



# Mentor Manual

SBISD SpringBoard Program



Revised June 2018

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# Section I

Overview and District Information

# SBISD

## Overarching Beliefs about Mentoring

### Students

- ★ **Life-on-Life Mentoring**—The mentoring model provides the ongoing, stable presence of a caring adult in the life of a child. Its primary mission is *not* direct academic support.
- ★ **Targeted Students**—Students targeted for participation are those “on the brink of success.” Students whose extensive needs are beyond what a mentor can provide guidance and support for in a once-per-week setting are not appropriate for this program.
- ★ **Self-Selection**—Mentees should be given the opportunity to “self-select” for participation. Success, in large part, is due to a student’s readiness and willingness to be part of a mentor relationship.
- ★ **Training**—Mentees should receive training in communication strategies, working with mentors and rules of the mentoring program prior to participation.
- ★ **Matching**—Young ladies are matched with female mentors. Young men are matched with male mentors. All matches are one-on-one.

### Mentors

- ★ **Orientation**—Prospective mentors must be provided with a realistic set of expectations and goals and must commit to spending 30 minutes - one hour per week with their mentee consistently over the course of a school year.
- ★ **Training**—Mentors and “mentees” must receive comprehensive training to maximize opportunities for success. The SBISD Community Relations Dept. provides initial and on-going training, programming and support through the SBISD Mentoring Office.
- ★ **Cadre Model**—Maximized opportunities for program success result when a cadre of mentors is recruited from a single corporate or community partner. This strategy enables cohesive program implementation, communication and synergy. Benefits to mentors include increased sense of community, increased sense of job satisfaction, increased camaraderie, and resource support. A Mentor Partner Coordinator serves as the counterpart to the Campus Mentor Coordinator to provide leadership for the mentor group.

### Campus

- ★ **Program Coordinators**—*Coordination of services is key.* The campus must designate a staff member to serve as the Mentor Program Coordinator. The coordinator serves as a liaison to the mentors and campus leader to coordinate program implementation, communication, and planning.
- ★ **Communication**—Regular, frequent communication between mentors, coordinators, teachers, administrators and the Partnerships, Volunteers and Community Engagement Dept. assures successful program implementation. Mentors communicate with designated campus person via phone or email to notify campus and student of time of planned mentor visit. This communication is vital to assure that mentors do not arrive to find their student absent. Campus may set up designated email address for mentoring.
- ★ **Programming**—The model program includes opportunities for “mixers,” inclusion of family, special events, and celebrations as well as weekly mentoring during mutually agreed upon times during the school day.
- ★ **Recognition and Support**—Campus staff and students should recognize, support, and value the volunteer efforts of mentors in both formal and informal ways.
- ★ **Measurable Objectives**—The campus and mentor partners should work together to develop measurable objectives for students, mentors, and campus staff so that qualitative and quantitative data may be collected to measure impact of the program on mentors, mentees, and the campus.



# SBISD VOLUNTEER ETHICS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES



Revised 5/19/2016

## Introduction

The following procedures have been developed by the SBISD Volunteer Advisory Board and are designed to protect both students and volunteers. Acceptance of and adherence to these ethics, procedures and guidelines is mandatory to participation as a volunteer in Spring Branch ISD.

These volunteer guidelines are designed to protect students from harm and to prevent even the appearance of impropriety on the part of the individual mentors, volunteers, students and schools participating in Spring Branch ISD volunteer programs. Please know that we appreciate your participation and that we appreciate your adhering to these guidelines. If you have additional questions, ask your school principal, campus volunteer coordinator or the Community Relations Department.

## Volunteer Procedures.

- **Criminal Background Check.** All current and potential SBISD volunteers must annually complete the SBISD volunteer registration process and authorize the SBISD Police Department to complete a criminal background check. The SBISD online volunteer registration is accessible through the district website. Individuals' criminal histories are subject to review by SBISD to determine eligibility to serve as an SBISD volunteer. SBISD reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to refuse and/or restrict an individual's access as an SBISD volunteer based on an individual's criminal history, in accordance with applicable law and SBISD policy.
- **Training.** Depending upon the volunteer role, you may be required to attend a campus or district training.
- **Sign In.** Sign in and out each time you volunteer on campus using the Raptor V-Soft check in system as per your campus guidelines.
- **Name Badge.** Wear the school provided identification badge as per campus guidelines
- **Volunteer Hours.** Record any volunteer hours served off-campus and report monthly as per campus guidelines.
- **Dress Code.** Use common sense in your dress. Neat, conservative attire is preferred and casual dress is acceptable. Remember, you are a role model for students.
- **Non-School Age Children.** Only bring your non-school age children with you if a school permits and if childcare is available.
- **Dependability.** Maintain consistent and regular attendance. Contact the school if you are unable to attend as scheduled.
- **No Smoking.** All SBISD facilities are tobacco free zones.
- **Respect.** Volunteers will be respectful of students and staff's cultural, social, and religious differences. Openness, honesty and respect are expected.
- **Discipline or Other Concerns.** Report discipline, academic or social/emotional concerns to the appropriate administrator or teacher.
- **Calendars.** Stay informed of school holidays, field trips, testing, etc as posted on the district website.
- **Materials and Supplies.** Return any school supplies utilized in your volunteer role and advise the appropriate school personnel of needed supplies as appropriate.

## Confidentiality.

**All student information should be treated confidentially.** Sharing student information with others may be a violation of the law. Confidential information includes any personally identifiable information regarding a student, including, but not limited to, a student's:

- Scholastic and health records
- Test scores and grades
- Family information
- Discipline or behavioral incident information
- Status or accommodations given an academic or developmental special need

Do not make a promise to a student that you will not reveal confidential information to a parent or school officials. *It may be necessary to do so* for the welfare of the student and to protect you from violating the law. Although the student is free to share confidential information with you, there are certain things that you are required by law to tell the campus administrator. Any personal information learned from a student or student's files, should be held in strictest confidence **except:**

1. If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional, chemical or physical abuse;
2. If a student confides that he or she is involved in any illegal activity;
3. If a student confides that he or she is considering homicide or suicide.

Should one of these exceptions arise, you are required to immediately notify the student's principal or appropriate school personnel and/or appropriate agencies in the case of suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with applicable law and SBISD Board Policy FFG, within 48 hours of learning of facts giving rise to the suspicion. Note on your calendar when this information was reported and to whom it was given. Remember, this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives, so do not share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities. If you have questions, please ask a campus administrator. Any student needs communicated to the volunteer should be referred to an appropriate staff person.

## Guidelines for Working with Students

### Meeting with Elementary School Students in your role as a volunteer/mentor/tutor:

1. All meetings and/or activities with students must take place on the school campus, or as part of a school-sponsored or school-related activity such as a field trip, concert or athletic game
2. All activities with a student or students must take place in a room with open visibility to the public or on the school grounds in sight of school staff representatives.
3. Off campus meetings between the volunteer and a student are strictly prohibited unless under the direct supervision of a school official or parent/guardian.
4. Communication with the student through the use of electronic media is prohibited. The term "electronic media" includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video sharing web sites (for example, YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (for example, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as land lines, cell phones, and web-based applications. A volunteer may communicate with the parent of a student about volunteer activities by telephone, cellular phone or email. The volunteer will provide a copy of any email communication to a parent regarding volunteer activities to district staff upon request. If requested by the parent or district administrator, the volunteer will cease calls and/or emails to the parent.
5. The volunteer is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page.

### **Meeting with High School and Middle School Students in your role as a volunteer/mentor/tutor:**

1. All meetings and/or activities with students must take place on the school campus, or as part of a school-sponsored or school related activity such as a field trip, concert or athletic game.
2. All activities with a student or students must take place in a room with open visibility to the public or on the school grounds in sight of school staff representatives.
3. Off campus meetings between the volunteer/ mentor/tutor and the student are strictly prohibited unless under the direct supervision of a school official or parent/guardian.
4. Communication with high school students through the use of electronic media is prohibited except in the limited circumstances described here. The term “electronic media” includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video sharing web sites (for example, YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (for example, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as land lines, cell phones, and web-based applications. Under the following limited circumstances, electronic media may be used to contact a student solely regarding mentoring/tutoring issues:
  - a. The parent must consent in writing to the type of contact in the Parent Permission Form.
  - b. If the parent consents, the mentor/tutor may communicate with the student by telephone or cellular phone, including text messaging. There may be no communication between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Upon request by the parent, student, or campus administrator, the mentor/tutor will cease communication with the student by telephone or cellular phone.
  - c. If the parent consents, the mentor/tutor may use email to communicate with the student solely about mentoring/tutoring issues. The mentor/tutor must copy the campus mentor program email on all emails to the student. The mentor/tutor may not communicate with the student by email during school hours or between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Upon parent, student, or campus administrator request, the mentor/tutor will cease email communication.
  - d. The mentor/tutor is prohibited from knowingly communicating with a student through a personal social network page. The mentor/tutor may communicate with a student through a social network page created by a campus or the district for mentoring and/or tutoring activities.

### **Transportation. Transporting a student in your personal car as part of your volunteer activities is prohibited.**

- Students must be transported in a school district vehicle for field trips or in the vehicle of a parent or legal guardian.
- Do not put yourself in the position of being alone with any student in any vehicle.
- Sometimes a parent may provide written consent for you to transport the parent’s child. That may not protect you from liability because you would not be acting within the scope of your duties as a volunteer.

### **Physical Contact.**

- Restrict physical contact.
- Use common sense.
- Physical contact should be limited to holding a hand, giving a soft pat on the back or sharing a hug in full view of other school officials.

- Remember that what you see as simple, friendly affection between you and the student may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

### **Positive, Respectful Role Model.**

- Do not criticize parents, teachers, school personnel or guidelines publicly or with your student. If a problem arises, consult with your volunteer coordinator or the campus principal.
- Do not discuss your students and their problems publicly or with others. If you need help with a student, discuss the matter professionally and confidentially with the teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or principal.
- Address the student directly and with sensitivity, be honest and model an appropriate manner.
- Use discretion in giving gifts to students in alignment with your campus volunteer program policy.

### **What you should know about Potential Liability.**

- A volunteer directly serving a school district is immune from civil liability – not personally liable – for conduct that is (1) incident to or (2) within the scope of your duties as a volunteer and involves the exercise of judgment or discretion on your part.
- You are NOT protected from personal liability if you use excessive force or negligence in disciplining a student resulting in bodily injury to a student.
- For purposes of liability, a “volunteer” is a person providing services (1) for or on behalf of the school district (2) on the premises of the district (3) or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.
- The law concerning volunteers does not limit the volunteer’s liability for intentional misconduct or gross negligence. That is, a volunteer can be liable for intentional misconduct or gross negligence.
- A person who does not provide services for or on behalf of the school district on the premises of the district or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property is not considered a “volunteer”. If you are not considered a “volunteer”, you may be subject to liability. A volunteer may be subject to criminal liability on charges for abuse of children.





# Section II

Campus Information

School	Principal		Phone	Address
<b>Elementary Schools</b>				#
Buffalo Creek	David	Rodriguez	713.251.5300	2801 Blalock Houston, TX 77080
Cedar Brook	Alejandra	Perez	713.251.5500	2121 Ojeman Houston, TX 77080
Edgewood	Jessica	Tejada	713.251.5600	8757 Kempwood Houston, TX 77080
Hollibrook	Annabel	Taylor	713.251.5800	3602 Hollister Houston, TX 77080
Meadow Wood	Hailey	Haynes	713.251.6200	14230 Memorial Dr Houston, TX 77079
Nottingham	Roy	Moore	713.251.6400	570 Nottingham Oaks Trail Houston, TX 77079
Pine Shadows	Christina	Winstead	713.251.6500	9900 Neuens Houston, TX 77080
Ridgecrest	Michelle	Garcia	713.251.6600	2015 Ridgecrest Houston, TX 77055
Shadow Oaks	Julie	Baggerly	713.251.6800	1335 Shadowdale Dr. Houston, TX 77043
Sherwood	Stephanie	Spencer	713.251.6900	1700 Sherwood Forest Houston, TX 77043
Spring Branch	Lynn	Austin	713.251.7000	1700 Campbell Rd. Houston, TX 77080
Spring Shadows	Rachel	Martinez	713.251.7100	9725 Kempwood Houston, TX 77080
Terrace ES	April	Falcon-Blanco	713.251.7200	10400 Rothbury Houston, TX 77043
Thornwood	Chyla	Weaver	713.251.7300	14400 Fern Houston, TX 77079
Treasure Forest	Celeste	Barretto	713.251.7400	7635 Amelia Rd. Houston, TX 77055
Valley Oaks ES	Kimberly	Reynolds	713.251.7500	8390 Westview Houston, TX 77055
Westwood ES	Kay	Kennard	713-251.2100	10595 Hammerly Houston, TX 77043
Woodview ES	Becky	Hagan	713-251-7800	9749 Cedardale Houston, TX 77055

School	Principal		Phone	Address
<b>Middle Schools</b>				#
Cornerstone	Jill	Wright	713.251.1600	9016 Westview Houston, TX 77055
KIPP	Eric	Schmidt	713.251.3800	2200 Ridgecrest Houston, TX 77055
Landrum MS	Steven	Speyrer	713.251.3700	2201 Ridgecrest Houston, TX 77055
Memorial MS	Jane	Green	713.251.3900	12550 Vindon Houston, TX 77024
Northbrook MS	Sarah	Guerrero	713.251.4100	3030 Rosefield Houston, TX 77080
Spring Branch MS	Bryan	Williams	713.251.4400	1000Piney Point Houston, TX 77024
Spring Forest MS	Raymorris	Barnes	713.251.4600	14240 Memorial Houston, TX 77024
Spring Oaks MS	Mary Lou	Davalos	713.251.4800	2150 Shadowdale Houston, TX 77043
Spring Woods MS	Deborah	Silber	713.251.5000	9810 Neuens Houston, TX 77080
WAIS (MS)	Steven	Schlabach	713.251.1800	901 Yorkchester Houston, TX 77079
YES Prep	Jeremy	Jones	713.251.4200	3030 Rosefield Houston, TX 77080
<b>High Schools</b>				#
Academy of Choice	Jill	Wright	713.251.1500	9016 Westview Houston, TX 77055
Memorial HS	Lisa	Weir	713.251.2500	935 Echo Lane Houston, TX 77024
Northbrook HS	Randolph	Adami	713.251.2800	#1 Raider Circle Houston, TX 77080
Spring Woods HS	Jennifer	Collier	713.251.3100	2045 Gessner Houston, TX 77080
Stratford HS	Chad	Crowson	713.251.3400	14555 Fern Houston, TX 77079
WAIS (HS)	Beverly	Martin	713.251.1800	901 Yorkchester Houston, TX 77079
YES Prep HS	Randolph	Adami	713.251.4250	#1 Raider Circle Houston, TX 77080



# Section III

Your Role as a Mentor

# Mentors are...

- Caring adults who spend 30 - minutes weekly with a student “mentee” as an advocate, advisor, role model and friend.
- Committed to helping a student “on the brink of success” – academically, socially, mentally, and physically—get his/her life heading in the right direction and focus on the future.
- Providers of guidance and support to enable a student to become whomever he/she aspires to be.

## Mentors Serve Students “on the brink of success”

Mentors in Spring Branch ISD support students “on the brink of success.” Many of these are students who may be identified as “at risk” and whose environment, circumstances, and resulting attitudes may discourage them from completing high school or from going on to a productive adulthood in society and the workplace.

### Factors Identifying Youth “On the Brink of Success”

- Welfare or single-parent household
- Economically disadvantaged
- Struggling with language barrier
- New student who has moved a lot
- Parents unfamiliar with school operations and resources
- Somewhat introverted and need confidence-building

Having one or more of these factors implies that the youth has needs that may or may not be met in school, home or in-school counseling. The purpose of mentoring is to empower a young person with the skills to close the gaps in unmet needs in their lives. With a mentor as a role model or guide, mentored students can begin to address personal, school and home struggles and begin to close these gaps.

# Mentors Should Be...

- **Effective Listeners** – A mentor may be the only adult the student has identified as one who will listen to his/her concerns and problems.
- **Encouragers of Goal Setting** – A mentor should not impose his/her goals for the student, but should help his/her mentee learn to be a goal setter of short- and long-term goals.
- **Identifiers of the Positives** – A mentor may be the only voice for encouragement a student has. Help the mentee identify the positives in his/her life.
- **Role Players** – A mentor should employ role play as a technique for solving problems
- **A Window to the World** – A mentor should help the mentee develop personal interests outside of school.
- **Encouragers of Extra/Co-Curricular Activities** – A mentor should help the mentee become more involved in all aspects of school life.
- **Trustworthy** – A mentor should be honest, open and trustworthy and abide by the *SBISD Volunteer Ethics, Guidelines, and Procedures* for confidentiality.
- **Sincere, Committed and Punctual** – Mentors not only impact students through their words, but also through their actions. By modeling reliability and dependability, mentors build developmental assets and set a good example.

## Mentors Maintain Confidentiality

All information shared by the mentee, or about the mentee (as legally permissible or approved by parent or guardian) is to be kept confidential, unless the mentee confides:

- Mentee is the victim of physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Mentee intends to hurt him/herself or someone else
- Mentee is involved in any illegal activity.

If you suspect your mentee is in danger of any of these circumstances, please follow SBISD VOLUNTEER ETHICS, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES and contact a school official immediately.

## **Qualities of a Successful Mentor**

### **❖ Personal commitment to be involved with a young person for an extended period of time.**

There should be a desire to be a part of another person's life, to be able to help them with developing decision-making skills and to see them become more capable of dealing with life's challenges. Mentors should be committed to evolving and continuing this relationship at least one school year to make a difference in a young person's life.

### **❖ Respect for individuals from diverse backgrounds, for their abilities and for their right to make their own decisions.**

Mentors do not need to rescue their mentees. Mentors do need to model a sense of respect and dignity in the relationship and in turn will win the respect of the mentee. Mentors are advisors and recognize the equality of the relationship.

### **❖ Ability to listen and accept different points of view.**

Mentors help by practicing active listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving mentees the opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum degree of interference from the mentor. A successful mentor can empathize without ever sharing the same experience.

### **❖ Ability to see solutions as well as barriers.**

Successful mentors are capable of examining a variety of issues and pointing out sensible alternatives. Mentors should be able to evaluate different solutions and demonstrate the ability to distinguish realistic options from those that have little chance of success.

### **❖ Flexibility and Openness.**

Mentors should realize that rapport and trust take time to develop and that communication is key to both. Become familiar with the mentee, know what things are important to him/her. Mentors should not be afraid to share with the mentee...communication is a two way street.

*Source:*

*Mentor Training Curriculum, United Way of America, Alexandria, Virginia*

## **Mentoring Do's...**

### Do...

- Be consistent
- Be yourself
- Be a listener
- Be honest, patient and forgiving
- Be encouraging
- Be a friend; not a parent, authority figure or teacher
- Work for gradual progress
- Take time to establish rapport
- Respect the trust placed in you
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Respect cultural, social and religious differences
- Maintain confidentiality (understand exceptions)
- Remember that everyone has strengths – some are more obvious than others!
- Be realistic in your goals for the relationship and expectations of your mentee
- Avoid physical contact other than handshake or other business-like greeting
- Engage the mentee in decisions about activities and direction of the relationship
- Realize that everyone needs to feel valued to act responsibly
- Remember you are not alone – call on school personnel
- whenever necessary
- Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship
- Where appropriate, make contact with mentee's teachers,
- counselors and parents
- Realize that responsibility for change lies within the student – not you
- Help your mentee see the practical advantages of school
- Realize your mentee's value system may be different from yours.

<https://cms.springbranchisd.com/Portals/371/tips.pdf?ver=2011-08-11-172515-143>

## **Mentoring Don'ts...**

### Don't...

- Feel awkward about silence, especially at the start of the relationship
- Get discouraged if you offer love and concern, but mentee doesn't respond immediately
- Get discouraged if your mentee's progress does not meet your expectations
- Take ownership of your mentee's problems; they belong to the student
- Feel you have to have all of the answers; it's OK to admit you don't know
- Allow your mentee to manipulate you in any way
- Leave student alone or leave school with the student
- Meet with student behind closed doors
- Expect to change mentee's life overnight
- Overstay your visit
- Hesitate to ask for help from campus personnel
- Join in with a mentee's criticism of family, school or friends
- Give out personal information until you are ready
- Give gifts

## **How to Avoid a Hug**

- Your mentee will be overjoyed to see you.
- Your mentee may approach you with a hug...turn to the side for a side hug.
- Appropriate touches:
- Fist bump
- High five
- Pat on the back



# Characteristics of Asset-Building Adults

## Who You Are

- Open, honest, and an active listener.
- Committed to integrity, responsibility, helping others, and promoting positive changes in the world.
- Hopeful and optimistic about young people and the future.
- Self-aware and committed to personal growth.
- Appreciative of others' strengths and uniqueness.
- Striving to be a caring and supportive friend and colleague.
- Reliable and trustworthy.
- Willing to share your "assets" (time, knowledge, experience, wisdom).

## What You Do

- Say hello, wave, or ask a question to take initiative in building relationships.
- Respect and affirm youth and children, seek to understand them.
- Believe in and take good care of yourself.
- Look for the good in others and seek common ground with them.
- Engage in healthy relationships with people of all ages.
- Have meaningful conversations with young people about personal values, beliefs, decision making, and cultural differences.
- Model positive behaviors, including kindness, lifelong learning, and restraint.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully and forgive people when they make mistakes.
- Encourage young people to succeed in school, serve their community, and be valuable resources.

## Asset-Building Affirmations

Intentionally building assets in your mentee and other young people encourages strong intergeneration relationships

- I'm a powerful asset builder in the life of my mentee.
- I know and use my mentee's name regularly when I see him/her.
- Each day, I greet my mentee warmly.
- I regularly encourage my fellow friends to build assets for and with young people.
- I focus on my mentee's gifts and talents.
- When young people are in trouble, I begin my interactions with them by focusing on their strengths.
- I help young people use their strengths to overcome their deficits.
- I am expanding my positive influence by pursuing relationships with young people I don't know.
- I work hard to maintain relationships with young people I'm already connected with.
- I have high expectations for fellow mentors, mentees, and myself.
- At least once a week, I do something for or with young people that goes beyond their normal expectations.
- I take the time to listen when young people speak to me.
- I help young people to visualize themselves performing at higher levels.
- Each day, I'm involved in spontaneous acts of asset building.
- I take the initiative in engaging young people positively.
- I smile at and make eye contact with young people as I go about my day.
- I believe that my power as a caring mentor comes from the relationships that I develop with my mentee.

Adapted from *Essentials of Asset Building: A Curriculum for Trainers*. Copyright 2002 by Search Institute

# Understanding Today's Youth

Culture not only refers to your mentee's ethnic or religious background. Generational differences may be the most important factor that separates you from your mentee. Technology has revolutionized the ways in which the 8-18 age group communicates, regardless of socio-economics. Cell phones and computers play a much more important role in daily communication than ever before. Electronic communication is used for everything. Teens use texts, Instant Messaging (IM), etc. to break up, make up, set dinner plans, complain about tests and maintain almost constant contact with their friends. Here are some other defining characteristics of current school –age children:

## **Digital Natives**

Current school aged students are not strangers to the unpleasant truths of the world (economic crashes, war on terror). They are also vastly synonymous with technology as they've grown up in the era of smartphones; most can't even remember a time before social media. For today's youth, it seems individualism is a far more important factor in style than traditional gender rules, and some former social taboos are not controversial for this generation. They are also a far more diverse group than their predecessors.

## **Affecting Real-Life Social Change**

For youth, community consciousness is a defining characteristic. They have even been called "Philanthroteens." They are not simply dreaming about making a difference someday in the future, they are already doing it with the help of social media.

## **Engaging Youth on Social and Mobile Channels**

Best practices for communicating and engaging with youth with a social media lens:

- Collaborate with them and help them connect with others
- Talk in images: emoji's, symbols, pictures, videos
- Communicate more frequently in shorter bursts of "snackable content."
  - Recognize that your mentee is accustomed to short messages and rapid responses.
- Tell your story across multiple screens.
- Do not be surprised if he/she seems unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the seemingly basic art of conversation.
- Common social media platforms: Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, twitter, Secret, Whisper.

### References:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jefffromm/2018/02/21/how-gen-z-is-using-social-media-to-affect-real-life-social-change/#1414ce1149f4>

<http://nonprofithub.org/social-media/future-social-gen-z/>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/meet-generation-z/>

# Mentors Build Self-Esteem

Mentors should observe their mentee's sense of self, talk to them about how they feel about themselves and help them find a way to see their own self-worth. Students with a strong sense of emotional well-being typically display the following types of characteristic attitudes;

- I feel comfortable with myself
- I can take life's disappointments
- I have self-respect. I can laugh at myself
- I respect the differences I find in other people
- I am able to meet the demands of my life
- I am able to give love and to consider the feelings of others
- I set realistic goals for myself
- I am not overwhelmed by my emotions
- I can accept my shortcomings
- I feel a sense of responsibility to others
- I can think for myself and make my own decisions
- I welcome new experiences and new ideas
- I feel good about the relationships I hold with other people
- I put my best effort into everything I do



# Section IV

Building Relationships

# Stage 1: Starting a Mentoring Relationship

## The Mentoring Relationship

Any successful mentoring relationship will move through four definite stages. The time spent in each one of these areas differs from relationship to relationship, but the progression is uniform. *Healthy mentoring relationships are evolutionary rather than static.* Over time, the relationship changes as the mentee grows and develops new knowledge, skills, and standards of social competence.

## Getting Acquainted

Mentors may feel nervous or uncomfortable in anticipation of the mentee introduction. In addition to age differences, you and your mentee may come from very different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and have very different life experiences. Your mentee is probably equally nervous! Go out of your way to make the first experience as comfortable as possible. Relationships get off to a better start when mentors and mentees take time to become acquainted with one another's interests, values, and goals. In the early stages, 1-6 meetings, communication may be awkward or difficult. Mentees may have trouble learning to trust an adult and may attempt to manipulate the mentor.

## Suggested First Meeting Activities

- **Introductions:**  
Greet the student with a smile and a handshake.  
Introduce yourself to your mentee and let him/her know how to address you.  
Be confident and smile!  
Ask the student if s/he has a nickname and by what name s/he would like to be called. Learn how to pronounce your mentee's name. Write it down correctly and phonetically.
- **Dependability:**  
Give your mentee the confidence that you will be dependable and will visit regularly.  
Talk with your mentee about your role in the mentoring relationship.  
Ask the mentee to tell you what s/he expects of you and his/her hopes for the relationship.  
Discuss how you'll let him/her know if you are unable to attend a scheduled appointment.
- **Acceptance:**  
Let your mentee know that you intend to be non-judgmental.  
Get to know your mentee by talking about shared interests.  
Maintain composure if s/he initially acts in a shocking manner. S/he may try to test your limits.
- **Be a Friend:**  
Express the desire to be an encouraging supporter and friend.  
Explain that you will keep everything that he/she says confidential, unless it is about something that might harm him/her in any way, as his/her safety and well-being come first.  
Emphasize the relationship over specific goals.  
Establish your own match traditions.
- **Activities Help Break the Ice:**  
Consider a game such as a simple card game, and chat while you play.  
Ask the student to give you a school tour-- walking and talking might be more comfortable than sitting and talking.  
Also, this activity lets the mentee be in charge!  
Consider an icebreaker to tell about yourselves. You might bring some questions to get things started. Examples can be found on the following page.  
Make family trees -- a GREAT way to learn about a child's background!
- **Closure:**  
End your first session on a positive and encouraging note.

# What's in a Name?

## Activity

Here are some great questions to help you and your mentee get acquainted:

1. What is your name?
2. What is the origin of your name?
3. Who picked out your name?
4. Are you named after anyone special? If so, for whom and why?
5. If you don't know where your name came from, that's a great thing you can find out before we meet again next week!
6. Do you know the definition of a mentor? Let's look it up in the dictionary.
7. How would you describe yourself?
8. What do you think you are really good at doing?
9. What do you like to do in your spare time?
10. What are your hobbies? I wonder if we have some in common.
11. What kinds of books, magazines and newspapers do you read?
12. What's your favorite TV program?
13. What do you like to do on the computer? Do you have access to a computer?
14. What kind of music do you like to listen to?

# After the First Meeting

After the first meeting, the relationship is ready to begin. Do not be alarmed if the next few meetings continue to be awkward. The mentor-mentee relationship takes time to grow! Just keep trying to get to know your mentee and build trust. Continue to set parameters for the relationship including when to meet and for how long, what kinds of activities will take place, etc.

## **Common Pitfalls of Stage I:**

As a mentor, you can get off on the wrong foot if you forget that mentor-mentee relationships are a partnership like all friendships. If you try to make all of decisions, your mentee is more likely to clam up and resist sharing his/her thoughts.

Spending time at your first few meetings brainstorming a few activities to do in the future can help break the ice and make the mentee realize that you value his/her opinions. If you cannot agree upon activities, try taking turns picking within the guidelines of the program.

Another common issue mentors report is that the mentee will not “open up” or is very quiet. This can be frustrating for mentors who view their mentee’s reluctance as boredom, ambivalence, or dislike. In reality, the mentee is probably still adjusting to the presence of a mentor figure in his/her life. Do not ask too much too soon; allow your mentee to disclose personal information when s/he is ready.

Many mentees have been hurt in past relationships with adults, and they need time to build trust in their mentor. Mentees living in poverty are also more accustomed to a non-verbally cued world. Finding an activity that you both enjoy doing is a good way to break the silence. Try board games, shooting hoops in the school gym, or a collaborative art project.

Beginning questions with phrases such as what, who, when, where, and why is a tried and true way to encourage conversation. Be patient—your mentee may never have had an adult in his/her life who wants to sit and talk or who truly cares about what he/she has to say.

## **Stage 2: Building the Relationship**

After a few weeks or months, your relationship will hopefully develop momentum and trust. You may (or may not) feel comfortable sharing very personal information with each other, and the original awkwardness of the first few meetings hopefully will have dissipated. You may already feel that you are ready to help your mentee set some goals and focus your activities on helping him/her achieve them. In this stage of the relationship, there is more listening, sharing and confiding. Values may be compared and personal concerns are often expressed. This stage typically lasts from one – three months.

### **Common pitfalls of Stage II:**

Once your mentee feels comfortable sharing the details of his/her personal life, you may begin to feel overwhelmed. Do not feel that you have to “fix” your mentee’s life or that you need to be a counselor or social worker in order to really make a difference.

Remember that as a champion and friend of your mentee you can do a lot to improve your mentee’s self-esteem and that you are a valuable asset in his/her life.

If your mentee is unloading his/her problems on you on a regular basis, talk to your program staff about getting extra help.

You may also start to feel underappreciated by your mentee in this period. Often mentors feel unrecognized for the time and energy that they are committing to the relationship. Don’t expect to be thanked by your mentee. Many students lack the maturity to thank their mentors. Sometimes it is a shyness issue; he or she might speak highly of you to teachers, friends, and family, but feel embarrassed to express this admiration directly. Try modeling courteous behavior when you are with him/her and tell him/her how much you appreciate him/her.



## **Stage 3: Acceptance, Influence and Change:**

As you move to the next level of the mentoring relationship, you may find your relationship becomes more accepting, but may also be a period of potential change. Your mentee is maturing, experiencing new things and developing as a young adult. New challenges are presented, goals are set, and hopefully, achieved.

At some point in your relationship, your mentee might try to find the limits of your relationship. He or she also might attempt to test the extent of your dedication. Despite the trust that you have built between yourself and your mentee, s/he might still attempt to measure the extent of your commitment to the relationship.

### **Common pitfalls of Stage III:**

If your mentee starts to miss meetings, shows resentment, or withdraw within himself/herself, it is important to realize that this behavior is not a personal attack against you, the mentor, but rather a manifestation of a fear of abandonment by yet another adult. While this phase might be tough and is a period in which many matches fail, stick through it and continue to affirm your commitment to the relationship. <sup>1</sup>

## **Stage 4: Closure /Redefining a Relationship:**

Sometimes a relationship must come to an end. It is very important for both the adult and the mentee to have formal closure. Should a relationship draw to a close, take time together to reflect on the benefits/challenges of the relationship, lessons learned from one another and opportunities to remain in touch. Consider sharing a picture of the two of you, or some other memento of time spent together.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "Overcoming Relationship Pitfalls" from the U.S. Department of Education's Mentoring Resource Center, <http://www.edmentoring.org/publications.html>



## Mentoring and Developmental Assets –A Strong Connection

The Search Institute has identified **40 Developmental Assets** which are positive experiences and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. *Mentoring is asset building at its best!*

External Assets	Mentors Are External Asset Builders! They Affirm the Community’s Support of Youth!	
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Other Adult Relationships	<i>Young person receives support from 3 or more non-parent adults</i>
	Caring Neighborhood	<i>Young person experiences caring neighbors. Mentors are often from neighborhood business or community organizations.</i>
	Caring School Climate	<i>School provides a caring, encouraging environment (SBISD research confirms improved campus climate for campuses with mentoring programs)</i>
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	Community Values Youth	<i>Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth</i>
	Youth as Resources	<i>Young people are given useful roles in the community. Mentors can help mentees be involved in community events, such as the Spring Branch parade, for example</i>
	Service to Others	<i>Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. Mentor groups are encouraged to sponsor one or more community service events with their mentees</i>
<b>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	Neighborhood Boundaries	<i>Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.</i>
	Adult Role Models	<i>Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior</i>
	High Expectations	<i>Both parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior</i>
Internal Assets	Mentors Are Internal Asset Builders! Through Dialogue and Action, They Can Encourage Development of Internal Assets and Personal Qualities!	
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	Achievement Motivation	<i>Young person is motivated to do well in school</i>
	School Engagement	<i>Young person is actively engaged in learning</i>
	Homework	<i>Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day</i>
	Bonding to School	<i>Young person cares about his or her school</i>
	Reading for Pleasure	<i>Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week</i>
<b>Positive Values</b>	Caring	<i>Young person places high value on helping other people</i>
	Equality and Social Justice	<i>Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty</i>
	Integrity	<i>Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs</i>
	Honesty	<i>Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”</i>
	Responsibility	<i>Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility</i>
<b>Social Competencies</b>	Restraint	<i>Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs</i>
	Planning and Decision Making	<i>Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices</i>
	Interpersonal Competence	<i>Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills</i>
	Cultural Competence	<i>Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds</i>
	Resistance Skills	<i>Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations</i>
<b>Positive Identity</b>	Peaceful Conflict Resolution	<i>Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently</i>
	Personal Power	<i>Young person feels he or she has control over things that happen to me”</i>
	Self-Esteem	<i>Young person reports having a high self-esteem</i>
	Sense of Purpose	<i>Young person reports that “my life has a purpose”</i>
	Positive View of Personal Fitness	<i>Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future</i>

## **Activities for Building Strengths in Your Mentee**

### **If Working On Self- Esteem**

- ◆ Share stories with your student about times when an adult made you feel special. How did it affect you?
- ◆ Agree that each of you will praise someone close to you once a day for a week. Plan to talk about how it made you and that person feel at your next meeting.
- ◆ Read a book or short story together and share different ending ideas.
- ◆ Draw pictures about something nice or fun that you could do tomorrow.
- ◆ Think of a way you and your mentee could work together and help another person feel more capable.

### **If Working On Trust**

- ◆ Share with your mentee a memory about someone you cared about when you were very small.
- ◆ Make a collection for a week of news articles or photos about people who did nice things for others.
- ◆ Think of something nice, a project to keep between each other, that each of you might do for someone tomorrow.
- ◆ Share with each other how your nice act worked out.
- ◆ Teach each other a favorite song.
- ◆ Talk about favorite dreams. What would you have to do to make them come true? Can anyone help? How?

### **If Working On Communication**

- ◆ Find a poem you both enjoy. Help each other memorize it.
- ◆ Listen to your student's favorite musical group (you can get a copy of the lyrics online to make sure it is appropriate before you listen to it at school.) Discuss this type of music and why they appreciate it.
- ◆ Make a list of ten questions you would ask in a foreign country. Ask someone who speaks that language to teach you the ten questions. Practice together.
- ◆ Make a "Special Effort Chart" for each other and give out stars at the end of each week. Use different categories such as "Job completed," "Job well done" and "Outstanding work."
- ◆ Make a list of the responsibilities you had at the age you (and the mentee) are at now. Will they change next year or five years from now?

### **If Working On Responsibility**

- ◆ Make a list of jobs involved with caring for pets. If you have a pet, what special jobs are involved? What responsibilities would each of you do and why? What would happen if you did not do your job?
- ◆ Consider what a budget is. Who uses them? Would it help each of you, why?
- ◆ Imagine what a teacher might do with a million dollars. What would a coal miner do? A doctor? An explorer? A musician? Each of you? Why?
- ◆ Talk about why it is important to be able to read and to do math problems. Have your mentee keep a record of ways he used those skills for at least two days.

### **If Working On Goal Setting**

- ◆ Together cut out magazine photos and inspirational works to make a collage of future things that you want to be accomplished.
- ◆ Talk about the nicest gift you have received that cost no money. Make a list of gifts that you and your mentee would especially like to give to each other that would not cost.
- ◆ Each draws a picture of your ideal room. Where would the furniture be? What would you want in the room?
- ◆

### **If Working On Decision- Making**

- ◆ Watch the same TV program several times. Talk about decisions the characters make. What things you might try to copy? Avoid? Why or why not?
- ◆ Draw a map of how to go from home to school. Add special landmarks: streets, signs, businesses, friend's houses and other landmarks. Discuss why you chose this route? Discuss alternate routes.
- ◆ Research what methods of public transportation are available in your town or neighboring town. Have you or the mentee tried them?

### **If Working On Problem Solving**

- ◆ Each of you try spending an hour without using electricity. Take notes and later talk about ways you would have to adjust your life style. Think of one thing everyone could do to reduce use of electricity.
- ◆ If you were to order a pizza, what are at least three ways to cut it to feed a family of three, four, or five?
- ◆ Make a family fire escape plan. Help your mentee draw a diagram of his/her family home.
- ◆ Using several gift catalogues give your mentee fake money to buy a gift for a friend. Have them find a gift and explain why they picked that gift and spent that amount on it.

### **If Working On Determination**

- ◆ Cut out articles/pictures about completed projects. Talk about what planning and preparation were required.
- ◆ Decide together on a skill or project you and your mentee could work on.
- ◆ Research occupations that your mentee is interested in. Find books that talk about characters performing those occupations, find what type of education one must have in order to do these types of occupations, etc.

### **If Working On Academics**

- ◆ Work on specific homework for classroom assignments.
- ◆ Teach them how to take notes.
- ◆ Study for a test.
- ◆ Learn how to use the library.
- ◆ Work on the computer.
- ◆ Work on writing skill for the TAKS test.

*Adapted from Bastrop Independent School District*

# Getting to Know Me...

Have your mentee complete the following prompts:

I dislike...

I wish...

I love...

I fear...

I hope...

I am embarrassed when...

The thing that bothers me most is...

The thing I'm most afraid of is...

I want most to be...

I am happiest when...

My greatest interest in life is...

I have great respect for...

My hero is...

When I am the center of attention, I feel...

When I am angry, I...

## I Can Change...

**Consider :**

**“Grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”**

**Discuss**

- My most important strengths are...
- My most serious challenges are...
- Things I can change for the better are...
- Things I am going to have to accept are...

# What Will the Future Bring?

Answer each of these questions about your future.

## What Do You Want to Achieve *Five Years* from Now?

High school diploma? \_\_\_\_\_

Part-time job? \_\_\_\_\_ Doing what? \_\_\_\_\_

Full-time job? \_\_\_\_\_ Doing what? \_\_\_\_\_

Have your own apartment? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Own a used car? \_\_\_\_\_ Paying for a new car? \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted into college? \_\_\_\_\_ College choice? \_\_\_\_\_

A one-week vacation in \_\_\_\_\_

A longer trip to \_\_\_\_\_

## What Do You Want to Achieve *Fifteen Years* from Now?

College degree? \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Master's degree? \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Full-time job? \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Own your home? \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Salary range:

\$10,000–\$20,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$21,000–\$40,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$50,000–\$75,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$ ? \_\_\_\_\_

Married? \_\_\_\_\_

Children? \_\_\_\_\_

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Two-week vacation each year \_\_\_\_\_ One-month trip to (location) \_\_\_\_\_

Own new car (no payments) \_\_\_\_\_ Help in the community? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

# Mentoring Activities

Below are some tips and strategies for mentoring sessions. Make sure that they are suited to the age and maturity level of your mentee before trying them. Also, feel free to be creative. This list is just a springboard to help get you thinking of good activities. And finally, do not be too structured. Spontaneity is an important part of any mentoring relationship!

1. Start by telling your mentee why you decided to become a mentor.
2. Play games—board games such as chess, checkers, and Monopoly, and Sudoku and crossword puzzles.
3. Select books you like and read them together. Get to an exciting part and finish it the next time you are together.
4. Pick a book and decide how many chapters/pages you will read a week. Discuss what you read at each visit.
5. Review previous tests and homework.
6. Do research on the Internet.
7. Learn effective study habits.
8. Exchange favorite recipes.
9. Use a disposable camera to capture special moments.
10. Construct and kite together and fly it.
11. Create a holiday, get-well, or greeting card for a special occasion.
12. Discuss opportunities for post-secondary education. Research two- and four-year colleges, technical schools, and the meaning of financial aid. What does it take to get into college? What high school courses should be taken? It is never too early to begin planning.
13. Start a pen pal project with a group of young people in another country.
14. Listen to popular music.
15. Talk about your first job.
16. Talk about planning a career.
17. Write a resume.
18. Have a pretend job interview.
19. Figure out how to program an electronic item.
20. Create a design and carve a pumpkin on Halloween.
21. Discuss proper etiquette and social graces.
22. Plan for a sound financial future. Discuss opening a savings and checking accounts and the concept of good credit and the meaning of plastic credit cards.
23. Talk about friends—those that the mentee would like to have and those that he/she does have.
24. Decorate t-shirts and wear your creations proudly.
25. Play sports, shoot basketball in a school or organization's gym.
26. Connect with the community. Research what after-school programs are offered in the community in which the youth might engage.
27. Research the history of music, and write a biography of a favorite musician or instrument.
28. Walk outside on a nice day, sit outside and just talk.
29. Research ways that you both can be more environmentally friendly in your daily lives. Start a campaign to educate the school.
30. Discuss travel and dream vacations. Make a budget and discuss how much it would cost to take such a vacation AND ways to save for it.
31. Usher at the school play or musical concert.
32. Help with homework. Make sure that the mentee takes the lead in making this decision.
33. Discuss people you admire. Compare heroes and research your favorites.
34. Ask your mentee—if you could go back to middle school/elementary school what would you do differently?
35. Swap photos of mentees and mentors.
36. Bring pictures of each other's families and discuss similarities and differences.
37. Play hangman.
38. Practice how to get the point across.
39. Design and paint a mural on the wall of the school. (With permission, of course!)
40. Discover ways to make spelling fun. Have a new word of the week that you explore together.
41. Read the newspaper together.
42. Share your life experiences.
43. Keep a journal.
44. Practice the answers to questions for the driver's license test.
45. Help your mentee write a resume.

46. Discuss people you admire.
47. Work on a community service project.
48. Complete a personality inventory.
49. Help your mentee design a personal business or calling card.
50. Help your mentee craft a personal mission statement.
51. Help your mentee learn about the Covey Seven Habits for Highly Effective Teens.
52. Help your mentee organize his/her binder and develop a system for keeping a calendar.
53. Cook something together in the school home-economics room.
54. Plan a dream vacation and discuss travel.
55. Put together a cook book of each of your favorite recipes.
56. Help your mentee learn about good study habits and strategies for making effective use his/her time.
57. Do an arts and crafts project.
58. Make something out of modeling clay.
59. Make a scrapbook of the year together.
60. Research the history of the school.
61. Write a book review
62. Make a collage out of cut outs from a magazine.
63. Teach a lesson each week about etiquette such as how to arrange silverware for a place setting, or how to make proper introductions.
64. Invent a new board game.
65. Investigate careers.
66. Explore your college website and teach your student about your job.
67. Take an imaginary trip around the world and study about each place you might visit.
68. Invent something!
69. Do a fun science experiment.
70. Grow a plant together.
71. Stay up-to-date on current events.
72. Make a family tree.
73. Write poems or rap songs together.
74. Work on a crossword puzzle
75. Read the newspaper and magazines together.
76. Invite a guest from a local labor market office to discuss market requirements and the fastest growing jobs today.
77. Share your dreams.
78. Discuss current events and news.
79. Plan a random act of kindness (such as putting chocolate kisses in every teacher's box).
80. Cook a meal together if it is allowed.
81. Ask your mentee where he hopes to be in five years? In ten?
82. Plan a game of basketball, football, or soccer with mentors against youth.
83. Design and paint a mural on the wall of the school.
84. Teach the alphabet, words and phrases of a foreign language.
85. Build and launch a rocket. Do not forget to take pictures.
86. Discuss personal hygiene, health, exercise, and healthy habits. Make a nutrition plan together.
87. Teach how to give a good handshake. Practice makes perfect!
88. Discuss safety precautions such as wearing helmets when riding bikes and fire safety in the home.
89. Write and illustrate an original storybook together.
90. Try to memorize all of the words to Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire." Look up all of the historical events referenced.
91. Explore what to do in an emergency. Create a contact list and discuss 911 procedures.
92. Decide on a community service project together with mentors and students and carry it out.
93. Plant a garden in front of the school, coordinate a food drive, hold a bake sale with proceeds benefiting a local charity or non-profit. Ask the program staff what needs there are.
94. Write an editorial and send it to the school paper or a local publication.
95. Share thoughts and feelings between meetings in a small journal.
96. Make summer plans like finding a summer job.
97. Practice spelling with alphabet cereal or flashcards.
98. Make up a card game.
99. Remember your mentee on his /her birthday with a card.
98. Make a scrapbook.
99. Teach how to ask a boss for a raise.
100. Discuss managing time effectively.



101. Talk about disappointments at school.
102. Help your mentee practice networking.
103. Write “thank you” notes.
104. Read, read.
105. Read the newspaper together.

# Cultural Awareness Skills

Cultural diversity can challenge a mentoring relationship. Mentors should:

- Be open with the mentee and initiate conversation about issues related to their culture as well as being honest about issues related to their own. Appreciate the difficulty of sharing such beliefs and experiences with others and remember to listen without becoming defensive.
- Research the mentee's culture. Magazines and newspapers targeted to particular communities can provide insight into that community.
- Take on the task of learning a language native to the mentee's culture, if appropriate. The mentee can teach you, or you can learn it together.
- Participate in cultural traditions with the mentee.
- Watch MTV, purchase teen magazines, listen to teen-focused music and be aware of the 21<sup>st</sup> century pop culture which today's youth experience.



# Section V

Working with School and Home

# Follow This Great Advice To Be A Happy Mentor!

Before each visit to the school, it is wise to **call or email the school office or designated program contact** ahead of time to make sure your mentee is not absent or involved in campus testing that day. Calling ahead of time can save you a trip so that you don't show up and realize that your mentee is unavailable to meet. It's disappointing to miss the person you came to see!

Always have a **game plan** in mind before you show up. Know in advance what topics you would like to explore or what games you might like to play with your mentee. This especially helps to alleviate the awkward pause you might have in the first couple of weeks when you are getting to know your mentee.

As you continue to meet throughout the year, thinking ahead of time about some fun/interesting topics for the two of you to discuss ensures that you will have **meaningful conversations** with your mentee. This can go a long way in helping the two of you to bond and to explore lots of interesting ideas together.

**Enjoy** the opportunity to get to know **your mentee** well!

# **Making Connections to the School**

The more you can learn about your mentee's school, his/her teachers and friends, the more effective you can be.

Here are some topics that you might wish to learn more about or share with campus staff if your mentee shares information that might help school staff better work with the student.

- What subjects/units is my mentee learning about this week/month/grading period?
- Difficulties mentee shares about understanding specific content the class is studying.
- Long-term projects that I might be able to help with?
- How can I help my student with study habits and test-taking strategies?
- How can I help my student with an academic problem he/she is having?
- What special services might be beneficial to my student? For example, are there after-school programs, or clubs?
- How's my mentee's behavior in the classroom?
- My mentee's home and family life might be impacting school performance. How can I help?
- Peer interactions – new friends, trouble with friends and gang involvement.
- Mentee' attitude about school.
- Mentee's attitude about the mentoring relationship.
- Upcoming events that I can attend?
- Assistance with basic needs such as clothing, etc.
- Any problems you may have encountered with mentee's parents.

# Making Connections with Parents

As a mentor, you are a great partner with parents in the education, growth and development and well-being of the student you mentor. You will have opportunities to meet your mentee's family during the year, and you should feel comfortable contacting the parent/guardian to introduce yourself. All parents/guardians must provide permission for their child to participate in the mentor program.

Here are some tips for communicating with your mentee's family:

- Confirm that your primary role is as a friend and helper, not a tutor and certainly not to replace or dispute a parent in his/her decision making process.
- Share information with parents about resources available at school that would be of benefit to your mentee.
- Remind your mentee to tell his/her parents about upcoming school events.
- Only if asked, help parents with advice on encouraging good study habits, help with homework and educational resources.
- Keep parents informed of projects you and your mentee are working on. Offer to help, if appropriate, with school related projects where you can be of help.
- Advocate for special services, if appropriate, to help parents with barriers to school involvement find ways to get support.
- Praise the mentee to parents when their child accomplishes a goal or achieves an academic success.
- Keep any meetings brief and to the point.
- Be friendly and respectful.
- Share information about yourself in terms of interest and background.
- Ask parents if there are any areas on concern, issue or goals that parent has.
- Affirm how you will meet and work with the mentee during school hours on school grounds.
- Do not share confidences about parents or family that your mentee has shared, or risk losing his/her trust.
- Don't get overly involved. Remember, your relationship is with the child, not the family.
- Don't try to become the family social worker.
- Don't get involved in taking sides between your mentee and parents or other family members. If family conflicts occur, offer to listen non-judgmentally, and help your mentee become a problem solver.