E-Connect Employer Liaisons FAQs

**What is E-Connect?**
E-Connect is a school-based e-mail mentoring program that utilizes e-mail and school-supervised face-to-face meetings to connect local high school students with disabilities with employees from local companies. The purpose of the program is to help young adults connect with a caring adult in their community and explore topics related to careers and future employment.

For a thorough explanation, please review the E-Connect Overview section of this website.

**How much time will I need to devote to being an employer liaison?**
Initially, you will have a brief (about ½ hour) meeting with the school and/or the program coordinator to discuss program logistics. After this meeting, your commitment will include recruiting mentors, conducting a mentor training (1 hour), addressing any follow-up concerns the mentors have, and helping coordinate mentor/mentee visits. Beyond these responsibilities, we hope that you will also be an e-mentor to a student so that you can participate in the program with your colleagues.

**What do I need to do as an employer liaison?**
The employer liaison coordinates e-mentoring project activities at the employment site, supports the mentors, and serves as a liaison between the school, the program coordinator, and the employer. Typical tasks of an employer liaison include:

1. Meet with the E-Connect coordinator or school staff and review the goals of the program and how it would fit your worksite;
2. Send out an invitation to other employees to become mentors (see Sample Mentor Recruitment Letter); this can be done through e-mail, company newsletters, etc.
3. Arrange for a mentor training (see Mentor Training Presentation in PPT);
4. Collect the mentor applications (see Mentor Application Form in Word) and send them to the school contact;
5. Help coordinate a visit for the students to your business shortly after the program begins;
6. Serve as the contact person for the mentors at your workplace (if any e-mentoring glitches arise, you will be asked to help with problem solving); and
7. Participate in evaluation of the program.

**How long will the program run?**
Typically, the mentoring relationship is established for 10-15 weeks or about one school semester. We suggest that programs run for a minimum of 10 weeks. We have found that programs of shorter duration do not allow enough time for a significant e-mail exchange and the required face-to-face meetings.
What training is involved for mentors?
All mentors are required to attend a one-hour training using the mentor training material. Typically, the E-Connect Coordinator provides this training using the Mentor Training Presentation (PPT). Mentors are also asked to read the E-Connect Program Manual (PDF) and complete a short Mentor Application (Word).

How are mentors and students matched?
All mentors complete a mentor application which is forwarded to the classroom teacher. Teachers are responsible for matching mentors and mentees. Matches are often based on interest.

Is there ongoing support for mentors?
A program coordinator is responsible for the ongoing support of the mentor and student mentee. Any questions or concerns you have during the mentoring program should be forwarded to the classroom teacher and the program coordinator.

Who do I contact with questions or concerns during the mentoring program?
If you have questions during the course of the program, contact the teacher and the program coordinator.

For more information, including the curricula, tools, samples, and more, please visit the E-Connect website at http://ici.umn.edu/e-connect.