

Society of Pediatric Pathology

Mentee Program Handbook

Introduction to SPP Mentorship

The SPP mentorship program aims to connect early-career pathologists and trainees with experienced pediatric pathologists who can provide guidance in:

- Diagnostic expertise in pediatric pathology
- Research development in pediatric diseases
- Career development in academic or private practice settings
- Work-life balance in pediatric pathology practice
- Building professional networks within the pediatric pathology community

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1. Getting Started with Your Mentor

Initial Meeting Guidelines

The foundation of a successful mentoring relationship starts with establishing good rapport and clear expectations. Your first meetings should focus on:

- Sharing your CV and background
- Discussing your specific interests within pediatric pathology
- Understanding your mentor's expertise and practice setting
- Establishing preferred communication methods and frequency
- Setting initial goals for the mentorship

Note: This is a living document that will be regularly updated to reflect evolving mentorship guidelines, new SPP initiatives, and feedback from program participants. Please ensure you are referring to the most current version available through the SPP website.

Compatibility Assessment

Take time to ensure you and your mentor are a good match. Consider:

- Alignment of subspecialty interests within pediatric pathology
- Compatibility of communication styles
- Availability and scheduling compatibility
- Career path alignment (academic vs. private practice)

2. Communication Guidelines

Methods of Communication

- Virtual meetings (Zoom, Teams, etc.)
- Email correspondence
- Phone calls
- In-person meetings at SPP / PPS / USCAP conferences
- Site visits if/when feasible

Best Practices for Professional Communication

- Maintain regular contact (recommended 30 minutes monthly at minimum)
- Respect agreed-upon communication schedules
- Prepare specific questions or topics for discussion
- Follow up on action items and commitments
- Document key discussion points and decisions

3. Setting Goals for the Relationship

Types of Goals to Consider

- Diagnostic expertise development
- Research project milestones
- Publication and presentation targets
- Fellowship or job application preparation

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- Leadership skill development
- Board certification preparation

Goal-Setting Process

1. Assess your current position and skills
2. Identify specific areas for growth
3. Set specific goals and time frame for measurable outcome
4. Create action plans with your mentor
5. Establish regular check-ins to monitor progress

4. Making the Most of Your Mentorship

Key Areas for Development

- Diagnostic skills in challenging pediatric cases
- Research methodology and grant writing
- Teaching and presentation skills
- Laboratory management knowledge
- Quality assurance and improvement

Maximizing Learning Opportunities

- Request feedback on diagnostic approaches
- Share interesting cases with your mentor
- Seek advice on research projects
- Discuss career decisions and opportunities
- Learn from your mentor's experiences and challenges

5. Networking in Pediatric Pathology

Building Professional Connections

- Attend SPP meetings and workshops
- Participate in any SPP taskforce

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- Connect with other mentees
- Engage in collaborative research projects

Networking Etiquette

- Follow up promptly on introductions
- Express gratitude for opportunities
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Share resources and opportunities
- Support fellow mentees

6. Completion of Relationship

Preparing for Transition

1. Review achievement of initial goals
2. Identify ongoing professional development needs
3. Discuss future collaboration opportunities
4. Plan for continued informal mentorship
5. Consider transition to peer relationship

7. Program Feedback and Evaluation

Continuous Improvement

- Complete regular program surveys
- Provide honest feedback about the mentoring relationship
- Suggest improvements to the program
- Share success stories
- Document career milestones and achievements

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