Mentor Handbook

Mentor PROGRAM
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

History of the Youth Mentor Program

The Mentor Program is one of the most valuable and successful programs offered through the Volunteer /Partnership Programs Department. Initiated in 1988, the Youth Motivator Program is the umbrella for all mentoring within the school district. The program has placed thousands of trained mentors with "at-risk" students. To participate, a school must designate a Mentor Coordinator to facilitate the program at the school site. The Youth Motivator Program has received many awards including the *Exemplary Program Award* from the National Association of Partners in Education.

Program Goal: To reduce the potential of students dropping out of school.

Program Mission: To enrich the educational experience of students at risk of academic failure by giving them one-on-one support and to improve the self-esteem, confidence, and motivation of students working with potential.

Program Objectives

- To give support to students who need additional assistance meeting graduation requirements
- To promote the values of education
- To improve a student's performance in attendance
- To teach students to set and reach goals by improving their social skills, attitudes, attendance, and behavior

Target Population

- Students in grades 2 through 12 who have been identified at their school for participation in the program.
- Parent/guardian permission is required before a student can enter the program.
- Students placed in the program have agreed to participate.

Commitment

- Attendance at a mentor training, offered by the school or district, is required.
- The mentor meets with the student for approximately 30 minutes a week for a **minimum** of 18 weeks, preferably for the school year.
- Weekly meetings are held on the school grounds during a regular school day. (Proper consent must be given for any off-campus events.)

Clearance of Mentors

All online applications must be approved through the Volunteer Programs prior to a volunteer's placement. Scanning a photo identification at any school site or administrative facility finalizes the application process.

WHAT IS MENTORING

Mentoring is:

- A structured relationship with one imparting support, insight, and experience
- A natural phenomenon in life that most of us have experienced through caring individuals in our family, schools, churches and neighborhood
- A developmental process that requires time to develop and produce results. It must be monitored to ensure success.
- A strategy that recognizes the potential in all young people to achieve and live full, productive lives

Mentoring means:

- Giving your time and thought
- Being there when needed
- Paying attention to a younger person
- Creating opportunities for the student to move successfully into new arenas of life (social, educational and work)

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is:

- A friend who is looking out for the best interest of the student
- A wise advisor, trusted teacher and counselor
- A resource person
- One who can make a difference in the life of a student through caring and expressing interest
- One who points out actions, values, and discipline that foster success and happiness
- One who helps the student envision and strive for broader horizons and possibilities

A mentor:

- Gives emotional support
- Fosters self-esteem
- Provides instructional support and monitors academic progress
- Provides vocational guidance and career planning
- Offers a constructive example, experience, motivation, inspiration, and insight

A mentor is a person who:

- Is self-confident, patient, and flexible
- Is sensitive to other's needs
- Is conscientious and reliable
- Has the ability to listen
- Wants to make a difference in the lives of young people

A mentor must be able to:

- Allow students to make mistakes
- Separate their own goals from those of the student

- Encourage students to continue to learn
- Reinforce students' successes, fostering a supportive relationship
- Communicate the relationship between academic skills and success
- Maintain the confidentiality of the relationship
- Ask for help when needed

Qualities of successful mentors:

- Personal commitment to be involved with another person for an extended time
- Respect for the individual and for their ability and right to make their own choices
- Ability to listen and to accept different points of view
- Ability to empathize with another person's problems
- Ability to see solutions and opportunities as well as barriers
- Flexible and open

A mentor is not:

- A tutor working with a student on remediation activities
- A substitute for the school guidance counselor
- A surrogate parent
- A friend

Differences between a mentor and a tutor:

- Tutoring is task-oriented, involving assignments and performance standards
- Mentoring is less work-oriented and is a mutual commitment of friendship
- Mentoring is a personal one-to-one commitment
- A tutor can function as a mentor
- A mentor finds it harder to move from the "good friend" role to the teacher-like strictness of tutoring

WHAT IS THE NEED?

Research indicates that most students who are going to have problems in school can be identified as early as the elementary school years. Many students in an "at risk" situation benefit from a close adult role model other than a family member. This interaction provides the opportunity for increased self-esteem and potential for self-growth.

Students who have conflicts in school:

- Dropout of school due to lack of interest and boredom
- Feel they "don't belong" and are not involved in any extra-curricular activities
- Hang out with "kids that understand them" – other dropouts
- May be former dropouts who need extra support when they return to school

Students who have a difficult home life may:

- Come from homes where parents or siblings were school dropouts
- Be children of divorced or remarried parent(s)
- Come from families with an alcohol or drug abuse problem
- Take drugs to reduce emotional pain and feelings of low self-esteem

Students with difficult personal concern may:

- Be struggling with feelings of hopelessness, guilt, rejection, or depression
- Lack of self-confidence due to a lack of a significant adult relationship

Changing lifestyles:

Effects of changes in the American family life-styles in the past twenty years include:

- Parents under stress show little support or interest in their child's education
- If a student's needs are not being met at home, they may be withdrawn at school
- Children of divorce may have feelings of guilt, rejection, depression and anxiety
- Many students work long hours at after school jobs, take care of younger siblings, and share household jobs, as well as attend school

Societal and economic factors:

- Some students lack self-confidence due to poor parent(s) and adult relationships
- Poor nutrition and lack of rest have a negative effect on academic performance
- Many teenage girls drop out of school when they marry or become pregnant
- Many males who identify themselves as fathers also drop out of school
- Many students hold jobs and work more than 20 hours per week
- Some students who receive failing grades are those with after school jobs
- A large percentage of working students say they are often too tired to go to school

WHY BECOME A MENTOR?

10 reasons to become a mentor (adapted from Drew University) http://www.depts.drew.edu/mentors/why.html):

1. To help a student stay in school, stay free of drugs, and prepare for a life of independence.
2. To enrich your own life by helping a child build their character and self-esteem.
3. You've had help along the way – now it's your turn to help.
4. The children waiting for mentors are the future of our nation!
5. To have fun!
6. The values and behaviors of children are shaped by what they see. As a mentor, you are a role model.
7. When children abandon their education, become teen parents, or engage in drugs or crime, it becomes everyone's problem.
8. Children who stay in school will have the skills to stay above the poverty level.
9. If not you, who?
10. Mentoring works!

Mentors as role models:

All students have a greater need for role models than for critics. Students who have poor self-esteem can benefit greatly from positive role models. Mentors can be extremely effective sources of learning for these students. The mentor role can assist students in numerous ways, including the following:

- Determining right from wrong through emulation
- Developing belief systems that guide behaviors leading to success
- Contributing to experiences which build confidence
- Assist in short and long term goal setting
- Provide consistency

Changing a student's behavior, feelings and attitude requires time, energy, and commitment on the part of the mentor. Keep in mind, only the student can make a change.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

VIPS Online Application
The *Application to Volunteer* can be accessed by using any computer. Be sure to use your full legal name and birthdate and select "Youth Motivator/Mentor (Training Required)" when identifying the functions in which you would like to participate. Have your government-issued ID scanned at a school or district site to complete the process. Your ID must match the name and birthdate provided on the volunteer application.

Upon successful completion of the online application, the mentor will be contacted by the VIPS office with mentor training dates. Once the training is complete, the application will be processed and, if approved, an e-mail will be sent to the e-mail address provided in the application. The school Mentor Coordinator can now be contacted to match you with a student. All volunteer approvals will expire on June 30, requiring volunteers to renew. Your ID will not need to be scanned again unless your name has legally changed.

Screening process
Florida Statute 943.04351 requires a search of registration information regarding sexual predators and sexual offenders. This background check is performed through the Raptor Management System each time a volunteer signs in, which maximizes the safety of our students.

Sign in/out and wear a nametag
Each time you go to school to volunteer you must sign in using the Raptor Management System, wear your nametag, and sign out. These requirements are necessary because:

- Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
- Volunteers who have been approved and follow the school's sign-in procedure are covered by School Board liability policies while volunteering.
- Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
- Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. The record of volunteer attendance is one basis for consideration of these awards.
- State awards are granted to schools that log a designated number of volunteer hours per school membership.

Mentor Pledge/Commitment
This signed agreement asks the mentor to:

- Make a firm commitment to the student through the program for a ***minimum*** of 18 weeks
- Honor the confidential nature of the student/mentor relationship
- Assist their student to set short-term goals
- Abide by the policies/procedures of the School Board of Volusia County, the VIPS Program, and the individual school in which they serve.

Attendance - Punctuality and reliability are expected since students are counting on you. Please inform teachers in advance of planned absences and call the school for unforeseen absences. Students will be disappointed you cannot come but will be reassured that you cared enough to call.

Confidentiality - Keep information you learn about students between yourself and the teacher. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, the family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher, school counselor, or the principal. In addition, do not take photographs of the student and do not post any photographs or information about the student on social media networks.

Exceptions: If the student shares any information involving suicide, drugs, abuse, serious illness, pregnancy or aggression, regarding themselves or another, please report this information to the Mentor Coordinator. Also report to the Mentor Coordinator if you should suspect your student is abused by their parent or guardian. (See "Reporting Abuse" on the last page.)

Health regulations - *Please do not come to school if you are ill.* This includes a cold, sore throat or cough. Please call the school and leave a message for the mentor coordinator and student when you have an unforeseen absence. Be certain you are completely over your illness before you return. Children learn by example and we ask that you, as a role model, use good health habits when you are at school.

Appearance and Manner

Volunteers are considered non-paid employees and should be well-groomed and dress professionally. Hats, short skirts and shorts, exposed midriffs, low cut blouses and inappropriate graphics/language on t-shirts are not allowable for students, let alone volunteers. If you are not sure how you should dress, please ask the Mentor Coordinator. Mentors should also set a good example to students by maintaining professional conduct and language.

Contacting the school

When cleared, the volunteer calls the school of their choice to schedule an appointment with the school-based Mentor Coordinator. You may obtain the name and phone number of school-based Mentor Coordinator from Volunteer Programs. Be aware that not all schools have an active Mentor Program and a Mentor Coordinator.

Initial mentor/coordinator interview

The mentor is acquainted with their school's specific program guidelines during the initial interview with the Mentor Coordinator.

Items covered during the interview:

- Type of Program
- "On campus only" program – student and mentor are restricted to meeting only on campus during school hours and are not allowed off campus for activities.
- Review *Mentor Interest Inventory* and *Pledge/Commitment*
- Signing in/out and wearing a name badge
- Weekly mentoring schedule (time, place)
- Information about the student (if match has been made)
- A school calendar, campus map, and bell/lunch schedule
- List of school personnel and necessary phone numbers
- All participating schools establish individual, school-based procedures for their Youth Motivator Program, resulting in a variety of school guidelines. Be sure to ask about specific guidelines you need to know about their mentor program.

Volunteer liability coverage
If an individual is injured while serving as school volunteer, they must notify a school administrator and complete an accident report located in the main office. To be eligible for possible liability coverage the injured party must be currently cleared as a VIPS volunteer and have signed in/out as a volunteer at the time of the incident.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR

Job Description:
- Status: Volunteer
- Supervisor: Mentor Coordinator

Academic Support:
- Helps with homework
- Helps with missed class assignments
- Encourages good attendance
- Encourages young people to stay in school and graduate from high school
- Helps a student evaluate educational choices and directs them to resources

Role Modeling
A mentor points out, demonstrates, and explains actions and values that offer the best chances for success and happiness. A mentor should help students see and strive for broader horizons and possibilities than they may see in their present environment.

Attention and Concern
Many students do not receive enough attention from the adults in their lives. Mentors can fill in these empty spaces with dependable, sincere and consistent attention and concern.

Listening
The other adults in the young person's life may not have the time, interest or ability to listen. Mentors encourage young people to talk about their fears, dreams, and concerns. Remember that the mentor may be the ONLY adult in a student's life who listens.

Accountability
A commitment made to a student for a meeting, activity, or any kind of appointment should be a mentor's priority, barring emergencies. This consistent accountability has several benefits:
- Cements trust between mentor and student
- Sets a good example (role modeling) for students to follow
- Creates mutual expectations that can be met

Goals
When appropriate, the mentor works with the student to develop long range goals for the student's academic and personal life. The success of this relationship will depend on the mentor helping the student reduce these goals to short term, manageable, weekly activities.

Closure
Closure can be difficult for both mentor and student. The student should be told at the beginning how long the mentor can commit. Closure also happens each time you both meet. At the end of each session remind your student the date/time of your next meeting.

Mentoring Life Cycle

Phase One: Building Trust
- Learning to communicate, planning meetings, forming a bond, acknowledging diversity

Phase Two: Exploring Possibilities
- Providing positive feedback, setting goals, exploring life skills, choosing skill building activities

Phase Three: Navigating Through the Relationship
- Understanding youth culture and your influence as an adult, overcoming hurdles, validating, communicating productively, being non-judgmental, maintaining confidentiality

Phase Four: Continuing the Cycle
- Being patient, beginning again, maintaining an open mind, having an enjoyable time

VOLUNTEER MENTOR GUIDELINES

- **VOLUNTEERS MUST MAINTAIN STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY** concerning information they see and hear about students and staff, *including students' grades, records, and abilities.* School staff members are the only people to be contacted regarding the students.
- **Volunteers must always be supervised when working with students.** Mentors should meet with their student in full view of a school staff member. Media centers, picnic tables, or having lunch with your student in the cafeteria are ideal spots.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance and behavior. They should be well-groomed, appropriately dressed and maintain professional conduct/language.
- **Volunteers DO NOT discipline students.** "Instruct" students in the behavior you expect. Report discipline problems to the mentor coordinator.
- Volunteers may not take photographs of students, unless permitted by a school administrator for a school project. Never post any student photographs or student information on social media networks.
- Punctuality and reliability are expected since the student and mentor coordinator have planned for your visit.
- Volunteers should be healthy, both physically and mentally fit. Call in absent if you are sick.
- Volunteers are required to sign in/out and wear a nametag while on a school campus.
- Mentors should never ask their student to do anything that would make the student feel uncomfortable. Volunteers should never touch students in any way that is aggressive, disciplinary or sexual in nature.
- Never leave campus with your student unless prior approval and all policies and procedures for leaving campus have been met.
- Volunteers may not give any medication to students.
- Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- Volunteers do not diagnose student weaknesses and strengths, prescribe activities for students, or evaluate student progress.
- Volunteers' comments should not be written on student papers that are to be sent home. Volunteers should not laugh or belittle student answers or efforts.

- Respect cultural differences. What may be intended as humor may be cultural bias or harassment.
- Volunteers' discussions with teachers should not interrupt class time. Turn off cell phones.
- Volunteers may not hold informal parent/teacher conferences or leisure conversations with staff members or other volunteers during volunteer time.
- Volunteers are not to bring preschool children into the classroom during instruction time. This presents a liability issue and is disruptive to the classroom.
- Volunteers may not conduct personal business at school.

Safety Guidelines

- Be aware of the school playground regulations.
- Supervise climbing activities carefully.
- Certain materials need to be watched closely: scissors, saws and woodworking tools, sand (it can damage eyes), glass items, pointed objects (such as a math compass or knife), cooking utensils, and pans.
- Do not allow a child to: use a paper cutter or adult scissors; handle hot dishes, pans, or ovens; move a pan containing hot grease or boiling water; remove pans from a stove.

Remember:
- Follow all of the school's safety rules.
- If an accident occurs, immediately notify a staff member.
- Never move a child involved in an accident. A member of the school staff will initiate proper procedures.
- If you are hurt or involved in an accident while serving in your volunteer capacity, you should report the incident to the school office and complete an accident report immediately.

GETTING STARTED

The Mentor/Student Relationship

Getting Acquainted

1) Be warm and friendly.
2) Introduce yourself and let your student know how to address you.
3) Learn to pronounce the student's name correctly. You'll want to write it down for your records, and if necessary, get the correct spelling from the mentor coordinator.
4) Use a month-at-a-glance calendar to establish your meeting dates and times. Let the student know how long they will be able to count on you. Let your student know you will be coming on a regular basis. Discuss how you will notify one another if unable to attend the weekly meeting. *Don't just not show up.* The student in an "at-risk" situation doesn't need to feel abandoned or rejected. The student will understand schedule changes, moving and other complications better than an unexplained disappearance.
5) Spend the first visit touring the school. Ask your student to show you the media center, cafeteria, office, playground, and so on. If not previously arranged, determine where you will meet weekly.
6) Get to know one another. Tell the student about yourself and then ask them to tell you about themselves.

7) Closure actually happens each time you conclude a meeting with the student. At the end of a meeting, give some positive feedback about that day or week. Remind your student of your next scheduled meeting and let them know you will return next week at the same time. End on a positive note.

Tips for Getting Acquainted

- Use positive reinforcement as much as possible. "I like the way you did that." "I appreciate your help." "What a nice smile you have." "I've enjoyed meeting you and look forward to next week."
- Accept your student as they are…be non-judgmental.
- Use the techniques learned at the orientation to tap into their talents and non-talents.
- Have the student draw/color a picture for you to keep. Tell your student if you intend to display the artwork in the office, dorm or on your refrigerator door. Ask them to sign the original work of art.



Mentor/Student First Meeting

1. Sign in through the Raptor Management System and print the name badge.

2. Introduce yourself to the student and let them know how to address you.

3. Learn the student's name, correct pronunciation and spelling.

4. Share briefly about yourself and ask your mentee/student to do the same. Conduct an icebreaker.

5. Let the student know that you will be coming every week, what day and what time.

6. Take a tour of the campus or play a game.

7. Let the student know that you look forward to seeing them next on _____ at _____:_____ m.

8. Make sure that your mentee/student leaves for class promptly at the end of your session. You can accompany the student and let the student take you for a campus tour as he/she walks back to class. Please be aware that classes may be in session. Do not interrupt teaching or enter classes actively being taught.

9. Make sure you sign out through the Raptor System. Leave your name badge. After the student has left, write comments in your *Weekly Journal of Mentoring Session* found in this handbook. Make sure any notes to yourself about the mentoring relationship are not in view while talking with your mentee.

The next two or three meetings should be spent primarily in establishing your relationship. Avoid jumping into goal setting too soon. Emphasize smiling, listening, finding out what the mentee/student likes. The student may let you know what areas they need help in. Ask how the student feels about school. Show that you care and understand. Work on building a relationship where the student begins to trust you and trust you will not criticize them. Be consistent, on time for your scheduled appointments and kind/supportive. Most of all, enjoy the mentoring relationship and HAVE FUN!

Weekly Mentoring Sessions

1. Start with something positive. Each week spend time talking about the past week and developing your relationship. Find out how things are going with your mentee/student.

2. Take time for tutoring or activity, i.e. lunch, computer, etc. The mentor coordinator has mentoring resource books available for you.

3. Do a goal-setting activity for the next session. Make sure the goal is measurable and attainable.

4. The remainder of the time can be spent just talking or playing a game.

5. Discuss any holidays, business trips, or vacation dates that will conflict with the scheduled visits.

6. End with something positive – give positive feedback.

7. Make sure that your mentee/student leaves for class promptly at the end of each session. Let them know that you will be thinking about them and cannot wait to see them next week to see how they are doing.

8. Make sure you sign out in the volunteer book/computer. Leave your name badge. After the student has left, write comments in your *Weekly Journal of Mentoring Session* found in this handbook. Talk with the mentor coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

Remember that you are in the student's corner, no matter what. Never give up on them! So encourage, encourage, encourage.

Incentives:
Smiles, words of encouragement, handwritten notes or cards, book covers, pencils, pens, framing the student's report card, special work.

One hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child. ~Author-Unknown~

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What is the best thing that happened this past week?
- How could the week have been better?
- What is something you know a lot about?
- What is the funniest thing you have done or seen?
- What interesting places have you visited (or would like to visit)?
- What famous person do you admire and why?
- What is your favorite class? What makes it your favorite?
- What class is hardest for you? What makes it hard?
- What is the thing that you like most about yourself?
- What thing do you wish others knew about you?
- Tell me about a time when you felt very (angry, happy, sad, etc.).
- What is your favorite thing to do in your free time?
- What is your favorite (book, movie, TV show, game, song, etc.)
- What do you do when you get (angry, nervous, frustrated, etc.)?
- What has given you the most personal satisfaction or sense of accomplishment?
- Who is the most important person in your life?
- What are your thoughts about (going to college, a career, etc.)?

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Wow	Way to go	Super
You are special	Outstanding	Excellent
Great	Well done	I am proud of you
Good job	I knew you could do it	Fantastic
How smart of you	Incredible	You tried hard
You are important	You have got a friend	You make my day

I like the way you are trying your best
You figured it out yourself
You really worked hard
You make me happy
A smile is worth a thousand words

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication begins with effective listening.

Interesting information:

- Listening is an essential part of communication.
- Most people use only 25% of their natural ability for listening.
- The average person's attention span rarely lasts more than 45 seconds.
- Today's average adolescent spends 13 minutes a day talking to a parent/guardian.
- Listening is not a natural art, but a learned art and therefore can be improved.
- It is important to remember that we do not deliberately choose to "not listen" - we merely forget sometimes how to listen well, or we don't take time to listen well.

Things that hinder effective listening

- Few people listen objectively to others - they tend to anticipate the message and begin thinking of an answer instead of listening to what is being said.
- The views expressed by the student are different from yours.
- The environment around you is noisy or frequent interruptions occur.
- The dress and appearance of the student is distracting.
- The student is telling you something you don't want to hear.
- The thoughts or feelings being expressed shock you or cause you anxiety.
- You are preoccupied with problems of your own and find it difficult to pay attention to what the student is saying.
- You do not have enough time to spend with the student and "hurry through" what the student is saying to you.

Three types of non-listening

1. **Listening with "half an ear"** Example: You're preoccupied with another activity while you're attempting to listen to someone who is talking to you.
2. **The "scene stealer"** Example: Taking the attention away from the person who is talking and centering the attention on yourself.
3. **The "guru" or "know it all"** Example: Giving quick, easy advice to a person with a difficult problem instead of helping the person make his own decision. Note: the "guru" response is used in more than 75% of responses.

In reviewing the three types of non-listening, consider the following:

- Has anyone ever "listened" to me this way? How did it feel?
- Have I ever used any of these types of non-listening?
- It is important to remember that we do not deliberately choose not to listen to others. We simply forget to take the time to listen well.

Steps to effective listening

1. Stop talking. Listen and hear what the student is saying.
2. Avoid judging what a person is telling you. It is important to hear what the student is saying. Be as objective as possible.
3. Be empathetic, put yourself in the student's shoes.

4. Recognize that the student is someone who is separate from you. Don't get too emotionally involved.
5. Don't prepare your answer while the student is talking. Avoid premature conclusions and interpretations.
6. Focus on the person who is talking with verbal and non-verbal actions. Establish eye contact. Present your "attention skills" for listening. Concentrate.
7. Respond to feelings - the student's, not yours.
    - Adults "intellectualize" - children "feel."
    - Accept the student's feelings as theirs, not yours.
    - Increase your vocabulary of words that express your feelings.
    - Trust in the student's capacity to handle his feelings and find solutions to his problems.
8. Be patient. Don't interrupt. Watch for "doors" (openings and pauses in the conversation). Ask yourself why the student is pausing.
9. Avoid close-ended questions. Example: I'll bet you're having some strong feelings." Better: "How do you feel about that?"
10. Show that you are listening by repeating back what you just heard the person say, in your own words. Example: You said your teacher was upset with you because you were late to class again. Is that right?"
11. Be yourself! These skills will come naturally as you work with your student. Don't force it. It takes practice to learn the skill of effective listening.
12. If you disagree with something a student is saying or doing, it is very important to show that you disagree with the **behavior**, not the person. **Keep self-esteem intact!**

LISTEN

When I ask you to **listen** to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.
When I ask you to **listen** to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.
When I ask you to **listen** to me and you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.
Listen. All I ask was that you not talk.
And I can do it for myself. I am not helpless - maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.
When you do something for me that I can do and need to do myself you contribute to my fear and weakness.
But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what is behind this irrational feeling.
And when that is clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.
Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what is behind them.

So please. **Listen** and just hear me; and if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn, and I'll listen to you.

Self Esteem and Students

Social workers and psychologists who work with discouraged students say they all have one thing in common - low self-esteem, which results in poor academic performance. Students learn who they are from how people react to them. If they are told they are bad, irresponsible or stupid, they will believe that this behavior is expected of them. However, if students are encouraged and recognized when they do well, they will feel that they are worthwhile. Students with good self-esteem can succeed in learning and develop healthy human relationships.

Self-esteem can be enhanced when:

- **Self-concept is demonstrated by performance.** Example: a student believes he is a good baseball player and hits a home run to win the game.
- **Others confirm self-concept.** Example: someone who believes in the student's artistic ability gives recognition of a student's artwork.

Students with high self-esteem

- Take pride in their own accomplishments
- Act independently
- Assume responsibility easily
- Approach new challenges enthusiastically
- Believe in themselves and their capabilities
- Show a broad range of emotions
- Handle frustration well
- Display a sense of humor

Students with low self-esteem

- Avoid situations that are uncomfortable
- Play down their own abilities and strengths
- Think others don't value them
- Blame others for their weaknesses
- Are easily influenced by others
- Do not handle frustration well
- Are overwhelmed with feelings of helplessness
- Show a narrow range of emotions and feelings

School performance

You will note that students may exhibit characteristics of both high and low self-esteem at one time or another. It is the pattern of their behavior that needs to be observed as opposed to simply focusing on a single characteristic.

Self-esteem determines behavior

Three main motives affect behavior resulting from feelings about one's self.

1. Students behave in ways that build their sense of self-worth and satisfaction. Example: seeking recognition and approval and doing things they do well.

2. Students behave in ways to confirm their self-image as seen by others as well as themselves. For example: students who believe they are "good" will tend to act positively- students who believe they are "bad" will tend to act negatively.
3. Students behave in ways that reflect their self-image regardless of changing circumstances. For example: students may perform poorly on an exam because they expect to, when in reality, they may be capable of passing the exam.

If a student has poor self-esteem, little satisfaction is derived from school, and performance levels are low. Most students' energies are expended on issues, which affect their feelings about themselves - relationships with others, personal problems, fears, and anxieties. These students have little interest in school tasks and are non-motivated. Schools emphasize remedial activities and these students fall farther and farther behind. An ongoing pattern of failure continues, while particular issues pertaining to individual self-esteem are ignored. The student experiences feelings of depression and anxiety that interfere with the ability to learn. When these students are helped to develop positive self-esteem, anxiety, and depression are diminished, and they have a greater motivation for learning.

GOAL SETTING

One of the most important tasks of the mentor is to assist the student in setting short and long-term individual goals. There are several important factors to consider before beginning the task of goal setting with your student.

- Time should be spent with your student in establishing a relationship of trust and confidentiality before you attempt goal setting.
- Involve your student in the goal setting process. Your student, with your guidance, must set each goal. It must be the student's goal - not yours.
- A short-term goal, which can be immediately achieved, is a good starting point. Example: Plan to complete all math homework assignments for the next week.
- Goals must be specific and measurable.
- You should ask the student to make a commitment to a goal. Confirm the commitment with a written agreement or handshake.

If your student fails to achieve the goal, look at the following points:

- The goal may have been too difficult for the student to achieve.
- The goal may have been developed without the active involvement and commitment of the student.
- The student may be fearful of achieving a self-enhancing goal. Many discouraged students perceive themselves as "losers" and are accustomed to making poor choices that reinforce their negative self-image. You may need to talk about this with your student.

A long-term goal may need to be established before a short-term goal can be explored with a student. The student may not see the need to work toward a short-term goal unless he sees the relationship between the two goals. Examples: Graduating from high school may be the motivating factor in helping a student work toward decreased tardiness. Completing homework assignments may be the first short-term goal for passing algebra.

A Model for Goal Setting

A goal must be:

1. **Conceivable:** You must be able to have a general understanding of the goal and be able to identify the first step or two necessary to achieve the goal.
2. **Believable:** In addition to being consistent with your personal value system, you must believe you can reach the goal. There is a need to be positive. Few people can believe a goal that they have never seen someone else accomplish. This can be a problem for goal setting in culturally deprived areas.
3. **Achievable:** The goals you set must be accomplished with your own strengths and abilities. Example: An overweight teenager, setting a goal of running the four minute mile in the next six months, would not be likely to achieve such a goal.
4. **Controllable:** If your goal involves someone else, get permission from the person that will be involved. Example: If your goal is to take someone to an event on a specific night, there is a possibility that the person would not accept your invitation to attend. However, if the goal were only to invite someone to a party, it would be acceptable.
5. **Measurable:** Your goal should be measurable in time and quantity. Example: Suppose your goal was to work on your term paper this week. You should specify your goal by saying "I will write 20 pages by 3 p.m. next Monday."
6. **Desirable:** Your goal should be something you really want to do, rather than something you feel you should do. There are many things in life that a person has to do, but doing things one wants to do provides a balance.
7. **Stated with no alternative:** You should set one goal at a time. If alternates are specified, the person often accomplishes neither. This does not restrict goal setting. Even though you may set out to accomplish one goal, you can stop at any time and drop it for a new one.
8. **Growth Facilitating:** Your goal should never be destructive to yourself, to others or to society. If a student is seeking potentially destructive goals, an effort should be made to encourage him to consider a different goal.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Diversity is anything that has the potential to divide people.

- Race
- Language
- Age
- Life styles
- Communication styles
- Religion
- Medical beliefs
- Culture
- Class
- Values/social norms

Every relationship has a "testing" period.

- Do not over-identify (this invalidates the other's experience)
- Do not assume too much
- Be who you are
- Be a model in a cultural context
- Be honest and comfortable with differences
- Appreciate, yet keep a perspective

Aim to establish a "BI-cultural comfort" within the student.

- Be aware of appropriate behavior for different cultures
- Identify where negative cultural things may be going on
- Provide other choices
- Talk about it

Learn about your student's background.

- Role of authority and family
- Perspective on time
- Marriage traditions, etc.
- Ways of dealing with conflict
- Communication styles

Mentors Tips

- Be understanding and non-judgmental
- Take time to learn about your student's lifestyle and culture
- Different does not mean better or worse…it just "IS"
- Our lives are enriched by diversity

SUPPORT FOR MENTORS

Mentor Coordinator

The school-based mentor coordinator is always available to assist the mentor and should be the **first person the mentor contacts with questions regarding their student or school policies/procedures.**

Volunteer/Partnership Programs

The district's Volunteer Programs department is also happy to take questions and concerns regarding Volusia County School's mentor programs. Call 386-736-7190, x20668 or x20221.

Mentor resource materials

Grade level resource materials are available for mentors to use with their students. These activity sheets are on a variety of topics (self-esteem, goal setting, friendships, etc.) and are extremely helpful in the early stages of the mentoring relationship. They can make the time spent together more rewarding and enriching. The use of these materials is the option of the mentor. They are available electronically on the district's website.

Materials are grouped by grade levels as follows:

- Grades 2 and 3
- Grades 4 and 5
- Grades 6 through 12

Additional resources (games, books, art supplies) may be available through the school-based Mentor Coordinator.

Recognition

Recognition of all volunteers (including mentors) is provided by the school's volunteer and mentor coordinators. The district also recognizes volunteers during school board meetings and other events at various times during the school year.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **What is the next step?**
    a. Submit an *online* application and visit a school or district site to have an identification with photo scanned in, VIPS will receive the application and photo ID through Raptor. If the applicant is not matched to any sexual predator/ offender, then the volunteer will be approved. Once cleared, the volunteer will be contacted regarding the need for the Youth Motivator orientation/training.
    b. After receiving the mentor training, you may call the school of your choice and schedule an appointment with the mentor coordinator. Tell the mentor coordinator you have been to the Mentor orientation/training and you are calling to schedule an appointment for the initial interview so you may be matched with a student.

2. **What will the meeting be like with the Mentor Coordinator?**
    a. Review the information under *Program Procedures, Initial Mentor/Coordinator Interview* section of this handbook.
    b. Remember to take the completed Youth Motivator Interest Inventory Form with you.
    c. Remember to ask where the *Resources for Mentors* materials are located.

3. **Can I call my student at home?**
    NO.

4. **What if I need to end my commitment before the minimum 18 weeks have been completed?** If for any reason you are unable to fulfill your commitment to your student, you must report these circumstances to the mentor coordinator so proper closure procedures can be followed. *Don't ever just leave or stop coming.* We appreciate your interest and concern in our student by volunteering your time to be a mentor and understand changes in life style that could affect the commitment.

5. **How do I stay advised of my student's school status?** It is important to be aware of their status. Should the student be suspended, move or drop out you will want to be informed of the situation so you will not make unnecessary trips to the school for meetings.
    Remember that the best way to stay informed of your student's attendance is to call the school on the day of your scheduled meeting to check if they are in school. Also, remember to call the school if you cannot make your scheduled meeting.

6. **What is the relationship between the student, parent and the mentor?** The parent/guardian has given their permission for the student to be involved in the program. However, the student may be opposed to the mentor talking to or meeting **their parent/guardian. The student may feel:**

- **The mentor will divulge confidential information to the parent/guardian.**
- The mentor may "team up" against them.
- The mentor may find out information the student isn't ready to share.
- In some cases the student may be embarrassed by their living situation.

7. **What if my student and I don't get along?** If after several meetings you find that the relationship is uncomfortable, it is appropriate to ask the mentor coordinator to re-match you as soon as possible. Proper closure through the Mentor Coordinator will ensure the student and mentor are comfortable with an early end of the relationship.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF MENTORING

Do's of Helping

- Do work for gradual progress, not "F" to "A." Focus on one area, subject or problem.
- Do remember that everyone has some strength. Remember to give positive reinforcement when possible.
- Do remember that everyone needs to feel valued in order to act responsibly. Take time to establish rapport.
- Do keep the students' information confidential as long as they do not plan to hurt themselves or others.
- Do try to speak with the mentor coordinator periodically regarding your progress with your student.
- Do be prepared for the student's appearance and language. Be aware of your own feelings about student's hair, use of profanity and clothing fads.
- Do be aware of limitations. You cannot change the student's home situation.
- Do be aware that the student's value system may be different from yours. Remember that listening is the best act of caring we can offer another person.
- Do be yourself. If you are uncomfortable in a situation seek help from the mentor coordinator.
- Do become familiar with school policy concerning students leaving the school grounds. Think about protecting yourself (liability).
- Do realize you may not be able to reach every child. Some students may still drop out or not make any progress. Responsibility for change lies with the student, not you.

Don'ts of Helping

- Don't get discouraged if your student's progress does not meet your expectations.
- Don't get discouraged if you offer caring and the student doesn't respond. The student's self-esteem may be so low that he may believe he is unworthy of your concern.
- Don't get discouraged if the student gets worse before they get better. The student could be testing you.
- Don't feel awkward with silence. Use silence to allow the student to make choices.
- Don't take ownership of the problem. The problem belongs to the student.
- Don't become overly involved. Decide in advance how much time you are willing to give your student.
- Don't expect the student to make quick changes in attitude or academic achievement.
- Don't feel you need to have all the answers. Admitting you do not know an answer does not mean you have failed your student.
- Don't wait for the student to initiate the relationship. Most students may be reluctant to do so and may depend on the mentor to establish the relationship.

- Don’t wait too long before contacting the mentor coordinator about problems or questions you may have.
- Don’t feel as though you personally failed if the student drops out. You may not see the benefits you have shared, but the student will always remember you cared.

Help the student see the practical advantages of education and obtain a high school diploma from your unique perspective.



A Year's Worth of Mentoring Activities

52 ideas, one for each week of the year

1. Ask Mentee to give you a tour of their school
2. Draw pictures of their favorite things (flowers, rainbows, clowns, etc.)
3. Talk about goals
4. Plan a career; look up careers on the internet
5. Find an activity in the resource handbook
6. Talk about goals; write goals
7. Give them (pretend) one hundred dollars, map out what they would do with it and why
8. Visit a place around the world (globe, map, Internet)
9. Mentee creates a family collage (old magazines, construction paper, glue, scissors)
10. Find an activity in the resource handbook
11. Go to the library and pick out books
12. Create a card for someone
13. Complete a job application
14. Role play a mock job interview
15. Play Uno (challenge mentee to add/subtract/etc. their card by the card already down)
16. Share a snack
17. Start a scrapbook
18. Learn about their type of music
19. Mentee creates a friend collage
20. Have a picnic outdoors
21. Help with homework
22. Help brainstorm, research, organize a school project
23. Plant a flower/tree
24. Create a crossword puzzle
25. Mentee creates a self-collage
26. Visit another place around the world
27. Learn a new game together
28. Make popcorn and listen as they talk
29. Play Scrabble (challenge mentee to put their spelling words on the board)
30. Create a calendar with (silly) things that your mentee has to do each day (count to 100 backwards, give their mom/dad a kiss on their cheek)
31. Make a mock report card
32. Play a musical instrument
33. Role play conversations with friends
34. Exercise
35. Talk about life
36. Investigate colleges
37. Look for college scholarships
38. Help with college applications
39. Shoot some hoops
40. Race to see who can name the 50 states on a blank map
41. Race to see who can name the 50 state capitals on a blank map
42. Play checkers
43. Draw a caricature
44. Start a hobby
45. Make a card for someone
46. Write a letter
47. Read together
48. Read the newspaper and discuss current events
49. Have a picnic outdoors
50. Celebrate their success
51. Talk about summer plans
52. Write a thank you note to teachers

VOLUNTEER/STUDENT AGREEMENT

What do we want to accomplish? _____

_____

_____

What will we do?

Volunteer:	Student:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

When will we work together?

Beginning Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Day(s) of Week: _____ Time- From: _____ To: _____

How will we let each other know if we must miss our appointment?

_____

_____

_____	_____
Volunteer Signature	Student Signature
_____	_____
Date	Date

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF MENTORING SESSIONS

Please take a few minutes to write down your thoughts regarding your weekly visit with your student. What you did together, accomplishments, frustrations, etc. Please pass on ideas that worked.

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

WEEK 5

WEEK 6

WEEK 7

WEEK 9

WEEK 10

WEEK 11
WEEK 12
WEEK 13
WEEK 14
WEEK 15
WEEK 16
WEEK 17
WEEK 18

MENTOR INTEREST INVENTORY

Please complete this form so we may have sufficient information on your experiences and background to provide the best mentor and student match as possible.
Thank you.

Name: _____ Phone:_____ Date:_____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____Education (type, degrees, etc.) _____

Best day and time for you to mentor: _____

Is this volunteer service for college class credit? ❑Yes ❑ No

Training (computers, business arts, etc.): _____

Interests, hobbies, skills, talents, sports, collections, etc.: _____

_____

Military Service: _____

Travels/other places you've lived: _____

What is the best time/method to contact you? _____

What languages do you speak?_____

What musical instruments do you play?_____

Previous volunteer experiences: _____

_____

Why do you want to be a mentor? _____

_____

Please describe your personality:

_____quiet _____outgoing _____happy _____ shy

_____talkative _____moody _____nervous _____ friendly

MENTOR PLEDGE COMMITMENT

To confirm your understanding of the policies and procedures for Volusia County Schools' mentor programs, please read each statement and initial in the space provided, sign and date the agreement.

_____1) I understand this is an "on-campus only" program. My student(s) and I are restricted to meeting only on campus during school hours and are not allowed off campus for activities.

_____2) I agree to make a firm commitment to the Youth Motivator Program by coming every week.

_____3) I agree to be prompt.

_____4) I agree to call the school if I am unable to attend.

_____5) I agree to remind my student at each session of the day and time we will meet the next week.

_____6) I agree to keep confidential the information my student shares with me <u>unless</u> it involves:

- Suicide
- Abuse
- Pregnancy
- Drugs
- Serious Illness
- Aggression

_____7) I agree that confidential information will not be shared with my co-workers, friends, or family. My student needs to know that personal information will be kept private.

_____8) I understand that I am not to discuss sex education, religion, and personal lifestyle with my student.

_____9) With the school's assistance I agree to help my student in taking small steps toward attainable short-term goals. I will try to remember the individual differences and help my student to achieve their own measure of success.

_____10) As a volunteer I agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the School Board of Volusia County, the Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) program, and the individual school in which I serve.

_____11) I understand the VIPS program reserves the right not to place me or to discontinue the use of my services as a volunteer.

_____12) I have received the Mentor Program "Mentor Handbook."

My signature confirms I acknowledge and will abide by the above guidelines.

_____ _____

Youth Motivator/Mentor Signature Date

_____

Printed Signature

July 2025

MANDATORY REPORTING ON ABUSE HOTLINE

FL Statute **39.201** gives guidelines for "**mandatory reporting** of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect; on the central abuse hotline.

Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, as defined in this chapter, shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department in the manner prescribed in subsection (2)." Florida Statutes, 39.201 (1)(a)

When the mentor knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or a vulnerable adult has been abused, abandoned, neglected, or exploited, call the Florida Abuse Hotline **and** inform the mentor coordinator. The Florida Abuse Hotline will determine if the information provided by the caller meets legal requirements to initiate an investigation. It is the volunteer mentor's responsibility to report to their mentor coordinator that they have made such a report.

- By Telephone: 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
- By Fax: 1-800-914-0004
- By TDD: 1-800-453-5145

The Florida Abuse Hotline suggests a caller be prepared to provide:

1. Victim's name, address or location, approximate age, race and sex;
2. Physical, mental or behavioral indication that the person is infirm or disabled (vulnerable adults);
3. Signs or indication of harm or injury, including a physical description if possible;
4. Relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the victim, if possible. If the relationship is unknown, a report will still be taken if other reporting criteria are met.

Additional information and a copy of the fax transmittal form can be obtained at the Department of Children and Families website: www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse.



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