

High School Teen MENTORING HANDBOOK



Big Brothers Big Sisters
Edmonton & Area

Alberta

High School Teen Mentoring Handbook

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SECTION 1

Welcome



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations! If you're reading this, it's because you've been selected to be a **high school mentor**. You're now part of a growing group of high school students who are making a lasting impact in the lives of elementary students. You're about to start a journey that will not only make a difference for a young person in need of a friend and role model, but also shape your life in many positive ways.

This *Mentoring Handbook* is designed specifically for high school mentors like you. It provides detailed user-friendly information that will help you throughout your involvement as a mentor. With ongoing training and support from Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and resources from Advanced Education and Technology, you should have all the tools you need to become a successful mentor.

Thank you for your commitment to helping children develop into healthy, happy and productive citizens.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

The Mission

Enhance the healthy development of children and youth through mentoring relationships and to provide a path to post-secondary education.

The Goals

Mentor's Goals

- Mentors have opportunities to develop their leadership, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Mentors are satisfied about contributing to community.
- Mentors know how to access credible information about post-secondary studies.
- Mentors have an increased understanding of the costs and funding resources associated with post-secondary education.

Mentee's Goals

- Mentees develop a positive attitude towards school and reading.
- Mentees have an enhanced awareness of future post-secondary education options and an increased sense of hope.
- Mentees have an increased awareness of their personal strengths and abilities.
- Mentees will learn to connect their hobbies and interests to potential careers and post-secondary education.
- Mentees will learn how to plan for post-secondary education.

Mentor's and Mentee's Goals

- Mentor's and mentee's self-confidence is enhanced.
- Mentors and mentees have opportunities to explore career options.
- Mentors and mentees have the information required to make informed choices about planning for post-secondary studies.
- Mentors and mentees establish a positive, long-term relationship between a caring mentor and the mentee.
- Mentors and mentees are aware of how to get help in planning for the post-secondary school process.

Background

Big Brothers Big Sisters Edmonton & Area, in partnership with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, are providing this High School Teen Mentoring Program.

The High School Teen Mentoring Program is a school-based mentoring program where mentor-mentee matches meet for one hour per week to engage in relationship-building activities at an elementary school.

Research About Mentoring

Research tells us that mentoring works.

Research on in-school mentoring	64% of students with an in-school mentor develop more positive attitudes towards school.
One-on-one relationships	By establishing a positive long-term relationship with a caring teen, children will increase their confidence, their self-esteem and their sense of hope.

Aims of the Program

This initiative aims to provide mentors and mentees access to good information about

- the world of work and potential options
- programs that can support their long-term interests
- planning for the future.

The Origins of a Mentor

We acquired the word, mentor, from the literature of ancient Greece. In Homer's epic, The Odyssey, Odysseus was away from home fighting and journeying for 20 years. During that time, Telemachus, the son he left as a babe in arms, grew up under the supervision of Mentor, an old and trusted friend. When the goddess, Athena, decided it was time to complete the education of young Telemachus, she visited him disguised as Mentor and they set out together to learn about his father.

Youth mentoring by definition is the presence of a relationship between a caring older, experienced individual and a younger person resulting in the provision of support, friendship and constructive role modeling over time.

"We get more than we give in so many ways." MENTOR

Characteristics of a Successful Mentoring Relationship

The essence of a successful mentoring relationship is built on the following five characteristics:

1. consistency – regular visits, showing up when saying you are going to come
2. closeness or connectedness – common interests or a shared bond
3. youth-centred – focused on the mentee’s interests
4. structure and support (goals)
5. duration – the length of time a mentoring match lasts.

BENEFITS FOR HIGH SCHOOL MENTORS

The High School Teen Mentoring Program is a two-for-one initiative. That is, one match between a mentor and a mentee promotes the healthy development of both the elementary school-aged student and the high school student. Over the years, research evidence has demonstrated many potential benefits to adolescents who participate in ongoing programs to help others.

A Big Brothers Big Sisters agency partners with a local high school to recruit and select high school mentors like you. The agency also partners with an elementary school to identify children most in need of mentors. They assist to create matches, and through structured sessions drive benefits such as

- personal growth
- academic growth
- future potential.

This mentoring program can open opportunities for you in community service scholarships, skill development in working with children, awareness about learning strategies, a better understanding of career pathways and after high school education/training possibilities.

MENTORING SESSIONS

Enrolment and Training Process

The enrolment process for mentees includes successful completion of the following:

- a referral
- parent permission
- child safety training.

The enrolment process for mentors includes successful completion of the following:

- an application
- references (a parent, a teacher and a third contact), and
- an interview with Child Safety training by BBBS.

“...our students had an opportunity to develop positive citizenship by being involved in giving back to their community...” ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Staff from Big Brothers Big Sisters Edmonton & Area will provide your mentor training. After the training, you'll be matched carefully with a mentee from the partner elementary school. Then throughout the school year, you and your fellow high school mentors will go to the elementary school on a weekly basis to mentor your mentee or other meeting arrangements will be in place. You'll also meet regularly with your BBBS caseworker and the other high school mentors to reflect on your experiences, share ideas and plan for future sessions with your mentees. That's it in a nutshell.

Objectives of the Mentoring Sessions

As a high school mentor in this initiative, you have two objectives to focus on with your mentee during your mentoring sessions:

1. foster a love of reading in your mentee
2. inform your mentee about post-secondary schooling and career planning.

This *Mentoring Handbook* and the *Mentoring Activity Book* will provide you with many ideas and resources to achieve these objectives.

For this to succeed, it is necessary for both mentor and mentee to form a strong relationship based on mutual caring and trust. The support you provide for your mentee aims to increase confidence and result in improved success in school. There is a section of the handbook which includes enhancing the self-esteem of the child with whom you are working. People feel good about themselves when they are successful. Organize activities so that mentees can be successful and then tell them how pleased and proud you are of them.

The mentoring session will not always look the same. Some teachers will send assignments with the child every time; some will send things occasionally. It is important to have a balance of class assignments and activities that you and your mentee have decided are important. If you think you are being asked to do too much homework support, be sure to discuss it with the teacher and your BBBS caseworker.

Thank you for choosing to be a part of our program. Above all, enjoy your experience and have fun!

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your First Day

On your first day, you will likely already know the school and name of your mentee. You may already have information about your mentee's strengths and areas in which your assistance is required.

Your BBBS caseworker will

- meet you at the school on the first day
- give you a volunteer's name tag
- show you the sign-in binder where you write in the days and times of your visits
- show you around the school so you know where you can hang your coat and where you will be able to find the basics that you will need. (Your mentee may also show you around in further detail.)
- provide you with a calendar of the school's events for the year
- take you to your student's classroom
- introduce you to the teacher when the schedule permits

- introduce you to your mentee
- review what is expected during the mentoring sessions
- discuss the Friendship Agreement.

The Friendship Agreement outlines what will happen during your visits. You, your BBBS caseworker and your mentee will all sign your names on the Friendship Agreement and talk briefly about what you might like to do on your first day.

Once everyone seems comfortable, your caseworker will leave you with your student to get started on establishing your match.

When your visit is over, you should

- walk your mentee back to the classroom
- remind your mentee that you will be back the following week on the same day at the same time
- sign out at your designated location.

If you have any questions after your first visit, be sure to speak with/call your BBBS caseworker.

Throughout the Year

Generally the mentorship program starts in early October and ends the second last week of June. Each mentee visit lasts about an hour. If you have to end a session early due to your own schedule or something happening at the school, do not be concerned about this.

You and your mentee will be given coloured transparent pouches. Yours will be full of great resources for career and educational planning both for you and your parents. Your mentee will have a similar pouch including an eraser and pencil from Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. This may also contain a log book that will go back and forth from you to the mentee's teacher. Your mentee may have homework sent by the teacher that you and your mentee need to work on during your session. Your BBBS caseworker will clarify how the resources in the pouches can be used within your program.

Every school has a calendar outlining the regular holidays in the year as well as any designated school days off. You are not required to make up days missed because of holidays or student absences.

There may be times when the school has a special visitor or presentation during your scheduled time. In these circumstances, ask mentees what they would like to do. If they choose to participate in the school group activity, you may want to stay and join in, or you can decide to see them next week instead. Please realize that schools have events that come up very quickly and that participating is important to the children. It is not that they do not want to spend time with you.

Program Evaluation

Advanced Education and Technology and Big Brothers Big Sisters will use a formal evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of this program. You will find the evaluation component in the activity book. With the results, the partners hope to develop a strategy to create sustainable mentoring programs using high school mentors.

Mid-Year and End-of-term Follow-up

Your BBBS caseworker will do a mid-year follow-up with you and with your mentee to determine how things are going. This takes place prior to January. And, your caseworker will also do a final evaluation with you individually or with your high school group of mentors.

Your caseworker will also do a final evaluation with you individually or with your group of high school mentors:

- thanking you for your participation
- discuss the mentorship program and see how things went
- discuss the option of returning next term or for another year.

Teachers and mentees will also complete a final evaluation form to get their perspective on the mentorship program.

Most of the schools in our program prefer to keep the same mentor-mentee match into the next grade in order to foster the relationship that has been built. Therefore you do have the option of returning as a mentor for the same student at the same school for the next school year.

Mentor Newsletter

Four times throughout the year, you will receive an **in-school mentor newsletter**. This newsletter outlines upcoming events and offers ideas and suggestions for building relationships with your mentee.

HEALTHY AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS

There are a few simple personal health issues you need to be aware of when interacting with children in schools.

1. During and after a visit, wash your hands to avoid contracting germs and viruses that cause common illnesses such as the cold or flu. Even though you are only spending time with one child, you will be exposed to many children and their illnesses in your one-hour visit. Washing your hands goes a long way in preventing you from becoming ill.
2. Use **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS** in handling blood or other body fluids. For example, if students have a bleeding nose, have **them** hold the facial tissue as a preventative measure.

YOUR BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER MENTORING CASEWORKER

During this mentoring program, you have your very own Big Brother Big Sister mentoring caseworker (BBBS caseworker). We (the caseworkers) are responsible for supervising your match and helping you make it work. At all times, you are part of a team—you are not alone in your relationship with your student. Your BBBS caseworker is present during all mentoring sessions and will always be available to assist with any questions or concerns. We want and need to know how your match is doing. Thus, we expect you to connect with us regularly.

If you see any signs in your student that make you concerned, please connect with school personnel and your caseworker immediately. It is important to talk to us about a situation so that we remain informed and are able to assist you as well as your student.

If your caseworker is not available outside of session times, please do not hesitate to speak with another caseworker or a supervisor at

Main Edmonton Office – 424-8181

You should never feel like you are alone. You are part of the team.

“... High school students really aren’t that scary.” MENTOR

SECTION 2

Being a Mentor



Being a high school mentor will probably be different than any experience you've ever had. It will be both rewarding and challenging—rewarding because of the personal fulfillment you'll get out of helping a young child and challenging because you may have to think and act differently than you're used to.

WHO ARE HIGH SCHOOL MENTORS?

High school mentors are high school student volunteers trained by Big Brothers Big Sisters. What do high school mentors do? As a mentor, you simply become the best friend you can to your mentee. So, what does this relationship look like? Let's take a look at how you should approach your role as a high school mentor.

Your Role as a Mentor

Your role as a high school mentor includes being a

- **good listener** who will be there when needed
- **fun person** who is a pleasure to hang out with
- **friend** who will help inspire mentees about their future
- **teacher** who will encourage learning
- **coach** who will help build skills and confidence
- **guide** who helps with setting and achieving goals
- **motivator** who encourages others
- **confidant** who can be trusted implicitly
- **role model** who is admired and looked up to.

What is Not Your Role as a Mentor

It is also important to recognize what your role should not be. As a high school mentor, your role is NOT to be a(n)

- **parent figure** who acts like a mom, dad, or other authority figure
- **therapist or counsellor** who tries to analyze everything said or done
- **cure-all** who tries to provide solutions to every problem
- **missionary** who promotes personal religious beliefs or values
- **advisor** who offers advice at every step of the way.

"I would love to see this program continue and flourish. It is a win/win situation for all involved." ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Some of these may seem a bit out of place to you. You might be thinking, “Okay. I get that being a friend to my mentee is a little different than being a friend to my high school peers. But how can I be a mentor to somebody without giving advice or trying to solve their problems?” Easy—by helping them to make their own decisions and find their own solutions. In short, by being a coach.

This means your overall goal is to develop a relationship with mentees to help them

- build awareness of the potential for being a healthy, happy and productive person
- learn how to succeed on their own by making decisions and acting on those decisions.

Take another look at the list of roles we said a high school mentor should not play. If you’re always analyzing things, offering solutions and giving advice to mentees—telling them what to do or think—it will be tough for them to develop the ability to make independent decisions and move themselves to action; in essence succeed on their own. Try to keep coaching in mind when you’re with your mentee.

This means asking or discussing with your mentee the following type of coaching questions:

- Do you understand or remember what was/is planned for today’s session?
- What supplies do we need today to do the activity?
- What do you need to know to do this activity?
- What did you like or learn in the activity, not like?
- What made you feel good about today’s session?
- How can we make our sessions or activities better?
- Who can we ask for help?
- What would make you... feel better? ...learn more? ...have more fun?
- What do you want to do in the next session?

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS

Contact With Your Student

You are allowed to have contact with your student **only** in the child’s school during school hours throughout the school year. There is to be no exchange of addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses. This is the agreement we have made with schools and parents with regards to our program. Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in a mentor’s termination. The best response to a student who asks for any of this kind of information is to tell them that you are just an in-school mentor and you can only see them at school.

The High School Teen Mentoring Program may try to arrange for mentors and mentees to meet to do an activity during the summer months. The BBBS caseworker will let you know if this is a possibility.

Cancelling or Missing a Visit

If you have to cancel or miss a visit, it is important for you to contact your high school teacher to inform them of your absence. The children really look forward to your visit and when mentors do not show up, especially without explanation, they are often disappointed. If you know in advance that you are going to be away (i.e. because of holidays, tournaments, etc.), let your student know which visits you will be missing. Also, notify your caseworker and mentee’s teacher of your away dates so that they can remind the student that you won’t be there during those times.

Consistency and Reliability

Two important elements in being a mentor are **consistency and reliability**.

We ask that you be consistent with your weekly visits. Understandably, things will come up in your life, and you may have to miss some of your visits. But, by being consistent with your regular weekly visits with the student, you can help alleviate disappointment.

Reliability is a very important characteristic we ask of our mentors. In order to develop a meaningful and trusting relationship with your student, plus set an example for them, it is extremely important that you be reliable.

Policy on Giving Gifts

Big Brothers Big Sisters has a gift-giving policy for our mentoring program. You are under no obligation to buy a gift for your student at any time. The biggest gift you can give is you and your time.

The High School Teen Mentoring Program initiative as a whole has decided **that mentors are not to give gifts as most of the matches take place in groups and most students cannot afford this**. The policy is set out of fairness to all children in the program, as well as to the other children in the school. We insist that you help us by abiding by this policy.

However, we do recognize the generous nature of our volunteers. As a result, we allow our mentors to **give a gift of a book or some other educational activity item** such as an activity book, journal or word game, valued **under ten dollars** to their mentee at **Christmas and at the end of the year**.

What about gifts for other holidays and birthdays? Our suggestion is that you and your mentee make a card or a gift for each other during your visit. Anything that you wish to do for the child's class must be cleared with your caseworker and the teacher beforehand.

SURPRISES AND MYTHS

As your BBBS caseworker helps prepare your group for the high school mentor experience, there will most likely be other students in your group who were mentors last year. You should ask them about all of the ins and outs of mentoring. We have provided a summary of what former high school mentors have said about their experiences, both the pleasant surprises and the myths.

Surprise #1: Kids can really amaze you.

It's true that most mentees are involved in the program because somebody thought they could use a mentor, but you shouldn't automatically think of them as "troubled kids." They can be smart, funny, thoughtful, playful, caring and even just plain silly—they're kids.

Almost all high school mentors have discovered their mentees have many strengths and positive qualities. Learning and encouraging these positive qualities is a large part of what makes the program fun for high school mentors!

Surprise #2: You and your mentee may develop a very strong emotional bond.

You'll probably find that you and your mentee have many interests in common: sports, computers, TV, music, school subjects, career options and others. In many cases, these common interests make the friendship flourish. It's pretty easy to develop strong connections with someone when you have things in common. These similarities may even help you work through the education and career planning activities and build capacity in your mentee.

Surprise #3: The bonds you develop are not just with your mentee.

You and your fellow high school mentors will be meeting regularly with your BBBS caseworker to talk about your experiences and to plan for upcoming sessions with your mentees. These meetings are a great venue for sharing ideas, but also for getting to know each other. Many previous mentors have found the bonds they develop with their fellow high school mentors is one of the best things about the program.

Surprise #4: You may learn a lot about yourself.

Ultimately, you and the other mentors are there to help each other be good mentors to your mentees. There's a good chance that each of you will find that being a mentor has opened the door to new experiences or interests for you. You may be surprised at how well you can relate to children, how caring you are or what a great role model you can be. Perhaps it may help you determine what you would like to do for an occupation or career path.

Sound like a great program so far? Will it be a great experience for you? Yes to both. But, you have to have realistic expectations. Don't be surprised when you see that the realities of working with your mentee are not always ideal. Here are some of the myths that former high school mentors have asked us to share with you.

Myth #1: It will always be easy.

Developing a close, positive and caring relationship with someone can be hard work. There's a good chance that the child you'll be matched with doesn't have much experience with this type of relationship. There may even be some emotional wounds that cause them to be standoffish at first.

Here are some of the common challenges high school mentors have encountered:

- You cannot relate to some of the life experiences that your mentee has had.
- Your mentee may not show much interest in you and your life.
- Your relationship may not develop as quickly as you believed it would.
- You procrastinate and wait until the last minute to plan activities.
- Activities are cancelled or missed because of miscommunication between you and your mentee.
- Your mentee is not sharing much about self.
- Your mentee does not let you know what he or she wants to do.
- Your mentee does not want to do anything you suggest.
- Your mentee does not seem appreciative.
- Your mentee's social skills are not improving in spite of your efforts.

In this *Mentoring Handbook*, we offer some ideas on how to handle situations like these. And, you'll always have backup from your BBBS caseworker. You can turn to your caseworker for help when you need suggestions on what to do or have concerns about your mentee. You also have a team of other high school mentors to support you in your efforts.

Myth #2: I will be able to see day-to-day changes in my mentee.

With hard work, you can reasonably expect your mentee to be somewhat more confident, competent and caring at the end of the school year than at the beginning of your sessions. These changes probably won't be very dramatic. For example, changing from being a C student to an A student or from a depressed introvert to a self-assured live wire is not likely. Any transformations will probably be more

subtle—maybe even impossible for you to notice any major changes over the mentoring sessions. But know you have had an affect on this child in a positive way by just consistently being there.

Myth #3: It’s okay for me to adopt a “Do what I say, not what I do” philosophy.

Kids are pretty smart. They can tell when someone is not being genuine. It will be just about impossible for you to help your mentee make good decisions when you’re making really bad ones for yourself. That’s why you’ve been asked to sign an agreement that details the commitments you’ll have to stick to while you’re a high school mentor. Along with being a role model comes responsibility.

Myth #4: I can quit any time without any real damage being done to my mentee.

Being a high school mentor is not for everyone. It’s a big commitment and responsibility. You’re signing on to be a trusted caring friend. If you quit the program in the middle of the school year, you risk disappointing or even crushing a child who may have few people they can count on. So if something comes up where you may not be able to fulfill your commitment, speak with your BBBS caseworker to discuss your options.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The following pages detail some characteristics that will help you understand what your mentee might be like according to age. As you review these items, keep in mind that these are generalizations. While they provide a description of children in general at each developmental stage, you may encounter something slightly different with your mentee. This does not mean that there is something wrong. It just means that, in some ways, your mentee may not be like the average child.

	Ages 5 to 7	Ages 8 to 10	Ages 11 to 13
General Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eager to learn ■ Easily fatigued ■ Have short periods of interest ■ Learn best when active while learning ■ Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interested in people; aware of differences; willing to give more to others but expect more ■ Busy, active, enthusiastic; may try too much; interested in money and its value ■ Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, have capacity for self-evaluation ■ Capable of prolonged interest ■ May make plans on own ■ Decisive, dependable, reasonable, have strong sense of right and wrong ■ Spend much time in talk and discussion; often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test limits; have “know-it-all” attitude ■ Vulnerable, emotionally insecure; have fear of rejection; mood swings ■ Identify with admired adult ■ Self-image especially affected by physical appearance

	Ages 5 to 7	Ages 8 to 10	Ages 11 to 13
Physical Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun and involve the use of energy ■ Need rest periods ■ Reading books together or doing simple art projects are good quiet activities ■ Large muscles are well developed; activities involving small muscles are difficult ■ May tend to be accident-prone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun and involve the use of energy ■ Bone growth not complete yet ■ Early maturers may be upset with their size; a listening ear and your explanations may help ■ May tend to be accident-prone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Small muscle coordination is good ■ Interest in art, crafts, models and music is common ■ Bone growth is not yet complete ■ Early maturers may be upset with their size; a listening ear and explanations will help. ■ Very concerned with appearances and self-conscious about growth ■ Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy
Social Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules ■ Can be very competitive; may cheat at games ■ Very imaginative; involved in fantasy play ■ Self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first; less cooperative as get older, very boastful ■ Learn best through active participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be very competitive ■ Choosy about their friends ■ Acceptance by friends important ■ Team games popular ■ Worshiping heroes, TV stars and sports figures is common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acceptance by friends important ■ Cliques develop outside of school ■ Team games popular ■ Romantic crushes common ■ Friends set general rule of behaviour ■ Feel a need to conform (dressing and behaving alike in order to belong) ■ Very concerned about what others say and think about them ■ Have a tendency to manipulate others (“Mary’s mother says she can go. Why can’t I?”) ■ Interested in earning own money

	Ages 5 to 7	Ages 8 to 10	Ages 11 to 13
Emotional Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert to feelings of others, but unaware of how their own actions affect others Very sensitive to praise/recognition and criticism/critique; feelings easily hurt Inconsistent in levels of maturity; often less mature at home than with outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings hurt easily Because friends are so important; conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules can arise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings hurt easily Because friends are so important; conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules can arise Caught between being a child and being an adult; often critical Loud behaviours hide lack of self-confidence Look at the world more objectively, but look at adults more subjectively
Mental Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very eager to learn Like to talk Own ideas of fairness become a big issue Have difficulty making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairness still a big issue Eager to answer questions Very curious; are collectors of everything (but for only short time) Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support Wide discrepancies in reading ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to be perfectionists (if they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty) Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support Attention span can be lengthy
Developmental Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of gender differences Early moral development Concrete operations (begin to experience predictability of events) Group play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social cooperation Self-evaluation Skill learning Team (cooperative) play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social cooperation Self-evaluation Skill learning Team (cooperative) play

“The Mentors really enjoyed the program –they rescheduled other activities to ensure that they could go to the elementary school as it was so much fun to be with their mentee.”
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

RELATIONSHIP LIFE CYCLES

Just like most relationships, a relationship with a mentee has a life cycle. Things usually start slowly and may be a little awkward; eventually interactions become easier as you become more comfortable with each other. The following information gives you an idea of how your relationship generally may progress and offers some guidance on what you can do at each stage.

From Hello to Goodbye



The orientation, enrolment and training process.

- Learn how the program works.
- Learn about working with children.
- Bond with your fellow High School mentors.
- Learn about the particular child you will be matched with.



The first several meetings between you and your mentor.

- Find out about each other.
- Get an idea of your mentee's needs and establish some overall goals of the relationship.



The time when you both begin to invest in the relationship and build a mutually satisfying relationship

- Demonstrate consistency, predictability and commitment to the relationship
- Begin to allow your mentee more control of the content of your interactions.



The time when you achieve a comfortable rhythm and feel like you are having some success.

- Closely monitor and assess the progress of the relationship
- Note how close you and your fellow High School mentors have become, and recognize group successes along the way



The end of the year closure and celebrations (even if you plan to continue meeting with your mentee the following school year).

- Wrap things up with your mentee in a thoughtful and sensitive manner.
- Celebrate the fun and growth that you and your fellow High School Mentors have experienced throughout the year.

"I would love to be a mentor again next year!" MENTOR

Tips for Stage 1: Preparing

- Ask questions. It's better to ask now than later when you are one-on-one with your mentee.
- Think about what you are learning in the context of other relationships in your life. You may find that lessons learned in one relationship will help you build or repair another one.
- Remember that a child's participation in the program does not mean they are a "problem child." Mentees have a wide range of interests and needs. Teachers, counsellors and some parents request mentors for students who they feel could use additional support.

Tips for Stage 2: Discovering and Negotiating

- In the first meeting, the BBBS caseworker will go through a friendship agreement with you and your mentee. This agreement will talk about the goals of your match and what strategies you will use to achieve them.
- Take the lead more in this stage than in later ones, asking more questions and planning more activities.
- Share appropriate information about yourself.
- Listen carefully to the details of your mentee's life and family, so you can refer to these in later conversations.
- Be prepared to do more games and activities than to have in-depth conversations as discussions will come out of the activities.
- Think about what you and your mentee want from this relationship. What is important to you? What is important to your mentee? Remember the objectives of the program.
- Share successes and challenges with your BBBS caseworker and fellow high school mentors.

Tips for Stage 3: Building Rapport and Trust

- Be on time and do not miss sessions.
- Be patient. Building trust can take a while!
- Arrive knowing what activities have been planned for the session (see *Mentoring Activity Book*) and always ask what activities your mentor would like to do next session.
- Expect some testing of limits. This is a way of determining if you will be consistent and committed even when the mentee's behaviour may be disappointing or difficult.
- Avoid using "should" and learn alternative ways to suggest constructive behaviour; for example, ask, "How about if ...?"
- When talking with your mentee about post-secondary schooling or career planning, be sure to share your thoughts about your own plans for the future.
- End each session on a positive note, finding something your mentee has done well, learned or enjoyed by completing the evaluation form together. Let them know when you will be visiting again and plan what activities you will be doing next session.
- Continue to share successes and challenges with your BBBS caseworker and fellow high school mentors.

Tips for Stage 4: Accomplishments and Attaining

- Be prepared for highs and lows. It's possible that you'll feel much closer to your mentee on some weeks versus others.
- Do some focused thinking about how the relationship is meeting both your and your mentee's needs. You might ask yourself these questions:
 - How well do I understand what my mentee wants and needs from me?
 - Have I set aside my own agenda to listen to my mentee's concerns?
 - How effective is my verbal and non-verbal communication with my mentee?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the match between me and my mentee?
 - What is working best in our relationship? What is not working as well?
 - What things about our interactions could change to make things better?
- Point out **significant milestones** that have been achieved and let your mentee know how excited you are about this (for example, in the areas of reading, comprehension, plans for the future, etc.).
- Acknowledge the growth that you notice in the relationships among you and your fellow high school mentors, as well as the relationships between other matches..

Tips for Stage 5: Wrapping Up

- Prepare mentees for the end-of-year closure to be sure they are not surprised by the sudden changes.
- Expect and plan to respond to feelings of anxiety or fear of separation.
- Discuss with mentees what was accomplished over the course of the year. Talk about where they see themselves going in terms of post-secondary schooling or career paths.
- Do the final evaluations and compare original answers to what you know now.
- Commemorate the experience with a group celebration with the other high school mentors and their mentees.
- Remember the gift-giving policy. Giving gifts may be seen as unfair by other mentees who may not get a similar gift from their high school mentor. Instead, decide as a group on something small that every mentor can make and present to their mentee on certain celebrations or special holidays.
- Let your BBBS caseworker know whether you plan to continue being a mentor next year and whether you plan on mentoring the same child.
- Have a party just for you and your fellow high school mentors!

“The return of many of last year’s high school mentors to mentor again this fall also speaks to the benefit they feel they have not only gained but given.” MENTOR

SECTION 3

Building Mentoring Skills



Good mentoring relationships do not happen by chance. They take work. The most successful high school mentors are those who plan and prepare carefully for the relationship, incorporating tactics that have proven successful. You must develop and thoughtfully integrate good mentoring skills. This section describes those skills and helps you build them.

GENERAL MENTORING TIPS AND STRATEGIES

When asked about their teachers or mentors, students mention the following traits and behaviours as being important to them. These traits are also important in building the mentor-mentee relationship.

- Appearance** Students like to feel that adults find them so important that they are dressing up for them. Young children especially will notice your clothes and accessories.
- Humour** William Glasser¹ says humour is a form of caring. Have fun and laugh with your student.
- Courtesy** Good manners are important for both you and your student. You can teach by example and make them feel important at the same time.
- Respect** Any time you encourage your student to share their ideas with you, without criticizing or putting them down, you are showing respect. Giving specific feedback also shows respect, whether you are giving praise, correction or suggestions for improvement (for example, “You really used some interesting descriptive words in your story,” rather than, “Good work.” OR, “I really liked your story. Can you give me more details about...?”).
- Realness** Let your student get to know you and you will seem more real to them, and not just another authority figure in the school. Share stories about your own life.

Not long ago, a research organization studied the relationships between mentors and mentees in BBBS mentoring programs². They wanted to know what made some relationships successful and others not so successful. Basically, they discovered that the most successful relationships were those in which mentors took an effective approach and used effective skills. New mentors should follow these recommendations:

Be a friend.

- **Remember your primary role.** You are there to be a friend. Don’t act like a parent. Don’t try to be an authority figure. Don’t preach about values.
- **Show affection, but not too much.** It’s okay to let your mentee know that you have been thinking about them, but be careful not to smother them with hugs and other types of affection.
- **Show empathy.** When your mentee is going through hard times, remember how it felt when you experienced a similar problem or loss. Try to imagine how your mentee feels.

¹ Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom, 1998. The William Glasser Institute. www.wglasser.com

² Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study by Carla Herrera, Jean Baldwin Grossman, Tina J. Kauh, Amy F. Feldman and Jennifer McMaken with Linda Z. Jucovy, August 2007. www.ppv.org

- **See your mentee as an individual.** Identify what is special and unique about the child and acknowledge it.
- **Make frequent “deposits.”** Think of building a relationship like building a bank account. Every time you do something positive—like following through or providing encouragement—it’s like making a deposit that your mentee can later draw on for strength.
- **Remember details.** Find out about and remember your mentee’s siblings, likes/dislikes, pets, classes, favourite teacher, etc.

Have realistic goals and expectations.

- **Focus on overall development.** Your primary concern should not be with making sure that your mentee achieves some specific outcomes (such as better grades or school attendance), but with providing as much support and encouragement as possible to help build their capacity. Throughout the relationship, emphasize friendship over performance.
- **Don’t become too involved.** Be aware of your mentee’s problems, but encourage them to assume responsibility for doing something about it (build capacity to make decisions and act). Keep in mind that some of your mentee’s problems are beyond your control. In these situations, be the best friend you can by listening without judgment.
- **Don’t take on too much.** If you think that a situation has gotten out of your control talk to your BBBS caseworker and seek help.
- **Don’t expect perfection in yourself or in your mentee.** Human error is inevitable and won’t matter as much if your mentee knows you really care. Do your best to handle mistakes in a responsible and constructive way. But don’t get discouraged if it seems like your mentee is uninterested in you or the program.

Have fun together.

- **Enjoy yourself.** The bottom line is that it’s not worth it if both of you aren’t having fun.
- **Think ahead.** Focusing on “fun” games and activities early in the relationship can lead to more “serious” activities later.
- **Don’t worry about seeming “cool.”** Find opportunities to be silly, such as making up nicknames for each other and sharing jokes.

Give your mentee voice and choice in planning activities.

- **Be “mentee-centred.”** Emphasize that it’s important to you that your mentee enjoy doing the activities. Then, listen carefully to what is said.
- **Brainstorm together.** Select the learning activities together and then brainstorm games and physical activities you would like to do when you get together. Plan a group activity and lead it together. Give a range of choices for possible activities.
- **Don’t get frustrated.** Mentees may be reluctant to suggest activities because they don’t want to be rude or they find it really difficult to make decisions.

“Our students so look forward to the days their mentors come!”

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Be positive.

- **Give frequent encouragement.** Remind mentees of previous successes when something seems difficult. Tell them “you can do it.” Also discuss that when learning new things, it usually is hard the first time you do anything but that makes it challenging and worthwhile to learn. Be encouraging, even when talking about potentially troublesome topics such as grades.
- **Acknowledge accomplishments.** In day-to-day activities, note when your mentee tries and succeeds (like correctly spelling a hard word or helping out a fellow classmate).
- **Don’t criticize the past.** Avoid bringing up past mistakes.
- **Don’t generalize negative behaviour.** Avoid phrases like “you always” or “you never.”
- **Don’t get discouraged.** Your mentee is not going to change overnight. Be careful not to set expectations, whether spoken or unspoken that cannot be met.

Let your mentee have much of the control over what the two of you talk about—and how you talk about it.

- **Explain confidentiality.** Be direct in letting mentees know that they can confide in you without fear of judgment or exposure.
- **Don’t push.** Children vary in their styles of communicating and habits of disclosure, so try to be sensitive and responsive to their cues.
- **Be flexible.** Do it their way once and your way next to demonstrate your openness to doing things in different ways and to respect their approach to problem-solving. Or ask coaching questions like, “How can we...?” “What are some other ways to...?” Then, decide on a way together.
- **Think ahead.** Remember that the activities you do together become a source of conversation.

Listen.

- **Allow your mentee to share and vent.** Just listening gives children a chance to vent and lets them know that they can disclose personal matters to you without worrying about being criticized.
- **Share.** While discussing any particular topic, share your personal experiences with that topic.
- **Use active listening.** Active listening not only confirms to mentees that they have been heard, but also acknowledges their feelings. For example, say, “You’re stuck on this question (content) and seem to be getting frustrated (feeling).”

Respect the trust your mentee places in you.

- **Be responsible.** If you are unable to make it to a mentoring session, it is best to be organized and say that in the session before. If that wasn’t possible, ask your BBBS caseworker to relay the information to your mentee. You might also have another high school mentor give a note from you to your mentee, letting them know you are unable to attend but still thinking of them.
- **If you give advice, give it sparingly.** If you give advice, focus it on helping your mentee identify solutions, not on criticizing or placing blame. Use the coaching question starters: how, what, who, where and why. “How can you react differently?” “What needs to change or be done?” “Who can support you?” “Where is another...?” “Why is this important to you?”

- **Confront thoughtfully.** If you feel you have to convey concern or displeasure, do so in a way that also conveys reassurance and acceptance. You increase your credibility if you can say why something is or is not appropriate and give an appropriate behaviour of statement/phrase that is appropriate. For example, stating “when you constantly leave the table while we are doing this activity we will not get it done in our session and that will make us both feel sad and frustrated. I need you to stay here and work with me for the next 10 minutes to get this activity done”.
- **Respect boundaries.** If you sense that a question you’ve asked is a sensitive or “touchy” subject, back off.
- **Don’t propose religious beliefs.** It is inappropriate to encourage your mentee to adopt any religious belief or habit.

Remember that your relationship is with the mentee, not the mentee’s parent.

- **Keep your primary focus on the mentee.** Talk to your BBBS caseworker when you have any questions or concerns.
- **Be non-judgmental about the family.** You may learn things about your mentee’s family beliefs or behaviours that you don’t agree with. It is not your position to cast judgment on them or on your mentee.

Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship.

- **Stay in touch.** Take responsibility to have the best outcome for both you and your mentee in attending sessions.
- **Don’t expect sophisticated feedback.** You will gain many things from this experience; however, detailed well-articulated expressions of feelings from your mentee are not likely to be among them.
- **Be consistent.** If a child has suffered many disappointments, consistency can be the most important quality you can offer.
- **Model appropriate behaviour.** Be conscious of your own behaviour and what self-image you are projecting verbally and non-verbally.
- **Don’t share your personal problems.** Only when there is a lesson to be learned by the mentee is it appropriate for you to share a personal issue. But be sure to make it clear how it relates to your mentee’s challenges.
- **Don’t give medication.** If your mentee needs medicine, talk to your BBBS caseworker. Never give your mentee any type of medication.

ACTIVE LISTENING AND OTHER COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You probably noticed that one of the mentoring tips was good listening. This is so important that it’s worth discussing further. In order for you to be successful as a high school mentor, you have to be a good communicator. You’ll have to learn and effectively incorporate a number of interpersonal communication skills.

“Self confidence, social skills, self-esteem and work habits were improved and enhanced through mentor interaction. A quiet, thoughtful presence does much to teach social skills, etc.” ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

The most important of these skills is being a good active listener. Active listening is not just keeping quiet while the mentee speaks; it requires much more than that. To convey that you care and are paying attention—and to understand and appreciate what the mentee is saying—you will need to respond in ways that help conversations go smoothly. The guidelines below provide you with some of the knowledge and skills that will help.

Listen

*When I ask you to listen to me, and you start giving me advice,
you have not done what I have 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 feel you have to do something to solve my problems,
you have failed me, strange as that may seem.*

So please, just listen and hear me.

And if you want to talk, wait a few minutes for your turn and I promise I'll listen to you.

ANONYMOUS

CONVERSATION BUILDERS

When you are talking with your mentee, there are many ways you can respond that will help build the conversation, making it go more easily and smoothly. These responses can be questions, statements or just brief sounds of acknowledgement. But they are all great strategies to practise.

- **Making the minimal verbal response.** (Provide verbal cues.) “Hm-mm.” “Yes.” “I see.” “Uh huh.”
- **Paraphrasing.** Mentee: “I had a bad day today.” High school mentor: “It sounds like things didn’t go well for you today.”
- **Probing.** “Tell me more.” “Let’s talk about that.” “Could you give me an example?” “I’m wondering about”
- **Reflecting.** (Communicate your understanding of your mentee’s perspectives.) “You’re feeling uncomfortable about seeing him.” “You really don’t like being treated like a child.” “It sounds as if you’re really angry with your mother.” “I remember how difficult Grade 4 can be.”
- **Clarifying.** “I’m having trouble understanding what you’re saying. Is it that ...?” “I’m confused about ...” “Could you go over that again, please?” “Sounds to me like you’re saying ...”
- **Summarizing.** (Recap where you left off last time, go over what you’ve done throughout the current session or sum up a few things that the mentee has just said.)
- **Informing.** (Share objective and factual information such as your high school’s football record or what grades you will need to attend college or university.)
- **Reinforcing.** (Highlight any successes.) “Congratulations for doing well on your math test!” “Wow! You learned how to ride a bike? That’s awesome!”
- **Self-disclosing.** “I fell down and chipped my front tooth when I was eight.” “I used to fight with my sister a lot, too.” “One of my biggest fears is talking in front of a lot of people.” “I am hoping to go to University and become a teacher.”

Keep these things in mind when you incorporate these conversation builders:

- Use the same vocabulary level that your mentee uses. Speak slowly enough that each word can be understood.
- Use concise rather than rambling statements or questions. Time your responses to facilitate, not block, communication—for example, don't interrupt.
- Minimize using closed questions to which the answer can be a simple “yes” or “no”; examples are those that begin with “is,” “are,” “do” and “did.”
- Maximize using open questions. These are questions that encourage longer answers; examples are those that begin with “how,” “what,” “could” and “would.”
- Minimize using “why” questions. These tend to put mentees on the defensive causing the mentees to think they've done something wrong.

CONVERSATION BLOCKERS

Conversation blockers are obstacles to good conversation or good interpersonal interaction. It's best to think of them as “high-risk” responses, rather than absolute killers of communication. In most cases, the occasional use of a conversation blocker will not completely destroy a relationship with a mentee. However, they are more likely to increase (at least temporarily) the emotional distance between the two of you. Using them repeatedly can cause permanent damage to a relationship, so they should certainly be used with caution. Below are a number of examples:

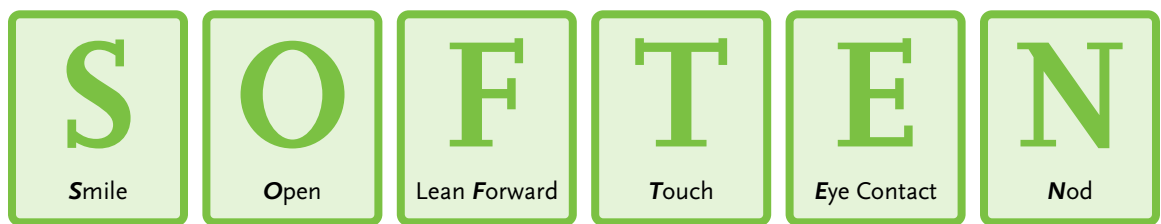
- **Ordering.** “You must” “You have to ...” “You will”
- **Advising.** “What you should do is” “Why don't you ...?” “Let me suggest” “It would be best for you” “If I were you, I'd”
- **Moralizing.** (Similar to ordering and advising, but with an extra element of “duty”) “You should ...,” “You ought to” “It is your responsibility” “The right thing to do is....”
- **Condescending.** (Talking down to the mentee, such as using baby talk) “Awww, is wittle Bobby having a bad day today?” “You're too young. You wouldn't understand.”
- **Diverting.** (Switching a conversation from the mentee's concerns to your own topic) “Let's not talk about it now.” “Forget it.” “Think you've got it bad?! Let me tell you what happened to me.” “That reminds me” “We can discuss it later.”
- **Sarcasm.** “Why don't you burn down the place?” “Did you get up on the wrong side of the bed?” “When did they make you boss?”
- **Criticizing.** “You're not thinking straight.” “You're acting like a little baby.” “Your hair is too long.” “That was dumb.” “You've got nobody else to blame for the mess you're in.”
- **Threatening.** “You had better” “If you don't, then” “If you do this I promise I'll” “Oh yeah? Try it and see what happens.”
- **Analyzing.** (Analyzing why the mentee does or says something) “What you need is” “You're just trying to get attention” “You don't really mean that.” “Your problem is”
- **Debating.** (Trying to convince the mentee using facts or logic) “Do you realize” “Here is why you're wrong” “Look at the facts. You broke a school rule. If you hadn't done, that you wouldn't be in this trouble.”

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

You've probably heard the saying "actions speak louder than words." Things that are communicated **without** words often send a stronger message than the words themselves. For example, if you were to say to your mentee, "This is really important to me" (and then roll your eyes at the same time), is what you just said believable?

Here are some tips on how to use non-verbal cues and body language to optimize the conversations you have with your mentee.

After observing humans interact for as long as you've been alive, you probably have a pretty good understanding of the kinds of non-verbal behaviours that would be useful and appropriate in a mentor/mentee setting. So we're simply providing an acronym to help you remember everything you already know. Just remember to SOFTEN up!



Smile Everybody prefers a smile over a frown. Obviously, there are times when a smile is not the appropriate facial expression and we're confident that you'll know when these are.

Open Adopt an open posture, try not to slouch or cross your arms or legs. An open posture is a sign that you are open to your mentee and to what they have to say.

(Lean) Forward During conversations with the mentee, face them squarely (not at an angle) and, as often as possible, lean slightly forward. Pay attention, however, to the distance between the two of you. If you sense that the mentee feels uncomfortable with your physical closeness, back up a bit.

Touch Appropriate touching, especially when it's initiated by your mentee, can be a good way to show that you care. But obviously there are times when it can be inappropriate. Be sure to check with your BBBS caseworker for more information on this.

Eye (Contact) Looking someone in the eye communicates sincerity and increases your credibility. Avoiding eye contact can make you seem sneaky, guilty, bashful or frightened. While using eye contact, be careful not to stare, squint or blink your eyes rapidly. It's more natural to look away from time to time in a relaxed, comfortable manner by just focusing over their shoulder. Also, try to position yourself so that the two of you are at the same eye level.

(Native cultures may see eye contact as aggressive behaviour. Speak to your BBBS caseworker if mentoring in a Native community.)

Nod Using simple gestures like nods conveys that you're paying attention. Other occasional physical gestures like motioning of the hands, tilting your head slightly sideways and leaning in to listen closely can be helpful, too.

MATCH MANAGEMENT

Your mentee will probably show you all sorts of behaviour—from being a “model child” to being out of control. Kids seldom act the same way all the time. It’s as if they are always trying out new behaviours. Your job is to keep up with these changing behaviours and understand the difference between misbehaviour and expression of natural childishness and exuberance. But if you do find yourself confronted with a misbehaving child, you should be prepared to handle it in a productive way. Bearing in mind that there are no hard and fast rules as to how and when to apply different child guidance techniques, here’s a simple two-step process to help you.

Step 1: Look at the context or situation.

Be a good detective. Take a close look at the situation and try to determine if something obvious (or not so obvious) might explain your mentee’s behaviour.

When It is very common for mentees to be more excitable or restless during transition times—at the beginning and end of the sessions.

Where New locations tend to cause excessive loudness, shyness, etc.

What Lots of commotion made by nearby mentees and by other high school mentors can make it difficult for your mentee to focus.

Who Some children are simply more rambunctious than others by nature.

Prevention Tips

- Begin each session by discussing the day’s plans. Set time limits. Say that your mentee may jump, be loud or run for two minutes. Then, the two of you have to move on.
- Discuss behaviour expectations before changing activities, location, etc.
- When not participating in group activities, move to a place reasonably far away from the others.
- Do not spend too much time on any one activity (15 to 20 minutes maximum). Variety is the key.

Step 2: Practise child guidance rather than discipline.

Your goal here is to guide your mentee into better behaviours rather than to “correct” or “punish” misbehaviours.

- **Focus on “do’s” instead of “don’t’s.”** If mentees are doing something they should not be doing, state what they should be doing instead.
- **Catch your mentee behaving well.** Pay attention to and praise positive behaviours. At the end of the day, say what you liked about the way they behaved.
- **Ignore attention-seeking misbehaviour.** Whenever possible, wait and pay more attention when your mentee quiets down or ceases the behaviour. Say you will talk, interact or play again when your mentee is not behaving in that particular way.

“I learned how to motivate kids.” MENTOR

- **Use positive, clear language whenever possible.** Say explicitly what you would like your mentee to do and explain why you're making this request.
- **Disengage from power struggles immediately.** If your mentee's behaviour is escalating rather than calming down the more you intervene, say that you need to take a break and remove yourself— physically if necessary—from the situation. Remember that it takes two to be in a power struggle—you should be the one to remove yourself from it.

MENTORING CHALLENGES

Many of our mentors find it helpful to discuss in advance some of the possible challenges they might face during a match with a mentee. For the most part, challenges are relatively minor and can be solved quite easily with some flexibility and creativity. The following are some situations and questions that other mentors have brought to our attention.

“What do I do if my mentee does not want to do the activities?”

This is a common situation as the mentee is probably missing lunch or recess to be in the program. At first some mentees will feel unmotivated to participate and would be playing with their friends. By preplanning you can avoid these problems and engage your mentee early.

To start, you could go for a power walk around the school and talk for about five minutes. Ask about their week or the time since you last met. You might want to compromise, working on one or two activities and then playing a game or doing some physical activity.

The session should be a **20-20-20** structure: 20 minutes of career activity, 20 minutes of literacy or academics and 20 minutes of play. Depending on time, you may only be able to complete either a career activity or a literacy exercise, and use the remaining time to play a game (board or physical).

Some mentors **use a calendar** to write out activities they will be doing each day so their mentee knows what to expect. Get your mentee involved in the planning to allow them to have some control over the sessions, this is a good way to engage them in decision making. If all else fails, remind your student of the Friendship Agreement that you both signed with your caseworker.

Note: It may be that your mentee is not in the mood, may be having a bad day or not feeling well to work on an activity that day. We all have our moods where we do not want to do things, and that's okay. This likely will not happen very often. Try your best to incorporate some other types of learning activities.

“What do I do if my mentee is having a bad day?”

Everyone is entitled to having a bad day, including children. We don't know what may have happened at home, during recess or in the classroom. You may notice your mentee is quieter than usual or somewhat distracted. If your mentee is feeling this way, try keeping your reading to a minimum and enjoy another activity instead. You may want to find a joke book and read it together, or tell each other your favourite kid's jokes or go around the school for a walk and talk.

“I have a new found respect and appreciation for what teachers have to go through.”

MENTOR

Alternatively you could ask your mentee what is wrong and talk about thinking positively. After trying several techniques if your mentee's mood doesn't improve ask them if they would like to go back to class. Do not take it personally if the answer is "yes", as sometimes children feel better in the familiarity of the classroom where they can choose to participate or not.

"What if my mentee misbehaves?"

It is rare that a child will misbehave during a mentoring session but it does happen sometimes. If mentees misbehave during a visit, consider the following:

- give a warning
- end the particular activity
- try something new
- return your mentee to the classroom if all else fails.

Physical discipline is not permitted. If you are not able to de-escalate the situation, ensure that you ask school personnel for assistance immediately. In the case of any extreme behaviour, you must discuss the appropriate intervention technique with school personnel and your BBBS caseworker.

Remember that most children do some amount of testing to see what is appropriate with you and what they can get away with. In this situation be firm but friendly as most testing will disappear when they clearly understand their limits. Maintaining clear boundaries and an appropriate length of time for activities will prevent difficult situations from arising.

"My mentee is easily distracted during our visits."

Most children are easily distracted or they have a tendency to want to jump from one thing to another. This is normal. The key to handling this situation is to ensure that you are able to change activities at least a couple of times during your visit. Most children have a very hard time sitting and reading a book for an entire hour. They need variety. You may also want to avoid high traffic areas in the school or have students sit where facing away from hallway traffic or activity.

"I need more ideas on what to do with my mentee."

Start by referring to the activities section of the *Activity Handbook* to engage your student in activities related to career planning and post-secondary schooling.

1. Choose activities together and look for those that are more physical (build a model, move around the room) or plan a group activity based on one of the group exercises.
2. Create costumes for some of the activities and pretend to be that character.
3. Access a computer to draw the interest of your mentee.
4. Use your Learning Clicks CD-ROM to build an Avatar and profile for your mentee. (Extra Learning Clicks CD-ROMs may be in the resource bin.)
5. Watch some of the youth reflection videos on the Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) website (alis.alberta.ca/et/ep/pps/psetvideos.html).

"I didn't know I could make such a difference by doing such a simple thing." MENTOR

6. Check the lists of literacy-based activities, website addresses for other resources and ideas of fun things to do together.
7. Ask your BBBS caseworker what activities work well in this program.
8. Ask your mentee's teacher if there is anything you can help your them with.
9. Approach your fellow mentors and find out what they do with their mentee.

“What do I do if my mentee is away or absent frequently?”

If your student is often absent when you come to visit, you may want to try a few things to help make your meetings happen:

- Discuss with the teacher any reason for the absences on your visiting day. The solution may be as easy as changing the day of your visit if this is a possibility.
- Talk to the secretary about setting up a system where you call prior to coming to the school to see if your mentee is in attendance that day. Keep in mind that school personnel will do their best to contact you if the student is absent; however, school personnel are very busy and calling you about an absence may be something they miss occasionally.
- Mention absences to your caseworker so that the issue can be further addressed. Most schools ask for the mentors to call to touch base. Schools will often have alternates to go in case there are children missing.

SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES

The four main points in tackling challenges that you face in your match are as follows:

1. **Be flexible.** Be willing to change activities and realizing your mentee may be having a bad day.
2. **Set limits and boundaries.** Remember it is okay to say, “No.” Feel free to set limits by giving your student a choice, yet you control the parameters of the choices you offer.
3. **Ask for assistance.** If in doubt in any situation, do not hesitate to speak with school personnel or your BBBS caseworker.
4. **Have fun.** We want your student's experience with you to be enjoyable and fun. Your visit is something we want them to look forward to.

“I was reluctant to do mentoring at first, but very glad I did...” MENTOR

SECTION 4

Self-esteem for Your Mentee



BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is defined as self-respect or the belief in oneself. It is how people feel about themselves. It is the feeling of self-worth—that we can handle our self and the environment with competence. It is the feeling that “I am somebody.”

Self-esteem is enhanced by	You could
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> being in touch with yourself and your personal history being part of a family and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> share your interests, hobbies, future plans and life concerns teach the value of family background and that one can move beyond this background if needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a special sense of self and recognizing uniqueness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss how you and your student are unique in appearance, talents, hobbies, career goals or interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to control one’s own life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teach students to make decisions, set personal limits, take responsibility and solve problems (build capacity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> having good role models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> set an example to help students establish their own values, goals ideals and personal standards.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Individuals with high self-esteem tend to

- be more effective in meeting environmental demands than those with low self-esteem
- adopt an active and assertive position in meeting environmental demands
- associate with such terms as self-respect, pride, self-acceptance and self-love
- manifest greater confidence that they will succeed
- be popular with their peers
- participate in more exploratory and independent activities
- defend themselves well against threats and demeaning attempts by other
- possess greater confidence in their ability to deal with events
- have less anxiety and a greater ability to resist the negative implications of social judgments.

“The high school students are building such positive relationships with our students. I know [our] kids will benefit as they learn together and strengthen their skills.”

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Individuals with low self-esteem tend to

- withdraw from others and experience constant feelings of distress
- be more intro-punitive (i.e. being hard on oneself) and passive in adapting to environmental demands and pressures
- feel inferior and timid
- have self-hatred and lack personal acceptance
- be submissive
- exhibit more frequent psychosomatic symptoms and feelings of depression
- isolate themselves from others. These individuals tend to feel that they have greater difficulties in forming friendships than do others.
- submit to social pressure
- have difficulty expressing controversial opinions, even when they know they are correct; and they tend to have a strong, defensive reaction to criticism.
- be “invisible members” of a group and rarely serve as leaders
- be self-conscious when talking to others. They tend to be conscious of their faults— whether real or imagined
- turn inward and dwell upon themselves—unlike those with high self-esteem.

SELF-ESTEEM IS IMPORTANT

Do the children you work with like themselves? Do they think others like them? Do they feel good about being them?

The answers to these questions are important. A child’s self-esteem has a tremendous influence on the child’s educational success, behaviour and overall development.

Helping Children Develop Self-Esteem

As adults, there is much that we can do—and can avoid doing—to ensure that children develop confidence and respect for themselves.

We can say things such as

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ▪ “Let’s do it together.” | ▪ “We’re really proud of you.” |
| ▪ “What do you think?” | ▪ “You’re an expert.” |
| ▪ “That’s the best job you’ve done yet.” | ▪ “Thank you.” |

By following these few guidelines, we can reinforce children's positive efforts, whether in academics, in citizenship or in attitudes toward others. We will be contributing to the development of their self-esteem.

My father knew all my faults, but to hear him talk (and in my presence, at that) you would think I had few equals. He showed in a hundred ways that he approved of me. When I disappointed him, he never showed anger, but instead assured me that he knew I would do better next time, that I could do great things. Everyone should have one person somewhere in his life like me father.

WILLIAM JEFFERIES

MENTORS' TOP 10 WAYS TO BUILD SELF-ESTEEM

1. Find out what is important to mentees, including some of their favourite things.
2. Use positive reinforcement. Point out things done well and provide compliments when appropriate.
3. Give opportunities to succeed.
4. Allow your mentee to make choices (i.e. choose the activity or book you will read together).
5. Be a good role model to your mentee, who will be watching you.
6. Remember your mentee is unique and should not be compared to other mentees.
7. Let your mentee know when she or he has taught you something new.
8. Be realistic with your expectations of your mentee. Set realistic goals.
9. Allow mentees the freedom to make mistakes but also encourage them not to be defeated by these mistakes.
10. Smile when you come and go to show you were happy to spend time with your mentee.

"This program gave Melanie some much needed one-on-one support and friendship. She loved this program and always looked forward to attending. It helped her with her peers and social skills. Her spirit was lifted and there was a notice in her confidence."

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT

Positive Reinforcement

Encouraging the Deed	Appreciation Recognition
<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I like the way you ... ■ You're good at ... ■ You sure know how to ... ■ Boy, look at all those ... ■ I like the way you handled that! ■ It looks as if you worked very hard on... ■ That's quite a good job. <p><i>Non-verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Smile ■ Wink ■ Pat on the back ■ Nod ■ Hug 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thanks for ... ■ I really appreciate ... ■ It was sure nice of you to ... ■ I was really pleased yesterday when ... ■ I noticed how you ... ■ I thought it was super when you helped me with ... ■ Great, you did... without me even telling you.
Encouraging Further Effort	Self-Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ That's a difficult job ... ■ Gee! That's tough. ■ It sure looks like hard work. ■ Hard, eh? ■ That's hard! ■ What a job! ■ You've made a good start. ■ You're improving. ■ I see you're getting ready to ... ■ You're all set! ■ Great! Now you're ready to tackle ... ■ That's a good beginning! ■ Keep it up. You're on the right track! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You must be pleased with ... ■ That must give you a good feeling! ■ I see you're very pleased with ... ■ You are pretty proud of ... ■ What were some of the things you felt good about today? ■ Sounds like you have some ideas on how to improve in ... ■ I bet that gives you a neat feeling ... ■ Sounds like you're excited ... ■ Sounds like you have learned ...

Adapted from: Stay in School/l'Ecole Avant Tout, Government of Canada Initiative, 1996.

"I now understand how different students are motivated by different things."
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

SECTION 5

Child Safety Program



CHILD ABUSE

The purpose of this section is to **highlight signs and symptoms of different types of child abuse**. Please note that the following signs and symptoms are not to be seen as exhaustive, but are examples or indicators of child abuse and neglect. It is possible for a child to experience more than one form of abuse at a time.

Child abuse includes the **physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or neglect** of a child by a parent, guardian or other caregiver that may result in a physical injury or emotional and psychological harm to the child. There are many different families in our community from a number of different cultural backgrounds. Keep in mind that what has been tolerated in one country may be defined as abuse in Canada.

Many children who are not abused or neglected may show one or more of these signs and symptoms from time to time—this does not necessarily mean that they are being abused. **It is the combination, frequency and duration of indicators that should alert you to a problem.** Take note of any changes in usual behaviour and extreme differences in behaviours from one session to another.

Signs and Symptoms of Various Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse	Physical abuse is the deliberate use of force on a child's body that may result in an injury. Physical abuse can be connected to punishment or confused with a method of discipline.
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Signs that a child may have experienced physical abuse include the following:

- unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations or abrasions on the face, torso, back, buttocks and backs of the legs
- unexplained small circular burns (cigarette burns) on the soles of the feet and palms of the hands
- unwillingness to tell you how an injury occurred
- serious physical injuries that are left untreated
- extreme behaviours (from extreme aggressiveness to extreme withdrawal)
- lack of trust and fear of physical contact with adults
- unwillingness to have you talk to his or her teacher about an injury
- having parents who give an unlikely explanation for an injury or who blame it on another person
- wearing clothes that cover arms and legs, even in hot weather; child resists changing clothing for any reason.

Neglect	Neglect consists of omission on the part of the parents or caregiver to provide the basic necessities to a child. Examples of this include: lack of sufficient food, clothing, shelter, adequate medical care or adequate supervision to prevent injury. Neglect may be identified by looking at the overall emotional and physical well-being of a child.
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Signs that a child may have experienced neglect include the following:

- appears hungry, listless and tired, has poor personal hygiene and frequently unattended physical or medical needs (hair, teeth, eyes and ears).
- gets inadequate supervision or childcare arrangements (places the child at risk) or is left at home without any supervision
- frequently misses school
- has parent(s) or guardian(s) who miss appointments and do not follow through on school requests, or easily allow others to assume this responsibility
- craves physical contact with others
- “fails to thrive” despite lack of disease or abnormality.

Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse is the persistent attack on a child’s sense of self. Examples include humiliation, isolation, rejection, intimidation and name-calling. Emotional abuse destroys a child’s self-image. A child who has been emotionally abused will often say “I can’t” and gets overly upset if they make a mistake. The child may be afraid of new situations and changes and may have the inability to trust others.
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NOTE: Some of these signs may also be an indication of another kind of upset in a child’s life such as some type of loss (death of pet, death or illness in family, break-up of family members).

Signs that a child may have experienced emotional abuse include the following:

- acts older or younger than appropriate stage of development
- displays a range of behaviours from aggressiveness and being out of control to being withdrawn and depressed
- states they are being blamed or belittled on a regular basis by parent(s) or guardian(s)
- seeks constant approval and has an unusual need to please adults
- feels responsible for parent’s difficulties and/or disappointments
- arrives early for school and makes excuses why they can’t go home
- has unusual fear of consequences of actions—often leads to lying.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any sexual exploitation of a child, whether or not it is consented to. It includes behaviour of a sexual nature towards a child by another child or adult. Sexual abuse is often difficult to identify because the children are often abused by a parent, relative or trusted adult-figure in the child's life who has threatened the child "not to tell" and to "keep the secret."

Signs that a child may have experienced sexual abuse include the following:

- complains of pain or itching in the genital area
- has detailed knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate for the child's age
- exhibits sexually precocious behaviour, or, creates artwork involving sexually explicit body parts or sexually abusive details
- dresses inappropriately (wears clothing that covers their arms and legs even in hot weather or wears provocative clothing)
- receives unexplained gifts or money
- seems sad or unhappy, and has poor self-esteem
- runs away from home often or talks about wanting to run away
- is discouraged from having contact with others and has poor peer relationships
- is reluctant to go to a particular place or be with a particular person.

HOW A VOLUNTEER SHOULD TALK WITH A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES ABUSE

Abuse victims are scared. They are scared of the past, the present and the future. They feel helpless and vulnerable and have a tremendous need for safety. The overriding thought that remains is, "Will telling be worse than not telling?"

The following are important points to remember about handling a disclosure of abuse:

Do

- Believe the child.
- Stay calm.
- Listen openly.
- Reassure child it is not his/her fault.
- Reassure child he/she did the right thing by telling.
- Let the child know what you are going to do.
- Offer the child comfort and support.
- Tell the child's teacher, school principal or counsellor before leaving the school. Then, inform your BBBS caseworker.

Don't

- Display indifference or trivialize the abuse.
- Display shock, horror, panic or disapproval to the situation.
- Interrupt while the child is telling the story.
- Allow the child to feel "in trouble" or "at fault."
- Expect the child to disclose everything at the beginning.
- Make an inappropriate promise not to tell anyone.
- Press or probe for information or counsel the child.
- Confront the alleged offender.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

It is essential that you report any suspicion of abuse as soon as it is identified. This is important particularly where there is concrete physical evidence on the child (bruises, burns, welts, broken bones). Some forms of physical evidence that may disappear within 24 hours are needed to corroborate the child's complaint. You do not have to prove that abuse has taken place as long as you have reasonable and probable grounds for the suspicions and are reporting your observations based on your work with the child.

As an in-school mentor, you should report any suspicions or disclosures directly to the appropriate school personnel, specifically the child's teacher, school counsellor, principal or vice-principal.

DO NOT LEAVE THE SCHOOL WITHOUT SPEAKING WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL FIRST.

As an in-school mentor, you are required to connect with your BBBS caseworker immediately after speaking with school personnel.

There will always be a Big Brother Big Sister caseworker present in the school during your sessions. The school will deal with the abuse disclosure. They may want to speak with the child directly and any siblings in the school before calling Children's Services and/or police to gather as much necessary information as possible.

Each disclosure is dealt with on an individual basis. The responsibility for investigation and follow-up lies with Children's Services and/or police. Cases will be prioritized and responded to by Children's Services and/or police depending on the urgent nature of the report.

After making your verbal report to the school and caseworker, you may want to jot down some notes: the date and place of your conversation with the child is important, and details on what the child has reported using the actual words the child used.

ABOVE SUSPICION: PROTECTING YOURSELF AS A VOLUNTEER

As more cases of sexual abuse are revealed through the media, there are bound to be situations where there is doubt about the guilt of the accused. Sometimes allegations made by children are actually "unfounded" and the accused is acquitted because of insufficient evidence. But, we are left to wonder whether or not the individual was really "guilty".

The justice system is improving and, in general, the rights of the victims are becoming more evenly balanced with the rights of the accused. Nevertheless, the system is not perfect and the media is quick to make a case of unfair treatment when a career is tarnished or a reputation is damaged. As a result, some people are urging those who care for children not to show any kind of physical affection whatsoever.

This kind of instruction is an overreaction—part of the backlash against the new measures for working against child abuse. It is important to show caring and to encourage children by being warm and affectionate. An extra effort by a child deserves a friendly "pat on the back" or a "tousling of the hair" to let them know how proud you are of them.

There are **sensible ways for volunteers to continue to show warmth to children while protecting their own integrity**. The following are guidelines you should follow to protect yourself as a volunteer:

- Make a point of showing affection to your mentee in open places where others can see and share in the warmth. If you are comfortable with others watching what you are doing with children, you are probably okay.
- Touch children **ONLY** on safe places on their bodies: the back, the head and the shoulders are acceptable. Avoid private places; they are not acceptable: the buttocks, breasts, thighs or groin.
- If a child is experiencing pain or feeling ill, take them to the school office. If an examination is necessary, it can be conducted by school personnel.
- If a child is sad and needs to be comforted, show affection by placing your arm around a shoulder and give a gentle hug or a good squeeze from the side. There is no need to hold or cuddle the child—leave this to the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- When conducting visits with your mentee, ensure you are in a designated or approved area of the school, in view of others.
- Sexually explicit conversations are not appropriate. If children ask any questions about sexuality, it can be handled by informing them that this is not a question for you, but rather a question for their parent/guardian. You should inform the teacher and the caseworker about the situation.

Always respect the integrity of the mentee you are matched with.

Your mentee's wishes must always be respected and a volunteer is never to stray beyond the "comfort zone" of the mentee. Be alert to your mentee's messages about their own personal space and the extent to which they are comfortable, if at all, with your physical closeness. For some children, even the briefest and least intrusive physical contact is not comfortable. It is not part of your job to "adjust" their comfort zone. Accept them the way they are and adjust your own behaviour accordingly.

Always think about propriety before you act. As with physical safety, we want you to keep both the reality and the perception of your behaviour beyond reproach. What may have been perfectly innocent and well intentioned on your part may look completely different to someone else. Don't allow yourself to stray into, or to be drawn into, a compromising situation that could be misinterpreted.

No secrets ever!

We teach the children that there shouldn't be any conversations or actions between the mentors and mentees that cannot be shared with their guardian, teacher and caseworker.

These recommendations are made for your protection, not to frighten or discourage you from developing a close relationship with your mentee. Relax, have fun and be comfortable knowing you are enriching a child's life.

SECTION 6

Understanding Learning



LEARNING STYLES

To contact a person by phone, you must dial specific numbers in the proper sequence. Our mind works in much the same fashion as a telephone switching system. It goes through several operations in a specific order, which allows it to store or retrieve information. We all do this a little bit differently. Even though we use our five senses to learn about the world around us, we develop our own unique learning style.

Most of us learn new things by predominantly using one preferred learning style:

- auditory
- visual
- kinesthetic/tactile.

The **Auditory** learner prefers to “hear” about new things; the **Visual** learner would sooner see a demonstration or read instructions; and the **Kinesthetic/Tactile** learner, learns best by doing things that are physical in nature or that have some emotional feeling attached to them. Some of us combine two or three modes when learning. Or, depending on what we are learning, we may switch our preference from one mode to another.

If we use all three modes, we tend to learn things better. However, there is no right or wrong way of learning. Most people just use or adapt their own unique combination of learning modes.

You can improve your ability to learn simply by understanding your dominant learning style (or styles) and by using the following chart. On the next page is a test designed to help you understand your learning preferences. Please take as much time as you require; answer the questions honestly as there is no right or wrong answer.

When you have answered all the questions, please add up your scores. The area that has the highest score indicates your preferred learning mode; your lowest score indicates your least preferred and least used mode of learning. By using some of the ideas listed under your strongest mode from the chart below, you can enhance your learning of new material.

This activity will help you determine your best learning style. Understanding how you learn helps you to be a better student.

When you have finished, transfer each number to its proper place on the Scoring chart on page 43. Then, add up each of the three columns on that page. You will then see very quickly your best learning style. At that point, you will know whether you are a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic/tactile learner. By this we mean whether you, as an individual, learn best through seeing things, hearing things or touching things.

“My Mentor helped me with my school work and it’s been improving because of her. I want to be a mentor when I am older!” MENTEE

Place a check in the appropriate column after each statement.

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
1. I remember more about a subject by listening to my teacher than by reading about it.			
2. I follow written directions better than spoken directions.			
3. I like to write things down or take notes for visual review.			
4. I press down very hard with a pen or pencil when I write or print.			
5. I require explanations of diagrams, graphs or visual directions.			
6. I enjoy working with tools.			
7. I am skilful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.			
8. I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.			
9. I remember best by writing things down several times.			
10. I can understand and follow directions on maps.			
11. I do better at academic subjects by listening to discussions and tapes.			
12. I play with coins or keys.			
13. I learn how to spell by repeating the letters out loud rather than writing the word on paper.			
14. I can better understand a news article by reading it than by listening to the radio.			
15. I chew gum, or snack while I study.			
16. I remember best when I picture something in my head.			
17. I learn spelling by "finger spelling" or writing out the words.			
18. I would rather listen to a talk or speech than read about the same material in a textbook.			
19. I am good at solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.			
20. I grip objects in my hands when I am studying or listening to the teacher.			
21. I prefer listening to the news on the radio to reading about it in a newspaper.			
22. I obtain information on an interesting subject by reading relevant materials.			
23. I feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, shaking hands, etc.			
24. I follow spoken directions better than written ones.			

Adapted from the Barsch Learning Style Inventory, Academic Therapy Publications.

Scoring Chart

Often = 5 points

Sometimes = 3 points

Seldom = 1 point

Place the point value on the line next to its corresponding item number. Then add the numbers to obtain the preference scores under each heading.

VISUAL		AUDITORY		TACTILE (Kinesthetic)	
No.	Points	No.	Points	No.	Points
2		1		4	
3		5		6	
7		8		9	
10		11		12	
14		13		15	
16		18		17	
20		21		19	
22		24		23	
VPS =		APS =		TPS =	

VPS = Visual Preference Score

APS = Auditory Preference Score

TPS = Tactile Preference Score

My learning style is _____.

I learn best by _____.

My least preferred style of learning is _____.

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

CHINESE PROVERB

ACTIVITIES THAT ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC LEARNING STYLES

Visual Learner

If you are a visual learner, you will remember things best when you've seen them.

- You will like a stimulating and orderly environment.
- You probably like to use diagrams and charts.
- You probably like reading, and may be a good speller.

Study tips to help visual learners

- Write things out to help you learn them.
- Draw pictures, charts and maps to help you understand things.
- Use mind mapping.
- Use planners, organizers or goal-setting charts.
- Highlight important points with colour.
- Try visualizing ideas and facts in your mind.
- Try changing places in the room while you're studying, to get a different perspective.
- Use models if they're available.
- Have a clear view of your teachers when they are speaking so you can see their body language and facial expressions.
- Study in a quiet place away from verbal disturbances.

Auditory Learner

If you are an auditory learner, you will learn best when you're listening (for example, when a teacher is speaking or when you are talking to someone). You will remember things best when you've heard them.

Study tips to help auditory learners

- Talk things through as you learn them, with a friend or tutorial group.
- Get a friend to read aloud to you.
- When you have to learn facts, try reciting them to yourself, or even singing them aloud.
- Find out if you study best in silence, or with music playing in the background.
- Participate in class discussions or debates.
- Use a tape recorder in class instead of taking notes.
- Speak out loud to someone while they write down your thoughts.

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner

If you are a tactile/kinesthetic learner, you will learn best when you're moving around. You will remember things best when you've done them. You may have trouble with spelling. In lectures, you may make many notes but tend never to look at them again.

Study tips to help tactile/kinesthetic learners

- Move around as you learn and revise.
- Work in a standing position.
- Work through problems physically (by doing the problems or sample problems).
- Mentally review what you've been studying while you're swimming or jogging.
- Use models and machines when you can.
- Take plenty of breaks while you're studying.
- Chew gum while studying.
- Use bright colours to highlight reading material.
- Dress up your room with posters.
- Listen to music as you study.
- Skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before settling down to read it in detail.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language development is a process that takes many years. Infants learn to respond to the language they hear in their homes by developing a listening vocabulary. As children grow, they start to use language to communicate, at first with words only their mothers can understand. This is the beginning of a speaking vocabulary. The development of oral language is the foundation of literacy learning.

Children who have not been raised in a language-rich environment will encounter difficulties in their attempts to read. It is very important to remember that talking with your mentee, reciting nursery rhymes, telling stories, jokes, riddles and playing word games will help them become a competent reader.

Most children first encounter books when someone reads to them. In order for them to understand stories, they must have an understanding of the vocabulary used and the concepts presented. Always talk about the ideas and the words before, during and after reading a book. Exposure to good children's literature helps mentees learn about the world and their place in it.

The literacy skills of reading and writing develop together. We often say that children “learn to read with a pencil” since decoding (sounding out words) and encoding (spelling) are really opposite processes using the same knowledge of the sound-symbol relationship of the English alphabetic code. Therefore, **each session should reinforce both reading and writing**. Remember that stories are not the only print material to which children need to be exposed. The career activities, non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers and all sorts of pamphlets can also be read and enjoyed. In some schools, access to computers will allow you and your student to access and enjoy career activities and other information online.

The use of language for listening, speaking, reading and writing, like any other skill, will improve with practice. The more you can incorporate language learning in sessions with your student the better.

Paired Reading

Your goal is to make literacy fun, and to have the mentee see reading as enjoyable. Don't let a child struggle with any reading or writing task. When encountering an unfamiliar word, let your mentee try to sound it out if desired, but quickly intervene and supply the word if your mentee is not successful. Another option is paired reading, reading out loud together (paired). Pace your reading speed to theirs and have your mentee track the lines you are reading with a ruler. Slow down if they fall behind and point to the word you are at to begin again if they completely stop reading. It takes practice to do paired reading but is a great way to increase literacy.

Using a dictionary is a difficult task for a child to master; if the meaning of a word is unknown, tell your mentee what it means. When your mentee is working on a written assignment, offer to do the typing, writing or printing. If your mentee is doing the writing, you can help by spelling the words when needed.

Reading Aloud

Most of us enjoy having someone read to us and children are no exception, even those in Grade 6. Read with expression in your voice and ask probing questions at the end. When you read to your mentee, you provide access to books that may be beyond their reading ability but feature concepts they can still understand.

“This is a wonderful program. The kids that are chosen are always excited and willing to participate.” ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

This High School Teen Mentoring Handbook will provide you with valuable information on how to be a mentor, including:

- building a great mentoring relationship
- surprises and myths about mentoring
- developing your conversation and listening skills
- determining your learning styles
- protecting your mentee