

# Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers

## Orientation and Welcome

Most student teachers will feel very apprehensive at the beginning of the semester. Please help your student teacher to feel welcome by introducing her/him to parents and children, as well as to your co-workers. If you have a weekly or monthly newsletter, please include information about the student teacher in it.

It is important that the student teacher get an orientation to the center, its philosophy, and its staff. Please make every attempt to help your student teacher learn about your center by doing this on the first day. Also give her/him copies of any policy handbooks for staff or parents that your center has.

- ***Accident/Emergency/Fire Drill Procedures***

Please make the student teacher aware of your center's policies regarding accidents, medical emergencies, fire drills, etc. Make sure she/he is aware of all emergency exits as well.

- ***Emergency School Closings***

It is important that student teachers be made aware of how school closings are handled. Please add her/him to your phone chain, if your center notifies staff by phone.

## Resources

Please share ideas and resources with your student teacher. Since she/he will be anxious to learn as much as she/he can this semester, please give her/him copies of finger plays, poems, game ideas or project ideas. She/he may have some ideas to share with you as well.

## Weekly Planning Time/Review of Plans

It is important to establish a time when you will be able to meet with the student teacher each week without interruptions from children or other duties. A one half-hour slot would be the minimum amount of time necessary at the beginning of the semester. Speak to your director about helping you to find a time for this meeting. The student teacher should be willing to come in early or stay late for this planning time. Please advise your student teacher as to what you expect her/him to be responsible for each week. It is helpful to give her/him suggestions, but allow her/him the freedom to develop her/his own ideas. You can offer to lend her/him resource materials, but she/he should know how to find age appropriate activities or children's books. Please speak to the college supervisor if you are not able to have a weekly planning time with your student teacher.

## Lesson/Activity Preparation

The student teacher should have her/his plans prepared at least 3 days in advance to show you so that you can offer suggestions before they are implemented. If she/he is using the planning web, advanced planning would still be discussed with you as would goals and objectives. All activities or lesson plans should allow for flexibility, based on the needs and interests expressed by the children. MCCC uses a traditional lesson plan format, which can be found in [Appendix F](#). If the center uses the emergent approach, please make sure that the student teacher identifies objectives and has some thoughts about how the lesson or activity may evolve. It is important that the student teacher does not assume that emergent planning means no advanced planning or preparation.

Later on in the semester it would be helpful for the student teacher to be given some planning time while she/he is student teaching so that she/he can use the resources of the center. One hour used for this purpose would be ideal, but the time does not have to be all at once. It could be broken up into smaller units of time or may not be possible at all.

## **Before During After Format**

In order to make the most of reading a book to children, student teachers are encouraged to use the Before During After format when reading a book. The introduction (before) encourages children to make predictions about the book or connect it to other books or their life experiences, the "during" enables children to stay involved by thinking about what will happen next or discussing vocabulary, and the "after" allows children to answer questions about the book or connect it to previous learning. The student teacher follows up with extension activities that tie in with the theme or plot of the book (science, art, math, etc). A more detailed explanation of this format can be found in the Appendix G..

## **Mentoring/Feedback**

Please give your student teacher on-going feedback to let her/him know how she/he is doing. Sometimes we assume that an individual knows she/he is doing well but this is often not the case. It is important to let the student know your opinion.

We have asked student teachers to purchase a dialogue journal in which they can ask you questions or make observations on days when you are not scheduled to have a planning meeting. The journal would be left in an accessible place so that you can look at it and respond with your comments. The dialogue journal provides an additional means of communicating with your student teacher. You are able to initiate the communication or your student teacher is able to do that. We hope you are willing to participate in the journaling. An alternative to the journal could be e-mail communication if that is agreeable to both of you, but the e-mail dialogue does not give the student teacher a permanent record of your communications the way a journal would

Please offer criticism in a positive and constructive way. Make sure that you let the student know that even the most experienced teachers have room for growth. Encourage the student teacher to assess her/his own progress and decide what areas she/he may still need work .

The cooperating teacher will be asked to complete a written evaluation form for the student teacher towards the end of the semester, with a recommendation for a final grade. Any other documentation that is kept would also be helpful, but not necessary, unless an on-going problem needs to be documented. The form should be sent back to the college supervisor before the final week of student teaching, unless it is necessary to wait until the end to evaluate the student. The college supervisor will make the determination of the final grade using your on-going input and written evaluation.