

PARENT MENTOR MANUAL

Mission

The mission of the Parent Mentor Program of Project YES is to strengthen families by providing support, encouragement and knowledge to parents of young children and teens. The program aims to produce small but significant change in parent-child relationships.

Program Structure

The Project YES Parent Mentor program provides trained and supervised volunteers, to assist parents in helping their children. Each parent mentor meets, with a set of parents or a single parent for one hour per week for a period of 12 weeks in a private setting. Parent mentors do not meet with the children at any time. If after the 12-week cycle is complete, the parents request to participate in a second 12-week cycle, they will be assigned a different mentor, according to availability, but may not continue with their current mentor.

Eligibility/Population Served

The Parent Mentor Program provides services to all Jewish parents regardless of their religious observance, cultural affiliation, or background. Parents may be dealing with children exhibiting a variety of issues including:

- children not meeting parental expectations,
- frustration with the child's behavior or academic progress,
- sibling conflict,
- lack of communication between parent and child,
- one or more children exhibiting at-risk behaviors, and
- religious issues

Parents are not excluded due to the type and/or severity of the child's problems. Single parents, large families, recent immigrants and step families are all eligible.

Eligibility of Parents

In order to participate in the program, a parent or parents must:

- reside in the service area
- demonstrate a desire to participate in the program
- agree to abide by policies and procedures of the Parent Mentor program
- commit to spending one hour per week for twelve weeks.
- agree to communicate appropriately with mentor regarding place and time of weekly meetings

Parent Screening Procedure:

Each mentee applicant will complete a phone questionnaire. Documentation of the screening process will be placed in the database and stored confidentially. Following the phone questionnaire, the program director arranges a match, with a mentor, according to the matching procedure (below). At the first meeting with the parent mentor the parent(s) are required to sign the pro-parenting agreement and complete a parent questionnaire.

Recruitment and Screening of Mentors

Recruitment of parent mentor volunteers is ongoing. Parent mentors are recruited by placing ads in local newspapers. They are also sometimes referred by friends who are already parent mentors.

The parent mentor volunteer database is to be reviewed annually to determine the actual numbers of parent mentors that are currently available and will be retained by the program. This review will guide further recruitment efforts.

Eligibility of Mentors

Parent mentors are trained and supervised volunteers from the Orthodox Jewish community. In order to be eligible as a mentor, a mentor must:

- be at least 18 years of age
- reside in the service area
- complete application forms
- agree to attend two 90 minute or one three hour training session(s)

- attend a twenty minute intake interview with parent mentor staff within 2 weeks of the parent mentor training
- agree to spend twelve 1 hour sessions with parent(s)
- be willing to submit weekly parent mentor reports and communicate at least monthly with program director or supervisory staff
- exhibit ability to listen without interruption, empathize and avoid being judgmental
- be willing to adhere to Project YES mentor program policies and procedures
- not be a user of illicit drugs or alcohol
- not have a criminal history
- be available for subsequent training and/or group supervision meetings as needed

Mentor Screening procedure:

Each mentor applicant will complete a screening procedure by:

- Completing application forms.
- Attending two 90 minute or one three hour training session(s).
- Completing a twenty minute personal intake interview with program supervisor.
- Providing two personal references.

Documentation of the screening process will be placed in the database and stored confidentially. After completion of the screening process the applicant is notified of his acceptance by phone. The program director will have final approval for an applicant's acceptance to the program. No reason will be provided to a mentor applicant that is rejected from participation in the program.

Training

All Project YES parent mentors are required to attend either two 90 minute training sessions or one three hour training session prior to being matched. The agenda focuses on basic program guidelines, communication/relationship

building skills, ways to help parents work successfully with their children and be aware of their emotions throughout the process.

The parent mentor training outline previewing the information is distributed at the training.

It is the responsibility of the director of the parent mentor program to plan all training sessions with assistance from other Project YES staff. Evaluation forms are completed by trainees/mentors following the training, for the purpose of evaluating/improving the content of the trainings and trainer performance.

Parent mentors are encouraged, but not required to attend additional training sessions to reinforce the information they are already familiar with. Group meetings for parent mentors will be held periodically to enable volunteers to share their experiences, successes, and failures and acquire new techniques from each other.

Matching

In order to ensure the best possible match between parents and a parent mentor, the coordinator of the parent mentor program will determine suitability based on the following criteria:

- preferences of the mentor and parent(s)
- gender
- religiosity
- commonly shared values
- scheduling availability
- mentor experience and qualifications
- geographic proximity

Pertinent information about the mentor is first shared with the mentees, such as the mentor's age, gender, religiosity, employment, marriage or family status. If the mentee is interested in the mentor, information about the mentee is then shared with the prospective parent mentor. Information to be shared may include mentee's age, gender, religiosity, employment, family situation, living situation, a summary of the mentee's needs assessment and expectations from the match.

Each party shall have the right to accept or refuse the proposed match based on the information provided to them. Once the match has been accepted by both

parties, the parent mentor is directed by Project YES staff to initiate a telephone call to the mentee(s) to arrange a time and place to meet.

If at any time during the twelve-week process, either party is no longer willing to continue, an alternative parent mentor may be arranged based on availability.

Match Support and Supervision

Following each parent mentor meeting, the parent mentor will complete and submit a Parent Mentor Record of Intervention Form highlighting the mentor's experience with this parent or set of parents, issues dealt with during sessions and questions. For the purpose of support and supervision, parent mentor supervisory staff will make phone or personal contact with the parent mentors following each weekly meeting with mentees. Contact and supervision notes will be recorded in the mentee case contact file in the Project YES database.

In the case of match difficulties, discord or concerns, appropriate discussion and intervention will take place to improve or rectify the problem areas. Beyond monitoring the match relationship and meetings, it is the responsibility of the program coordinator to provide other support for the mentors such as group supervision. Parent mentor supervisory staff also meets periodically to address issues that arise in supervision and identify innovative approaches to ensure the success of the program.

Recognition Policy

All volunteers are recognized as important to the success of the parent mentor program. Particular emphasis will be placed upon recognizing those who volunteer for the program as mentors. Mentors may be selected for recognition based on length of service and/or their successfully delivering the program, according to parents' reports of improvement in parent-child-family relationships.

Safety

The Parent Mentor Program has been designed to assure the safety of the mentors, parent mentees and the parent mentor supervisory staff. Mentors meet mentees either in the Project YES office, the mentor or mentees residence or a mutually agreed upon location that ensures the privacy required for the one-hour meeting. If any mentor feels in the slightest bit uncomfortable with the mentee(s), or his/her neighborhood, they can be reassigned.

Parent mentors are not obligated to disclose their private contact numbers to mentees, but may choose to do so to easier facilitate contact regarding emergency situations or for scheduling and cancellation of meetings.

Parent mentors are expected to use the weekly supervision sessions to share any concerns about the effects of their work with mentees. This will ensure that they are not being harmed emotionally by being a parent mentor.

Confidentiality

The Project YES Parent Mentor Program protects the confidentiality of its mentees. All client information in the parent mentor program is confidential. Cases are referred to by case number and not by name. In addition, the weekly supervision report form lists only the case number and no where on the form does the mentee's name appear. All prospective mentors and mentees will be informed by the program staff of the scope and limitations of confidentiality. Mentors are required to sign a confidentiality form at the training session ensuring that information about their mentee is kept confidential from **everyone** except Project YES staff.

In order for Project YES to provide a responsible and professional service to participants it is necessary that staff **not** divulge extensive personal information about the prospective participants, including:

- Information gained from mentors and mentees, written or otherwise, about themselves and /or their families, in application to and during program participation.
- Participant's names and images gained from participants themselves, program meetings, training sessions and other events.
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references and employers.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals or organizations only upon receipt of signed "release" forms from mentors or mentees.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of

- program participants may be used in agency publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor or mentee.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
 - Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving Project YES. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
 - Program staff are mandated reporters and as such must disclose information indicating that a mentor or mentee may be dangerous to or intends to harm him/herself or to others.
 - If program staff receives information at any point in the match process that a volunteer is using illegal substances, there is current criminal activity of any kind, or is inappropriately using alcohol or other controlled substances, the existing match will be closed.
 - At the time a mentor and mentee are considered match candidates, information is shared between the prospective match parties. Each party shall have the right to refuse the proposed match based on the information provided to them. The information that may be shared is listed in the matching section of this manual.

Safekeeping of Confidential Records

Each staff member will be provided with security access to confidential information based on their level of security.

Violations of confidentiality

A known violation of Project YES policy on confidentiality by a program mentor may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the program.

Closure

Both parties in a match relationship must participate in closure procedures when the match ends. Closure occurs when the twelve week program has been completed, when one or both participants do not want to continue the match or when changes in life circumstances in one or both of the match partners' lives prevent further meetings. Hence the match may end at the discretion of the

mentor, mentee and/or program coordinator. At that time parents complete, for a second time, a parent questionnaire that enables the program to monitor the effect of parent mentoring. This questionnaire is completed at the end of the last meeting and mailed by the mentee to Project YES in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided at that time.

Informal contact and continued involvement beyond the match duration may occur without Project YES involvement but is not recommended. This is to protect the emotional health of both the mentor and parents. Parents who wish to further benefit from the parent mentor program may request to participate in a second twelve-week program with a different mentor.

Mentors will be reassigned to future matches at the discretion of the program coordinator based upon past participation/reliability, performance and current goals and needs of the program.

Program Monitoring

In an effort to monitor the successful outcome of the parent mentor program, parents complete a questionnaire at both the beginning and end of the twelve sessions as well as a follow up three months later expressing their concern regarding their child(ren) in specific areas as well as *their* perception regarding their own parenting ability.

The outcomes are then evaluated so that improvements can be made to the Parent Mentor Program that reflect the implicit suggestions of these questionnaires.

A questionnaire regarding mentor performance is also completed by the parent(s) at the end of the twelve sessions. This feedback, together with other factors is taken into consideration when mentors are considered for assignment to another match in the future.

Addendum to include:

Application form for mentors

Parent Mentor Record of Intervention form

Pro-parenting agreement

Parent Questionnaire (completed at the beginning and the end of 12 wks and 3 mos later)

Training Outline

Training Evaluation form

Confidentiality Form for mentors

Mentor Performance Questionnaire

Evaluation of mentor form