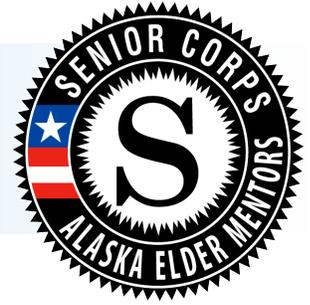




# RurAL CAP Elder Mentor Program



Elder Mentors have been improving children's success in Head Start, classroom and other community settings across Alaska for more than 30 years. By providing one-on-one help with school work, modeling social and cultural values, and offering emotional support to children with special needs, Elder Mentors offer the inter-generational relationships so important to healthy child development. Alaska's Elder Mentors serve through the national Senior Corps Program.



Elder Mentor Marsha Ayuluk works with Chevak Head Start child, Ryder Night, to learn new and important skills for kindergarten readiness. Photo by Charlie Ess

Program goals include increasing school readiness for pre-school children, increasing school success for K-12 students - and for all children, reinforcing social skills, cultural values and resilience. The Elder Mentor program is an investment in Alaska's past, present and future, with powerful results. This program directly impacts three special groups:

- **Children** who are economically, socially, or developmentally disadvantaged increase their school success through individualized tutoring.
- Low income **Elders** stay active in their community while sharing their skills, and receive a small, tax exempt stipend and support for meals and transportation.
- **Education Professionals** benefit by having a supportive role model for the classroom and a mentor who can work with children needing extra help. Teachers often report that students are more engaged in learning when an Elder is present.

RurAL CAP does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, and subcontractors.

## Contact Information

RurAL CAP's Elder Mentor Program  
Phone: (907) 865-7353  
Toll-free: (800) 478-7227  
eldermentors@ruralcap.com

Support provided by:



# About the Elder Mentor Program

## Benefits

- Elder Mentor volunteers receive a small hourly stipend that can average about \$200/month. In addition, they receive leave and holiday benefits. Transportation and meals (if not provided by the program or school) are reimbursed based on guidelines. Stipends are tax exempt and do not affect other financial aid or benefits that an Elder may be receiving.
- Elders receive training, a Senior Corps vest and annual recognition.

## Time Commitment

- Elder Mentors are expected to spend approximately 15-20 hours per week with students during the school year. Participation in organized summer programs is encouraged, but not mandatory.
- Training time includes an extensive orientation and workshops on topics that address child development, current education strategies, and also subjects of interest to seniors.

## Eligibility

- Lower income seniors, age 55 or older. Maximum household income levels are \$29,680 for one person or \$40,040 for two. Information for other household sizes is available.
- Seniors must pass and maintain status in the Alaska State Background Check System, which includes having finger prints taken.
- Seniors must complete an annual health assessment. RurAL CAP will pay for this if it is not covered by insurance or IHS.

## Volunteer Service

- Elder Mentors are expected to work directly with children. The goal for pre-school children is to increase readiness to enter kindergarten. The goal for older students is to increase engagement in school activities and learning.
- Elder Mentors bring compassion, social support, and cultural values to the students both individually, and classroom-wide. Activities include: talking, reading, playing games, helping with assignments, modeling appropriate behavior, participating in crafts, telling stories, teaching cultural skills and language.

## School, Head Start or Community Setting and Supervision

- Supervising staff assign students to the Elders based on special needs and goals - about 4 students per Elder. A simple work plan is written to guide the Elder in the activities and goals for each student. The student's progress is also noted on this form and reported.
- Each month, the Elder completes an activity sheet that is reviewed and approved by their supervisor.
- Supervisors will occasionally receive short surveys to assess program success.
- The school/supervisors will provide documentation of the Elder's on-going training.
- The service site helps provide annual community recognition for Elder.