Early Childhood Mentor Network (ECMN)

Information for Faculty

2025-2026

# **Purpose**

This overview outlines expectations and guidelines for working in partnership to provide early childhood practicum students with meaningful, hands-on mentoring and instructional experiences in early childhood settings through the ECMN. It is intended for faculty teaching ECED 2120/2121: Curriculum Development through Play: Birth - Age 4 and/or ECED 2130/2131: Curriculum Development and Implementation: Age 3 - Grade 3 and/or faculty who have students (mentees) placed with an ECMN mentor.

# **Overview of Structure**

ECMN is funded by the NM Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and Central NM Community College—Ingenuity (CNMI) administers the contract on behalf of the state. ECMN is one of four programs in the Early Childhood Networks (ECN). The other three programs are the Early Childhood Director Network (ECDN), the Infant Toddler Teacher Network (ITTN), and the Home-Based Provider Network (HBPN).

# **ECN Administrative Team**

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# **ECN Overview**

ECN is a statewide network with its main “Hub” in Albuquerque, led by the ECN Administrative Team. There are four “Spokes” located across the state (Farmington, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, and Silver City). Each Spoke has a Spoke Manager who facilitates the work of the four programs at their site.

# **Faculty ECMN Application Process**

Faculty can apply to join the ECMN twice per year (fall and spring) on the ECN website at [ecnetworks.org](http://ecnetworks.org.).

By joining ECMN, early childhood faculty members can strengthen their collaboration with the ECN Administrative Team, Spoke Managers, and mentors to enhance student support.

# **Mentorship Overview**

Mentorship takes place over a 10–15-week term and follows one of two formats.

**Format 1**

* 45 hours of mentorship within the mentor’s classroom
* 15 hours of mentor-mentee collaboration

**Format 2**

* 15 hours of virtual mentorship that includes remote classroom observation\* and feedback.

**\*NOTE**: Remote observation may not be possible in cases when a program prohibits all remote observation and video recording.

Classroom observations are an important part of the mentorship experience. Mentor teachers who work with their mentees in person have the opportunity to conduct observations in their classrooms.

In the case of virtual mentorship, we encourage mentors and mentees to work together to arrange remote observations. They might use videoconferencing software to conduct a live observation. Alternatively, a mentee might record themselves working in their classroom and share the recording with their mentor. We recognize that program policies on remote observation vary. Mentees should consult with their center director and cooperating teacher to ensure that remote observations are conducted in a manner consistent with those policies.

# **Placement Process**

ECMN works to pair mentees with mentors who match their format and age group preferences, depending on the availability of mentors who meet those criteria. Placements are generally completed within the first two to three weeks of the term, with the exact timeline varying by institution. Once placements are completed, mentors will contact their mentees to introduce themselves and arrange an initial meeting. The following is a breakdown of the placement process by location:

* **Albuquerque**: ECME Field Experience Coordinator and ECN Program Coordinator work together to determine placements.
* **Farmington, Las Cruces, Silver City**: Spoke Manager works with faculty to determine placements.
* **Santa Fe**: Spoke Manager works with faculty to determine placements for mentors in both Santa Fe and Taos. If the student is in APRENDE, the Spoke Manager works with the Apprenticeship Program Manager to determine placements.
* **Other Locations/Institutions:** Students pursuing degrees in ECE and first-year teachers around New Mexico are welcome to apply to work with an ECMN mentor. If the applicant is a first-year teacher or attends an institution that does not have an affiliated Spoke Manager, the ECN Program Coordinator will determine placements.

For general program and placement questions, students should contact the ECN Program Coordinator or the Spoke Manager. If students have concerns regarding their mentor/mentee placements, they should notify the institution and the ECN Program Coordinator.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**ECN Program Coordinator:** SupportsSpoke Managers and Field Experience/Practicum Placement Coordinators in placing students with ECMN mentors. The ECN Program Coordinator also facilitates placements for students attending institutions that do not have a Spoke Manager or Field Experience/Practicum Placement Coordinator.

**Spoke Manager:** Facilitates placement of students in their region with ECMN mentors. Communicates information about placements to the ECN Program Coordinator.

**Field Experience Coordinator/Practicum Placement Coordinator:** Facilitates the placement of students at their institution with ECMN mentors. Communicates information about placements to the ECN Program Coordinator.

**ECN Administrative Team:** In most cases the ECN Administrative team will work with the ECN Program Coordinator and Spoke Managers. Spoke Managers will work directly with faculty in their region. In some cases, the ECN Administrative Team will work with faculty members, but this is on a case-by-case basis.

## Faculty Role

Early childhood faculty play a critical role in the success of ECMN by supporting practicum student placements, bridging the gap between mentor and mentee, and working with ECMN team members, Spoke Managers, and mentors to identify and promptly resolve issues.

Faculty are eligible to participate in other networks. If a faculty member attends professional learning community (PLC) meetings through their participation in another network, they will earn a stipend of $40 per meeting. Faculty may earn stipends for mentoring at the same rate as mentors, provided they do not mentor their own practicum students. If a faculty member does not have an early childhood classroom in which to host mentees, they are limited to virtual mentorship.

## Faculty Responsibilities

To fulfill this role, faculty will:

* **Support Student Placement**
  + As needed, coordinate with ECN Administrative Team or Spoke Managers to arrange practicum student placement and communicate relevant placement details.
* **Monitor and Address Concerns**
  + Document and communicate any placement or mentor concerns to the ECN team and Spoke Manager within 72 hours (3 days).
  + If additional support is needed, collaborate with the Spoke Manager and ECN team to develop a Success Plan.
    - **IMPORTANT:** Mentees ***should not*** be removed from placements without completing a Success Plan.
    - See page seven for a copy of the Success Plan and a detailed overview of the process. It is the understanding of all ECN participants that refusal to engage in the Success Plan process or failure to arrive at a satisfactory resolution may result in consequences up to and including removal from the program.
* **Prepare Students for Practicum**
  + Share and discuss the ECMN Practicum Student Information Sheet with students to clarify expectations.
* **Support Mentor Communication**
  + Give mentors at least 48 hours’ notice before visiting their classroom for observations.
  + Ask mentors about specific classroom projects or events to align observation goals.
  + Do not assign mentors coursework or readings.
* **Attend ECN Events**
  + Attend the Annual Kick-Off (August)
    - The Annual Kick-Off is an opportunity to connect with ECN members across networks.
    - The Annual Kick-Off is held in Albuquerque and in each of the four spokes.
  + Attend the End-of-Year Celebration (April)
    - The End-of-Year Celebration is a gathering for ECN members to reflect on and celebrate their work and the success of the program year.
    - The End-of-Year Celebration is held in Albuquerque and in each of the four spokes.
* **Promote ECN Programs**
  + Share flyers and information about events and ECN programs with teachers, colleagues, and students.
  + Facilitate visits from ECN representatives to share program information with students, faculty, and staff.

## Mentor Role

Mentor participation in the network is twofold: 1) a commitment to creating and maintaining mentoring relationships, and 2) participating in a monthly professional learning community facilitated by a lead mentor to build supportive relationships, develop leadership skills, and improve their mentorship skills.

## Mentor Responsibilities

To fulfill this role, mentors will:

* **Provide Orientation and Onboarding:** Introduce mentees to the classroom and school environment, including policies, routines, paperwork, events, and parent communication.
* **Engage in Observation and Feedback:** Regularly observe mentees (in person or virtually) and provide timely, constructive feedback to support their growth.
* **Facilitate Reflective Practice:** Lead reflective conversations with mentees throughout their practicum to deepen their understanding and promote critical thinking about their teaching practices.
* **Scaffold Learning:** Reflect on mentees’ experiences and use those reflections to guide and scaffold their learning.
* **Maintain Communication:** Respond to mentee questions in a professional, supportive, and timely manner (within 48 hours).
* **Model Respectful Relationships:** Approach all interactions with mentees with empathy, respect, and a commitment to their growth and success.
* **Support Professional Growth:** Assist mentees in transitioning from practicum students to independent educators by offering guidance, sharing experiences, and encouraging professional readiness.

## Mentee (Student) Role

Over the course of their work with an ECMN mentor, practicum students/mentees receive support based on their particular needs, gain familiarity with an early childhood classroom environment, learn through classroom experience, engage in reflective conversation, and receive guidance as they transition from being a student to an independent teacher.

## Mentee Responsibilities

Mentees are responsible for actively participating in their practicum experience with their ECMN mentor.

To ensure a successful practicum experience, mentees will:

* **Adhere to Policies:** Follow ECMN’s guidelines as well as the policies and requirements of their respective college or university.
* **Meet Hourly Requirements:** Complete 45 hours of mentorship in the mentor’s classroom and 15 hours of collaboration, or 15 hours of virtual mentorship.
* **Maintain Professional Communication:** Keep open, consistent, and timely communication with their mentor. Respond to mentor inquiries (within 48 hours) and share progress as needed.
* **Be Punctual and Responsible:** Arrive for scheduled meetings with their mentor. If a mentee is unable to attend a meeting or is running late, inform their mentor as soon as possible.
* **Seek Support If Needed:** If any challenges arise during the mentorship experience, the mentee should contact their instructor or a member of the ECN Administrative team for assistance and guidance.

[ECN Success Plan](#_Early_Childhood_Network)

**Addressing Concerns and the Resolution Process**

**Step 1: Identifying and Documenting Concerns**

* When a concern arises, the individual with the concern will notify their Spoke Manager. If the individual is unsure who their Spoke Manager is or there is no Spoke Manager for their region or program, they will notify a member of the ECN Administrative Team.
* The Spoke Manager or the ECN Administrative Team will document the concern on the Success Plan. If necessary, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled with the individual raising the concern to obtain more information.
* The Spoke Manager or the ECN Administrative Team will reach out to the other individual(s) involved in the concern, documenting their response on the Success Plan.
* At their discretion, the Spoke Manager or ECN Administrative Team will inform any other relevant individuals, requesting their input or responses so all parties have a shared record.

**Step 2: Facilitating Resolution**

* The Spoke Manager or ECN Administrative Team will schedule a Success Plan meeting with all involved parties.
  + The meeting facilitator will summarize the information they gathered in Step 1 and provide the parties an opportunity to respond or add more information.
  + The parties will reflect on their roles in the conflict and determine specific steps they each will take to reestablish a positive working relationship.
* The Spoke Manager or ECN Administrative Team will outline a schedule for future follow-up and conduct periodic check-ins with all parties according to the schedule.

**Step 3: Escalating Unresolved Concerns**

* If the issue remains unresolved, the ECN Administrative Team will provide further support and mediation.

**Step 4: Determining Outcomes**

* **Resolution Achieved:** The Success Plan will be signed and implemented.
* **Resolution Not Achieved:** If a resolution cannot be met, ECN may:
  + Remove one or more of the individuals involved from the program.
    - The Success Plan is ECN’s official conflict resolution process and engagement with the process is a condition of participation in ECN programs. If an individual refuses to engage in the Success Plan process, even if that individual is the “aggrieved” party in the conflict, their refusal will be considered as voluntary withdrawal from the program.
  + Adjust or discontinue a placement or partnership (e.g., mentor and mentee, Lead and member, etc.).
  + Reassess its collaboration with one or more of the partner organizations involved.

**Step 5: Success Plan Completion**

* **Resolution Achieved:** The Spoke Manager or ECN Administrative Team will monitor implementation of action steps and conduct follow-up meetings according to the schedule outlined in Step 2. If the parties involved determine additional follow-up meetings are not necessary, they may elect to move directly to an exit meeting. At the exit meeting, all parties involved will discuss and document the steps taken to resolve the conflict, verify that resolution was achieved, and formally close the Success Plan.
* **Resolution Not Achieved:** If a resolution cannot be met, either because implementation of the Success Plan failed to produce a satisfactory outcome or because one or more involved parties declined to engage in the Success Plan process, the ECN Administrative Team will convene an exit meeting. At the exit meeting, all parties involved will discuss and document the steps taken to attempt to resolve the conflict, the reasons why resolution was not achieved, and the outcomes that will follow from failure to reach resolution. The ECN Administrative Team will take the required next steps and formally close the Success Plan.

# **Early Childhood Network Success Plan**

**Success Plan for** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When there is a concern or conflict between ECN participants, it is the responsibility of the lead person involved to document the issue, identify the conditions to ensure success, and notify all involved parties (I.e. Spoke managers, faculty, mentee, ECN team, mentor, etc.).

**Examples:** a concern between a practicum student and mentor, faculty and mentor, lead and mentor, etc. or any fractured relationship between participants.

**The initiator of the Success Plan has identified the following areas of concern:**

**The participant’s response to these areas of concern:**

**The following action plan will be implemented:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person Responsible** | **Specific Action Step(s)** | **Estimated Completion Date** | **Follow Up Notes** |
| **Mentee** |  |  |  |
| **Mentor** |  |  |  |
| **Spoke Manager** |  |  |  |
| **ECN Program Team** |  |  |  |
| **Faculty** |  |  |  |
| **Other** |  |  |  |

**If progress is not made, the following actions may occur:**

**It is the understanding of all parties that if areas of concern are not resolved to the satisfaction of the ECN team, consequences such as removal from a placement or ECN program may result.**

A follow-up meeting will be scheduled within one week to discuss progress and make recommendations regarding next steps.

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 (Signature) (Date)

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 (Signature) (Date)

**Notes from follow-up meetings:**