

Practice Profile for the Check & Connect Mentor



Philosophy, values, and guiding principles

The primary goal of the Check & Connect (C&C) mentor is to provide the necessary supports to help students become and stay engaged at school and with learning. This process begins with the mentor building a relationship with the student and the student's family. C&C mentors work directly and collaboratively with individual students, their families, school staff, and community service providers. C&C mentors implement strategies to increase student engagement (academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective) at school and with learning.

Desired outcomes

- Decrease in risk factors¹ and increase in protective factors² for the student.
- Increase in academic³, behavioral⁴, cognitive⁵, and affective⁶ student engagement.
- On time school completion with a high school diploma.

Use and purpose

The purpose of this practice profile is to guide the C&C mentor through the implementation of the C&C Comprehensive Student Engagement Model. The critical components of the C&C mentor position include: building relationships with students; systematic monitoring and analysis of student-level "check" data; providing personalized "connect"

1 Some examples of risk factors include low educational expectations, few educational resources, weak adult authority, and few caring relationships.

2 Some examples of protective factors include a relationship with one caring adult, opportunities for participation, motivational support for learning, and expectations for school completion.

3 Academic engagement includes increased credit accrual, improvement in course grades, and increased grade point average.

4 Behavioral engagement includes increased attendance and a decrease in office referrals, detentions, and suspensions.

5 Cognitive engagement includes a motivation to learn, use of self-regulated learning strategies, a value of learning, use of goal setting, and perception of the relevance of school to personal aspirations. Cognitive engagement can be measured with the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI).

6 Affective engagement includes a sense of belonging and connection to school and availability of quality support from parents, teachers, and peers. Affective engagement can be measured with the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI).

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Check & Connect is a comprehensive student engagement intervention developed at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, and implemented by schools nationwide. Learn more at checkandconnect.umn.edu.

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interventions; and, engaging with families. The essential elements and specific practices related to the critical components are identified in the rubric below. This profile also guides the C&C coordinator in designing the necessary supports for the mentor's implementation of these critical components. Mentors and coordinators are encouraged to use this profile throughout the year to discuss the mentor's development of skills and practices related to the C&C mentor position.

Development of the profile

This profile was developed by national Check & Connect trainers at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) Practice Profile Template.

Citation of research used in the development of this profile:

Christenson, S.L., Stout, K., & Pohl, A. (2012). *Check & Connect: A comprehensive student engagement intervention: Implementing with fidelity*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Core Components and Essential Elements	Contribution to Outcome	Proficient (P)	Developmental (D) Skill is emerging but not yet ideal proficiency. Coaching is recommended.	Needs Improvement (N) Follow-up professional development and coaching is necessary.
<p>MENTOR: Builds relationships based on mutual trust</p> <p>The mentor's relationships with students are based on mutual trust and open communication. The mentor focuses on promoting students' educational success.</p>	<p>Increase protective factors Decrease risk factors</p>	<p>The mentor models respect and expects respectful behavior from all students, using interactions as opportunities to teach appropriate social skills.</p> <p>The mentor engages in two-way, open communication with students using a variety of different strategies.</p>	<p>The mentor uses strategies to build mutual trust with students, but open communication and respect are not demonstrated by the mentor across contexts with every student.</p>	<p>The mentor is unable to establish two-way communication with any student. The mentor has not employed any relationship building strategies with students (i.e., mentor only focuses on sharing check data during weekly meetings).</p>
<p>MENTOR: Long-term commitment</p> <p>The mentor makes a two-year commitment to working with students and families.</p>	<p>Increase protective factors Decrease risk factors</p>	<p>The mentor consistently meets with students weekly despite their behavior and decision-making, demonstrating acceptance and accountability.</p> <p>The mentor continues working with students and families from semester to semester.</p> <p>The mentor works with students and families for at least two years.</p>	<p>The mentor takes an occasional break in meeting with a student when the student is making poor choices or not taking accountability for their actions.</p> <p>The mentor works with a student at least one-year but less than two years.</p>	<p>Mentor recommends that a student is exited from C&C early or chooses to no longer be their mentor due to a student's negative behavior.</p> <p>The mentor works with a student for less than one year.</p>
<p>MENTOR: Persistence-Plus</p> <p>The mentor is a persistent source of academic motivation, familiar with the youth and family (continuity), and continues to provide the message that "education is important to your future" (consistency).</p>	<p>Increase protective factors Decrease risk factors</p>	<p>The mentor conveys a consistent message to the student that education is important to the student's future.</p> <p>The mentor provides personalized, supportive, positive messages to the student over time regarding education and their future.</p>	<p>The mentor is inconsistent with their message that school is important and the need to stay in school and receive their diploma.</p>	<p>The mentor does not convey the message that school is important for the student's future.</p>

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CHECK: Systematic monitoring The mentor monitors the student's school attendance, behavior, and educational progress weekly.	Increase academic and behavioral engagement	The mentor systematically checks student's attendance, behavior, and educational progress at least weekly. Weekly check data are recorded on a progress monitoring form by the end of each week.	The mentor checks student's attendance, behavior, and educational progress 2-3 times each month. Weekly check data are recorded one or more weeks late.	The mentor inconsistently checks students' data; only checking data 1 time per month OR not checking data at all in one or more areas* (attendance, behavior, educational progress) each month. Data are not recorded by the end of the month. <small>*as applicable to site requirements</small>
CHECK: Focus on alterable variables The mentor focuses on attendance, behavior, and course performance data to analyze risk level for the student.	Increase academic and behavioral engagement	The mentor analyzes check data on at least a monthly basis to determine the level of risk and identify the area(s) of focus.	The mentor inconsistently assesses and identifies high-risk areas and correlating focus areas (required monthly). The mentor needs assistance with analyzing data for high risk and focus areas on a monthly basis.	The mentor does not analyze check data for high risk and/or does not identify focus areas based on risk level. The mentor focuses on status variables only.
CONNECT: Problem solving The mentor uses a cognitive-behavioral approach with students to promote the acquisition of skills to resolve conflicts constructively and encourage the search for solutions rather than a source of blame.	Increase cognitive, affective, academic, and behavioral engagement	The mentor engages students in identifying the problem, generating possible solutions, evaluating those solutions, and choosing one. The mentor follows-up with students to evaluate the selected solutions and assists with making any adjustments.	The mentor guides the student through resolving conflicts without student input. The mentor generates potential solutions and choices for (as opposed to <i>with</i>) students.	The mentor avoids problem solving with the student or places blame on the student or others when problem situations arise.

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<p>CONNECT: Capacity building</p> <p>The mentor fosters productive coping, self-regulation, self-advocacy skills, and social and academic competencies, and diminishes the dependence on the mentor.</p>	<p>Increase cognitive, academic, and behavioral engagement</p>	<p>The mentor models and teaches capacity-building skills (e.g., goal setting, problem solving, self-monitoring, self-advocacy, etc.) and provides multiple opportunities for students to practice these skills with feedback by the mentor.</p>	<p>The mentor teaches capacity-building skills (e.g., goal setting, problem solving, self-monitoring, self-advocacy, etc.) but does not provide opportunities for students to practice these skills and/or does not provide feedback to students on their practice opportunities.</p>	<p>The mentor solves problems for the student or is directive in telling the student how to solve problems.</p> <p>The mentor makes excuses for the student.</p> <p>The mentor does not hold the student accountable.</p>
<p>CONNECT: Personalized data-based interventions</p> <p>The mentor uses timely interventions, driven by data, to re-establish and maintain the student's connection to school and learning.</p>	<p>Increase academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement</p>	<p>The mentor uses intensive interventions when the student is identified at high risk in one or more area.</p> <p>Interventions are aligned with specific risk variables (e.g., arranging alternatives to suspension, tutoring or goal setting for low course performance, intensive problem solving for attendance, etc.).</p>	<p>The mentor provides intensive interventions one month or more after the student is identified as high risk in one or more area.</p>	<p>The mentor does not provide intensive interventions when warranted by the data (e.g., only basic interventions are provided when a student is at high-risk in one or more area).</p> <p>Interventions do not align with specific risk indicator (e.g., the mentor provides tutoring instead of intensive problem solving for high risk behavior).</p>

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<p>CONNECT: Promoting participation and affiliation with school</p> <p>The mentor facilitates the student's access to and active participation in school-related activities and events and promotes the student's identity as a learner.</p>	Increase affective engagement	<p>The mentor gains knowledge of the student's interests, strengths, needs, and educational progress by asking questions and seeking student input.</p> <p>The mentor suggests activities within the school and community for the student that are feasible and relevant to the student's interests.</p> <p>The mentor facilitates student access to and active participation in school-related activities and events and promotes the student's identity as a learner.</p>	<p>The mentor provides general activities available for the student within the school and community without considering the student's specific interests and limited resources.</p> <p>The mentor identifies barriers to the student's participation but does not work across school and family systems to address these barriers.</p>	<p>The mentor does not provide activities to develop student's active participation in the school and community settings.</p> <p>The mentor does not identify barriers that may be discouraging the student's participation (e.g., course schedule, transportation, out-of-school time responsibilities, etc.).</p>
<p>ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES: Connect, partner, and engage with parents/families:</p> <p>The mentor engages with parents and strives to foster the parents' active participation in their child's education. The mentor works to establish a relationship and a routine communication system with families.</p>	<p>Increase protective factors</p> <p>Decrease risk factors</p>	<p>The mentor seeks input from parents and establishes a routine two-way communication system that works for both the mentor and the family.</p> <p>The mentor communicates the student's school progress with families at least monthly (i.e., sending a note/email/voicemail that is positive, honest, and focused on goals).</p> <p>The mentor gathers input from families and works in partnership with families in promoting student engagement and problem solving.</p>	<p>The mentor and family know each other but do not have a reciprocal relationship.</p> <p>The mentor reaches out to families inconsistently and at the mentor's convenience.</p> <p>The mentor's communication with families is one-sided.</p> <p>The mentor does not consistently include families in shared decision-making and the problem-solving process with their child.</p>	<p>The mentor does not attempt to establish a relationship with parents.</p> <p>The mentor does not attempt to connect with parents on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The mentor attempts to "fix" the family.</p> <p>The mentor lacks cultural sensitivity and responsiveness.</p> <p>The mentor does not value parent/caregiver(s) role in their child's education.</p>