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Safe Kids Worldwide

## **Mentor and Instructor Candidate Guide**

**March 2015**

Please note that Safe Kids Worldwide regularly reviews our materials to clarify information and to address questions and feedback received.

For the most up to date information and to download forms,  
go to <http://cert.safekids.org>

# Instructor Mentor and Instructor Candidate Guide

This guide outlines the Mentor and Instructor Candidate relationship, what is requested of you as the Mentor or Candidate. You will find hints, tips, and practical examples; you can use to get started.

Keep in mind that any decisions related to the course should always consider the quality of experience for the class, the instructor team, and Instructor Candidate. When the teaching team meets their responsibilities and creates a positive learning environment for the class, Instructor Candidates are likely to mirror that learning experience, which maintains the high standards for quality teaching and increases the value of the standardized curriculum.

## **To the Instructor Mentor:**

Welcome to the Safe Kids Mentor and Instructor Candidate Guide. Safe Kids thanks you for your willingness to guide and assist an Instructor Candidate in their professional development. A firm commitment and a willingness to invest your time and energy into the process are the most important components for a successful mentoring relationship. A Mentor volunteers time and experience as a way to help the IC grow and develop. It takes time, patience, and leadership to bring out the best in others, including an Instructor Candidate.

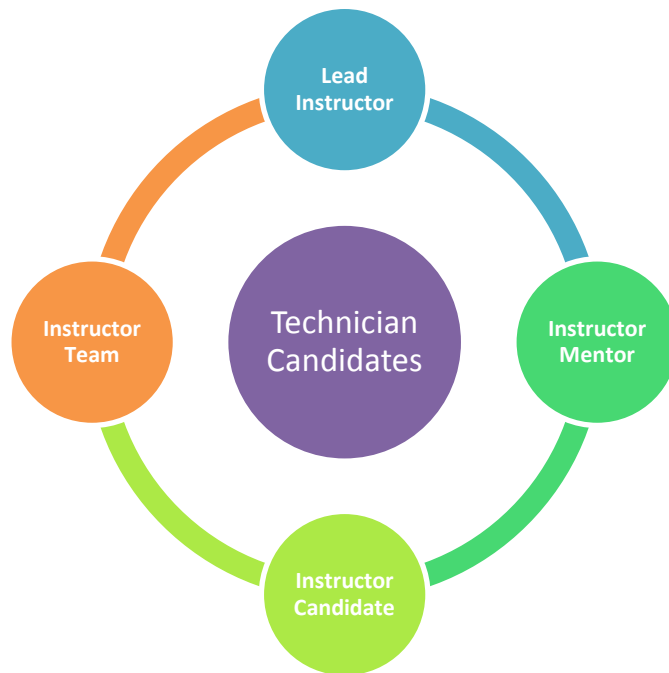
## **To the Instructor Candidate:**

Welcome to the Safe Kids Mentor and Instructor Candidate Guide. Safe Kids thanks you for making a commitment to successfully completing the Instructor Candidate process and to becoming an Instructor. It is as important for you to invest your time and energy into the process as it is for your Mentor. To have a successful instructor candidacy, and to have a strong IC-IM relationship, you will need solid technical and communication skills, and self-motivation.

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# Introduction to the Guide



Success revolves around creating a positive learning experience for Technician Candidates. The Instructor Candidate (IC) is an integral part of the instructor team and, if well-prepared and mentored, should not be considered a novice. The well-prepared Instructor Candidate will fit seamlessly into the instructor team.

The goal for each instructor team should be to prepare Technician Candidates to become strong CPS Technicians. While the Lead Instructor has primary responsibility for all aspects of the course, every team member (Instructors, course assistants/Technicians, Instructor Mentor and IC) impacts the outcome. A strong team communicates effectively and adapts to changing situations (such as weather, changing logistics or classroom issues) to provide the best experience possible for the Technician Candidates.

# Instructor Mentors

## Role and Responsibilities

- Share knowledge and experience and assist in the development of another professional
- Enhance your own communication and leadership skills
- Give back to the profession
- Enable another professional to reach their goals

## Supporting Your Instructor Candidate

- Provide clear expectations at the beginning of the working relationship
- Provide candid, constructive feedback
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be accessible
- Listen actively to the Candidate
- Promote responsible decision making; thinking through the problem before arriving at a decision
- Maintain a professional relationship
- Act as a role model
- Share knowledge and experience
- Discuss appropriate ways to communicate with technician candidates and instructors

## Being a Strong Mentor

- Mentoring is a key part of helping others to develop as a professional.
- Don't agree to mentor someone with whom you have a close working relationship. This can hamper objectivity and limit the Candidate's growth.
- Help your Candidate develop technical and communication skills so they will be prepared for the responsibilities of being a member of a teaching team.
- Commit to your role as an Instructor Mentor, but be clear as to your role. Your role is to be the Mentor; your Candidate has to fulfill his or her obligations too.
- Work side by side and then have the ability to let the individual go it alone.
- Identify weaknesses and lead the person in the right direction without taking over the task.

**Note:** Safe Kids ([Policies and Procedures](#)) encourages two Instructor Mentors, if possible, although only one Mentor is required. In this best practice scenario, one Instructor Mentor would be designated as the primary Instructor Mentor on the course roster but both Instructor Mentors would provide mentoring and feedback, and both would complete the evaluation together. The evaluation may be found at <http://cert.safekids.org> under **Resources-FAQs**, then **Forms** and **Becoming an Instructor or Technician Proxy**.

## Providing Feedback

### Before the IC's certification course:

- Meet with your IC on several occasions to help her become more comfortable with the curriculum. Some Mentors find it helpful to follow this sample schedule:
  - Prep Meeting #1
    - Review entire curriculum and technician guide
    - Agree on ground rules for process
      - Consider asking IC for his or her own feedback before offering your comments. IM Sample Questions: How do you think you did? What did you think you did well? What do you think you need to work on? You can add any additional constructive feedback or comments needed, but may find that the prepared IC will already know how he did.
      - Use the ground rules during all practice activities so they become a habit.
    - Look at all modules and hands-on activities assigned to the IC
      - Review time limit for each activity; encourage IC to meet time limit while preparing
      - Set next meeting date/time, and ask IC to prepare questions about the assigned modules and hands-on activities
    - Prep Meeting #2
      - Review ICs questions and all assigned modules and hands-on activities
      - Discuss various ways to prepare lecture notes
      - Set next meeting date/time; ask IC to come prepared to practice teach at least two of modules using their own lecture notes
    - Prep Meeting #3:
      - IC to practice teaching at least two modules using lecture notes, the actual Power Point Presentation, and a projector, if possible. The IM listens and observes the practice lecture, holding comments until Module is completed. Note duration of each module, and whether IC was over/under the assigned time.
      - Follow agreed upon ground rules when offering feedback.
      - Answer any questions IC has about material covered in the modules; clarify any areas that were not explained clearly.
      - Set next meeting date/time; ask IC to come prepared to practice teach all assigned modules and to use teaching tools while teaching each module.

### During the certification course

- Meet with the IC immediately after each assigned module or hands-on activity is completed to receive and provide feedback. This should only take a few minutes; it is helpful to do this while it's fresh on both the IC's and IM's mind.
- Utilize the daily evaluation form and include feedback from other members of the teaching team, when applicable.
  - Evaluation: <http://cert.safekids.org> under **Resources-FAQs**, then **Forms** and **Becoming an Instructor or Technician Proxy**.
- Utilize the documentation worksheets to make signing off on practical experience easier. Find them at <http://cert.safekids.org> under Resources-FAQs, then Forms and Becoming an Instructor or Technician Proxy.
- Provide constructive feedback, encouragement, and support to your Candidate, as well as candid guidance on ways to improve.

## General Tips for Effective Mentoring

### Put in the time

- If possible, several brief contacts can often be more beneficial than one long, intensive appointment.
- Once you have established rapport with your Candidate, set up regular meetings. This structure can help the mentoring relationship succeed even if meetings eventually become informal.

### Offer guidance

- Give specific and concrete guidance when appropriate.
- The goal is for the Candidate to create the outcomes. Handled well, guidance and direction can be your most appropriate and valuable response.

### Don't provide the answers!

One of the most important goals of a Mentor is to **help Candidates develop independent thinking skills**. This requires a balance of coaching the Candidate to discover their insights and giving guidance when you think it is most needed. Only after the Candidate does preliminary thinking and problem solving on their own, ask questions such as 'What is important here?' This will guide them to the most appropriate answer or course of action, instead of handing it to them.

### Put yourself in the Candidate's shoes

Don't assume the Candidate will have all the answers. Candidates may go through a range of emotions from feeling doubtful to feeling confident with their abilities.

### **Listen to your Candidate**

An effective Mentor provides the relationship that the Candidate is seeking. Candidates may be seeking anything from a listening ear to specific guidance or feedback.

### **The continuing relationship**

The mentoring relationship between the mentor and candidate may continue long past the completion of a successful course. The relationship may evolve in to a learning partnership by providing mutual feedback and creating learning opportunities where each can learn from one another's successes and mistakes.

This mutual relationship of professional growth is rewarding to individuals as well as advancing the field of child passenger safety



# Instructor Candidates

## Role and Responsibilities

- Share knowledge and experience and assist in the development of technician candidates
- Enhance communication and leadership skills
- Demonstrate the ability to work as a reliable team member, anticipate what may be needed
- Ask questions of mentor and teammates to clarify any information or instructions
- Participate in all pre and post class meetings
- Be the best Instructor Candidate you can be
  - Discuss with your Instructor Mentor any norms for the instructor team, including:
    - How hands-on exercises are set up
    - What teaching tools are available or typically used,
    - If there is a daily meeting for instructors (before or after class) during a certification course
    - Be an active participant by questioning and listening actively
    - Demonstrate initiative (Ask, “What can I do to help?” if not already working on an assigned task or preparing to teach a module)
- Undertake self-development tasks within a timeframe (identify your strength and weaknesses, plan with local instructors on how you may improve those areas and set up a task list on a calendar)
- Use constructive feedback offered by your Instructor Mentor to improve your skill set
  - Gather resources to enhance knowledge; car seats and their technology (car seat mfg. websites); vehicles (vehicle mfg. websites); identify reliable sources for technicians and families, i.e. Parents Central- <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/index.htm>

## Supporting Your Technician Candidates

- Be approachable
- Be an active listener
- Share knowledge and experience relevant to the professional background of the Technician Candidate
- Be available to provide information as well as providing reassurance on the candidates daily success and what to anticipate for the next day
- Use constructive feedback. Bring an individual’s attention to an area in which their performance could improve, in a manner that helps the individual understand and internalize the information. Constructive feedback does not focus on fault or blame; it is specific and is directed towards the action, not the person.
- Use the Technician Manual to assist in clarifying information with challenging or complex questions

## Preparing for Your Candidacy

Solid technical and communication skills are the foundation of a successful candidacy.

- Curriculum
  - Review the entire curriculum, not just the modules you have been assigned
  - Compare the Instructor Guide to the Technician Guide; emphasize the modules you have been assigned, but review the entire curriculum
  - Print the slides for the modules you have been assigned to teach
  - Print out and review all quizzes and skills assessments, including the instructions for each activity. Complete the quizzes without referring to the answers; afterward, score each quiz and review areas that were missed. Make sure to note testable material in the Instructor Guide, your notes, AND in your copy of the Technician Guide. This is not to “teach to the test” but to ensure that you cover the material the way it is covered in the Technician Guide.
  - Refer to the glossary of technical terminology and review anything unfamiliar with your Instructor Mentor
  - Review the activities in your modules with the instructors and assisting technicians on how you want the activity to be set up
- Keep current with car seat and vehicle technologies and how they interact
- Be familiar with local and national child passenger safety resources found at [Safe Kids Resources](#) and [CPS Board Quick Links](#). Make sure to visit each website and familiarize yourself with the resources provided.
- Use every opportunity to teach child passenger safety fundamentals before your instructor candidacy. If you are not comfortable speaking in front of a group, then practice your assigned modules with your Instructor Mentor(s) as the “class.” Use the power point presentation, your notes, and any teaching tools suggested in the curriculum.

## Confirming IC class

As an Instructor candidate, you must be officially listed on an instructor team for a specific certification course before teaching with a team.

Determine which certification course will be designated for your Instructor Candidacy.

- Contact Lead Instructors in your area (searchable on <http://cert.safekids.org>)
- Ask about locations and dates for upcoming certification courses and if other instructor Candidates are already committed for those courses
- The Lead Instructor, or course administrator, is responsible for including you on an instructor team and assigning your Instructor Mentor. You must already be an approved Instructor Candidate.

**Note:** As soon as the course date has been registered, review the course profile and confirm you are on the Instructor Team. This is also a good time to confirm the details for the mandatory pre-course instructor meeting (s) and that the Lead Instructor has your current contact information. Meetings may be done by Skype or similar media.