

Family Mentorship Experience: Alternative Option Form
(to be reviewed and completed by ALL LEND Trainees)
Va-LEND Program
2006-2007

The Family Mentorship Experience is a requirement of the Va-LEND curriculum. Occasionally we accept a trainee for whom the FME commitment as outlined on the FME Overview is redundant of experiences they have had in great abundance, with a wide variety of families who have children with disabilities, and in a wide variety of settings, including much exposure to such families in the home.

Are there any extenuating circumstances in your life experience that lead you to feel that the FME as outlined would not be a useful and productive educational opportunity for you?

No _____ Yes _____

If you checked yes, please fill out the remainder of this form.

What are those extenuating circumstances? (give details)

Any alternative option must require you to plan some experiences/activities that you do not usually encounter in your professional life that will (1) meet the objectives of the FME and (2) do so in the context of relationship with one or more families who have children with disabilities.

Any alternative FME will also include specific components of the standard FME commitment.

Possible alternatives to the “standard” Family Mentorship Experience include but are not limited to:

- Follow the basics of the standard FME but be paired with a mentoring family which is expert beyond just their own child, so you can focus more specifically on learning more about advocacy and empowerment of families to be leaders.
- Follow the basics of the standard FME but be paired with a mentoring family which is in particular need of advocacy and support, so you can focus more on the experience of directly advocating for a family and also more fully appreciate what a family actually experiences in learning to navigate services and systems. Such a family could be a family that has previously been seen in a LEND interdisciplinary clinic or another family identified by LEND.
- If you yourself have a child with a disability, or if you have a disability yourself, you could possibly be a mentoring family for another trainee, but you would still need to work out a plan for yourself for meeting the FME objectives, either through creatively crafting your mentorship of that trainee, through the standard FME commitment and being mentored by another family, or through an alternate option to the FME that you design with faculty.
- Design an independent contract with Elaine Ogburn and your faculty advisor to research one or more topics of common concern among families (e.g., limited financial resources and access to resources; depression in children with disabilities, their parents, and/or their siblings; a particular family dynamic; marital stress; an issue related to chronic illness, death, or grief; etc.), and then present your findings to trainees and faculty.
- Design an independent contract with Elaine Ogburn and your faculty advisor to develop some resource around Family-Centered Care to implement in your own discipline or work setting (for example, looking at your own work setting from the point of view of families with children with disabilities and devising a realist plan of what Family-Centered Care could look like there). NOTE: Two trainees could possibly analyze each other’s work settings in this way.
- Come up with your own creative idea to meet FME objectives and your own professional and personal goals for your VA-LEND year!

If you would like to request an alternative FME:

1. Turn in this form at Va-LEND orientation..
2. Telephone Elaine Ogburn at 804-320-4514 **ASAP** to notify her of your interest and to begin discussion of a possible alternative for you to the standard Family Mentorship Experience. Since this is prior to FME orientation (scheduled for September 8), Elaine will be happy to provide you with more detailed information about the standard FME and alternatives when you call. You may wish to consult your faculty advisor after talking with Elaine.
3. The decision to do an alternative FME, made jointly by Elaine and you, must be finalized by Friday, September 1. You are still required to attend FME orientation on September 8.
4. Once the decision is finalized, you must develop a working draft outlining your proposed alternative FME plan. Both Elaine and your faculty advisor will be happy to talk with you about your plan as you develop it. Your draft is due by email to Elaine and to your faculty advisor by Monday, September 11. Elaine’s email address is esogburn@vcu.edu.
5. Your faculty advisor and Elaine will review your proposal and give you feedback on it. Your proposal must be approved by Thursday, September 21, prior to the FME Picnic for trainees and mentoring families on September 23.