

Medical Student – Resident Mentorship Program

Overview of the Program (2024 - 2025)

Introduction

Launched in 2020, the CPS Resident's Section established a national medical student-to-resident mentorship program. The goal of the program is to pair students interested in paediatrics with paediatric residents training across Canada. Mentors can then support each student in learning more about the field of paediatrics, paediatric residency programs, paediatric CaRMS applications, and related topics. The program allows students the opportunity to network beyond their own medical school and learn from the experiences of residents who were recently in their position.

As part of the program, each resident mentor is paired with a student, either locally or elsewhere in Canada. The mentor-mentee pair are expected to stay in contact by email, phone calls, videoconference, or in-person meetings to provide mentorship. The program runs each year from October until the CPS Annual Meeting (typically in May or June).

In previous cycles of the mentorship program, over 90% of residents and 95% of medical student participants agreed that the program was a positive experience. Two-thirds of medical students left the program with greater interest in paediatrics as a specialty. The mentorship program has thus become a wonderful asset for all those with a passion for paediatrics!

A Message for Mentors

Welcome to the Canadian Paediatric Society Mentorship Program! Whether you are a returning mentor or a first-time mentor with the program, we are thrilled to have you. On behalf of the CPS, as well as all of the medical student participants, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and dedication to this program. Without your continued involvement, the program would not be as successful as it is today. This guidebook is designed to help orient you to the components of this mentorship program and your responsibilities as a mentor.

A Message for Students

The CPS would like to extend a warm welcome to all medical students. If you have taken part in our previous iterations – we are happy to see you again. Thanks for your ongoing interest! If it is your first time in the mentorship program, we are excited to get you connected and hope you enjoy the experience. We encourage you to make the most of this excellent opportunity with your mentor, gaining valuable insights into their journey to becoming a pediatric resident. This guidebook will help orient to what you can expect from the program and provide suggestions on how to make the most of this mentorship.

Mentorship Program Expectations

Role of the Resident Mentor

Mentors are practicing resident physicians who volunteer their time to mentor one or two medical students who are interested in paediatrics. Mentor-mentee matches for the program are distributed in early October, and the official mentorship program comes to a close at the CPS Annual Meeting. However, the mentorship relationships that you establish through the program can certainly continue beyond this period in a less formal setting.

Mentors know the ins and outs of the medical school journey and can offer wonderful insight to current medical students. Residents not only have personal experience of being a medical student on the wards, but also gain further experience and insight through working with medical students on their ward teams. Thus, they can offer applicable advice to students. Mentors know first-hand what it takes to go through the CaRMS process and be successful in matching to a paediatric residency. Therefore, they can be a great support and resource to students as they embark on this process.

While your medical student mentee has been encouraged to initiate the conversation, we appreciate that there could be factors impeding them from doing so. If you have not heard from your mentee in a while, we recommend that you reach out to them. Mentors are encouraged to maintain their connection with mentees throughout the year, with a frequency determined by your schedules and what works best to help your mentorship relationship be as successful as possible!

Role of the Medical Student Mentee

Medical students are expected to reach out to their paired mentor after receiving the mentorship match email to coordinate how and when the first meeting will occur. We encourage all medical student participants to try the mentorship primer activity on page 4 of this guidebook prior to initiation of the mentorship relationship. This activity will help the student reflect on their previous experiences and discover what most they would like to take away from this program.

Frequent Topics of Discussion

General:

- Mentor's journey to paediatrics (why and how you chose paediatrics, considerations that contributed to this decision)
- Advice you would give your younger self in medical school
- What is the most helpful piece of advice you've ever received?
- Research in paediatrics
- Advocacy & community outreach in paediatrics
- Best aspects of a residency & career in paediatrics
- Challenging aspects of a residency & career in paediatrics
- Are there things that a medical student should be doing right now to prepare for a career in paediatrics?

CaRMS and Medical Student Rotations:

- CaRMS process & matching to a paediatric residency
- Advice for personal statements & interviews
- Factors that influenced making a rank order list
- 4th year elective options, experiences, and recommendations
- How to excel in paediatric rotations and electives
- Best resources for learning paediatrics as a medical student
- What are some mistakes you made in medical school and what/how did you learn from them?
- How do you go about building/ maintaining your professional network?

Residency:

- Taking call as a paediatric resident
- Experience transitioning from a medical student to Jr. resident to Sr. resident
- Career options in paediatrics and the process of a subspecialty match and fellowship
- If you were to start residency all over again, what would you do differently?
- Things you learned in residency that you never knew as a medical student
- Work-life balance (balancing responsibilities of residency with personal, family life, relationships and other commitments. Time to pursue other interests outside of medicine? Stress management?)
- What does a normal work week look like (on different rotations)?
- Financial aspects of residency (how they managed medical school debt, investing, etc.)
- Pros and cons of the residency program where they are currently training

Asking for Feedback:

- What are 2-3 things I do well?
- What are 1-2 things I could work on or do differently?
- What personal or professional skills do you think I should work on developing? And what experiences might help me do that?

Medical Student Mentorship Primer Exercise

We encourage you to spend some time reflecting on your previous experiences, specifically how they have shaped you and led you to an interest in paediatrics. Next, think about what you wish to gain in a year's time from this mentorship relationship.

Consider the following questions:

- What do I hope to take away from this mentorship program?
- What insight can my resident mentor provide me beyond information that I am able to obtain from respective faculty websites?
- How open do I wish to be in conversation with my resident mentor, and how open do I expect them to be with me?
- What aspects of myself and my experiences would I like to share with my mentor so that they can better understand me as a unique individual (and therefore be able to tailor their mentoring)?
- What kind of mentorship am I looking for? Do I want a “hands-on” relationship with regular communication or a more laid-back style where I contact them as questions arise?
- How can I make this experience valuable for my mentor?

Maintaining Engagement through the Year

We encourage mentors and mentees to establish the best avenue for contact and conversation early on in their mentorship interactions. Together, the mentor and mentee should define expectations about how frequently they would like to stay in touch. We recommend some form of communication at least once every 2 months. Interaction and communication in varied forms can allow mentors and mentees to stay engaged with the program, form a strong mentorship bond, and have a positive experience.

In-Person Meetings

We recommend local matches can meet in person early on in their mentorship to allow for better familiarity and connection moving forward. Grabbing a quick coffee or lunch can be great icebreakers to help ease the transition into more formal mentoring. Otherwise, see below for virtual methods of meeting your mentor.

Zoom/ MS Teams/ Other Video Conferencing Platforms/ Phone Calls

All of the above options are a great alternative to in-person meetings and allow mentors and mentees to become better acquainted if in-person interactions are not feasible.

Email or texting

If you find that your schedule is busy, email may be the best timely option to facilitate communication. It's also a great way to check in about how things have been going and how you can plan for the next meeting, while also brainstorming some possible topics of discussion.

Student Testimonials

“I found this program extremely fulfilling and helpful.
My mentor was absolutely fantastic.”

“Thanks for organizing this! ...it was a great way for me to connect with residents and pick their brains. In particular, I was able to learn more about one residency program that I was sort of interested in before that has [now] become my top choice! I'm grateful to have this mentorship connection because now with the possibility of not having visiting electives, I'll at least have this resident connection that I can continue to use throughout my CaRMS process”

“Loved this, would like to participate again!”

“...really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with a pediatric resident and expand my awareness of other programs, in addition to having the option to reach out for help as needed.”

Resources

Resources for Mentees

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Resources for Mentees and Mentors

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