



BRIGHT MINDS

EMPOWER. ACHIEVE. INSPIRE.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

GUIDE



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ABOUT BRIGHT MINDS

Bright Minds has been bringing a little magic into the everyday lives of children by matching them with adult volunteers in fun and rewarding relationships. We are very excited that you are considering being a volunteer with our organization.

Friendship is a powerful thing. It's fun, almost anyone can be a friend and it's important. Experiencing fun activities together and forming a trusting bond with a child can have a powerful and positive impact on the child.

Our Mentor Program allows a way for you can meet with your Mentee to build a fun friendship.

Higher Grounds Mentorship - Mentors and Mentees can meet at the Bright Mind's faculty or other approved site typically at the same day & time each week. Activities take place at the site most likely with supervised personnel and other matches meeting at the same time. These matches do not meet outside of faculty grounds.

History and Purpose:

Bright Minds is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization providing tutoring, mentoring, and meal programs for disadvantaged elementary and middle school youth in the Chicagoland area. Bright Minds's goal is to foster a commitment to young people that will promote prosocial friendships, strong interpersonal skills, alleviate hunger, and reassert a sense of hope in children's' future. Only through personal relationships can a sense of individual responsibility be reestablished that will give youth the commitment to follow through on the path to adulthood with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Our goal is to aid in the improvement in a child's self-esteem, behavior, attendance and academic success.

Bright Minds recruits, screens, and trains our Mentors. The organization also monitors the relationship and (with input from supervisors, parents, and the mentor, themselves) evaluates the success of the program. Mentors are selected from various occupations and age groups.

A key component of this program is location. Meeting take place at the facility so there is NO contact (phone or otherwise) between the Mentor and Mentee outside of the approved setting. Mentor signan agreement to this effect prior to the initial meeting.

Mentors are required to sign a logbook and be identified each time they enter the site facility. The Mentor/Mentee contacts occur only during specified hours.

Bright Minds staff serves as the liaison between the activity organizers and the Mentor/Mentee to facilitate scheduling. Also, organization staff is also available to handle any problems that may arise.

Who are our *Mentees*?

- Children from our community who could benefit from having a positive adult role model.
- Children who like to have fun.
- Age 6 to 18.

How do Children come into the program?

Most children in our programs come to us through their parent or care-giver. All the children and their parents must want to be in our program.

Your Role

The success of the match friendship depends greatly on the efforts of the Mentor, the Mentee, and the Parent. Each one plays an important role in helping build a meaningful friendship.

What is a Mentor?

It won't be long before you meet your Mentee for the first time. And, when you do, it will help for you to understand your role as a Mentor.

Successful Mentors...

- Emphasize friendship over changing the behavior of the child.
- Are not authoritarian.
- Decide activities together with Mentees.
- Are consistent & dependable.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Are patient.
- Focus on having fun.
- Set boundaries and limits.
- Acknowledge that positive impact on the child comes after the relationship is built.
- Put a child's safety and well-being first.

- Communicate on a level the Mentee can understand
- Listen well and act as a soundingboard
- Have a positive self-esteem
- Are able to help the Mentee without doing their work for them
- Reinforce the Mentee's accomplishments & respect the child's dignity

What a Mentor Is Not:

- Parent
- Financial support
- Peer
- Therapist



BRIGHT MINDS SUPPORT

HOW BRIGHT MINDS WORKS WITH YOU & YOUR MENTEE



Bright Minds works hard to support the relationship you have with your Mentee. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone. Mentors and Mentees work with their BM Support Specialist/Team from their Bright Minds organization. This specialist also works with the Mentee's parent/guardian.

Along the way to forming a safe and lasting friendship your BM Support Team will be in touch with all of you to help you and your Mentee. Sometimes they will call, meet you in person, or email you to make contact. Communication will initially happen two weeks after you are first matched and then every other month throughout the life of the match. This allows us to provide support, give you ideas for activities, etc. You can think of your BM Support Specialist as the main link between you, your Mentee, the organization.

That's not all that the BM Support Team provides for your match. They also:

- Provide you feedback on how you're making a difference.
- Find information and resources that you might be interested in.
- Give you activity ideas for you and your Mentee.
- Help you communicate with your Mentee.
- Work with you on any conflicts that might come up.

You don't need to wait to hear from your BM Support Specialist--they love to be contacted by their Mentors. Here are some good reasons for calling your BM Support Specialist:

- To get feedback from the Mentee, and approved site about how the match is going.
- Share fun stories about your match.
- Discuss concerns you are having with your match or the safety of your Mentee.
- Ask for activity ideas.
- Report any emergency situations.

Contact your BM Support Specialist by phone and/or email--whichever is most convenient for you.

If your BM Support Specialist is not available please contact the organization for assistance. We make it a priority to serve you when you need it.



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

It's pretty simple - by building a trusting friendship with a child you can make a powerful impact in his/her life. That's what it's all about.

Here are some thoughts on making a difference:

- Consistently sharing activities together (having lunch, just talking) is the biggest factor in forming a positive relationship with them.
- Deciding together what activities to do fosters a stronger relationship.
- By being there you are making a difference even if you don't think you are.
- If you're concerned about not making a difference, talk it over with your BM Support Specialist.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

1. Commit to one year of friendship with your Mentee, with activities 2 to 4 times per month (during school year) for no less than approximately one hour at the facility per meet up.
2. To spend one-on-one time with my match in the designated areas on faculty grounds (e.g., Game room, and playground).
 - Mentor and Mentee will spend most of the time together one-on-one.
 - As the only adult approved to spend time with the Mentee, the Mentor may not bring another individual to participate in a match activity.
3. To contact the Bright Minds Team Member as required. This includes a phone call within two weeks of being matched and monthly thereafter or as required by the individual program while Mentorship is active. Calls from Bright Minds to Volunteer should be returned within 48 hours.
 - To contact BM Support Team Member when problems arise which may affect the Mentorship relationship
 - To contact BM Support Team Member if Volunteer personal contact information changes such as phone number, email address, etc.
 - To contact BM Support to discuss activities, child safety, child development, relationship development, organization affiliation
4. To maintain contact with the Mentee at the designated site (Bright Minds Facility) only and have no contact with the Match outside this site.
 - Exchange of contact information such as home address, phone numbers and email addresses is prohibited; social media contact is prohibited.
 - School-based activities or meet ups such as plays, concerts, classroom parties are acceptable; Bright Minds should be advised when this occurs.
 - Field trips, sporting events and any other off-ground school activities are prohibited unless special permission is given by Bright Minds prior to the event.
 - The taking of photos and videos of the Mentee are not allowed unless written permission is given to organization staff via a Parent Permission form.
5. To complete required end of year paperwork to assess the program's effectiveness.
6. To contact Bright Minds if closure of the mentorship is contemplated. This contact should be made before ending the match.
 - Unless attending a Bright Minds staffed activity. Mentors are not allowed to provide transportation to their Mentees, or walk them home, under any circumstances

MENTORSHIP GUIDELINES

GROUND RULES

- **Mentees and their Mentors are not allowed to meet** off site grounds unless attending a Bright Minds staffed activity. Mentors are not allowed to provide transportation to their Mentees, or walk them home, under any circumstances.
- **If you will not be able to meet with your Mentee** during your designated time, please follow the procedures directed by your Program Coordinator at the time of your mentorship to ensure your Mentee is aware.
- **Keep the relationship primarily one-to-one** – A good one-to-one friendship offers something the Mentee will look up to and admire. Keep your involvement with other Mentees in the classroom minimal as this may affect your relationship with the Mentee. As the only adult approved to spend time with the Mentee, the Mentor may not bring another individual to participate in a match activity.
- **Develop relationships with the child's parent/guardians**— By knowing the family of your child, they will be a valuable resource to you throughout the year. They can update you on your Mentee's progress, let you know of important days, and will help you to feel welcomed in their environment
- **NEVER engage in criticism** of those in authority including Mentee's parents/guardians.
- **Follow sign in procedures** at the Bright Minds facility; pick up notices or information relating to your Mentee, faculty activities, or early closings.
- **If your Mentee gets sick** please walk them to the Program Coordinator.
- **When using the restrooms** walk your Mentee to the restroom and wait for your Mentee either in the restroom if there are stalls or just outside of restroom.
- **At the end of the activity** please walk your Mentee back to the classroom and remember to sign out before leaving the building.
- **Please meet with your Mentee** in an open area - when meeting in a classroom or conference room please leave the door open.
- **If you are dissatisfied** with approved site personnel, address your concern to the BM Support Specialist that is assigned and we will help.
- **Confidentiality is mandatory.** There may be opportunities to see test scores or to hear things about your Mentee. These should not be discussed outside of the site facility.
- **All mentoring and lunch sessions** are to be held on site grounds during specified hours. Lunch may be brought in or you may purchase lunch in the cafeteria.
 - Providing opportunities for your Mentee to earn money should be discussed with the parent/guardian.
- **If you must miss a mentoring session,** please call the site and leave a message for your Mentee. Mentee look forward to your visits. It is important to let them know that you did not forget about your session. We understand that there will be times when you will have to miss a session but it is crucial that you call to cancel.

- **If your Mentee reaches out** to you with problems which require specific help you are unable to give, please contact BM Support Specialist for assistance and guidance. Also inform BM Support Specialist immediately if you suspect the child is experiencing abuse or neglect in the home.
- **Gifts to mentees** often result in jealousy by other Mentees. It also sets a standard with which other Mentor are uncomfortable. Please limit gift giving to small rewards for a job well done, birthday, or the like. A new pencil, key ring, book, or magazine to interest your Mentee are excellent examples of acceptable gifts.
- **Inform Bright Minds** whenever you experience a change in address, telephone number, so we can keep your records updated.

Discipline/setting limits:

- Physical discipline is never allowed.
- State expectations for behavior and any boundaries.
- Verbally address behavior concerns, clarify what needs to change or happen.
- If your Mentee does not respond, take him/her home and inform parent/guardian.

Supervision of Mentee

- Mentors are responsible for the supervision of Mentees at all times from the start to finish of a match activity.
- At no time should a Mentee be left unsupervised or left with someone else during a match activity.

Movies, video games, media, internet

- Mentors and parent/guardians are responsible for determining age-appropriate content/ratings in all media forms when with a Mentee.
- Viewing rated R (under 17 requires a parent/guardian) or NC-17 (no one under 17 admitted) movies or playing video games rated M (Mature-17+) is not allowed.
- Exercise caution and careful consideration when viewing movies rated PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned—some material may be inappropriate for children under 13) or playing video games rated T (content suitable for ages 13 and older) with your Mentee. If your Mentee is under the age of 13, you must get the parent/guardian's permission first.
- Viewing any media content with explicit sex, graphic violence or pornography is not acceptable while with your Mentee.
- Consult with your Program Coordinator for further consultation or clarification of these rules.
- Use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco:
 - Do not purchase or consume alcohol, drugs, or tobacco or engage in any illegal activity while in the presence of your Mentee.

Dress Code: Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately.

- Be aware of logos and designs on clothing and baseball caps to ensure that they are suitable for children (Examples may include logos/designs using alcohol or drug images, bad language, sexually explicit, etc.)
- Undergarments should never be shown even when bending or lifting arms overhead.
- Tops should be modest and cover your stomach and chest.
- Volunteers are expected to be positive role models in every aspect including dress and appearance.

MEETINGS OUTSIDE OF THE FACILITY

Visits and activities in the outside of facility grounds are strictly prohibited for the first six months of the match to allow for the healthy development of the match relationship. To qualify, the following criteria must be met and approved before any visits or activities outside facility grounds may occur:

- Mentor, Mentee, and Parent/Guardian is in compliance with the match agreement and all program policies and ground rules are being followed.
- Mentor and Mentee must meet with the Program Coordinator to complete the three month Strength of Relationship Survey.
- The Mentor has demonstrated good judgment and reliability in their commitment to the Mentee and has adhered to child safety guidelines, program policies and procedures.
- The Mentor, Mentee and Parent/Guardian consistently demonstrate good judgment, reliability and communication.
- Mentor must have prior parent/guardian approval for each activity occurring.

Meetings outside of facility grounds may be revoked at any time by the Mentor, Mentee, Parent/Guardian or Bright Minds staff. Frequent, excessive or exclusive outside of facility grounds will not be permitted. Match activities should include a wide range of activities other than at the home. The Program Coordinator has the authority to restrict the Mentors and Mentee's activities if there are concerns regarding the safety level or appropriateness of such visits. In that case, the parent/guardian and Mentor will be informed of the professional staff's decision.

WORKING WITH

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians have entrusted their child to you. They remain the leaders in their family and we respect and honor that. The parent's/guardian's support is critical to the success of the match. It may take a while to establish your role with the parent/guardian. Listed below are some ways you can work with the parent/guardian.

- Make sure they are aware of activity plans, and ask if the activity is okay. Do not rely on the Mentee to tell the parent/guardian about plans.
- Communicate with them before and after an activity. Describe what you plan to do and what you've done together.
- Let them know about any changes in plans.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of your Mentee's family with those outside of Bright Minds Independence.
- Maintain a primary relationship with your Mentee, and do not become overly involved with the rest of his/her family.
- Talk to your BM Support Specialist about any concerns you have regarding your Mentee's family or your Mentee's well-being.

Supportive Parents/Guardians:

- Return phone calls and stay in regular contact with you.
- Work with you to find the best times for meet ups to occur and make sure that their child is prepared and on time.
- Do not use you as a form of punishment. It is important that your Mentee knows that you will be in their life even if they have not been meeting their parents'/guardians' expectations.
- Never ask that siblings or friends be included your outings.
- Do not expect you to purchase anything for their child.
- Do not discuss your Mentee with you when he/she is present.

Building a partnership with your Mentee's parent/guardian takes time. For more information see Strategies for Common Challenges or contact your BM Support Specialist.

If your BM Support Specialist is not available, please speak with another member of our BM Support team.

REPORTING

CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES

Who should report suspected child abuse or neglect?

Anyone may voluntarily report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local child protection or law enforcement organization. Minnesota law requires professionals who work with children and families and their delegates to make a child protection report if they know or have reason to believe (this applies to Bright Minds staff and all of our Mentors):

- A child is being neglected or abused.
- A child has been neglected or abused within the preceding three years.

Anyone who reports child abuse in good faith is immune from civil liability. The reporter's name is confidential and accessible only if the reporter consents or by court order. The inconvenience of reporting is offset by one simple fact: the action you take could save the life and spirit of a child and provide a family with much needed support.

It is against the law to not report suspected abuse or neglect to a local child protection or law enforcement organization.

IMMEDIATE DANGER

If you know or suspect that a child has been abandoned or is in immediate danger (such as recent sexual assault or a serious physical assault), contact your local law enforcement organization right away.

NO IMMEDIATE DANGER

If the child is not in immediate danger, but you have reason to believe a child has been maltreated:

- Contact your Program Coordinator immediately. They are there to assist and offer support during the reporting process.
- Reports need to be made within a 24-hour time period after the suspected abuse or neglect has occurred. A written report is required within 72 hours of the report.
- Contact the child protection unit of the county social service organization the child resides.

If you are unsure whether you should make a report, call your Program Coordinator and they will assist you.

CHILD

SAFETY GUIDELINES



The following safety guidelines were designed to protect program participants from harm, identify potential areas of risk and define ways to minimize liability. Volunteer Mentors are required to follow these guidelines while matched with a Mentee. Please contact your BM Support Specialist for further consultation or clarification.

EVERY MONTH:

Stay in touch with your BM Support Specialist to advise them of your activities, the development of your relationship with your Mentee, and to receive coaching and feedback.

SUPERVISION AND TRANSPORTATION OF CHILD/YOUTH:

- Be responsible for the supervision of your Mentee and at no time should the child be left unsupervised or left with someone else during a match activity.
- Do not allow others to transport your Mentee (friends, family, roommate, partner).
- Maintain a working phone number where your Mentee's parents or Bright Minds can contact you while on an outing with your Mentee.
- Create a plan with your Mentee that you will both follow if you get separated while on an outing.

IF THE CHILD GETS SICK:

- Never give medication unless given either verbal or written permission from the parent/guardian.
- Ask if your Mentee has any allergies to medication.
- Take your Mentee home and inform the parent/guardian of the child's symptoms.
- Always carry your Mentee's current medical form, contact information and the Bright Minds emergency phone number.

IF ACCIDENT OR INJURY OCCURS:

Emergency

- Refer to the emergency contact information form.
- Make the necessary arrangements to address medical needs, call 911 if necessary.
- Notify parent/guardian of the injury.
- Contact Bright Minds at 215-833-7466.
- Report accident/injury to your BM Support Specialist.

Non-Emergency

- Apply basic first aids (Band-Aid, ice, etc.)
- Notify parent/guardian of the injury.
- Decide whether the activity can continue.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING....

For the Mentor :

- Allows both the adult and the child to form a positive, healthy relationship.
- Helps the adult develop and sharpen their skills in working with youth.
- Provides a sense of satisfaction that comes from helping others.
- Improves personal morale.



For the Mentee :

- Each type of mentoring can offer something a Mentee different. Mentoring benefits all young people by providing them with positive adult role models.
- Mentoring can be the bridge to health and well-being in the midst of many difficult choices.
- Helps form positive relationships with caring adults.
- Helps increase motivation in school and career.
- Helps reinforce the importance of education.
- Helps enhance self-esteem.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

EXPECTATIONS

We all had someone in our lives, other than a parent, who made a difference to us. This is what you can do for a child in our program. It's really pretty simple—it's a matter of making yourself available on a consistent basis. It's showing you care. It's having fun with a child. It's listening to them talk about whatever is going on in their lives. It's a series of small, teachable moments that, in the end, make a Mentor difference.



KIDS WHO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES DO BETTER IN SCHOOL.

Site-Based Mentoring is not a classroom program, and it's not tutoring. Site-Based Mentoring is one-to-one mentoring that takes place in the approved site facility. Of course, some Mentees do talk with their mentors about class, or do homework, or read together, but it's really all about friendship and guidance.

You can play or jump rope or shoot hoops — whatever you and the Mentee enjoy.

Changes in your Mentee tend to occur slowly. Often Mentees won't say —thank you— but this doesn't mean they aren't enjoying the time with you. It just takes time for the relationship to form.

VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS

NOW THAT YOU ARE MATCHED WITH YOUR LITTLE; YOU MAY BE THINKING WHAT COMES NEXT AND HOW FAST WILL IT HAPPEN?

As every experienced Big will tell you, the friendship takes time to develop. It is a different experience for every Big and Little, and no doubt your friendship will be unique.

However, there are some common stages that most match friendships will go through at different times, usually depending on the level of trust that has been established.

Honeymoon Stage

FROM THE FIRST MEETING TO APPROXIMATELY THE FOUR-MONTH DATE.

What does this stage look like?

- You both are trying to figure out each other.
- Littles may try to get their Bigs' approvals or impress them.

What can you do to move it along?

- Without prying, learn facts about your Little and reference them in your conversations: e.g. favorite things, best friend, where they've traveled.
- Be consistent and flexible, do what you said you were going to do.
- Be patient and remember that relationships have ups and downs, and don't "happen" by themselves.

Growth Stage

FROM APPROXIMATELY THE FOUR-MONTH DATE TO THE ONE-YEAR DATE.

What does this stage look like?

- This is the most crucial time regarding the development of the Big/Little relationship.

- This is the time that may be a turningpoint in the relationship.
- It is common, aroundthe four-month date,that your Littlewill begin testing you to see what you are really about and how much he/she can get away with.
- Your Littlemay be observing you to find a reason not to trustyou.

What can you do to move it along?

- Show your Little that he can trust you, through your reliability, consistency, and time together. As trust develops, your Little will probably begin sharingbits of information here and there with you.
- Keep in close contact with your SupportSpecialist for ideas.
- Recognize and praiseaccomplishments
- If you need to give adviceor address behaviorproblems, give reasons; avoid "shoulds."

Maturity Stage

THIS STAGE BEGINS SOMEWHERE AROUND THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY DATE.

What does this stage look like?

- You will notice your relationship with your Littlehas become more positive and realistic and match activities are less structured.
- Most Bigs have shed their preconceived notions regarding the match and their Little.
- As the friendship matures,you will see the maturityof your Littleas he/she grows and develops.

What can you do to move it along?

- Identify past shared experiences and enjoy shared "jokes."
- Learn something new to both of you, together.

Transition and “Closure”

- The Little you now know is probably not the same Little with whom you were initially matched. Changes probably have occurred. Celebrate the experience as much as you can together - highlights and hurdles.

- If the transition of closing the match is not approached carefully, a child can be hurt by the experience. Our staff will work with you, the child and his/her school to help you with this transition. The Mentee you now know is probably not the same Mentee with whom you were initially matched. Changes probably have occurred. Celebrate the experience as much as you can together - highlights and hurdles.
- If the transition of closing the match is not approached carefully, a child can be hurt by the experience. Our staff will work with you, the child and his/her school to help you with this transition.

MATCH COMPLETION

ADDRESSING COMPLETION IN YOUR CHILD'S MATCH

At some point most mentoring relationships end. Sometimes they end because the match just doesn't fit, one of the parties has moved or changed schools, or life circumstances have changed. Regardless, positive match completion is an important part of healthy relationship management. Consequently, we would like to point out some important aspects of successful match completion.

REMEMBER CLOSURE IN YOUR LIFE

First, consider a time in your life when you experienced the end of an important relationship; perhaps a break-up, divorce, etc. How did this event make you feel? How was it handled? How could it have been addressed in a different, more positive way? What practices do you have regarding endings and transitions.

CONSIDER YOUR CHILD

Next, consider how ending the relationship may affect your child. Your child may feel they are at fault, feel hurt, abandoned or angry. They may also act indifferent. If handled inappropriately, completion can have a very negative impact on a child.

ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS

It is helpful to acknowledge your own emotions and the emotions of your child. Match completion is common and honesty around the situation is most helpful. Consider this an opportunity to handle saying goodbye in the most healthy, respectful way. If addressed properly, match completion can be a positive experience.

STEPS TO COMPLETION

It is the commitment of Bright Minds to assure closure is handled in the most respectful, positive manner possible. Therefore, we ask all participants to participate actively in completion and adhere to the following steps:

- Notify your Program Coordinator as soon as the need for completion is identified.
- Develop a completion plan with your Program Coordinator.

- Work with your child's Mentor and the Program Coordinator to arrange a final closure activity.
- Focus on the positive aspects of the match. Perhaps share photos, stories, etc. Matches often make a farewell project such as a memory book or cards.
- Allow your child an opportunity to discuss completion if they desire.
- Acknowledge that the closure is also difficult for you as the Mentor. Use this event as an opportunity for a teachable moment. Discuss how moving on is a part of life.
- Be clear with your Mentee about what they can expect from you next. If you tell them you are going to write or call them, make sure you follow through with your promise.

Bright Minds appreciates your commitment and follow-through in this process. We recognize this can be very difficult for all involved. We are dedicated to supporting you in match completion and hope you will work with us to ensure a positive mentoring experience for all involved.

SUCCESSFUL MATCH

1. KEEP APPOINTMENTS & BE CONSISTENT.

- When you follow through in having your child on time for activities, it sends a positive message to the Mentor that you value the match and the time your child spends with them, which will help build trust in the relationship.
- If there is a time when your child can't keep an activity appointment with their Mentor, please call or email the Mentor to keep communication open and honest.

2. COMMUNICATE OPENLY & REGULARLY.

- As the parent/guardian, all activity plans are to be scheduled through you, not your child, and be sure to let your child's Mentor know of any schedule changes.
- Be honest about match activities or actions you are not comfortable or happy with.
- Keep your child's Mentor informed if there are things going on in your child's life that may affect their mood or behavior while on an activity.

3. MAINTAIN MONTHLY CONTACT WITH BRIGHT MINDS.

- Monthly check-ins with your Program Coordinator are required to ensure that your child is safe and happy in the match. If Bright Minds does not have contact with you on a monthly basis, is unable to help the match through any challenges, and is unable to reach you after 3 attempts your match may be suspended. If Bright Minds is still unable to reach you, the match may be closed.
- Returning all phone calls, emails or letters from Bright Minds will help ensure a strong, healthy match.

4. SET BOUNDARIES & KEEP THEM.

- Before the match begins meeting on their own, sit down with your child and talk about your expectations for their behavior when with their Mentor. Be sure to make clear that your child is not to ask the Mentor for gifts or spend money on activities, as the focus of the match is solely on developing the friendship.
- Address concerns as they arise; do not wait until it becomes a larger issue.

5. BE PATIENT.

Bright Minds has worked hard to match your child and their Mentor based on shared interests, but that does not mean friendships form overnight. Take the time to check in with your child's Mentor before and after each activity when the Mentor picks up and drops off your child, as your teamwork will help your Mentor feel more comfortable around your child (and vice versa) more quickly.

6. MAKE A CALENDAR.

Talk with your child's Mentor about what days and times of the week work best for activities for both their schedule and yours. Having a common meeting day can help cut down on rescheduling and communication issues.

7. BE A GOOD FRIEND

Listen, have fun, take time to get to know this new person in your life. Choose activities that you both enjoy and that will strengthen the bond between you. Don't set out to impose mandatory changes in the Mentee. Positive behaviors will flow after your Mentee trusts you and your Mentee grows in being more secure, not by declaring mandatory new behaviors that the Mentee has to do.

8. BE FLEXIBLE.

Everyone has busy lives these days, including you, your child and their Mentor. Sometimes activities must be cancelled or rescheduled. Cancelling or rescheduling with as much notice as possible will keep the match running smoothly.

9. HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

Remember that friendships and change take time. The impact of the match may not be easy to see, especially early on, but to prevent frustration and burnout for both yourself and your child's Mentor, focus on consistent activities between them and your child's enjoyment in the match. Realize that problems may come up:

- It's normal for problems to arise in a match relationship
- Try to balance your expectations of what it will be like with your Mentee and be realistic about how fast the relationship will take to develop.

10. BE YOURSELF!

Have fun; be silly; be yourself!

QUALIFICATIONS

- Mentors must be 18 years of age or older.
- Mentors must have a viable means of transportation to/from the school/site (including public transportation)
- Mentors must be able to supply references.
- Spouse/Spousal Equivalent or other Family Member
- Work/School
- Personal (friend)
- Prior youth experience (if applicable)
- Mentors must be willing to provide a release of information authorization for criminal history checks, driving record checks, counseling reports and other youth serving involvements.
- Mentors must be willing to provide their social security number, complete a background check and provide prior organization involvement.
- Mentors must agree to participate in the enrollment process.
- Mentors must demonstrate stability in mental health, personal/family life, social relationships, good judgment and employment history.

HAVE FUN. MAKE A DIFFERENCE. MAKE A FRIEND.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

ENROLLMENT

APPLICATION

Take time to carefully complete the application. Read the paragraphs on the back and sign and print your name on the bottom of the last page. Return the application to us via mail, e-mail, or fax. An application which has been e-mailed will be signed at the interview. Inform your references that we will be contacting them; this can overcome any potential delays.

INTERVIEW

An interview will be scheduled with you as soon as possible after the completion of the application. This interview will include a brief orientation, signing of police check consents, with a discussion and questions. The interview is usually completed at the most convenient location for the volunteer and will last about 1 ½ hours.

We also ask that you supply us with two forms of ID including a copy of your driver's license, a DD214 for those in the military, and proof of auto insurance which meets State minimum requirements for the applicable program. There will be a Child Protective Services Registry check and criminal background check as well.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION ON INVOLVEMENT

When the enrollment process is complete, you will be notified in a letter or by phone of the decision regarding your involvement with the Organization. Organization policy prohibits the disclosure of information related to this decision.

MATCHING

Once you are approved a BM Support Specialist arranges a match with a child based upon interests and preferences of the participants (parent/guardian, child and you). A match-up meeting may occur.

at the child's home, in our office, or another appropriate place. The purpose of the match meeting is to introduce the participants and hopefully, the participant's family. For the School Buddy Program, the match-up meeting will occur in the school as contact outside the school setting is not permitted in this program.

CASE MANAGEMENT FOLLOW-UP

Throughout your involvement in our program, the BM Support Team will be in touch on a regular basis. Most of the contact will be by phone with periodic in-person contacts. BM Support offers professional support to matches and families. For the First Friends program, the First Friends Coordinator will be the contact for any additional training and follow up.

TRAINING

You will be required to attend a training session before you're matched. Training will be offered weekly or as needed, and will cover areas that you feel would be beneficial. On-line training may also be available.

***PROCESSING OF YOUR VOLUNTEER APPLICATION MAY TAKE UP TO 4 – 6 WEEKS**

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Commitment to Learning:

1. Take a walk together and collect interesting leaves, rocks, etc.
2. Take a class together.
3. Research about famous inventors/explorers/discoverers.
4. Learn to sew, mend, knit or quilt.
5. Learn how to ride a bike.
6. Painting or gardening.
7. Get a chemistry set and do your own experiment.
8. Learn about different instruments.
9. Check out a book and read/discuss with your Mentee.
10. Learn words in a foreign language.
11. Do a pottery place
12. Look up new words in the dictionary and learn three new words a month.
13. Learn how to make homemade ice cream.
14. Make a bead necklace or bracelet.
15. Learn how to use a camera; take pictures and make an album.
16. Teach healthy eating habits: nutritious meal preparation and wellness.
17. Teach simple first aid skills.
18. Help your Mentee with homework and school projects.
19. Try a new recipe together.
20. Make fresh squeezed-orange juice.
21. Play board games.
22. Teach your Mentee how to write a resume.
23. Talk about career interests.
24. Use a magnifying glass to examine all sorts of things.
25. Learn how to program a computer.
26. Learn new games using math skills.
27. Ask your Mentee for help with a project you have been working on.
28. Make a book together. Cut out magazine clippings for pictures and write a fictional story.
29. Learn a simple magic trick together.
30. Start a stamp/coin collection.

31. Plant a vegetable or flower garden.
32. Buy a yo-yo and learn how to do tricks with it.
33. Go on a camera scavenger hunt
34. Learn a dance together.
35. Take a class together
36. Watch a professional or semi-professional sporting event
37. Discuss what each dream job requires in terms of education and experience
38. Try mastering something difficult: juggling, cooking a soufflé, water color painting
39. Use a globe to locate friends and talk about places you would like to visit.
40. Plan an imaginary trip around the world.
41. Make food from around the world and learn how people in those countries live.
42. Ask your Mentee to share his/her opinion about an important topic.
43. Encourage your Mentee to write letters to the editor of your local newspaper about issues that are important to them.
44. Teach one another customs and rituals from each of your backgrounds.
45. Pretend you are dining at a restaurant and talk about manners.
46. Share family pictures.
47. Discuss with your Mentee what qualities make a good friend.
48. Explore your Mentee's career interests
49. Use a book of names to find the meaning of each of your names.
50. Help your Mentee write a letter to the President. Request a photo so your Mentee will receive a picture and packet of information in the mail.
51. Role-play meeting new people so your Mentee gains confidence in possibly unfamiliar situations.
52. Engage in activities that require creativity.
53. Play games in the gym together
54. Talk with your Mentee about what he/she wants for their future.
55. Write a poem about one another and share.
56. Help your Mentee make a list of all the people who love them.
57. Write a letter to your Mentee on your anniversary: explain how much this friendship means to you.
58. Let your Mentee teach you something new.
59. Make something to celebrate your friendship.
60. Eat lunch with your Mentee at school.

HOBBIES:

- Start a collection
- Make puppets and do skits
- Draw faces on balloons
- Paint rocks
- Do model cars, planes, or boats
- Buy a book of crafts or go to craft shows
- Sew or needlework
- Knit
- Grow plants
- Play musical instruments
- Play board games
- Plan for future schooling
- Read a book out loud
- Workbooks
- Make up your own stories
- Do a leaf collection
- Learn about another country
- Get library cards
- Set goal with prizes for reading a certain number of books

INDOORS ACTIVITIES:

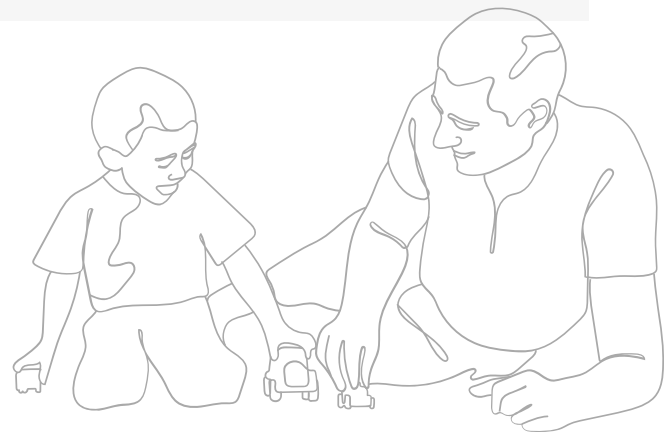
- Write an article about your experience as a match for Bright Minds
- Experiment with different hairstyle
- Color
- Do puzzles
- Make bird feeders
- Recite a poem
- Sing a song

WORK EXPERIENCES:

- Explore different job opportunities
- Learn how to complete applications
- Complete a resume
- Rehearse an interview
- Fix something together
- Clean your house or car
- Do yard work together

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES:

- Be in or go to a fashion show
- Go to the zoo
- Play video games/watch a movie



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR MATCHES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:

- Twirling a baton
- Learning a cheerleading routine
- Learning a dance
- Walking/Jogging
- Golfing
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Handball
- Racquetball
- Horseshoes
- Flying a kite
- Throwing a Frisbee
- Baseball
- Football
- Kickball
- Play foosball, air hockey, pool or ping pong at Bright Minds

ACADEMIC:

- Do Flash cards
- Do homework together



WHAT DO I DO?

Over the years we have seen some common problems that can occur in any match. These are called common because they are, well...common. It's normal for Mentee/Mentor relationships to experience some of these situations. We've collected some examples of these common problems and some tips on how to handle them. If you are experiencing one of these challenges in your match, please bring the issue up with your BM Support Specialist and discuss in more detail how to proceed in a successful way.

“MY MENTEE DOESN'T SHOW APPRECIATION.”

Coming into the match with a preconceived notion of how your Mentee should show appreciation will set you up for a letdown. Your Mentee may not say “please” and “thank you” when you first start meeting, and even after many times together he/she may still not respond in a way that you deem appropriate.



Response: “I had a good time” may eventually be a response, but may be a long time in coming.

Sometimes he/she might only say, “It was o.k.” Be sure you model the behavior you would like your Mentee to demonstrate, and be consistent.

“MY MENTEE DOESN'T SHARE FEELINGS AND/OR INITIATE CONVERSATION.”

You may feel that your Mentee is not putting as much into the relationship as you would like. The relationship may seem one-sided for a long time with you doing the talking, but your Mentee not saying much.



Response: Eventually your Mentee may well respond in a more open and honest way, trusting you and confiding in you as an adult who will not disappoint or walk out on him/her. Conversation between you will grow and your Mentee may share more feelings with you. If this happens, rejoice in it, but remember that no relationship is perfect and all relationships are defined in a variety of ways.

“MY MENTEE DOESN’TACT THE RIGHT WAY.”

Your Mentee may come from a family with a very different value system than yours. It is not your responsibility or role to try to change the values of your Mentee. Your match is a learning experience for both of you. If your Mentee has never been to a play, they may not know what behavior is expected of them.



Response: Try to be content with the understanding that, through your example, your Mentee may come to respect values that are more positive. But this may be a long process.

“MY MENTEE DOESN’T SEEM TO NEED ME.”

Every child should have someone to bring a Mentee magic to them, but your Mentee may not respond in a way that makes you feel you are needed. Feeling needed may be expressed by your Mentee in small ways, and may be non-verbal.



Response: In time, you may learn to recognize small signs that your Mentee needs you. This will help you in being content with the knowledge that you are making a difference and are a much-needed part of your Mentee’s life.

“MY MENTEE DOESN’TMAKE TIME FOR ME.”

Your Mentee may seem to have Mentee time for you, but be assured that although other activities and family issues may appear to interfere, your Mentee is benefiting from the interest and involvement of a caring adult friend. You are the person spending one-on-one time with your Mentee; listening; sharing, and showing your desire to be together on a regular basis.



Response: No group activity, school event or family commitment can take the place of your special relationship with your Mentee. If you recognize the importance of what you are doing, chances will increase that your Mentee will recognize this too.

“MY MENTEE DOESN’T SEEM INTERESTED.”

Keep in mind that we all demonstrate interest in different ways, and your Mentee may not know how to communicate that he/she is interested.



Response: Be sure you do not make assumptions based on your Mentee’s behavior, and talk to your Support Specialist if you have questions.

“MY MENTEE DOESN’T WANT TO IMPROVE.”

Your Mentee may have many adults eager to tell what she/he is doing wrong.



Response: What your Mentee will respond to is someone who will point out and praise strengths. These strengths (assets) can range from the values that the child holds to things he/she is good at doing. If your Mentee knows that you are going to be positive, give encouragement and compliments, and appreciate the unique person that he/she is, change will happen in very positive ways, and your Mentee will grow in confidence, competence and caring.

The most important thing to remember is that you will need to be patient and persistent throughout your relationship! Your relationship may take time to develop, but if you are able to manage your expectations, be open to surprises, and accepting of your Mentee as an individual, you are in for a fantastic ride! Your BM Support Specialist is available to help you through any of the above situations. Remember to seek help as necessary.



THANK YOU!

As your match begins, and throughout the entire life of your match, we want to THANK YOU! You are stepping forward on a journey where you don't know exactly what will happen, but you are doing this because you care for others and you know that there is great reward in life in the relationships you develop.

We wish you all the best in your match with your Mentee. Have great fun and take pride in your contribution to the happiness of your Mentee. We will be supporting you, throughout your journey.



CHILD DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

6-7 YEAR OLDS

General Characteristics

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they are active while learning.
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks. They like to do things that are fun and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles are difficult (i.e., working on models with small pieces).
- May tend to be accident prone.

Social Characteristics

- Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
- Can be very competitive. May cheat at games.
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing.
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative than at five, and boastful.
- Learn best through active participation.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are alert to feelings of others, but are unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regress when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.

Mental Characteristics

- Are very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Their idea of fairness becomes a Mentor issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

Developmental Tasks

- Sex role identification.
- Early moral development.
- Concrete operations - the child begins to experience the predictability of physical events.

8-10 YEAR OLDS

General Characteristics

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give to others but expects more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.
- Can be very competitive.

Social Characteristics

- Are choosy about their friends.
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sports figures is common.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friend's rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

Mental Characteristics

- Their idea of fairness becomes a Mentor issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Very curious, collect everything. May jump to other objects of interest quickly.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation/Skill learning
- Team play.

11-13 YEAR OLDS

General Characteristics

- Testing limits, “know-it-all attitude.”
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good. Interests in art, crafts, models and music is high.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- Are very concerned with their appearance, and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

Social Characteristics

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to “belong.”

- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others (“Mary’s mother says she can go. Why can’t I?”).
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults’ rules and friends’ rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- 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.

14-16 YEAR OLDS

General Characteristics

- Testing limits, “know-it-all attitude.”
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to “belong.”
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.

- Have a tendency to manipulate others (“Mary’s mother says she can go. Why can’t I?”).
- Going to extremes, emotional instability with “know-it-all” attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with an admired adult.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- Can better understand moral principles.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

Developmental Tasks

- Physical maturation.
- Formal operations.
- Membership in the peer group.
- Relating to the opposite sex.