

**PARENT MENTOR
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**Services provided by the
Parent Mentor Project
are available to all families
of children residing within
SEDOL's member districts.**



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Funds for this project are provided through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education and matching funds from the Special Education District of Lake County. One hundred percent of these funds are from federal sources.



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THE PARENT MENTOR PROJECT



The Parent Mentor Project is based on the belief that students with disabilities will be ensured an appropriate and meaningful education if parents and educators build positive partnerships through increased communication, understanding, and collaboration. Its main objective is to provide support, training and ongoing technical assistance to parents and educators related to the referral, identification and educational services for children with special needs.

The Parent Mentor Project is funded in part through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in partnership with the Illinois Federation of Families (IFF). Recognizing the importance of parent involvement, the Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL) provides additional funds to support the project, which currently has two Parent Mentors.

What is a Parent Mentor?

Parent Mentors are parents of one or more children with educational and/or physical needs. They act as a liaison between families and educators to strengthen communication and partnerships between home and school. Parent Mentors do not represent or speak for parents; they are **not** advocates. Their role is to empower parents to fully participate as a partner in their child's education.

The Parent Mentors receive ongoing training from SEDOL, ISBE, and IFF on a variety of topics related to special education law, policies and procedures, evaluation and assessment, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, conflict resolution and community resources.

Parent Mentors are available to help families residing within SEDOL's member districts. You may contact a Parent Mentor by phone or email for *confidential* assistance. There is no fee for their services. Mentors are parents who have been through the process and want to help!

How Can a Parent Mentor Provide Support?

Some of the ways Parent Mentors are available to support parents and educators include:

- Providing workshops for parents, educators, and community members.
- Explaining the special education process (rules, procedural safeguards, IEPs, evaluations, etc.)
- Providing assistance with IEP meetings (preparation/attendance).
- Helping to locate resources (community, regional, and statewide).

What One Parent Said About the Project . . .

"The Parent Mentor I worked with helped me with everything from understanding the process to knowing whether my expectations were reasonable to providing feedback on letters I wrote and attending meetings. She provided an alternative way to work with the school, which was less confrontational, and helped our family through one of the most stressful times we have ever experienced."

