

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### PRACTICE MENTOR

**Name of Service – Suburb, Town / State**

**Award**

**Category**

**Start Date**

#### Position Overview

The focus of the role is facilitating quality education and care practice within a relationship based learning culture (congruent with the spirit of the learning frameworks).

The practice mentor operates at all times with children (rather than educators) as their primary client. The practice mentor works through the educator (and others) to ensure that children's voices are always heard – to ensure that children and their rights and interests always come first.

The FDC practice mentor role is focused on the following:

- Leading and modelling best practice, and promoting excellence in education and care and outcomes for children.
- Building educator capacity (abilities, skills and expertise) through high quality coaching and mentoring processes.
- Developing and maintaining high quality collaborative relationships with service staff, educators, children, families and other stakeholders.
- Fostering a learning and development culture characterised by active and reflective learning and a democratic and inclusive environment.
- Leading and guiding pedagogical processes and practice.
- Advocating for children, educators, families and the broader sector.
- Leading and managing reform and change.
- Developing and implementing systems and policy.
- Facilitating efficient, effective and competitive business processes.

#### Key Result Areas

1. Leadership- Vision and Inspiration
2. Relationships- Foundation for Learning
3. Learning – Reason for being
4. Business – Sustainability and Agility
5. Outcomes – Flourishing

#### Supervision

Within the FDCAQ Delegations of Authority policy the Practice Mentor currently reports directly to the Service Manager.

The Practice Mentor position may provide close, routine and general supervision to Educators, students and volunteers. (See 'Delegations of Authority Policy')

## Key Areas of Responsibility

### LEADERSHIP- VISION AND INSPIRATION

Leadership capabilities encompass leading self, leading others, leading the service, and leading the profession to enable children to flourish. A key role for the practice mentor of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is their role as a leader of practice through asking questions about the inter-relationship between feelings, thoughts, perceptions and actions. This is enabling of critical reflection and exploration of the many complex, interacting factors that now define practice.

- Demonstrates understanding of contemporary perspectives on leadership and professionalism in education and care, reflective practice, people processes, and change management and organisational agility
- Demonstrates understanding of service philosophy and vision, and how they inform practice and decision making
- Demonstrates a deep appreciation of the strengths and challenges of FDC, how FDC differs from other service types, and the complexity and value of education and care in general
- Demonstrates understanding of and concern with the role of social, economic and political factors such as power, gender and context in education and care
- Can seamlessly apply theory and philosophy to practice; can articulate and provide rationales for own position/identity as a leader and an education and care professional
- Able to 'see the whole' (to simultaneously focus across multiple Domains, contexts, layers and perspectives)
- Can modify style/approach to suit work with different people, cultures and contexts
- Leads and inspires others with a vision of excellence in children's learning and wellbeing
- Facilitates and encourages distributed/collaborative leadership whilst also successfully enacting the positional leadership responsibilities of the role; able to balance competing opportunities and demands of the role
- Leads by expanding own and other's capabilities
- Leads others in ensuring that education and care services start with and are based on the rights, interests and perspectives of children
- Models professional, socially just, moral and ethical practice and ways of relating and engaging with others
- Demonstrates leadership in initiating and responding to change
- Actively advocates for the learning and wellbeing of children within and beyond the education and care setting, and for education and care as a valued and professional field of practice.

### RELATIONSHIPS- FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING

Relationship capabilities encompass deep connection to others and to self to build and nurture relationships through which leaning and growth can flourish.

- Demonstrates a deep understanding of education and care as a relational activity (i.e. where learning is achieved in the context of relationships)
- Demonstrates understanding of contemporary perspectives on relational communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict management
- Demonstrates deep understanding of the nuances and complexities of developing and maintaining clear professional boundaries in relationships with others (children and adults)
- Able to articulate relevant frameworks that guide practice in the context of relational learning, interpersonal communication, professional boundaries and conflict management
- Builds and nurtures open, trusting, respectful learning focused relationships with a diverse range of people (children and adults)
- Models good personal and professional boundary maintenance, and management of ethical issues, privacy and confidentiality

- Builds authentic and purposeful networks and partnerships that engage others (e.g. with colleagues, educators, families, other professionals, schools, community) in the interests of promoting children’s learning and wellbeing
- Proactively and constructively manages crucial conversations and conflict to move learning forward
- Embraces and promotes fairness, equity, inclusiveness and valuing of individual differences so all can thrive together
- Fosters adaptability and resilience in others. Assists others to manage complexity and uncertainty.

### **LEARNING- REASON FOR BEING**

Learning capabilities encompass pedagogical philosophies, principles and practices that facilitate excellence in professional practice and children belonging, being and becoming. As learning leaders, practice mentors are deeply involved in actively shaping and co-creating all aspects of pedagogy involving both children and adults. In doing so, practice mentors are vigilant in ensuring that, in all relationships and processes, children remain the primary client.

- Demonstrates extensive knowledge and understanding of contemporary childhood development and early childhood education and care practice, and the theories and research on which they are based
- Demonstrates extensive knowledge and understanding of adult learning processes and the underlying theories and research together with well-developed coaching and mentoring frameworks
- Demonstrates a deep appreciation of the parallels between child and adult learning principles and practices that enable belonging, being and becoming (e.g. learning through relationships, learning through play, uniqueness of each learner, scaffolding learning, active engagement of learners, creating rich learning environments; learning depending on the learning of all those who support the learning)
- Demonstrates deep appreciation of the ways in which context and community influence pedagogical decision making
- Able to articulate own pedagogical frameworks and ‘thought through’ practice principles for working with adults and children
- Co-leads implementation of a clear and coherent vision for children’s learning, and excellence in pedagogical practice of self and others; enables and supports rich learning environments in the home, and active participation and decision making by children in all matters that effect their learning and wellbeing
- Builds and nurtures supportive, safe, encouraging and collaborative coaching and mentoring relationships with educators and other adults that facilitate quality pedagogical practices and learning outcomes for all children; encourages and facilitates lifelong learning
- Optimises adult learning styles in work with educators and other adults and encourages them to be self-directed, to think critically, to be reflective practitioners, and to develop their identity as leaders. Co-constructs coaching and mentoring model/framework tailored to individual adult learner (needs, experience, and stage of capability development), own style, and the unique adult learner-practice mentor relationship

### **BUSINESS- SUSTAINABILITY AND AGILITY**

Business capabilities encompass facilitating effective, efficient, viable and agile structures and processes – human, financial, knowledge, administrative - that enable the ongoing success and sustainability of education and care services, particularly in the context of the changing and challenging contemporary environment.

- Demonstrates deep knowledge of relevant government legislation, regulations, standards and frameworks, and funding requirements
- Demonstrates understanding of relevant service systems, technology, policies and procedures and knowledge of small business management (e.g. accounting requirements, taxation, information and communication technology)

- Demonstrates knowledge of contemporary people process philosophies and frameworks
- Demonstrates understanding of the increasingly competitive and complex market forces impacting on FDC, and the tensions and challenges they present for promoting the economic viability of services as well as continuing to honour the profession's moral and ethical obligations to give primacy to children's rights and interests
- Able to articulate people process philosophies and frameworks that guide practice
- Actively facilitates sound service management and sustainable business and financial management in alignment with business philosophy/model (including ensuring adherence to funding, regulatory and legal obligations and requirements)
- Co-leads high quality people processes (e.g. recruitment, induction, performance review and management) that are fair and transparent and facilitate retention of high quality people
- Engenders mindsets and behaviours of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship to foster ongoing improvement and competitive advantage (in ways that sustain and enhance capacity to focus on children and their learning)
- Proactively embraces use of new technologies/methods for communication and learning, and assists others to do so
- Participates in marketing and promoting the service and building community presence through relationship building, public relations strategies, and being alert for innovative funding opportunities.

### **OUTCOMES- FLOURISHING**

Outcome capabilities encompass facilitating an ongoing, dynamic cycle of planning, monitoring and assessment of the quality of learning and education and care practice to ensure that learning is engaging, authentic and meaningful, and enables children to flourish. Practice mentors have a crucial role to play in the nexus between practice competence and learning outcomes.

[\* Assessment of outcomes is considered an integral part of everyday education and care practice (rather than a separate activity undertaken in isolation or at the end). However it also includes more deliberate actions in designing strategies, tools and practices to support assessment of learning outcomes.]

- Demonstrates in-depth understanding of contemporary principles and practice in assessment pedagogy
- Demonstrates understanding of the need to assess learning realistically, at a range of levels (short term, longer term, big picture), and using a variety of tools, approaches and perspectives
- Demonstrates understanding that learning and learning outcomes are complex and emergent rather than able to be linearly pre-determined or planned from the outset
- Develops knowledge and skill in research and evaluation approaches and understands that, as well as improving quality, research and evaluation can help shape the professional image of the sector
- Able to articulate philosophies and frameworks that guide practice
- Builds a culture of high expectations, and collective accountability and ownership for learning and learning outcomes - in self and others
- Maintains visible focus and commitment to goals and priorities that focus on learning
- Leads others in responding to outcomes by together initiating positive change in learning beliefs and practices
- Ensures outcome assessment processes engage children wherever possible and are clearly linked to improving learning
- Ensures fairness and equity, and a partnership approach to assessment
- Works collaboratively to develop and refine effective ways of capturing outcome information. Participates in service benchmarking and evaluation processes
- Acknowledges and celebrates results and achievements – large and small

## Skills and Attributes

### Emotional Intelligence

- Demonstrates self-awareness, awareness of others (empathy), self-management skills and capacity to motivate self and others.
- Shows genuine interest in others and works to make them feel valued.
- Acts with both heart and head.

### Agility

- Demonstrates openness, adaptability, and flexibility in responding to change.
- Able to identify and take advantage of opportunities quickly.
- Seeks out innovation; thinks laterally; can generate and share new and creative approaches.

### Comfort with Complexity

- Accepts uncertainty and complexity as normal.
- Demonstrates comfort with ambiguity and with an environment of continuous change.
- Remains focused and is able to decide and act in the face of ambiguity.

### Strengths Focus

- Displays a positive, optimistic approach; has a sense of humour.
- Focuses on strengths rather than deficits – what is working well rather than problems.
- Supports and encourages others; listens actively and inspires trust and confidence.
- Shows drive and energy, patience and perseverance in the face of challenges.
- Works from strengths to build positive and meaningful relationships.

### Values Driven and Reflexive

- Demonstrates awareness of how values, beliefs and experiences shape behaviour, voices and understanding.
- Shows curiosity; continues to question and challenge.
- Acknowledges and learn from mistakes.
- Lives own personal and professional values in enactment of own role and in relationships with others.

### Integrity and Courage

- Guided by explicit values and principles where the rights and interests of children are afforded the highest priority; ethical and professional in attitude and behaviour.
- Demonstrates honesty and humility; open about own strengths and learning areas; takes responsibility for own decisions and actions.
- Prepared to express own views; dares to be different.
- Shows a commitment to social justice and social inclusion.

## Key Relationships

Internal	<p>Team members, educators and families at the local service level.</p> <p>All FDCAQ team members</p>
External	<p>Families, local community network, regulatory authority, relevant government agencies, Australian Children’s Education and Care Authority</p>

## Selection Criteria

### *Essential*

- *Demonstrated experience in leading others to deliver education and care services under the National Quality Framework- National Quality Standards.*
- *Experience in managing multiple demands at one time, prioritising and developing work plans to meet goals and targets.*
- *Practice that is underpinned by a focus on relationships that create foundations for learning, communication and conflict management.*
- *Demonstrated approaches to performance that is underpinned by reflective practice.* Well-developed skills in the use of information technology in a business environment.
- Understanding of the profit for purpose sector.

### The applicant must also possess:

- Experience working in children's education and care service profession.
- Minimum Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care..
- 'C class' driver's licence and registered roadworthy vehicle.
- Current Suitability for Child Related Employment card or eligibility to obtain one.
- Ability to work outside normal hours
- Ability to travel and stay away from home on infrequent occasions.
- Be agreeable to obtaining a criminal history check.

### *Desirable*

- *At least 5 years working in the children's education and care profession*
- Experience in working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities