



Overview

The Learning Outside Together (LOT) program is jointly owned and administered by Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) and BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS). The non-profit agency Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is an equal partner in the project.

Mentors

Mentors are critical to the LOT program. They set the tone and encourage deeper reflection and relationships between LOT participants.

Because of the importance of this role, it is necessary to have clear expectations of the mentors. Each mentor signs a contract with ECEBC which specifies the deliverables, timeline, and fee. Mentors also sign a confidentiality agreement. This policy document covers further administrative considerations.

Eligibility

To be eligible to become a mentor, an individual must hold a valid ECE certificate in BC and hold a certificate of completion for the LOT participant program. Completion means they have finished at least 10 of the LOT participant program modules on the Early Learning Hub and attended at least 70% of their weekly participant meetings. Additional eligibility criteria may be determined for each intake, particularly when there are more applicants than mentors needed. These criteria may include selecting for a diverse group (personal characteristics as well as workplace characteristics), and/or prioritizing those who self-identify as Indigenous, in keeping with the values of the program. At times, there may be priority given to those who have not yet had the opportunity to be a mentor.

Professional Development credits

Mentors complete the “mentorship course” on the Early Learning Hub. This consists of 4 modules, personal reflections, and weekly peer meetings with other Mentors and your group “Facilitator”. Each part of the weekly activities (module, reflection, meeting) is expected to take an hour every week, for a total of 12 hours of professional development credit (3 hours/week x 4 weeks). Facilitators will confirm the hours of completion and provide this information to ECEBC. ECEBC will generate certificates after completion of the mentorship training, however, mentors can request these earlier if needed. Any appeals for the PD hours follow an identical process to that of the LOT participant program PD certificates.

Attendance at peer Mentor group meetings

All mentors are expected to attend all peer mentor meetings, throughout the mentorship course and the participant course.

Any absences must be reasonable (for example, being off sick) and be communicated with the group facilitator as soon as possible. The facilitator will track attendance and may provide it to ECEBC upon their request.

Attendance is expected for each meeting in FULL. By showing up on time, engaging, and staying for the full hour, it shows respect to the other mentors.

Facilitators may decrease the frequency of mentor meetings if they feel weekly meetings are no longer needed. This decrease in frequency is only recommended after the participants have completed at least three modules of the participant program.

Supporting quality experiences for participants

Being a mentor is a new experience for many and can be a positive learning experience. To provide support for mentors the facilitators will observe at least one of the mentor's participant group meetings. Situations may arise where there is concern that a mentor is not thriving in the role. This may be noticed by the mentor, a Facilitator (observing mentors who have unexplained and/or frequent absences, and/or are disruptive in meetings and/or other concerns regarding their role as mentors) or by a participant.

If a facilitator has a concern regarding a mentor, they may request to meet one on one with the mentor. Effort will be made to support the mentor and ensure positive resolutions. The facilitator will keep ECEBC informed along the way.

If a situation/behaviour is noticed by a participant, it may not reach the attention of the facilitator/ECEBC. There are possible routes for this information (contacting one of the project partners: BCACCS or ECEBC directly, informing a participant in another group who tells their mentor). In both cases, the first person to learn of the situation will share this with the mentor and their facilitator. This ensures that the mentor and facilitator have the first opportunity to address the situation. A situation/behaviour may also be reported in writing to the project partners.

If the facilitator feels the situation/behaviour remains unresolved, they will refer the situation to the project coordinator or project partners (ECEBC and BCACCS) who will connect with the mentor directly. Again, effort will be made to support positive resolutions.

If they are unable to resolve the situation/behaviour with the mentor, a mentor may be asked to step down and a replacement mentor found. If a mentor is asked to step down, only necessary information will be shared with the project leadership team which includes all project partners. Any decisions about the honorarium payment would be made at that point, based on whether the contract deliverables were met

ECEBC may bring any other issues, concerns or topics that arise during the LOT program to the partnership for decision making.