quality preschool programs” had only three mentees apply, and the mentors decided to provide each with an individual mentorship model given the different aspects each wanted to learn. The mentees were very happy with this outcome and the flexibility of the program. Some mentees expressed a desire for a smaller, more intimate group. Others commented on wanting fewer mentors for consistency across small group sessions. Several participants expressed a desire for grouping by experience level, and some wished there was shorter time between sessions. All these comments will be considered by the advisory board in the planning for the next fiscal year.

What collaborations occurred regarding mentorship?

***“Mentorship helped the mentee to integrate her own prior knowledge and skills, develop confidence, and find ways to modify and adapt current approaches to increase her success. Personally, I felt that I improved my skills at working with adults!”***

***--a mentor (04-05)***

The Mentorship Program is constantly seeking to improve, and has made many changes to the program based on feedback from participants, supervisors, and stakeholders in the field. Survey information, meetings with stakeholders, and conversations with the program coordinator and advisory board members influenced the choice of the small group topics. Feedback from evaluations have documented that topical mentorships have been timely and of great importance. Mentees and mentors have consistently given feedback to support the existence of mentorship as an option to workshops, conferences, and other methods of training. By sharing the mentorship topics, other training agencies and provider agencies have been influenced. There are attempts made to collaborate whenever possible.

Historically, eein had made efforts to respond to current, identified needs and collaborate with other groups that provide training opportunities for people in the field of early childhood education. Both of the funding agencies for mentorship are involved in funding other professional development initiatives, therefore it is important that their representatives are part of discussions which look at the bigger picture for NH ESS, preschool special education, Head Start, infant mental health, and child care fields. Mentorship seeks to compliment other workshops and conferences that personnel are attending by offering an experience that can take individual interests into account. As requests for mentorship cluster around a specific topic, this information can be shared with funding agencies to better inform their planning statewide.

The program coordinator and the advisory board maintain contact with other individuals and groups interested training and familiar with early childhood disability issues in a variety of ways. When possible, the program coordinator or an advisory board member attends early childhood and planning meetings where mentorship can be represented in a broader perspective. Communication with key stakeholders, including PTAN interagency and clinical support meeting participants, ESS Quarterly meeting participants, Family Resource Connection advisory board, NH-AIMH and local infant mental health groups’ representatives, Child Care Resource and Referral coordinators, early childhood grant coordinators, and others as appropriate. Marketing

the program in these venues has also occurred. New opportunities are constantly being sought to collaborate and consider additional funding sources.

How were the Mentorship Program activities monitored to determine if they were conducted as planned?

***“I think this model is effective because it allows professionals to create their own professional development in a very personal and supportive atmosphere.”***  
***--a mentor (04-05)***

As a standing committee for eein, a mentorship report was given at each eein board meeting on a monthly basis by the committee chair. A report of mentorship activity was developed and shared with advisory board members on a monthly basis, prior to the eein board meeting. This year, there were four advisory board meetings that occurred (September, December, May, and June) which resulted in written meeting minutes that were sent to all advisory board members, including a parent and representatives from both funding agencies. Supporting materials and information were presented to all advisory board members prior to meetings to allow for input and feedback before and/or during the meeting. Additionally, there were two ad-hoc meetings with program coordinator, committee chair and the grant manager to address issues that were reported in minutes to the advisory board for input.

Occasional emails were sent by the program coordinator to ask questions and solicit feedback as needed. The mentorship program coordinator wrote articles for the eein newsletter with updates on the mentorship program to the general membership. A summary report was written in February for the funders and the eein Board of Directors. Finally, this evaluation report is written at the end of the fiscal year, with input from advisory board members. Copies of this report will be made available to the general public as well as submitted to the funding agencies and advisory board members.

How was the Mentorship Program effectiveness assessed to determine how well the objectives were met?

***“Research shows information learned in mentoring situations is retained more often than that learned in a workshop!”  
--a mentor (04-05)***

As part of the orientation process for all participants, the program coordinator provides evaluation forms and outlines the expectations of the program regarding paperwork. In each mentee’s orientation packet, an initial and final evaluation was included. Looking at their rating of skill level both before and after mentorship gives information about meeting the goal of improving their abilities to serve children and families. Questions regarding their supervisors’ support and input are part of the evaluation. Mentors are given a final evaluation only. Many participants take the time to reflect and share their feedback in a detailed manner, while others give minimal information. Additionally, participants respond to phone and email inquiries from the program coordinator regarding their mentorship and how it is progressing. This allows for intervention if necessary as well as timely input.

All participants are expected to provide progress notes for each meeting they engage in, and this provides another opportunity to share feedback on the program. Mentors are not paid without submission of corresponding progress notes. All forms were also available online if desired. Advisory board members provided feedback at all meetings regarding evaluation of the program, many providing feedback from their own agencies or other programs they are involved with. An evaluation of the program coordinator yielded additional information about the program, how to improve processes, and what was working well.

Funders had the ability to ask questions and seek input from the program coordinator as needed. They used information from mentorship to impact other training initiatives. They were supportive with suggestions and input as needed.

How was the impact and results of the Mentorship Program measured?

***“My mentor was available for my questions and knowledgeable to answer them. I feel more confident from this experience and have new ideas to share with families.”***

***--a mentee (04-05)***

This year there were fifty-eight mentees and thirty-four mentors participating in the Mentorship Program. Feedback was provided through written evaluation, as well as verbal and email comments. All mentees reported that their supervisors were supportive of their participation, and a few encouraged their staff to do presentations at their agency for others to benefit from the experience. Some mentees used mentorship as part of their staff development plans. A few supervisors gave verbal testimony regarding their staff's participation in the Mentorship Program to the coordinator or advisory board members.

All mentees reported an increase in their skill level, and that they shared information they learned with their colleagues as well as families they worked with. It is difficult to measure the impact that mentorship has on a program or its families, but comments indicate this ripple effect will continue to effect programs. When a staff leaves employment with one agency to work for another, they take the skills and information with them to impact other colleagues and families. By sharing what they learn, they leave much of this new knowledge with the previous program as well.

Through the program coordinator's and advisory board members' participation in statewide early childhood meetings, they believe there is great interest and support of the program based on discussion that occurred this year. Administrators spoke of the need for specific, in-depth training on topics of interest to their staff. The marketing of the program by those who have experience with it was important and will have future effects. Gradually, more and more people are hearing about the program and its benefits.

Who conducted and participated in the Mentorship Program evaluation?

What data sources were used?

When did Mentorship Program evaluation activities occur?

***“It is challenging to meet the needs of mentees, mentors, funders, and families, but mentorship allows for flexibility and individualized opportunities.”***

***--an advisory board member***

***(04-05)***

The program coordinator created formal pre and post evaluation forms for program participants with the assistance of the advisory board, to be used at the beginning and end of mentorship. The participants were asked to fill out written progress notes and evaluations for the program coordinator to review as meetings occurred, including reflections on the program and process. As issues arose, the coordinator brought these to advisory board members for input. At each advisory board meeting, relevant aspects of the program were reviewed and feedback was shared. Representatives from eein’s Executive Committee and Budget and Finance Committee as well as the committee chair and grant manager were part of all discussions regarding the Mentorship Program. The program coordinator provides information on the Mentorship Program through newsletter updates, monthly program updates, and this evaluation report.

Information provided on the evaluations included:

- who applied; were the goals met,
- unexpected outcomes or barriers to the program,
- their skill level before and after mentorship,
- how their supervisor was involved in the mentorship,
- how their mentorship will affect the lives of children and families,
- how they incorporated their experience with their staff development plans, and
- how they plan to give back to the field.

Informally, feedback was solicited from stake holders at meetings, training events, and one-on-one conversations. A training needs survey was created by the advisory board and mailed out for input to next year’s programming. This was done both the Spring previous to and during this fiscal year. The eein board of directors conducted a program coordinator evaluation that was given to all mentors, mentees, and advisory board members to provide feedback. Information provided useful suggestions and support of the coordinator, but also for the program.

Program evaluation was ongoing. The program coordinator is receiving feedback informally from participants from orientation to completion. Input to the program is received and thoughtfully considered at any opportunity. At the completion of the fiscal year, extra attention is given to looking ahead to the next fiscal year and implementing improvements and new ideas.

How are the results of ongoing Mentorship Program evaluation activities used to fine tune and improve the program?

***“I was able to discuss and learn new information through numerous mentors and experiences. I am better able to support children in my program because of my involvement in mentorship. I think job embedded professional development is the way to go! ”***

***--a mentee (04-05)***

Over the past eight years, the Mentorship Program has evolved and changed based on feedback from funders, participants, supervisors, advisory board members, and other stake holders. When possible, the program adopts new ideas that can easily be implemented after thoughtful discussion with the advisory board. At times, changes to the program require changes to the grant application or need to be started at the beginning of a fiscal year. Each year, the program coordinator, with the advisory board, review the feedback provided by current participants. Based on this, they seek to adapt the program to better meet the goals of the grant.

While every effort is made to constantly solicit feedback on the program and make changes that will improve the impact of mentorship, it is striking that the goal, process, and positive feedback remain fairly constant. The evaluation process affirms that our work is meaningful and has impact on professionals and families. The individual nature of the program is also highlighted in every evaluation process, making it difficult to know how each small change that we make to our process will affect the big picture.

Collaboration with other early childhood training agencies has been a way to share the information this program receives with a larger audience, in addition to disseminating the final evaluation report. Due to the important role the advisory board has regarding program evaluation for mentorship, the search for new members is constantly part of the meeting discussions. Maintaining good communication with the representatives of the funding agencies also provides for a bigger picture view of what is needed, what is occurring, and where mentorship can best fit in to address personnel development.

What lessons were learned this year for the Mentorship Program?

***“My mentor had lots of experience to offer and helped me through discussions, review of material, and application to my kids. I liked the ability to share ideas and feel supported.”***

***--a mentee (04-05)***

Over the past eight years, the Mentorship Program has evolved and been responsive to feedback. Marketing efforts remain an important focus as there are many people in the early childhood community who still do not know about the program or who do not understand the flexibility and benefits it can offer. Reaching the numerous and at times unknown child care personnel presents different challenges to reaching the more limited numbers of ESS, preschool special education and Head Start staff. Connection with regional Child Care Resource and Referral Coordinators has helped with linking to the child care providers, as well as the program coordinator speaking to regional child care groups to explain the process and opportunities.

Experienced staff and administrators are another group that needs encouragement to think of mentorship as a vehicle to their professional development. It seems easier to target new staff and administrators to consider mentorship than more experienced ones. Focusing on adding to workshops already occurring, reminding administrators to consider encouraging seasoned staff as well as inexperienced staff, and talking with mentors about becoming mentees are some of the strategies that have been employed to address this issue. Advertising the range of mentors in our pool of resources and the expertise available may positively influence applications. It was exciting to have public health professionals participate in the program this year for the first time, especially as we seek to expand our participants.

Finding topical mentorships that appeal to a variety of early childhood professionals is a constant challenge. Feedback this year indicated that timing of the small group sessions and the range of experience within the group were barriers for some participants in getting the most out of their topical mentorship. Being limited to four topical mentorships provides a challenge to the advisory board to select topics that are of interest and to meet the needs of both novice and experienced people in the field. Although clear outlines for the small group sessions are advertised, greater consideration will be given to working with mentors to provide pre-requisites and expectations of the participants. Timing of small group sessions has been problematic both with shorter time frames with allowing participants to leave work or miss appointments too frequently, as well as longer time frames with too much information forgotten and lack of prioritization. The coordinator will attempt to speak with each mentor for input as well as allow

for participant individual time to occur in a longer time frame at the end of the fiscal year. In one mentorship, the sessions were not linked by a common mentor, and participants felt this was not optimal. Others commented on wanting fewer mentors for consistency across small group sessions. The coordinator will plan to have consistency in future topical mentorships.

This year, a “mini-mentorship” model that was piloted last year was continued with great success. This use of shorter time frames and multiple mentors on specific topics to provide additional expertise and a different perspective met the needs of some busy professionals in the field. This also allowed more people to benefit from the experience of mentors that have limited time to offer mentorship. Some feedback indicated that this was not enough time to really implement useful information in their practice. Others found this time frame manageable and were grateful for the opportunity that did not involve much time and travel. The program coordinator will consider how to process this with applicants in better ways to result in positive outcomes or to encourage them to consider a different mentorship option. Using individual slots for mini-mentorships becomes more challenging as our applicants increase. The advisory board will need to consider how to handle this choice.

Based on the response from last year, a partial mentorship slot was again dedicated to speaking to groups of early childhood students in higher education to provide them with information that may influence their future work with young children with disabilities and their families. It will be considered for next year as well. The topic of oral-motor and nutrition issues continues to be a need for both ESS and preschool special education, and there are limited professionals who can share this knowledge. Using this model offers opportunities to professionals that they would not be able to get otherwise. Some feedback indicated that the need should be addressed additionally, outside of mentorship, and the program coordinator initiated communication between funding agencies and the mentors to see if this can occur. Finally, an individual application for an infant mental health mentorship inspired other colleagues to seek information on the same topic. This group of professionals provided a topical mentorship as mentors and also received mentorship to improve their skills in the field.

For the second year, the mentorship program joined the Training and Education Committee in conducting a Spring survey on training needs for both mentorship topics and workshop or conference ideas. Information from this survey will be used in discussion for topical mentorship offerings and may influence some potential participants to apply. This will be done annually if possible, as it is important to continually get input from professionals. The information resulting from the survey will be shared with other early childhood agencies involved in training. Although response last year and this year seems low considering the number of people who received the survey, it is felt that those who responded are the most likely to apply for

mentorship and attend training events. The presence of the Training and Education Committee Chair on the Mentorship Advisory Board this year has improved collaboration.

This year, there was a change in Training and Education Committee chairs, but this board continues to have representation from this group. Also this year, the advisory board wanted to add a pediatric therapist to gain input that was lost from last year's board. A therapist was found but was unable to continue her work with this board due to personal issues. After considerable effort was expended to seek this representative, a past and current mentor agreed to participate from a distance via email and phone until someone is found. The board continually looks for a variety of new members to inform our discussions and add to the broad representation that the grant envisions.

Time and travel were the most notable barriers to the mentorship experience expressed by both mentees and mentors. Arranging schedules, working around illness or personal situations, and balancing work commitments with training opportunities was a challenge to many in the program, not only this year but in past years as well. Those that applied later in the year had less time to complete a full mentorship than those who applied earlier. Some participants lived in more rural parts of the state and needed to travel to get what they were looking for. This was challenging, especially in winter with snow conditions. Despite the barriers of time and travel, all participants agreed that their experiences were positive. The opportunity to observe another site and speak face-to-face with mentors was beneficial and preferable to phone and email contact.

Benefits to participants stated on final evaluations included:

- increased confidence in observation, assessment, treatment, consultation, and interactions with families,
- increased awareness of referral sources and services available; a greater awareness of developmental challenges in classroom planning,
- adult learning techniques and leadership skills; learning from those outside of my field,
- implementation of curriculum and increased support and organization; a tailored experience,
- increased skills, techniques, and knowledge,
- great review of material for both mentee and mentor,
- learning new, simpler, or alternative methods,
- increased communication skills for interactions with staff and parents; collaboration and sharing opportunities,
- wonderful discussions with others interested in the same topic; increased safety considerations,
- hands on learning,

- motivated to keep learning, and
- decreased feelings of isolation.

The strength of the program continues to be the self-directed, flexible manner in which learning can take place. Those in the topical mentorship model liked the balance of information being presented and an opportunity to ask questions, learn from peers, and have some individual time to focus more on the topic. The individual mentees liked the ability to use more than one mentor if they desired, and to focus on a topic they really wanted to explore. All mentees were pleased with the mentors they worked with. The time to digest the information that is given and an opportunity to process it with the mentor at a later date is another key to the success of the program.

The requirement for mentors to give resources to the mentee, who in turn gives to the Family Resource Connection, is important to allow others in the field to benefit from the mentorship experience. Likewise, the expectation that there is a “payback” for this free professional development opportunity is supported by the participants and helps to build relationships and skills. This most often is in the form of sharing information with colleagues at staff meetings, but some have expressed interest in writing articles or becoming a mentor in future.

Suggestions for the program from final evaluations included:

- increase advertising,
- clarify confusing paperwork expectations,
- allowing for small group exchanges on a regional basis,
- encouraging the mentee to demonstrate initiative, follow through, and self-regulation to achieve success,
- providing more opportunities for mentorship and more often,
- increasing time of mini-mentorship,
- assisting with scheduling and communication difficulties between mentor and mentee,
- offering a follow-up group to topical mentorships if participants want to continue their learning,
- meeting more often to stay focused,
- allowing for more time to absorb material presented,
- decreasing travel time required of mentee, and increasing support for mentor to travel,
- offering different days of the week to allow for multiple families to be affected,
- offering different levels of support to address the variety of base knowledge of participants in topical mentorships, and
- increasing consistent attendance and participation.

Each year attempts are made to edit forms to make them as simple as possible with maximum clarity. Another review of forms will happen for next year's participants. The program's limited funding makes addressing the ideas for increasing hours or providing additional options for mentorship challenging. The advisory board will review all feedback and consider how to make changes to the program to provide optimal mentorship experiences, including what topics to address through topical mentorships and mini-mentorships.

From evaluations, topics identified as a need from current participants included:

- variety of oral-motor issues; pediatric medications,
- Creative curriculum implementation,
- consultation skills,
- working with children with Autism,
- complex social interactional issues,
- better defining a new role (ESS coordinator, preschool special education coordinator, child find coordinator),
- supervision skills, and
- communication with "difficult" people.

Looking for new grants and opportunities to collaborate to support mentorship is a continual goal for the future. Having the state Head Start Collaboration Administrator on our committee, as well as a Child Care Resource and Referral representative, and expressed interest from state representatives of public health, child protective services, and mental health is encouraging. The history of collaboration in our state to support early childhood initiatives is positive and may offer opportunities to create new mentorship pilots and designs. Currently, there are fiscal cutbacks and conservative decision making in many state agencies that involve young children. Board members will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate when possible to raise the awareness of the opportunities for mentorship and the positive impact it can have. Working with mentors from the Bureau of Medical Services, MICE program, DHMC, and private business may help raise the awareness of the program. This year, the advisory board came up with a fee per mentorship to serve as a basis for discussions with other agencies interested in looking at individual or topical mentorship options. This will continue to be revised as necessary.

***“This format works well for folks like me who are currently working in the field. It helps to build on the experiences and skills I already have, and gives me connections for further help if needed in future.”***  
***--a mentee (04-05)***



*Copies of this report are available upon request to:*

*Early Education and Intervention Network of NH*

*c/o Casey Family Services*

*105 Loudon Road*

*Concord, NH 03301*

*603-228-2040*