

Dear Family,

As the 2003 fall semester approaches, we are writing to ask you if you would be willing to participate in our MCH LEND Family Mentor program. This past year, out of all the components of the MCH Leadership Training Program, which includes course work, Seminars, Research lectures, clinical work, community experiences, cultural activities and team projects; our trainees again ranked the Family Mentor component the *highest* when asked what their most significant learning experience was. Below are comments from our 2002 trainees:

- I learned about commitment to family and the struggles with accessibility. I learned about perseverance and hard work. I learned about unconditional love. I learned how to play Tony Hawk's skateboarding on Playstation II.
- I learned what factors prevent families from getting places on time, completing activities and going through daily routines...
- Where to start? I had coffee with my mentor mom and was touched that she opened up to me about what it was like when she learned their child had a developmental disability. I really learned a lot from her sharing her experiences and feelings with me.
- I was able to visit my mentor child's school, her home and do things in the community with her. I got to see her in different settings with peers and with her family. I never would have been able to learn this any other way...
- This was the most powerful experience for me. It increased my compassion for families who have children with developmental disabilities.
- I learned about the reality of dealing with multiple challenges. I learned about the many similarities between families with and without children with disabilities that I just never thought about before...
- I learned many wonderful parenting techniques for myself and to pass on to other families who may be struggling with their child's behavior...
- I learned what families value. I feel fortunate to have been provided with the unique opportunity of being included in a family with a child with special needs. I better understand the daily life of this family. I thank them and you so much for this opportunity!

The Family Mentor experience helps to foster an understanding for students of what it means to be a parent of a child with a disability, and what family-centered care means from the family's perspective. With this new understanding from families such as yours, it is our hope and our goal that these students will go on to better serve in leadership positions in the future, meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and their families.

We understand if you are unable to be a mentor family; however, if you are willing to participate again, we would love to have you! When you have a minute, please check off the enclosed form and mail it back in the envelope provided.

Sincerely,

And all the MCH LEND Staff at the Waisman Center

WI MCH LEND
The Family Mentor Program

**MCH Interdisciplinary Leadership Education in
Neurodevelopmental & Related Disorders
(MCH ID LEND)**

_____ YES, I am willing to be in your Family Mentor Program.

___ 10 hours (Weekly interactions, approximately 2 hours each)

___ 20 hours (Weekly interactions until end of semester)

_____ I would like more information before deciding whether to participate.

_____ Thanks, but we're not able to at this time.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

A good time to reach me is _____

Thank you! (Do you have questions? Please call Barb at 263-9672)

The WI MCH LEND Program
Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental
And Related Disabilities
Waisman Center

WI MCH ID LEND Program
Family Information for Family Mentor Program

Parent Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone _____

Work phone _____ (IF OK for trainee to reach you there?)

Email _____

Which way do you prefer to be contacted? Phone ___ Email ___

Children's

Names	Age	Date of birth	School and grade	Special needs or comments?
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_____	___	_____	_____	_____
_____	___	_____	_____	_____
_____	___	_____	_____	_____
_____	___	_____	_____	_____

Are there other persons living in your home? If so, please give name and relationship:

Do you have pet family members? ☺ _____

Please briefly describe your daily schedules (your work, children's sports, lessons, therapies, etc.)

What are the "Best" times – week days, evenings, and week-end days – for your student to get together with you?

The following is optional (information about family's experiences for trainee)

Race(s) of family members _____

Religious preference(s) if any _____

Mother: Occupation _____

Father/Partner/Other caretakers: Occupation _____

The following represents some of what we hope students will see and learn in their mentoring experiences with you:

- That families with children with special needs are families *first*
- There are many obstacles with many ways to work around them
- Acceptance of different priorities and styles for each family
- What behaviors and attitudes by professionals are supportive; which ones get in the way, or are harder for families
- How families are treated by the public
- An understanding of different living environments
- An understanding of the child's diagnosis
- What leisure time and friendships mean to families and their children
- What school and community relations are like for families
- Sibling relationships in families

When thinking about what You most hope for a student to learn from their mentor interactions with your family,

What do YOU think is important for a student to learn from your family's experiences?

What information, experiences, or activities do you want to share with your students?

What do you feel you are good at helping a student understand? What do you or your family teach best?

Many students are interested in learning more about particular issues of concern for families. Are there certain areas or issues of special focus for your family at this time? (For example, but not limited to...)

- School issues
- Medical issues
- Social skills and friendship building
- Advocacy building
- Transition
- Inclusion
- Behavioral issues
