

# Observe, Reflect, and Apply: Ways to Successfully Mentor Early Childhood Educators

*What strategies lead to effective mentoring and long-term improvement in classroom teaching practices? These practical recommendations—for program directors, supervisors, adult educators, and other mentors—are based on coaching and inquiry research.*

Marilyn Chu

Inspiring an early childhood teacher to explore new ideas that promote young children's development and learning is one of the great rewards of being a teacher educator, coach, or mentor. Yet the goal of the mentoring process—to connect effective strategies to a teacher's actual interactions with young children—requires more than just providing inspiration and sharing knowledge.

The broadest and oldest term for ongoing guidance to support professional development is *mentor*. Mentoring is:

“a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protégé or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.” (Lutton, 2012, p. 84; NAEYC & NACCRRA, 2011, p. 10)

The inquiry or teacher-researcher strategies described in this article are methods supported in part by research on coaching effectiveness (Rush & Shelden, 2005) and teacher study, action research, and inquiry groups (Somekh, 2010; Stremmel, 2007; Wilson, 2008). Mentors—teacher educators, supervisors, and others—are encouraged to adapt these research-based practices as they work with early childhood teachers.

## Why Mentor?

A national dialogue is underway about how to implement effective early childhood professional development

strategies. Many states are seeking to improve the quality of programs for young children. Teachers are urged to engage in professional development opportunities that promote research-based teaching practices that result in positive outcomes for children (Buissee, Wesley, Snyder, & Winton, 2006).

Quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) are being developed and strengthened with incentives for early childhood teachers to engage in evidence-based practices. QRIS systems with required professional development components are also included in the federal Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge Grant priorities (Mardell, Fiore, Boni, & Tonachel, 2010).

What does effective professional development look like? A growing body of study indicates that effective professional development should

- be ongoing,
- include self-assessment, and
- be associated with specific criteria or expert feedback that is aligned with instructional goals, learning standards, and curriculum materials (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, & O'Herin, 2009).

High-quality mentoring lowers staff turnover, decreases the isolation of caregiving (Kagan, Kauerz & Tarrant, 2008), and increases teachers' emotional responsiveness when interacting with children (Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003). These types of *individualized, practice-focused approaches to professional development* have positive effects on teachers' practices and/or on child outcomes (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittacker, & Lavelle, 2010).

**Note:** This article is based on M. Chu (in press). *Developing mentoring and coaching relationships in early care and education: A reflective approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## High-quality mentoring

- lowers staff turnover
- decreases the isolation of caregiving
- increases teachers' emotional responsiveness when interacting with children

Mentors who focus on specific teacher interests and work dilemmas, and who are knowledgeable, make a difference with teachers who ultimately positively influence children (Stichter, Lewis, Richter, Johnson, & Bradley, 2006). Mentors who listen to the experiences, dilemmas, and interests of teachers are especially effective when they offer ongoing encouragement and feedback to strive for high standards in ways that respect the cultural and program context (Chu, Martinez-Griego, & Cronin, 2010).

One-shot workshops, which may be full of valuable information, rarely lead to long-term change in teaching practices (Guskey, 2000; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In contrast, embedded professional development—a mentor who observes teaching practices (Knight, 2007; 2009) and encourages reflection on them (Shidler, 2009)—more effectively supports application of new practices. Of course, health and safety concerns must be addressed at once.

## First, Build Trust

A supportive and responsive professional relationship is needed for the mentoring process to begin (Fox & Hemmeter, 2011). Trust is more likely to be built when mentors start the relationship by listening and asking open-ended questions to learn what the teacher wants to know and be able to do.

After teachers have been involved in a professional development workshop or heard about a relevant teaching concept, they often seek support for implementing new practices in their classrooms. Using a mentoring framework—a **cycle of inquiry** to investigate teacher questions—guides both the mentor and teacher. This framework includes:

- **Observe** to gather information,
- **Reflect** to make meaning of documentation, and
- **Apply** an action plan.

When the teacher and mentor agree on a timeline, materials, and resources needed, as well as identifying desired outcomes, the teacher is likely to be more engaged and feel reassured. Mentors are most effective when they ask open-ended questions, listen, and employ a cycle of inquiry.

**Agree on a timeline, materials, resources, and outcomes.**

## Mentoring Is Relationship-Based

People who feel frustrated or anxious about making changes become more comfortable when their concerns are first met with acceptance and empathy (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Then a mentor's offer to collaborate to investigate a problem is usually met with greater interest (Goleman, 1994). A mentor who says, "This is a challenging situation. Both of us can observe and think about this to find a solution", is more likely to engage the teacher.

A lecture or offer of specific information on how to do something will probably be less effective. Consultants who offer technical assistance—before they listen to concerns, offer empathy, identify questions to investigate, and reflect on possibilities—usually do not prompt long-term change in teacher behaviors (Buyssee & Wesley, 2005). Teachers who are overwhelmed by daily responsibilities or lofty program outcome expectations may feel paralyzed and afraid to take a risk. Jumping in with information tends not to work, even though this may be exactly what is being requested from a mentor (Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009).

Most issues need time to be considered and investigated. Initially, adult educators are urged to collect and share more questions than answers with mentees. Supervisors and program directors might also encourage teachers to first wonder and reflect out loud or in a journal. Mentors can encourage teachers to ask themselves:

- What are my questions?
- What problems frustrate me?
- What is most interesting in my recent observations?
- What do I hope to happen?

From the start, the most effective mentors are those who are co-learners, who wonder along with the teacher. This strategy reignites motivation and reduces the anxiety or burnout that prevents thinking and imagining new actions. Skilled mentors resist solving problems at first and focus on identifying issues and questions of interest. This is harder to do than immediately giving advice and often feels counter-intuitive. Wondering and reflecting might seem like wasting time, but the new



Subjects & Predicates

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skills developed as a result will live with the teacher long after a mentor moves on.

As the relationship develops, refine questions teachers ask themselves to more specific ones, such as:

- What do my wonderings tell me about what I want to learn about a child's strengths, interests, development, culture, personality, and learning strategies?
- What resources will further my understanding related to my concerns and observations?
- What might I do next?
- Why should I consider new ideas/change my teaching strategies?
- What do I need to do to change my interactions with children?

Mentors can facilitate teachers to engage in the process of *thinking about changes* before taking action. Supervisors and college instructors can also encourage teacher stories and narrative observations. Then discuss the multiple meanings and

interpretations of these narratives. Choose a specific focus such as emotional development or program practices to raise teacher awareness and motivation. Initially identifying teaching dilemmas is key to figuring out what to do about the dilemmas.

**Listening is an important mentoring tool.**

### Spark Teacher Awareness

Mentors who begin by asking open-ended questions about a teacher's work and who then listen with interest, respect, and empathy to teaching stories create a safe climate for adult learning. By examining how close the teacher's actual practices are to his or her teaching vision, goals, and ideas, mentors can re-ignite curiosity about teaching effectiveness.

Listening is an important mentoring tool to support understanding of a teacher's perspective. A teacher might share a dilemma such as, "I just don't know how to explain to Thea's parents that she is learning when she plays!"

A mentor who is listening can take that cue to invite the teacher to reframe the concern into a question. An investigation of "How does Thea learn through play?" could begin the mentoring process of creating a plan to

- document Thea's play interactions,
- identify research-based resources to interpret the documentation, and, finally,
- apply this new understanding in effective teaching practices.

Mentoring communication skills include asking questions and giving feedback about teachers' stories and documentation to increase awareness about the situation. A few examples are cited in Table 1 (following page).

When Mariyanna, a working teacher and early childhood college student, was asked these sorts of questions and given feedback, she became more willing to engage in further investigation. Mariyanna reflected in her journal about her long conversation with 4-year-old Amanda who was making a book about a cat.

I feel I am not doing as good a job of using language to promote thinking as I could do. I find myself being aware of trying to find a balance between asking too many and not enough questions. I don't want to distract her and end her interest in what she is discussing and drawing.

Table 1. Questions and Feedback to Spark Awareness.

- **Encourage and acknowledge feelings about teaching:** "How do you feel about it? How does the child feel? What do you need? What do you think the child needs in this situation?"
- **Empathize:** "I struggled with that issue when I was a toddler teacher, too."
- **Promote problem solving:** "Let's brainstorm a list of options to alter the block area. We'll examine the pros and cons of each possible solution. After you make changes, you can observe and document what you see happening. Then we'll come back together to reevaluate."
- **Summarize and organize:** "There seem to be two key issues here."
- **Clarify:** "You are noticing..."
- **Encourage some more:** "Yes...please tell me more...that's interesting..."
- **Paraphrase:** "You showed him pictures of his expression to help him understand his feelings."
- **Find common ground:** "Is focusing on early literacy strategies the place you want to start?"
- **End with an affirmation:** "I enjoyed discussing this with you. I am confident we will figure this out. It was really interesting to look at this issue today."

A conversation followed with Mariyanna's mentor, who first empathized with the challenges of talking to a preschooler. Next their conversation led to a focus on how to use more effective questions to promote the child's higher-level thinking skills. Mariyanna documented her next conversation with Amanda, as well as her thoughts and feelings about the experience.

Amanda: "I wish I was a bird."

Me: "You wish you were a bird. Why?"

Amanda: "I wouldn't have to go to school."

Me: "Where would you go, Amanda?"

Amanda: "South Dakota."

Me: "How would you know you would like South Dakota?"

Amanda: "I want to see what it looks like."

Mariyanna then reflected in her journal:

I was delighted by Amanda's and my conversation about her imagining to be a bird and flying to South Dakota. I wondered: Why does Anna express longing to escape school? Did she see a passing bird overhead that caught her fancy? Does she have a longing for freedom, but not the language skills to express that concept yet? Do I read too much into the remarks of a 4-year-old?

This teacher's reflective notes opened the door for many conversations with her mentor (also her college instructor) about engaging in meaningful conversations and promoting cognitive growth with children. Mariyanna was now motivated to better understand how to

encourage, expand on, and respond to children's comments. She identified research questions of interest to her and now realized how important it is to facilitate children's conversations.

A teacher-child interaction assessment tool, *Classroom Assessment and Scoring System* (C.L.A.S.S.) (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) was discussed before Mariyanna engaged in this process. She seemed overwhelmed with the prospect of having to learn one more thing. Later, she realized this tool could support her thinking about how to interact with children. Her insights came at the right time and the tool was offered again by her trusted mentor. She was now ready to explore this new resource. Trust and timing were key in this situation.

Mariyanna also became eager to hear more about classroom interactions as well as to find other resources to inform her practices from another teacher-mentor.

## Facilitate a Cycle of Inquiry

Scaffolding teachers' development with stimulating questions, careful observation, and emphasizing thinking deeply requires "promot(ing) experiences and types of development in the teachers that enable and motivate them to promote similar experiences and types of development in the children" (Schienfeld, Haigh, & Schienfeld, 2008, p. 151). If teachers are going to foster children's dispositions as scientists, then mentors must also engage teachers to construct questions to research.

If teachers do not have their own questions, one way to stimulate their thinking is to invite them into the process after first observing a child in their program. A simple and effective beginning question to

consider is, “How does \_\_\_\_\_ learn through play?”

Then share Cycle One of the inquiry process—**observe**, **reflect**, and **apply**—as outlined in Table 2. In some situations, the mentor may find it helpful to model the documentation process for a teacher.

More experienced teachers might have questions about how to improve a child’s group experience. The mentor could ask them to take observational notes about what they notice children and teachers doing and saying during a specific time of day or during specific play experiences. Encourage documentation in the classroom over a period of time. While examining observational notes together, invite a teacher to begin the inquiry process as described in Table 3.

Revisiting the same documentation evidence enables both teacher and mentor to become more skilled in working together. Detailed questions and collaborative dialogue facilitate even greater investigation and learning. Mentors working with teachers experienced in methods of assessment and teacher research may want to begin facilitating with more detailed questioning as outlined in Cycle Two in Table 4.

Mentors are urged to reflect on the process of facilitating the *observe-reflect-apply* cycle. Consider the timing when juggling the learning needs of a teacher. Engagement in a process that enables teachers to construct, examine, analyze, and communicate their ideas also requires content knowledge. However, mentors usually find that content is often meaningless if the teacher does not know how to apply it, or if a positive learning relationship is not maintained. A skilled mentor, who establishes the inquiry process

**Table 2. Cycle of Inquiry With an Inexperienced Teacher.**

<i>Cycle One:</i> Mentor demonstrates inquiry process for teacher. What am I wondering about? What questions do I have? Mentor observes a child and frames a simple inquiry question such as “How does Sam learn through play?”		
<b>OBSERVE</b> <i>What is this child doing and saying?</i>	<b>REFLECT</b> <i>What does it mean?</i>	<b>APPLY</b> <i>What do I do to keep the learning going?</i>
Sam (20 months) wears a firefighter hat to go outside to play. He picks up a stick on the playground. He points the stick at a plant and says “Brrrrrr. Out, fire!”	Sam substitutes one object for another in pretend play. Sam is beginning to express himself in two-word phrases. (See Teaching Strategies, 2010)	Mason, the teacher, expands on what Sam says and asks questions to encourage him to express his ideas. “I see you have a hose to squirt the fire. How much water do you need?” Sam replies, “Fire all wet. Gone!”
<b>Mentor uses descriptive narrative or anecdotal notes as evidence.</b>  Highlight with the teacher areas to better understand.	<b>Mentor uses program resources to interpret observation with teacher.</b>  Help the teacher choose one area of an observation to interpret.	<b>Mentor describes observed, effective teacher-child interactions.</b>  Ask and listen for the teacher’s new or different insights. Model openness to multiple perspectives and build on teacher’s ideas.

**Table 3. Cycle of Inquiry With a More Experienced Teacher.**

<b>OBSERVE</b> <i>What is interesting in this observation?</i>	<b>REFLECT</b> <i>What does the observation tell about the child’s strengths, interests, development, temperament, or learning strategies?</i>	<b>APPLY</b> <i>What questions does this observation generate? Turn interests, dilemmas, or problems into researchable questions.</i>
After taking notes, highlight areas of interest with the teacher.	Help the teacher choose one area to question and research.	Help the teacher identify concerns and frame questions. “Why is the block area a location where conflict between children occurs frequently?”

Based on questions in Forman & Hall (2005).

**Table 4. Revisit Documentation to Explore Questions in Greater Depth.**

<i>Cycle Two:</i> Mentor and teacher revisit/reexamine observations.		
<b>OBSERVE</b> Observation revisited: <i>What do you want to know? What are you curious about?</i>	<b>REFLECT</b> Reflective conversation: <i>Make more meaning</i>	<b>APPLY</b> <i>Engage more deeply with content or curriculum changes</i>
<p>What do you find most interesting in this observation?</p> <p>What other evidence should you collect (observation notes, work samples, photos, audio or video recordings, input from families)?</p>	<p>What does it tell you about the child's strengths, interests, development, temperament or learning strategies (or other areas for interpretation)?</p> <p>To which child goals and objectives does it relate?</p> <p>What additional resources do you need to help you interpret what you document and the evidence you collect?</p>	<p>What might you do next?</p> <p>What do you want to plan for this child to support his or her development?</p> <p>What changes might you make to the environment, materials, schedule, routines or to your interactions?</p> <p>What content do you want to know more about before planning for this child?</p>
Mentor supports teacher to develop a research question and purpose for continued observation and evidence gathering.	Mentor asks questions to prompt the teacher to examine the observation and evidence gathered to answer the new teacher research question.	Mentor poses questions to help teacher evaluate how what was planned and what happened supported the child's goals. Mentor asks teacher what to do the same or differently next time.
Example of more specific teacher-generated research question: How do teacher-child conversations support Sam's language development?	Example of teacher comment: After reviewing my observations, I see that Sam's engagement in conversation is greatest when he is involved in back-and-forth conversations during dramatic play. He seems to have a strong interest in learning about water's properties.	Example of teacher comment: Looking at the videotape made me aware that I often ask a lot of fact-based questions. I might want to try more open-ended questions to encourage Sam's language.

documentation to communicate about a child's development. The teacher selects significant notes from a longer documentation. Together, wonder about the possible meanings of the vignette. Then decide on a purpose for the documentation, such as sharing developmental milestones with a family member.

The vignette in Table 5 (pg. 26) was created by a new toddler teacher. Her goal was to show families the tremendous social growth she was observing in two toddlers who had been confrontational.

**Refine questions that teachers ask themselves.**

**Identify Areas for Teacher and Program Development**

After engaging a teacher in the cycle of inquiry (observe, reflect, apply) for some time, the next step is for the mentor to assess the knowledge, skills, and program conditions needed to continue teacher engagement in inquiry (see Table 6, pg 26).

To sustain a teacher's learning through on-site peer mentoring, a mentor might ask the questions:

- Who in the program is a problem-solver and collaborator?
- Who understands how to connect knowledge of child, program, and family development? (Schienfeld, Haigh, & Schienfeld, 2008).

Also review specific gaps in skills or knowledge that may prevent a teacher from making necessary changes in practice. Now it is time to emphasize

before linking the teacher to specific information or technical assistance, reinforces practices that prepare the teacher to solve dilemmas independently in the future.

**Communicate Children's Learning to Families**

A vignette (brief anecdotal notes about a single learning experience) is a simple, yet effective way to use

content knowledge that a teacher needs to sustain interests. It may also be the time to link a teacher or program to other resources and forms of professional development such as college courses, teacher study groups, or mentors with specific content knowledge (referred to as “coaches” by Lutton, 2012, p. 85).

## Mentor Self-Evaluation and Outcomes

Finally, mentors to early childhood teachers reflect on their own progress, as outlined in Table 7.

The mentoring process can help teachers reflect on their daily practices and interactions for the purpose of improving children’s development and learning. Skilled mentors facilitate teacher inquiry into routine teacher questions, dilemmas, and problems. They strengthen a process grounded in relationship-building, communication, and teacher-researcher facilitation skills. When mentors scaffold a cycle of inquiry, even an experienced mentor can move from intuitive to more intentional practices.

No matter how skilled a mentor may be in early childhood content knowledge, there is room for new or expanded skills that facilitate a process of inquiry. Mentors urge teachers to wonder, identify questions, gather information, analyze observations, and communicate ideas. A mentoring process that focuses on investigating teacher questions has the potential to ignite a teacher’s curiosity, persistence, and wonder.

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## Table 5. Toddler Friendships Vignette

### Forming Toddler Friendships: Lori and Jamie’s Picnic

#### Selected observation notes

Lori: I would like to have a picnic. You too?

Jamie: Yeah, I wanna come. I need to make tea for my baby!

Lori: Okay. I will help, okay?

Jamie: Yes please! Thanks!

Lori: Okay, I will get my Care Bear® and the puppy to sit with your baby.

#### Interpretation

Lori is working together with Jamie to accomplish her goal to have a picnic with her stuffed friends and babies. They cooperate and communicate with each other through multiple tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and setting the table. Based on their laughs, smiles, and conversation, I believe they really enjoyed each other’s company and are learning what it means to be a friend.



Subjects & Predicates

*Trust is more likely to be built when mentors start the relationship by listening and asking open-ended questions to learn what the teacher wants to know and be able to do.*

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Table 6. Mentor Assessment to Support Continuing Teacher Inquiry.

<p><b>OBSERVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are teachers able to objectively record what they see, hear, and observe?</li> <li>• What supports and barriers exist for documentation?</li> <li>• Describe what documentation or assessment skills can be strengthened.</li> </ul>
<p><b>REFLECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are teachers able to make logical, informed meaning from the data they gather?</li> <li>• Do teachers need more knowledge regarding child development, cultural competency, language acquisition, or other areas, to interpret their observations?</li> <li>• What resources would be most helpful?</li> <li>• How well does the program support the disposition of teacher as researcher?</li> <li>• What skills, dispositions, or knowledge could be strengthened?</li> </ul>
<p><b>APPLY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How competently does the teacher build upon children’s interests and ideas?</li> <li>• How well does the teacher make reasonable choices, share perspectives, and collaborate with other teachers, families, and supervisors?</li> <li>• Is the program a comfortable place to share multiple points of view?</li> <li>• Who in the program will connect teacher and family perspectives to child development and program plans?</li> </ul>

Table 7. Mentor Self-Reflection on the Cycle of Inquiry Process.

<p><b>In what ways did I...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know and build a respectful relationship with the teacher?</li> <li>• Learn about the teacher and the early childhood program by listening, observing, and exploring together?</li> <li>• Explore what the teacher was wondering about?</li> <li>• Encourage information gathering and documentation of a teacher-identified problem or focus of inquiry before giving advice?</li> <li>• Problem-solve through dialogue and reflective feedback?</li> <li>• Encourage and challenge the teacher’s professional development through use of open-ended and reflective questions?</li> <li>• Evaluate your work together and leave with ideas for next steps?</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.fippcase.org/caseinpoint/caseinpoint_vol1_no6.pdf">http://www.fippcase.org/caseinpoint/caseinpoint_vol1_no6.pdf</a></p> <p>Schienfeld, D.R., Haigh, K.M., &amp; Schienfeld, K. (2008). <i>We are all explorers; Learning and teaching with Reggio principles in urban settings</i>. NY: Teachers College Press.</p> <p>Shidler, L. (2009). The impact of time spent on coaching for teacher efficacy on student achievement. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 36(5), 453-460.</p> <p>Somekh, B. (2010). The collaborative action research network: 30 years of agency in developing educational action research. <i>Educational Action Research</i>, 18(1), 103-121.</p> <p>Stichter, J., Lewis, T., Richter, M., Johnson, N., &amp; Bradley, L. (2006). Assessing antecedent variables: The effect of instructional variables on student outcomes through in-service and peer coaching professional development models. <i>Education &amp; Treatment of Children</i>, 29(4), 665-692.</p> <p>Stremmel, A. (2007). Teacher research: Nurturing professional and personal growth through inquiry. <i>Voices of practitioners</i>. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/vop/Voices-Stremmel.pdf">http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/vop/Voices-Stremmel.pdf</a></p> <p>Teaching Strategies. (2010). <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i>. Washington DC: Author.</p> <p>Trivette, C., Dunst, C., Hamby, D., &amp; O’Herin, C. (2009). Characteristics and consequences of adult learning methods and strategies. <i>Winterberry Research Synthesis</i>, (2)2. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.</p> <p>Wilson, N. (2008). Teachers expanding pedagogical content knowledge: Learning about formative assessment together. <i>Journal of In-Service Education</i>, 34(3), 283-298.</p> <p>Zaslow, M., Tout, K., Halle, T., Whittaker, J., &amp;</p>
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Subjects & Predicates

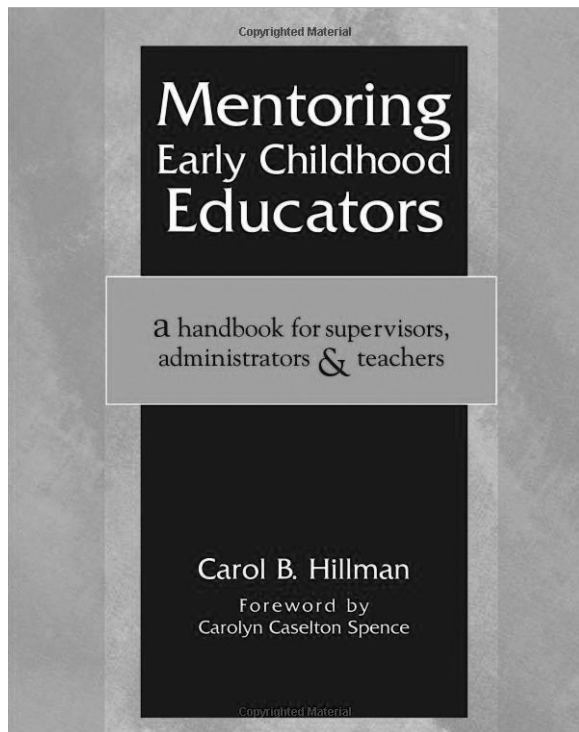
*Engagement in a process that enables teachers to construct, examine, analyze, and communicate their ideas also requires content knowledge. A skilled mentor—who establishes the inquiry process before linking the teacher to specific information or technical assistance—reinforces practices that prepare the teacher to solve dilemmas independently in the future.*

# Extend

## These Ideas With a Professional Book

Connect Mentoring With a Professional Book

Emily Schmidt



### *Mentoring Early Childhood Educators: A Handbook for Supervisors, Administrators, and Teachers*

By Carol B. Hillman. (2006). 120 pp.  
\$25. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

subsequent chapters continue to define the supervision process, including strategies for getting to know student teachers, the importance of various elements in the classroom learning environment, the benefits of written journals, and handling challenging issues.

Hillman offers a variety of real-life examples from her own experiences and clear, well-organized objectives, as well as reflective questions at the end of each chapter. The sample observations, journal responses, and field placement documents are a guideline for the supervision process, and subtly weave an understanding of the value of mutual respect in the relationships of all involved. The strategies provided include appropriate classroom observations, communication techniques, handling difficulties between the mentor and learner, and supervision that expands the experience for the new teacher.

This is a ready reference for those who supervise student teachers, are administrators of early childhood programs, or work as classroom teachers. *Mentoring Early Childhood Educators* offers mentors the skills to support new teachers and administrators and reciprocates by providing a learning experience for the mentor.

Carol Hillman taught young children for more than 20 years. She has been an educational consultant, an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College of Education, and a member of the Board of Trustees for the Bank Street College of Education.

Her handbook contains six chapters, a list of suggested readings, as well as three appendices. In the first chapter, "The Role of the Supervisor," Hillman describes the position of the supervisor who mentors student teachers in early childhood education. She emphasizes the importance of effective communication, the art of observation and listening, and "bringing forth an improved climate of learning."

Hillman's book is written for a variety of educational roles. She points to the common bonds among them, which create a community of learners who together can make a difference in the lives of children. The

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