



Big Brothers Big Sisters®

OF CENTRAL MASS & METROWEST

**Community-Based
Programs Volunteer Handbook
2019**

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Community-Based Volunteer Guidelines

I agree to all of the following conditions:

1. I will visit with my Little once a week during the school year at the site of one full year. I will adhere to all community-based guidelines when visiting outside of the site.
2. I will not spend more than 50% of match meetings with my Little at my home.
3. I will not use my cell phone while meeting with my Little, except for in cases of emergency.
4. All plans must be clearly understood between myself and my Little's parent/guardian. This is not the responsibility of my Little. I will receive prior approval from the parent/guardian for all outings with my Little.
5. All activities should be low to no cost with my Little. If I want to spend more than \$100 for an activity, I will contact my Match Support Specialist for approval.
6. I understand I should be the only one to provide transportation to my Little, as I am the only one approved by the BBBS agency. No other individuals will be included.

7. I understand the Agency encourages a working relationship between myself and my Little's parent/guardian. I will not develop a personal relationship with my Little's family, as this may adversely affect our friendship.
8. I understand when my Little is in trouble or grounded at home, he/she should still be allowed on outings with me.
9. I understand BBBS strongly discourages connecting on social networking sites with my Little.
10. I will return all calls from Big Brothers Big Sisters within 48 hours and provide feedback about the match. **I understand that failure to do so will result in the termination of the match.**
11. I will complete agency surveys regarding my relationship with my Little.
12. I will report any problem or concern with my Match Support Specialist ASAP.
13. I understand that overnight outings between myself and my Little are not allowed until further notice.
14. I will report any changes in address, telephone number, place of employment and e-mail address.

Print and Sign Your Name: _____

Date: _____

Child Safety

1. I will make sure my Little is wearing his/her safety belt while driving. The child must sit in the back seat until 12 years of age. Children must use a booster seat in Massachusetts for a child that's up to 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall or 57 inches tall.
2. Texting and talking while driving with my Little is prohibited.
3. When my Little visits, firearms in my home will be locked and unloaded; ammunition is kept in a separate place.
4. My Little and I are not permitted to participate in any activities that involve weapons, firearms, and ammunition.
5. If I am on a boat, my Little must wear a life vest at all times. If we are riding bikes, my Little must wear a helmet.
6. I will abstain from alcohol/tobacco for a minimum of 6 hours prior to/during activities with my Little, even if the parent says it is okay to do so. I will abstain from marijuana for a minimum of 12 hours prior to/during activities with my Little. Furthermore, I agree to have my person, clothing and my vehicle free of marijuana paraphernalia and odor prior to/during activities with my Little. I am responsible for my Little when we are together.

Signature _____ Date _____

Expectations – What will you do?

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 BIG difference.

Our Vision:

That all children achieve success in life.

Our Mission:

To provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

5 Tasks of a Mentor

- 1.** Establish a positive personal relationship.
- 2.** Help your Little develop critical life skills.
- 3.** Assist your Little in accessing additional resources.

4. Increase your Little's ability to interact with other social and cultural groups.

5. Help your Little to develop his/her own competencies and feelings of self-worth.

BBBS Match Support - How BBBS Works with You

BBBS works hard to support the relationship you have with your Little. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone. Each match will be assigned a Match Support Specialist. This may change throughout the duration of the match but BBBS will inform you of any changes and/or will support you in the interim.

Along the way to forming a safe and lasting friendship, your Match Support Specialist will be in touch with you. Monthly communication is required for the first year of the match and quarterly communication is required after the first year throughout the life of the match. This allows us to provide support, give you ideas for activities, etc... You can think of your Match Support Specialist as the main link between you, your Little, your Little's parent and the agency.

Your Match Support Specialist will:

- Give you ideas about low cost, fun and learning activities you can do with your Little.
- Provide help on specific topics to you when you need it.

- If necessary, help you work through any problems you might have with your Little and/or his/her parents.

Match Support Specialists 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 Little.
- Offer donated tickets to community/sports events.
- Keep you updated on activities offered by the agency.
- Help you communicate with your Little and their parent.
- Work with you on any conflicts that might come up.

You don't need to wait to hear from your Match Support Specialist—they love to be contacted by their

Bigs. Call your Match Support Specialist:

- To get feedback from the Little, and Parent/Guardian 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 Little.
- Ask for activity ideas and find out about current events at BBBS.
- Report any emergency situations.

Roles of a Big Sister/Brother (“Bigs”)

➤ Adult Companion:

- Be involved in the total life of the child by being understanding, kind, sincere, patient and by providing affection and security.
- Commit unconditionally - accept that the child may have difficulties due to emotions, developmental level, different value systems, latent hostility toward adults, or testing the Big to determine if the friendship is genuine.
- Be a consistent and reliable presence in the Little’s life, through the Little’s happy and difficult times.
- Allow the child a degree of independence in the choices and judgments he/she makes.
- Put the child’s safety and well-being first.

➤ Positive role model:

- Exhibit honesty and respect for others.

- Be a positive example in lifestyle, social interactions, dress, occupation, personal habits and demeanor.
- Acknowledge that positive impact comes after the relationship is built.

➤ **Friend and Listener:**

- Emphasize friendship over changing the behavior of the child.
- Maintain open communication with the Little.
- Suspend judgments and accept the child for who he/she is.
- Create an environment that encourages expression of positive and negative attitudes, feelings and thoughts.
- Focus on having fun.

➤ **Limit setter:**

- Set clear limits for acceptable behavior.
- Direct limits to the actual behavior of the child, not at the child as a person.
- Emphasize positive behaviors rather than pointing out negative ones.

➤ **Resource and Guide:**

- Open the door to activities and experiences for the Little.

- When serious problem situations arise, act as an advocate to identify the appropriate resources to ensure successful intervention.
- Share your own skills and talents with the child.
- Create “**Teachable Moments**” out of difficult decisions or situations.

A Big is...



- Consistent**
- Reliable**
- Caring**
- Patient**
- Persistent**
- Supportive**
- Encouraging**
- Attentive**
- Communicative**

A Big is NOT...



- A Parent**
- A social worker**
- An ATM or Santa**
- A disciplinarian**
- A babysitter**
- A Taxi service**

- ☑ Open Minded
- ☑ Observant
- ☑ Nurturing
- ☑ Committed
- ☑ Fun

*** In order to maintain healthy boundaries and to prevent confusion, a clear understanding of your role as a **Big** is essential. ***

THE “DO’S” AND “DON’TS” OF BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

Developing a trusting, positive and reciprocal relationship is hard work. The following “tips” are certain to ease the process.

BE CONSISTENT:

If a child has suffered multiple disappointments, this can be the most crucial quality that you can offer. Consistency is a **key factor** in building trust.

MODEL APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:

Be conscious of your own behavior and the self-image you are projecting. Your Little will most certainly be watching and learning (even when you don’t think they are!).

SPEND ONE-ON-ONE TIME:

The Big Brothers/ Big Sister relationship is primarily a one-to-one relationship. Shared time between a Big and Little may be the only time when the child is not with several siblings, or surrounded by a roomful of students.

ACTIVELY LISTEN and REMEMBER DETAILS:

In your eagerness to relate to your Little, resist the impulse to interrupt with a similar story of your own. Listen actively, with your full attention. Nothing is more flattering than to know that you are truly being listened to and that what you have to say is worth remembering.

LEARN 20 FAST FACTS:

In the course of your first couple of outings, without prying, find out 20 facts about people, places and things that are important to your Little. Who is their teacher? Who's their favorite band/singer? What's their favorite food?

GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT:

Remind your Little of previous successes when something seems difficult or insurmountable. Tell them, "You can do it."

BE FLEXIBLE:

Relationships are about give and take. Learn to compromise; do it the Little's way once and your way the next, i.e. museum this time and movie next time.

RESPECT BOUNDARIES:

Be aware of your Little's physical and emotional "comfort zones". If you see that a question you've asked is "touchy," back away. Children who have been hurt before need to protect their vulnerability.

PRACTICE EMPATHY:

Although you may not have suffered the degree of loss that your Little has, reach down and remember how you felt about the losses you have had, i.e. loss of a beloved pet, a grandparent's death, divorce, etc...

BE CLEAR AND UP FRONT:

If your Little is behaving inappropriately (swearing, etc...), address the specific behavior in a clear and direct manner. It is your responsibility to help educate your Little, in a caring way, about appropriate social behavior.

Keep in mind while building the relationship,

DO NOT:

DO NOT criticize your Little's family:

Even if you disapprove, do not voice your opinion. Consult your Match Support Specialist with any concerns. Help your Little constructively problem-solve issues involving his/her concerns about the family. Do not pass judgement.

DO NOT criticize your Little's friends:

Likewise, do not voice your opinion about behavior or “style” of your Little’s friends. Friends are important people in your Little’s life.

DO NOT constantly teach:

Recognize “**teachable moments**” using approaches such as, “What do you think of the way that person just behaved?” Be a guide while helping your Little discover his/her own answers. Make certain that teaching is only one component of the complex mentoring relationship.

DO NOT share your personal problems:

While it is truly valuable to share your thoughts and experiences with your Little, remember that you are there for the child. Only when there is a lesson to be learned is it appropriate to share personal problems with your Little.

DO NOT set unrealistic expectations:

Understand that you are one force among many in your Little’s life; be patient and persevering. Be aware of, and celebrate, the small changes and successes.

DO NOT pry:

Be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal cues that indicate you are asking too many or too threatening questions.

DO NOT worry excessively about doing the wrong thing:

Just be yourself. Use sound judgment and common sense. Remember that we all make mistakes; turning mistakes into “teachable moments” is the key.



WHEN BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP, REMEMBER THESE KEY POINTS...



Relationships take time.



Relationships don't happen by chance; they require effort, patience and commitment.



Relationships have their ups & downs.

How to Create a Partnership With Your Little's Parent/Guardian

Parental support is critical to the success of the match. Establish your role, and work with the parents/guardian by:

- Communicating with them before and after an activity. Describe what you plan to do and what you've done together.
- Making sure they are aware of activity plans and ask if the activity is okay. Do not rely on your Little to communicate.
- Letting them know about any change in plans.
- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of your Little's family.
- Maintaining a primary relationship with your Little and not becoming overly involved with the rest of his/her family.
- Talking to your Match Support Specialist about any concerns you have about your Little/Little's family.

Stages of the Mentoring Relationship

There are some **common stages** that most relationships will go through at different times, usually depending on the level of trust that has been established.

The Beginning Stage – From the first meeting to approximately 4 months.

What does this stage look like?

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

What can you do to move it along?

- Without prying, learn facts about your Little and reference them in conversation. i.e. favorite things, best friend, where they have traveled.
- Be consistent and flexible: do what you said you were going to do.

A common phenomenon in early match development is the expectation that we are going to immediately impact our Little's life.

For example:

- My Little's grades jumped from F to A!
- My Little became a perfect kid!
- My Little trusts us completely!
- My Little shows me sincere appreciation!

Beware of the trap of placing expectations on yourself and your Little; this often sets you up for disappointment and you become burned out. Results may not be immediate and you may not see an impact for years to come. This is common, but be aware that you are definitely making an impact on your Little!

Growth Phase - From the 4 month stage to one year.

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 turning point in the relationship.
- Your Little may begin testing you to see what you are really all about and how much he/she can get away with.
- Your Little may be observing you to find a reason not to trust you.

What can you do to move it along?

- Show your Little that he/she can trust you through your reliability, consistency and time together. As trust develops, he/she may begin to share bits of information here and there with you.
- Keep in close contact with your Match Support Specialist for ideas.
- Recognize and praise accomplishments.
- If you need to give advice or address behavior problems, give reasons and avoid “shoulds”.

Maturity Phase - From one year onward.

What does this stage look like?

- You will notice your relationship with your Little has become more positive, 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 maturity of your Little as he/she grows and develops.

What can you do to move it along?

- Develop long term shared interests, activities that you will do frequently together and that you both enjoy.
- Identify past shared experiences and enjoyed shared jokes.
- Learn something new to both of you, together.

Match Termination and Closure

For the most part, match termination is not a sudden decision. Generally there is a culmination of events in the Big or Little's life, or during the match relationship that lead to the final decision to close a match. Your Match Support Specialist's role is to supervise, support, advocate, and intervene so that the match termination is always a last resort. However, to prepare for a match termination, Bigs should keep the following perspective:

Life is a series of goodbyes.

- Life means having and holding – then letting go and giving up, even what we care about the most.

Sometimes goodbye is only a spatial separation.

- The experience and memory of your time with your Little is always with you. Strive to make the parting a positive memory as well.

Encourage open talk with your Little about the impending termination.

- Talk about how you are feeling, when the last visit together will take place, what your Little will do after you are gone, and how you can keep in touch. i.e phone, write, email, etc...

Relive with your Little the activities you have shared together.

- Look at pictures of your time together, scrap books and journals. Talk about what you have shared together, learned together, cared about together, and how you have learned from one another.

Let your Match Support Specialist know as soon as you think the match may need to come to an end.

- Your Match Support Specialist can offer additional guidance and support.

Match termination results in a detachment process, similar to the grieving process.

- It is normal for your Little to deny that they eventually may never see you again. Be concrete with your Little.
- Let your Little know the last day you will be sharing together, why you cannot continue in the match, and how things will be different.
- Be prepared that your leaving may bring up memories and unresolved issues of other significant people who have left your Little.
- Begin preparation for the parting early to allow both you and your Little some time to get used to the idea and process what “Match Termination” means.

Communicating with Your Little

“I” MESSAGES

- Help explain your feelings in response to someone else’s behavior.
- Do not accuse or place blame - avoid judgment and keep communication open.
- Continue to advance a situation to a problem solving stage.

For example:

“I was really sad when you didn’t show up for our meeting last week. I look forward to our meetings and was disappointed not to see you. In the future, I would appreciate it if you could call me and let me know if you will not be able to make it.”

Avoid:

“You didn’t show up and I waited for one hour. You could have at least called me and let me know that you wouldn’t be there. You are irresponsible.”

Watch the message that you are giving:

- **Body language:** slouching, turning away, and pointing a finger
- **Timing:** speaking too fast or too slow



- ***Tone of voice:*** shouting, whispering, sneering, and whining
- ***Choice of words:*** biting, accusative, pretentious, and emotionally charged
- ***Facial expression:*** smiling, squirming, raising eyebrows, and gritting teeth

Results:

“I” messages present only your perspective allowing the other person to actually “have” a point of view. “I” messages communicate both information and respect, moving both parties along to the problem solving stage.

Paraphrase

- Listen first, then reflect the two parts of the speaker’s message, **FACT** and **FEELING**, back to the speaker.
- Listen “between the lines” for the “feeling” part of the communication.
- “Check out” what you heard for accuracy – did you interpret what your Little said correctly?
- Helpful when working with youth culture/language that is constantly changing. Often words have an entirely different meaning for youth today.

Format:

Examples for FACT

- “So you’re saying that...”
- “You believe that...”
- “The problem is...”

Examples for FEELING

- “You feel that...”
- “Your reaction is...”
- “And that made you feel...”

Results:

- Enables you to gather the information and report back the facts and the attitudes/feelings that were expressed in the message.
- Lets the other person know that you understand and care about his/her thoughts and feelings.

Open Ended Questions

- Collect information by exploring feelings, attitudes and how the other person views a situation.
- Maintain an active dialog without interrogating by asking questions which cannot be answered with a “yes”, “no”, “I don’t know”, or a grunt.
- Helpful when dealing with youth, teenagers especially, whom tend to answer questions with the least amount of words possible.

Examples:

“How do you see this situation?”

“What are your reasons for...?”

“Can you give me an example?”

“How does this affect you?”

“How did you decide that?”

“What would you like to do about it?”

“What part did you play?”

Caution: Using the question, “Why did you do that?” may sometimes yield a defensive response rather than a clarifying response.

Results:

Since open-ended questions require a bit more time than close-ended questions (questions that can be answered by “yes”, “no”, or a brief phrase), they give the person a chance to explain. Open-ended questions yield significant information, which can in turn be used to problem solve.

Listening Skills

Relationships are built from a foundation of effective listening skills and good overall communication. These skills are based on respect, honesty and responsibility. With children, we have the obligation to listen, and to understand their level of communication.

ACTIVE LISTENING

- **Attempt to understand the content and emotion of what the other person is saying.**
- **Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal messages.**
- **Focus, hear, respect, and communicate your desire to understand.**
- **Not the time to be planning or delivering your own message as to how you feel.**

Active listening is **NOT**: nagging, cajoling, reminding, threatening, criticizing, questioning, advising, evaluating, probing, judging or ridiculing.

What skills are used?

- Eye contact

- Body language: open and relaxed posture, forward lean, appropriate facial expressions, positive use of gestures.
- Verbal cues such as “um-hmmm”, “sure”, “ah”, “yes”, etc...
- Paraphrasing what you heard in your own words to ensure understanding

What are the results of active listening?

- Encourages honesty
- Frees people of troublesome feelings by allowing for open expression
- Reduces fear - helps people become less afraid of negative feelings
- Builds respect and affection
- Increases acceptance - promotes a feeling of understanding
- The first step towards problem solving- “negotiating from the heart”

When you actively listen, you cooperate in solving the problem and in preventing future problems.

Problem Solving

Remember no one, even children, wants you to solve their problems for them. People share problems in order to process their feelings regarding the situation – not for you to advise them on what to do. To support your Little in his/her problem solving process, ask some of the following questions:

- “What’s the worst that could happen if…”
- “How bad would it be if…”
- “What would that mean?”
- “Let’s make a list of pros and cons.”

“Roadblocks” to Effective Communication

The following, while not always bad to use, have a tendency to “close down” communication rather than “open up” communication, and should be avoided in conversations with Littles.

1. Ordering, Directing, Commanding

Telling the child to do something; giving the child an order or command.

“I don’t care what other children are doing, you have to do the yard work!”

“Now you go back up there and play with Luis and Destiny!”

“Stop complaining!”

2. Moralizing, Preaching, “Should’s” and “Ought’s”

Invoking vague, outside authority as accepted truth.

“You shouldn’t act like that.”

“Children are supposed to respect their elders.”

3. Teaching, Lecturing, Giving logical argument

Trying to influence the child with facts, counter-arguments, logic, or your own opinion:

“Children must learn to get along with one another.”

“Let’s look at the facts about college graduates.”

“When I was your age, I had twice as much to do as you.”

4. Judging, Criticizing, Disagreeing, Blaming

Making a negative judgement or evaluation of the child.

“You’re not thinking clearly.”

“That’s an immature point of view.”

“You’re very wrong about that.”

“I couldn’t disagree with you more.”

5. Withdrawing, Distracting, Sarcasm, Humoring, Diverting



Trying to steer the child away from the problem. i.e. withdrawing from the problem yourself, distracting the child, pushing the problem aside, etc...

“Just forget it.”

“Let’s not talk about this at the table.”

“Come on- let’s talk about something more pleasant.”

“We’ve all been through this before.”

Creating and Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Boundary – a healthy space or a separation between individuals, both emotionally and physically. Setting boundaries shows your Little that you are concerned for their safety and well-being. Boundaries are necessary to allow a child to feel safe & secure in his/her relationships.

Keep in mind when setting boundaries:

- Know your role as a Big. Role clarification is essential in preventing any misunderstanding or inappropriate request on the part of a parent, child, or volunteer.
- Be aware of sharing personal information and how comfortable you are in discussing your personal life with your Little.
- Understand that you can say “I do not feel comfortable discussing this” to your Little whenever you feel it is appropriate and allow your Little to do so as well.
- Remember not to pass judgements on families and their different values. Voice your concerns to your Match Support Specialist regarding any of these issues.

Setting Appropriate Limits

By setting firm limits, Bigs help Littles create a relationship that is built upon respect.

Be sure to:

- **Set clear rules and standards to promote responsibility in children.**
- **Praise positive behaviors rather than simply pointing out the negative ones.**

This encourages the Little to learn from their Big and enhances their self esteem, allowing for a rewarding and warm relationship to grow.

Strategies for setting appropriate limits:

- Set realistic, age appropriate limits
- Continue to enforce limits consistently
- Always model appropriate behavior
- Be direct and specific
- Support your words with actions

Managing Difficult Situations

Handling Difficult Behaviors

- **Showing Off** - Ignore the behavior unless the child can hurt himself or others. If so, remove them from the situation
- **Pushing to the limit** - Give no warning. When the misbehavior takes place immediately apply a consequence
- **Giving up easily** - Break up required tasks into shorter assignments. Reinforce them after every completion
- **Dependency** - Help the child get started and then have them work on their own.
- **Shy** - Provide short frequent non-threatening ways for children to express themselves
- **Fearful** - Discuss the reasons for the fear and work on a plan to overcome it
- **Lying**- Ask follow-up questions to get more specific details

Delicate Topics:

Certain topics should be discussed only when initiated by the Little. These topics can be touchy and strongly affect the relationship. Feel free to seek support and feedback from your Match Support Specialist. Also ask your MSS if these topics are appropriate to talk about with your Little via the parent's permission.

- Sex
- Peer Pressure
- Hygiene
- Behavior
- School Performance
- Personal Insecurities
- Stealing
- Identity Issues (Class, Culture, Sexuality)

Issues of Concern:

These may have lifelong implications for your Little so you need to report these your Match Support Specialist. They may be part of an ongoing problem so you should be aware of any issues in your Little's life.

- Fighting at school
- Depression
- Gang affiliation
- Substance abuse
- Verbal harassment

Crises Requiring Intervention

These require direct and immediate intervention. Some issues such as abuse and neglect are mandated by law to be reported. You are not expected to handle these issues alone; please contact your Match Support Specialist AS SOON as you become aware any of these situations.

- Child abuse and neglect
- Abusive relationships
- Chemical dependency
- Arrests
- Suicidal behavior
- Mental illness
- Physical harassment

Social Networking Recommendations

We strongly recommend that you **do not** use social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, to communicate with your Little. This is especially true for Littles who are under 13 years of age, which is the legal age to use any of the mentioned social media. If you choose to disregard our recommendation, please take into careful consideration the following pros and cons before determining the appropriateness of becoming “friends” with your mentee:

PROS

- 1) Youth utilize social networking more than they use email. It may be easier to communicate with a young person if you are connected through social media.
- 2) Your Little may feel closer to you if you are connected through social media.
- 3) Social media provides an opportunity to share information quickly through the use of status statements and messages.

CONS

- 1) Social networking can blur relationship boundaries.

- 2) Little's who are "friends" with their Big may see information, language or pictures that are not appropriate for them to see because of the nature of their relationship.
- 3) Bigs may see things on their Little's profile that are questionable in nature. Questions arise regarding what needs to be reported to the program and to the mentee's parents. Reporting on these things may cause the mentee to lose trust in the mentor.

**If you do choose to "Friend" your Little on a social networking site, PLEASE be sure to secure any information, language, or pictures that are not appropriate for them to see by adjusting the privacy settings of your site.

BBSCM Social Networking Policy

Big Brothers Big Sisters recognizes that online social networking (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Blogs, etc.) has become a very popular communications tool and that many of our Big Brothers/Sisters and Little Brothers/Sisters use these websites. In general, personal use of social networking sites is typically for communications between peers, including friends and family. BBBS wants to reiterate that your relationship with your Little is that of a mentor in addition to a friend.

Not all social networking sites are designed to support mentoring relationships. Please proceed thoughtfully when inviting or accepting an invitation from your Little to a social networking site. If you have any doubts, please contact your Match Support Specialist and/or postpone your invitation or acceptance. If you do choose to participate in a social networking site with your Little, you must adhere to the following guidelines regarding any postings related to your match or affiliation with BBBS:

- Do not participate in any online communication with/about your Little unless you have discussed this with the parent/guardian or Match Support Specialist and have received their approval.
- Never post any pictures of your Little online unless you have the written consent of the child's parent/guardian. That consent form should be filed with BBBS.
- Never post the last name of your Little, his/her parent/guardian or BBBS staff.
- Never post any contact information for your Little.

- Never post any identifying information about your Little (ie: child's home address, school the child attends, where the parent works, etc).
- Make sure that your page settings are set to private, so that only people you approve can view your online content. Ensure that BBBS and the parent/guardian are approved if you plan to post content related to your match.
- When in doubt about whether or not something is appropriate to post, consult with your Match Support Specialist prior to posting.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the termination of your match.

Confidence Building

For children to think positively of themselves, they must be thoroughly convinced that they are lovable, that they matter and have value simply because they exist. A crucial part of this is the quality of relationships that exist between children and those who play a significant role in their life. One of your most important roles as a mentor is to be your Little's cheerleader. Many of the children in our programs suffer from low self-esteem for various reasons. Below is some information about self-esteem and strategies for boosting their confidence!

DO:

- **Give responsibility:** Take the attitude that your Little is a responsible person.
- **Show appreciation for every positive action:** Show that you appreciate these efforts
- **Ask your Little for their opinions and suggestions:** Littles probably know things that you don't. Show confidence in their judgment and you'll learn something!
- **Encourage participation in decision-making:** Show respect for your Little's opinions by getting them involved in making decisions about activities, classes, career choices etc...

- **Accept mistakes:** Without mistakes, there would be no learning. Mistakes can occur anywhere, and can be made by anyone. Don't overreact when they occur. Teach them that failures can be steppingstones to success.
- **Emphasize the process, not just the product:** Focus on the effort, progress or movement. Remember, it takes time to accomplish any goal; by encouraging efforts and progress, you can help increase self-confidence
- **Have positive expectations:** If you expect the worst, chances are you'll get it. However, don't expect perfection. Instead, expect positive things and increasing effort.
- **Hold aspiration for your Little:** A simple statement like "I can't wait until you graduate high school in two years!" can show that you really do expect them to do well.

Don't

- Give speeches or lectures
- Argue or debate
- Ignore misbehavior
- Bribe or give rewards

Promoting your Little's Positive Self-Esteem

INFORMATION ON SELF-ESTEEM

- Children grow and mature physically as well as emotionally.
- Their feelings about themselves encompass both the physical and emotional as they develop their **self-concept**.
- This development depends on the quality of relationships established between parents and children, and in other relationships with significant adults.
- To develop a positive and strong self-image, children must be thoroughly convinced that they are lovable, that they matter and are worthwhile, and that they can handle themselves and the environment with competence.
- **A word of caution:** there is a difference between being loved and feeling loved. Meeting a child's needs of feeling love is essential for their emotional well being.

What creates a sense of self-esteem?

- The quality of relationships that exist between children and those who play a significant role in their

life.

- The psychological climate a parent, teacher, or Big creates for the child will determine the development of a healthy and positive self-image.
- Money, education, social class, parents' occupation, geography **are not** responsible for high self-esteem.

Steps in helping children build a strong sense of self-esteem:

- Emphasizing the positive things life offers, acknowledging day-to-day accomplishments, and offering sincere praise for work done.
- Telling the child what you like about them and their behavior. Do not be afraid of their getting a “big head”. Children need this honest information.
- By offering friendship, providing positive reinforcement, listening and showing trust, you can help your Little gain confidence and self-worth.

SELF-ESTEEM: WHAT'S IN A DEFINITION?

Self-esteem is...

- Finding a work you love or developing a capacity to love your work.
- Developing an open mind and a tolerance of others.
- Understanding what makes people, including yourself, want to grow, to know and to be more.
- Knowing that you can always learn and maybe you can help others to learn.
- Working towards harmonious relationships with others.
- The desire to be as good as you can be and then get better.
- Knowing that if you take action toward a definite purpose, you will feel better.

- Wanting to be as healthy as you can be.
- Learning to dream and wake up knowing that, with persistence, all dreams are possible.
- Feeling compassionate for yourself and others.
- Being able to communicate with another person without either one of you feeling “put down.”
- Learning how to eliminate fear from your emotional mind.
- Having the capacity to hope, faith to believe, and desire to share.

Embracing Diversity

DIVERSITY summarizes the many different and unique qualities we each possess. For Bigs and Littles there will definitely be differences, both subtle and very apparent. Most importantly, *open mindedness*, *mutual respect* and *sharing* can bridge the gaps felt by Bigs and Littles.

COMMON DIFFERENCES:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Ethnicity
- ◆ Socioeconomic Status (SES)
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ Sexual Preference

With these differences in mind, both parties may feel a “culture shock” during the initial stages of a match. *Celebrating* and *embracing* diversity can help erase the lines that separate and categorize us.

CULTURE is more than race or ethnicity; it encompasses *values, lifestyle* and *social norms*. A lack of understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity can result in becoming judgmental and condoning discriminatory behavior, thus sabotaging the opportunity to develop trusting relationships.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

- ◆ Communication Styles
- ◆ Mannerisms
- ◆ Styles of Dressing
- ◆ Family Structure
- ◆ Traditions
- ◆ Time Orientation
- ◆ Response to Authority
- ◆ Finances

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Bigs and Littles may come from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and as a result, they will possess unique traditions. As both parties participate in the match, cultural competency or cultural awareness should be developed. Cultural competency is the ability to work across differences. This skill allows a person to take risks and become open with a person of a different race/ethnicity.

Key Terms:

Race often refers to a group of people who share distinctive, physical characteristics such as skin color or hair type.

Ethnicity refers to a group of people who share a national or geographic identity through language or history.

Bigs and Littles effectively communicate despite racial/ethnic differences by...

- **Attending to curiosity** - For example, some racial/ethnic groups deem direct eye contact in a conversation as a sign of disrespect while other groups view it as a sign of attentiveness. When Bigs and Littles have dissimilar mannerisms, Bigs can ask their Littles open-ended questions to fuel thoughtful dialogue.

- **Sharing and being open to new information** - Bigs and Littles can exchange personal stories and learn from each other's racial/ ethnic experiences.
- **Avoiding stereotypes** - When a person is unfamiliar with a racial/ethnic group, he/she may make generalizations that are treated as facts. These generalizations can cause barriers and miscommunication. In order to avoid making these generalizations, a person must acknowledge that they have these ideas in their head. He/she must be accountable to themselves and others by refraining from saying or laughing at offensive comments.
- **Finding teachable moments** – Enjoy the different things you can learn from each other including foods, music and clothing.

Though, Bigs and Littles may have varying perspectives on the role of authority figures and family, communication styles, or ways of dealing with conflict due to their racial/ethnic backgrounds, it is not impossible to foster a friendship based on their commonalities.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Bigs and Littles often come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. These differences are common and require time and understanding for an appreciation of their significance.

Example:

A Little's family may have to move frequently, perhaps every few months, and may not have a telephone.

How might this impact a match?

- **Both the parent/guardian and Little will be prepared to play a proactive role in communicating with the Big.**
- **A Big and Little may have to come up with some creative ways of keeping in contact, if a Little has access to email at school or may have to set a standard time to call a Big weekly.**
- **The match may have to schedule visits for the same day and time weekly.**

Psychological Effects of Chronic Poverty

Some Littles may develop a short term “culture of survival” frame of mind. For example, a Little who comes from a very poor family may spend large sums of money on frivolous things - \$200 on sneakers. Poverty often prevents people from believing that their future holds any promise of getting better. Saving money and investing in the future is a luxury they don’t believe they have.

YOUTH CULTURE

Remember what it was like to be your Little's age? If you think about the following questions, you'll find that much of what you went through at that age, your Little is also going through:

- What was really important to you at the time?
- What was your father/mother like? Did you get along? Were you close?
- Think of your friends. Were friendships always easy or were they sometimes hard?
- In general, did you feel as though adults typically understood you well?

Many characteristics of childhood are normal, common, developmental traits and consequently don't vary significantly from one generation to the next.

MODERN YOUTH CULTURE

Many adults believe that, in general, teenagers are exceedingly more rebellious than they themselves were as young people. Rebellion is a common, and perhaps necessary, ingredient in an adolescent's transition into adulthood.

How our society has changed...

- Alcohol and drug abuse is more prevalent today.
- Sexually Transmitted Infections are more common and more contagious.
- Crime and violence have dramatically increased throughout the country.
- Single-parent families have become more common while greater demands are being placed on all families.

Tips for success in relating to your Little

◆ **Take initiative: make your Little feel more comfortable in the relationship.**

You are the adult—you are the experienced one. Imagine what your Little might be thinking or feeling. When they come to you for help or advice they may already feel insecure about the problems in their lives.

◆ **Be yourself.**

Sometimes, with the best intentions, we try to “relate” to young people, using their slang to be like “one of the gang.” Littles may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.

◆ **Do not over-identify with your Little.**

“*I know exactly what you’re feeling.*” Your Little realizes you will never know exactly what he/she is experiencing. He/she may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you truly know where he/she is coming from.

◆ **Respect your differences.**

If something about your Little is bothering you, first determine whether the behavior is simply troubling to you because you would do it differently, or whether it is truly an indication of a more seriously troubled youth.

◆ **Model appropriate behavior.**

Littles will be watching and absorbing everything you do, so remember what you say and do may be duplicated by your Little in the future.

◆ **Identify and address situations on an individual basis.**

Don’t generalize a person or their behavior as traits possessed by an entire social group.

◆ **Minimize the use of “slang” words.**

Especially out of anger, it reinforces stereotypes and directly influences prejudices.

SEXUAL IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Developmentally, three questions that all adolescents are seeking to answer are:

- Am I normal?
- Am I competent?
- Am I loveable?

It is important to remember that all youth have these same insecurities. As a Big you need to ask yourself, **“How can I help a gay or lesbian youth to answer “yes” to these questions?”**

Create a safe environment...

- **Physically: remember that not everyone is sensitive to homosexuality/bisexuality; a Little must first and foremost feel physically safe.**

- **Emotionally: remind your Little that he/she is normal, competent, and loveable. You may not have the answers to all of your Little's questions and you may not fully understand what your Little is going through, but you can provide support to your Little while he/she sorts out confusing feelings through maintaining an open line of communication.**

Trust: You are a trusted friend to your Little; although telling a parent may seem like the right thing to do, it may not be. Depending upon your Little's cultural/ethnic background, disclosing homosexuality/bisexuality to the family may be both physically and emotionally threatening. A Little may not be able to return home once this information is disclosed to the family or parent/guardian. First find out if the Little can speak to the family about his/her sexuality concerns.

SEXUALITY

SEXUAL ORIENTATION - an individual's physical and emotional arousal toward others.

- **In the 1940's, Alfred Kinsey suggested that sexual orientation falls along a spectrum, including varying preferences between heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual orientation.**

In adolescents, questioning and experimenting with one's sexual orientation are common behaviors.

- Trusting relationships with adults allow for the opportunity to discuss their feelings, especially if they are questioning their sexual identities.
- As a Big, be aware of the long, difficult process that is involved in an individual's sexual identity formation - particularly when that sexual identity is socially stigmatized. i.e. gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientations.

The Four Stages of Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Identity Formation:

1. Feelings of difference

A long process that sometimes begins with a vague sense of being different during childhood. Awareness of these feelings of difference may occur as early as 5-7 years old.

2. Identity Questioning

Beginning to wonder whether the feelings of difference are about their same-sex attractions. This stage can involve ambiguous, sexualized same-sex feelings and/or experimental activities. Stress and conflict often arise over the incongruity between the developing sense of self and the social stigmatization. This stage may last a long time, as these feelings occur and are often repressed.

3. Coming Out

Tolerance and later acceptance of identity often comes through contact with gay/lesbian individuals and culture, exploration of sexual possibilities and first sexual relationships. This person may begin careful, selective self-disclosure outside of the gay/lesbian community.

4. Pride

Integration of sexuality with the rest of one's self-concept. The capacity for love relationships increases. This person attempts to self-disclose to a wider group of people, and is better able to manage the stigma related to his/her lifestyle.

PUBERTY

When children reach age 10 they are already on the verge of becoming adolescents. **Tween boys and girls** (pre-adolescents ages 9-12) will experience significant changes as puberty hits. Physical, emotional, and social changes are all part of **puberty** which makes this developmental time fun, confusing, and even risky. The more informed you are, the better prepared you will be.

PHYSIOLOGY

Some of the most important signs of puberty are:

- The growth of facial and body hair.
- Body odor changes, with underarm odor becoming more pronounced.
- Menstruation can start for some tween girls.
- Breasts in tween girls start to show, and some engorgement and discomfort can be experienced.
- Tween boys can have a sudden deepening of the voice.

PSYCHOLOGY

- The social unit becomes very important, as peers and friends become their focus.
- Parents may begin to see that tweens start to find them “uncool”.
- Gender characteristics are more evident during this stage, with boys emulating male role models and girls emulating female role models.

- Pop culture becomes important for most tweens, as they become fans of their favorite artists and follow them.

EMOTIONS

- Due to hormonal changes, tweens can become moody.
- Tween boys can show a preference to be by themselves and become silent and appear distant.

SEXUALITY

- **Sexual Curiosity:** At this age tweens may become more curious about sex. As their sexual hormones develop, children are eager to find out more information about sex and discuss it amongst themselves.
- **Sexual Arousal:** The development of sex hormones can also cause children to get more easily aroused—sometimes even involuntarily.

WHAT TWEENS NEED TO KNOW

It is important that tweens seek the right information regarding puberty and sex. Peers may be eager to talk about the topic but they may not have accurate information to share. Thus, talking to trusted adults about sex is a better source of information. Tweens may feel awkward approaching their parents with sex questions, but they may be the best resource.

Additionally, hygiene is increasingly important for tweens. At this age, deodorant use should be part of the daily routine for tween boys and girls. Specifically for tween girls, the use of sanitary pads and bras is important to master.

Common Characteristics of Our Littles

Much as adults, children play different “roles” depending on whom they are interacting with and the level of trust they feel with that person. These roles are a way of protecting themselves – not showing too much too soon for fear of being vulnerable to the other person.

The Silent Child -The child who rarely talks, except in one or two word sentences. Until they are certain that you are sincere about being a friend, **your Little may be:**

- Taking some time to get to know you and how you react in certain situations.
- Sizing you up to see what you are all about.

Your Little may assume an inactive role, which could be mistakenly construed as disinterest or boredom. His/her behavior has nothing to do with you personally. **Remember to:**

- Be patient and give plenty of opportunities for your Little to give his/her opinion.
- Don't push the issue of getting your Little to talk. You may be the only quiet time the child has outside of a hectic home environment.
- Use interactive activities (such as board games) to take the pressure off of the child to make conversation. Conversation comes more naturally when you are having fun.

- Follow through on scheduled meetings unless there is an emergency. This child is expecting you to let him/her down like other adults have. If you know you won't be able to make a scheduled meeting, let the child know why and you will miss seeing him/her. Schedule your next meeting together ASAP.
- Ask questions about his/her week, how school went, family, etc...

The “Love You to Death” Child - The child who will try to call you all of the time, hang on you, seem to want your attention constantly and may use negative behavior to get your attention as negative attention is better than none at all.

- May be starved for attention and need the one-to-one time that you can provide.
- Boundaries have never been taught so they do not know what normal behavior is.

It is very important that you set boundaries with this child as soon as you perceive the attention seeking behavior is becoming a problem. **For example:**

- Pick one day per week and a specific time frame that the child may call you.
- Explain that hanging on you or hugging excessively is not acceptable behavior but sitting next to one another or an occasional hug is acceptable.
- For the very clingy child, you may need to ration your hugs (one at the start of the outing and

- one at the end) or have your Little ask if it's okay to give you a hug.
- Give the child praise when he/she behaves within the boundaries you have set.

The “Give Me” Child - The child who expects that adults will buy things to express their love or caring. Do not feel that you must spend money on your Little in order to have fun or that you must make up for all that he/she is without at home. **Following are some guidelines:**

- Don't start off your match relationship by bringing the child a gift. The child will anticipate and expect all match meetings to be this way.
- Use your first meeting together to start building a healthy friendship by exploring one another's interest/hobbies, what qualities you look for in a friend, and what friendship means to you.
- Educate your Little about how much money it costs to buy things and how many hours you have to work to purchase a specific item. Often times, children simply have no concept of money and that you have to work to get it.

The “I Don't Care” Child - In response to the question, “What would you like to do?” this child's reply is often “I don't know” or “whatever you want.” This child is probably lacking in self-confidence to suggest match activities.

Responses like this often leave the Big Brother/Big Sister wondering if the child really wants to share time with him/her due to the child's lack of enthusiasm. **Make sure to:**

- Take responsibility for planning activities and calling your Little.
- Choose two activity options and help your Little to choose one.
- Sit down together with the Little and brainstorm different match activity ideas and make a list.

The “I Won’t Show Any Feeling” Child - Of course, this child does have feelings but is reluctant to show that he/she really cares whether he/she spends time with you or not.

- May have been let down by adults who made promises and didn't keep them.
- Denies his/her feelings as a defense mechanism to prevent disappointment.

Be patient and remember, this child is in the program because he/she has said he/she wants to be. You are just the person who can prove to this child that not all adults break their promises.

- Always follow through with plans with your Little unless an emergency comes up.
- Always call and explain to your Little why you have to cancel plans and express your disappointment at not being able to share time with him/her.

- Be sure to reschedule as soon as possible.
- Check in with your Little and ask “how do you feel about this?” or “how did that make you feel?” when your Little shares a significant piece of information with you about school, friends, peers, family, etc...

Bullying

What is bullying?

- Bullying is unfair and one-sided. It happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.
- Bullying may consist of hitting, teasing, taunting, spreading rumors and gossip, stealing, or excluding someone from a group. It is carried out with the intent to harm someone.
- Bullying is often a repeated activity. However, bullying may also occur as a one-time event. Bullying always involves a power imbalance. The person bullying has more power due to such factors as age, size, strength, support of friends, or access to resources (such as toys and other belongings), and uses this power in a deliberately hurtful way.

Who bullies?

People sometimes assume that only boys bully, but that is not true. Girls also bully others.

- **Boys** tend to use methods such as hitting, fighting, and threatening. These face-to-face behaviors are easy to observe.

- **Girls** tend to bully using physical and verbal attacks, but they often use behind-the-back methods that are harder to see. These more subtle behaviors include getting peers to exclude others and spreading rumors and gossip.
- It's important to remember, though, that girls *and* boys use both face-to-face and behind-the-back bullying methods.

What are the consequences of bullying?

The serious consequences of bullying go beyond those that result from violations of school disciplinary rules. Bullying jeopardizes children's safety and potentially creates both short- and long-term problems for all children involved. Children who are bullied are more likely to develop future academic problems and psychological difficulties. Serious problems such as depression and low self-esteem can result, and they can continue into adulthood.

Children who bully and continue this behavior as adults have greater difficulty developing and maintaining positive relationships. Research shows that without effective intervention, children who regularly bully others may grow up to become perpetrators of domestic violence, child abuse, hate crimes, sexual abuse, and other illegal behavior. In fact, children with bullying problems at age 8 are six times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24 than children who do not have bullying problems.

How many children does bullying really affect?

Bullying affects virtually all children. Although it is true that some children will never be bullied, research shows that children witness 85 percent of school bullying incidents. Child witnesses, or *bystanders*, may feel powerless to stop bullying. They may fear being bullied next. And they may feel sad or guilty about the abuse others experience. Additionally, bystanders may see those who bully succeed at getting what they want. This may tempt bystanders to take part themselves and may lead to an overall increase in bullying. Improving social skills and creating a safe, caring, respectful school environment can help all children deal with bullying.

Isn't bullying just a normal part of growing up?

The many myths about bullying include the notion that bullying is a harmless childhood activity and a normal part of growing up. Confusion about the difference between *conflict* and *bullying* can fuel this myth. While occasional peer conflict is inevitable, bullying is not inevitable. It should always be avoided. In a conflict, both sides have equal power to resolve the problem. But bullying involves the intentional, one-sided use of power to control another. Its harmful consequences can affect people for the rest of their lives.

Wouldn't my Little tell me about being bullied?

Not necessarily. Children may not tell adults—not even their parents—about being bullied at school. Studies show that children don't tell because they believe adults won't help stop the bullying. Children may also think that they should be able to solve their own problems. Or they may not even recognize that they are being bullied. Other children are afraid. They think that telling an adult will result in worse treatment from the child doing the bullying.

Watch your Little for the following signs. Any one of them could indicate that he/she is being bullied:

- Fear of riding the school bus
- Cuts or bruises
- Damaged clothing or belongings
- Frequently “lost” lunch money
- Frequent requests to stay home from school
- Frequent unexplained minor illnesses
- Sleeplessness or nightmares
- Depression, or lack of enthusiasm for hobbies or friends
- Declining school performance

What to do if your Little is being bullied?

- ✓ Tell your Match Support Specialist
- ✓ Don't tell them to ignore the bullying
- ✓ Don't blame them for the bullying. Don't assume he/she did something to provoke it.
- ✓ Allow them to talk about his or her bullying experiences.
- ✓ Empathize with them. Tell them that bullying is wrong, it is not their fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it.
- ✓ Do not encourage physical retaliation.

What to do if your Little bullies others?

- Tell your Match Support Specialist
- Build on your Little's talents by encouraging him or her to get involved in positive activities

ADD/ADHD

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Attention Deficit Disorder is a neuro-biological disability that affects up to 11% of all American children. It interferes with the child's ability to sustain attention, focus on a task and to delay impulsive behavior. ADD/ADHD makes children vulnerable to failure in important areas of developmental mastery – namely school performance and peer relations.

Characteristics of children with ADD/ADHD can include:

Signs of impulsivity:

- fidgeting with hands or feet
- difficulty remaining seated
- difficulty following through on instructions
- shifting from one uncompleted task to another
- difficulty playing quietly
- interrupting conversations, intruding into other performing children's games
- doing things that are dangerous without thinking about the consequences
- excessive running, jumping, climbing

Signs of under-activity:

- lethargic
- daydreaming/spaciness
- failure to complete tasks
- seems disorganized
- poor leadership abilities
- difficulty in learning
- difficulty in following instructions
- doesn't listen
- forgetful, easily distracted

Suggestions for Bigs matched to Littles with ADD/ADHD

1. Avoid activities where there will be large groups of people participating, particularly if your Little has a hyper disorder. Large groups may over stimulate the Little and bring out negative behaviors.
2. Develop a standard routine in your visits together. If possible, plan the same time and day each time you get together. To reduce anxiety in the Little due to changes in routine, tell your Little in advance about any cancellations, schedule changes or special events.
3. Set boundaries and stick to them. The Little needs structure, so establish simple guidelines. Do not overburden the Little with lots of details. Review the rules at the start of each visit.
4. Have consequences for negative behavior. One consequence may be that your visit will end early that day if your Little does not follow rules. Do not let your Little negotiate the consequences or you will have no credibility with him/ her.
5. Explain and give directions in simple terms. Be brief and to the point. Do not give the Little several directives at once. i.e. "Tie your shoes, wash your hands and grab your jacket." The Little will become frustrated and act out when he/ she cannot remember all of the directives.

6. Be sure you have your Little's attention before telling him/her anything. Establish eye contact by getting down on the Little's level. If your little looks away, starts daydreaming, etc... ask him/her to look back at you before continuing.
7. Make sure your Little does not become overly tired or hungry. Fatigue and hunger are likely to have a worse effect on him/her than the average child.
8. Use praise, comments and concrete awards when your Little is showing positive behavior. Praise should be immediate, specific and sincere if the Little is to make a connection between his behavior and the compliment.

Eating Disorders

Types of Eating Disorders:

1. **Anorexia:** When you have anorexia nervosa, you're obsessed with food and being thin, sometimes to the point of deadly self-starvation.

Symptoms include:

- Refusal to eat and denial of hunger
- An intense fear of gaining weight
- A negative or distorted self-image
- Excessive exercise
- Flat mood or lack of emotion
- Irritability
- Fear of eating in public
- Preoccupation with food
- Loss of period

2. **Bulimia:** When you have bulimia, you have episodes of bingeing and purging. During these episodes, you typically eat a large amount of food in a short duration and then try to rid yourself of the extra calories through vomiting or excessive exercise. *You may be at a normal weight or even a bit overweight.*

Symptoms include:

- Eating until the point of discomfort or pain, often with high-fat or sweet foods
- Self-induced vomiting
- Laxative use
- Excessive exercise
- An unhealthy focus on body shape and weight
- A distorted, excessively negative body image
- Low self-esteem
- Going to the bathroom after eating or during meals

Depression

What is Depression? A medical illness that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Depression can cause physical symptoms, too.

Symptoms of Depression include:

- Feelings of sadness or unhappiness
- Irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Changes in appetite — depression often causes decreased appetite and weight loss, but in some people it causes increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Agitation or restlessness — for example, pacing, hand-wringing or an inability to sit still
- Irritability or angry outbursts

Anxiety

What is anxiety? Anxiety happens as a normal part of life. It can even be useful when it alerts you to danger. But for some people, anxiety persistently interferes with daily activities such as work, school or sleep. This type of anxiety can disrupt relationships and enjoyment of life, and over time it can lead to health concerns and other problems.

Common anxiety signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling apprehensive
- Feeling powerless
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired

Children and the Grieving Process

Grief is: A normal and natural reaction to loss

A holistic experience – It affects our entire being: mind, body, spirit and emotion.

A unique experience – no two people will grieve exactly the same

Grief issues of our Littles: The loss of a parent(s) through death, divorce, desertion, incarceration, or placement of child in a foster home

A Child's Expression of Grief

Lack of Feelings: The child may act like nothing has happened. This is a protective mechanism, nature's way of caring for children.

- Be there and answer questions when the child does engage in the loss.
- Let the child share when he/she is ready. Sometimes engaging in a fun, interactive activity such as coloring relaxes the Little's defenses and he/she will open up.
- Suggest that the child keep a grief journal, write a letter or draw a picture to the absent person to facilitate the Littles's expression of grief.

Regressive Behavior: Children may regress by reverting to baby talk, become afraid to be left alone, or not remembering how to tie their shoes. This type of behavior usually occurs immediately after a death and is a way to help them feel safe.

- Plan calm, quiet activities, such as walking, quietly talking and time alone. Let your Little feel nurtured and safe.

Loss & Loneliness: Because the Little has finally realized the loved one is never coming back, he/she exhibits a lack of interest in his/her world, appears depressed and suffers low self-esteem. Feeling depressed is a normal response.

- Assure your Little that he/she is not alone in his/her grief. It's okay to play and have fun without feeling guilty. Plan some fun, carefree activities around lots of people.

Explosive Emotions: The Little outwardly displays anger, blame, hatred, jealousy, resentment and panic attacks. This is a natural way for the Little to protest the painful reality of the loss. Behind the display of emotions are feelings of pain, helplessness, frustration and fear.

- Create ways to help your Little express pent-up emotions such as exercise, play sports, sing, dance, draw, work with clay or keep a journal.

Implusive Emotions: Children who are not given permission to display their emotions by themselves or others turn their grief inward and suffer feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, anxiety and chronic physical complaints.

- Try to be supportive, understanding and encourage outward expression of grief.
- Recognize this Littles's good deeds and accomplishments by giving genuine praise.

Acting Out Behavior: Some typical behaviors may be instigating verbal/physical fights, rebelling against authority figures, or generally being loud and agitated. It is difficult to understand what is causing this behavior. Perhaps the Little is feeling insecure, abandoned, unlovable, and responsible for the loss. This behavior may be the only way the Little knows how to express him/herself and a way to protect him/herself from future loss.

- Acknowledge your Little's grief, talk about appropriate ways to express grief and follow through on planned activities unless there is an emergency. The last thing this child needs is the loss of another person.
- Set limits and consequences. If your Little is not behaving, simply end your visit early.

Tips for Helping Grieving Children

Acknowledge the loss

- This lets your Little know that you care, that it's okay to talk with you and that the loss is real.

Use proper terminology

- Such as "cancer," "death," "divorce," and "desertion." Avoid euphemisms such as "lost," "eternal rest," "left us," "is away visiting," or "went to sleep for a long time."

LISTEN

- Listening is more important than asking questions and giving advice. Let your Little's questions guide you. Answer with a question until you have a clear understanding of what the child is asking

Create structure

- While experiencing grief, the Little feels a lack of control in his/her life and therefore needs the structure of normal routines, appropriate limit setting, consequences for inappropriate behavior, affection, caring and adult role models.

Be aware and sensitive

- Grief and emotions may resurface around important holidays, birthdays and the anniversary of death, divorce or desertion.

Reassure the child

- Children often times think the way they behaved, looked or thought caused the loss. Assure your little that that the death, divorce, or desertion was not his/her fault.

Be aware of your own feelings

- Your own grief may resurface as a result of working through issues with your Little. You must first take care of yourself so you can then support your Little.

Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents

How are children affected?

- They rarely receive critical developmental support.
- Emotional difficulties including sadness, withdrawal, fear, anger, and anxiety are common reactions.
- Problems in school performance, attendance and behavior are common.
- Many of the children have endured relationships in which they have experienced abandonment and neglect.
- Children of prisoners may be forced to give up their homes, their sense of safety, and sources of comfort.
- Children with a parent(s) in prison are may not have a safe, stimulating environment.
- Most are without a stable living situation.
- Some children have witnessed forms of violence.

What should I do as the mentor? How do I make the relationship work?

- The quality of the mentoring relationship is the key to improving the Little's quality of life.
- Focus on building a positive relationship.
- Focus on building trust.
- Remember to focus on the positive qualities of the Little, rather than trying to change his/her behaviors.
- Be honest, consistent, and show that you understand it is hard being away from his/her parent.
- Bigs are always welcome to seek support, whether by turning to their Match Support Specialist or other Bigs for help.
- Treat your Little as you would any other child. Show respect.
- Recognize and assure the Little that he/she has potential!

Top Priority – Child Safety

Child safety is our #1 Priority. We focus on the child's safety and well-being throughout the match. We do this by providing:

- Thorough professional screening of our Bigs
- Guidelines that establish appropriate boundaries and respect a child's right to feel safe.
- Ongoing BBBS Match Support contact with each party in the match. This provides up-to-date information and early warnings of potential problems throughout the match relationship.

As a Big you play a role in supporting the parent's primary role of keeping their child safe. Bigs need to model appropriate behavior as well as assume responsibility for their Little's safety during outings.

Safety issues to be aware of include:

- * Internet safety
- * Bullying and violence prevention
- * The Little's medical condition
- * Child abuse prevention

If you ever have a situation where your Little talks to you about any abuse or violence he/she is subject to, contact your Match Support Specialist immediately. Our response to the disclosure by a child can prevent negative outcomes for the child and their family.

Child Abuse Prevention: Training for Mentors

As child care service providers and mandated reporters, BBBS staff are required to report to DCF any suspected incidents of child abuse. The information you are receiving in this training is drawn from DCF resources on identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse. *Most importantly, if you ever suspect that a Little is being abused or neglected, or you have questions regarding a Little's safety, please contact our office immediately at (508) 752-7868.*

The Big's role is not to be judgmental of the Little's living situations, but rather to provide friendship and support to the Little. BBBS staff are prepared to deal with reports of suspected abuse. Staff are also prepared to train Bigs to be vigilant while respecting the dignity of the families involved in this program.

The four major types of child abuse include **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse,** and **neglect**. Although behavioral indicators and physical symptoms from the four areas may overlap, it is important to understand the signs that are specific to each area.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse - “the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under eighteen which causes, or creates, a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury, or constitutes a sexual offense under state law, or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual” as defined by the laws of the Commonwealth.

- Evidence of abuse includes **bruises and welts, burns, and hair loss or bald spots**. However, children are very active and sustain bruises regularly; it is presumptive to assume that bruises and physical signs are only a result of abuse.
- When these physical signs are insufficiently explained by the child, or occur at an unusually high rate, the volunteer should take notice and discuss this information with the BBBS staff.

Bruises and welts are suspect when they occur:

- * On infants, especially facial bruises (or on the lips and mouth).
- * On the child’s torso, back buttocks, or thighs.
- * As unusual patterns that might reflect the shape of an instrument used (i.e. belt, wire hanger, hairbrush, hand, bite marks).
- * As clustered bruises, indicating repeated contact with a hand or instrument.
- * On several surface planes at the same time - back, thighs, stomach, etc...

Burns that are unusual include:

- * Cigarette burns (small, round circular burns on the child’s body).
- * Immersion burns indicating dunking in a hot liquid, burns on feet and hands, or “doughnut” shaped burns on buttocks and genitalia.
- * Rope or restraint burns (on arms, wrists, hands, neck, or legs).
- * Dry burns that result from a hot implement being applied (iron, hair curler, etc...), or a child’s body part being forced to make contact with a hot surface (heater or stove).
- * Burns to external genitalia.

Hair loss, bald spots, or hemorrhaging beneath the scalp may be due to vigorous hair pulling.

Behavioral signs of children who have been or are being physically abused:

- * Child is uncomfortable with physical contact.

- * Child demonstrates self-destructive behavior, including self-mutilation (cuts), alcohol and substance abuse, promiscuity.
- * Arrives at school early or stays late, as if afraid to be at home.
- * Chronic running away behavior, particularly in adolescents.
- * Body movements appear uncomfortable, or child complains of soreness.
- * Child becomes apprehensive when other children cry.
- * Demonstrates extreme behaviors (i.e. very aggressive or very withdrawn), or exhibits behaviors that are inappropriate for that child's developmental level (i.e. over-sexualized behaviors in young children).
- * Wears layers of clothes that are not compatible with the weather, to cover up his/her body.
- * Seems to be fearful of parents.
- * States he or she is afraid to go home or cries when it is time to leave.
- * Child reports injury by a caretaker.

Some serious injuries require diagnosis by a medical professional in order to determine treatment. **Head injuries** can cause permanent brain damage or death. Subdural hematomas (blood pooling under the skull) and retinal hemorrhages can result from a child being shaken or hit in the head; a child's facial bones can also be fractured from blows to the head. **Skeletal injuries** can result from physical abuse; a child's bones can separate at the growth center, become detached and cause hemorrhaging, or result in spiral fractures of the bone shaft. These types of injuries are a result of limbs being twisted or pulled. **Internal injuries** can result from a child being punched, kicked or hit, and can also indicate physical abuse.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse - "an impairment to, or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child, as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior." It is difficult to detect and can produce lifelong consequences for the child.

Physical indicators of emotional abuse include:

- * Speech disorders (stuttering, aphasia or inability to speak)
- * Delays in physical development (i.e. enuresis or bed-wetting)
- * Stress-induced health issues such as ulcers, anorexia, skin disorders
- * Asthma or severe allergies

Behavioral signs of emotional abuse can include:

- * Habit disorders such as thumb-sucking, biting, rocking or eating

disorders

- * Conduct disorders including social withdrawal, and anti-social behavior such as property destruction, cruelty, or stealing
- * Neurotic traits such as sleep disorders and inhibition to play
- * Hysteria; obsessive or compulsive behaviors (i.e. hand washing); phobias (i.e. unusual fear of bugs); or hypochondria (i.e. complaints of sickness with no observable symptoms)
- * Behavior extremes such as being overly compliant or extremely passive, or being very aggressive or demanding
- * Over-adaptive behaviors – assuming the parent or caretaker role with other children or acting inappropriately infantile
- * Delays in emotional or intellectual development
- * Suicide attempts or self-destructive behavior
- * Alcohol or substance abuse
- * Promiscuity

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse - “any type of sexual contact or interaction between a child and adult when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an adult’s sexual needs or desires; this includes intercourse (oral, genital, or anal sexual penetration), sexual exploitation, and molestation (verbally enticing, fondling, masturbating, exposing of sexual organs).”

- Not only performed by adults on children. Older or bigger children may force younger, smaller children into some types of “sex play”. This type of coercive behavior is different from normal sexual curiosity between young children.
- Motivated by the abuser’s desire for power and control, rather than sexual fulfillment.
- Can occur in any setting in which the child is totally alone with the abuser, even when other people are in the same house or apartment.
- Caretakers who are sexually abusing children often inflict abuse when putting children to bed.

Who are the victims?

- Thousands of boys and girls every year, with many cases going unreported.
- One out of every three girls and one out of every six boys are sexually abused.
- The figure for boys may actually be higher, but abuse incidents against boys are reported less frequently than with girls.
- Occurs within all socioeconomic levels, races, and ethnic groups.

Who are the abusers?

- Also come from all socioeconomic levels, races and ethnic groups.
- Largest percentage of reported abusers is fathers, stepfathers, and male caretakers.
- Mothers and female caretakers appear to be reported less frequently.
- It is estimated that fathers, grandfathers, or relatives victimize at least one million children annually in incestuous relationships, due in part to the diverse range of cultural norms and practices.
- Most incidents are committed by individuals who are known and trusted by their victims, including parents', family friends, neighbors, clergy, babysitters, teachers, coaches, or others whom children have close physical and emotional contact.

How are the victims affected?

- Most are manipulated, deceived, bribed, or forced into some type of abusive sex act, which results in confusion and traumatic responses for these children.
- Children lack general knowledge about the acts that constitute abuse, and can be exploited due to their innocence.
- Because the abuser is typically a trusted adult, children are confused by some of the pleasurable feelings they feel.
- Children experience a wide range of emotional and behavioral responses including shame, self-doubt, guilt, or injured self-esteem.
- Some believe that it is their fault or that they “caused” the abuse to happen.
- Children may protect their abusers due to fear of rejection or physical injury.
- Others tolerate abuse in order to protect their siblings or to keep the family intact.
- Too many children grow up believing that they deserved to be sexually abused, or that sexual abuse is “normal” behavior.

Physical signs of sexual abuse include:

- * Torn, stained or bloodied underclothing
- * Pain or itching in the genital area
- * Difficulty in walking or sitting due to pain
- * Bruises or bleeding of external genitalia
- * Frequent urinary or yeast infections, or occurrence of Sexual Transmitted Infections
- * Pregnancy
- * Frequent psychosomatic complaints (headaches, abdominal pains, etc...)

Behaviors that can indicate the occurrence of sexual abuse include:

- * Social withdrawal or chronically depressed mood
- * Overly submissive reactions
- * Infantile or immature behavior
- * Seductive behavior or promiscuity

- * Role reversal with caretakers, or being overly concerned for siblings' well-being
- * Poor self-esteem, lack of confidence, or devaluing/berating oneself
- * Peer interaction problems, or lack of interest/involvement in peer activities
- * Extreme weight changes (gaining or losing)
- * Suicide attempts or self-injurious behavior (especially with adolescents)
- * Extreme variation in emotional responses – hysteria, lack of emotional control
- * Sudden difficulties in school setting
- * Inappropriate sexualized behavior, language, premature understanding of sex acts, or promiscuity
- * Discomfort with physical contact, closeness, or displays of affection
- * Excessive masturbation

It is important to note that extreme behavior changes may not indicate sexual abuse, but may be responses to other types of problems. Many children respond to sexual abuse with several small behavioral changes rather than sudden dramatic changes. Helping adults will want to be aware of subtle behavioral changes, without assuming that sexual abuse has occurred.

Neglect

Neglect - “failure of a caretaker to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care. Neglect can be deliberate, through negligence, or unintentional, as in a person’s inability to provide for a child’s necessities.”

Observable signs of neglect

Lack of supervision

- Children are without adult supervision for long periods of time.
- Young children left in the care of other children too young to supervise them.
- May engage in dangerous activities because they are being inadequately supervised (playing with matches, outside late at night).

Inadequate clothing or consistently poor hygiene

- Children are constantly dirty or un-bathed.
- Clothing is not appropriate for the weather, and children suffer from health symptoms (persistent respiratory problems, frostbite, or sunburn) that are associated with excessive exposure.

Lax medical and/or dental care

- Medical or dental needs are unmet, including unfilled medications.
- Symptoms due to poor medical and dental hygiene (skin conditions, excessive dental cavities or bleeding gums).

Lack of a routine with regard to school

- Children are chronically absent or late to school
- Children have total responsibility of getting themselves ready for school.

Inadequate nutrition

- Children are lacking sufficient quantity and quality of food.
- No attention to balance and/or variety in diet.
- Constantly complaining of hunger or rummaging for food.
- Poor nutrition results in severe developmental delays in children.

Inadequate housing

- Structurally unsafe housing (exposed wiring, general disrepair)
- Inadequate heating.
- Unsanitary conditions.

Behavioral signs to be aware of that may indicate neglectful treatment:

- Child talks about the fact that there is no one to care for or look after him/her.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Involvement in delinquent behavior, drops out of school, or is frequently absent or late to school.
- Demonstrating self-destructive behavior.
- Steals food or begs from classmates.
- Regularly fatigued, listless, lacking energy, or falling asleep in class.

Be aware of cultural expectations and your own personal values when considering a situation that you perceive to be neglectful. Families have different practices with respect to child rearing, and you may learn about beliefs that are different from your own. **Do not mistake poverty for neglect.** Overall, be careful not to place judgement on a family's lifestyle. If you have any concerns, please contact the BBBS office immediately.

What to do if a child discloses abuse

If a child discloses information to you that indicates abuse is occurring, remember these guidelines when responding:

- Remain calm, and deal with the disclosure on the child's conversational level – allowing the child to communicate the incident in his/her own terms.
- Maintaining eye contact is important while talking with the child; he/she is putting a great deal of trust in you by talking to you, and your attentiveness is crucial.
- Remind the child of your “unconditional positive regard” – you will care about her/him no matter what has happened.
- Stress that the child is doing the right thing by talking to you, and reinforce that you believe her/him.

- Emphasize to the child that the incident was NOT his/her fault.
- Express that you are concerned and want to help.
- Tell the child that you have the responsibility to report the incident to people who can also help.
- Call your Match Support Specialist.

Understanding abusive parents

Everyone has the ability to strike out from anger, fear, pain or frustration. Most people are able to control these violent thoughts and impulses, and have the resources and emotional capacity to cope with difficult situations. An abusive parent or caretaker is unable to control his/her negative impulses as a result of a combination of circumstances.

Seven general problem areas are typically recognized in abusive families.

Many abusive parents were deprived of parental love, emotional support, or physical care and were physically and/or sexually abused themselves during childhood. Consequently, their basic needs for nurturing and dependence remain unfulfilled. As a result:

- **Their own unmet needs are carried over into adulthood, causing fear, frustration and anger upon which they act impulsively.**
- **They often lack the skills necessary to provide emotionally for themselves, and therefore cannot provide for the emotional support of their children.**
- **They often lack self-esteem or a sense of self-worth.**
- **They usually do not know how to access the support and reinforcement they were denied as children.**
- **Physical punishment is often accepted as a normal consequence in these parent-child relationships.**

Because many abusive parents did not have their own nurturing and dependence needs fulfilled as children, **they lack the skills to appropriately care for or protect their own children.** As a result:

- Abused children are typically given roles in the family that are developmentally inappropriate. The parent-child role is reversed, and the child becomes the caregiver and nurturer.
- When the child is incapable of fulfilling the parent's needs and demands, the parent's resulting frustration can turn to abuse.
- The child becomes the parent's "scapegoat", as the parent projects his/her feelings of inadequacy and failure onto the child.

As a result of poor role modeling from the adults in the parent's own childhood, **the parent is unable to appropriately nurture and perform child-rearing skills.**

- The parent may have unrealistic expectations about a child's developmental abilities. They may not know what a child is capable of doing at certain ages.
- Punishment is inevitable when a child fails to meet inappropriate expectations.

Many abusive parents have a **fear of emotionally investing in relationships.**

- They attempt to avoid rejection and anger by breaking off close relationships.
- They shun emotional commitment, isolating themselves and compounding the issue.
- Stress is present in the family unit, and abuse is more likely to occur.

External stressors introduced by **life crises** such as loss of employment, loss of housing, lack of food or clothing, being in debt or any type of domestic crisis can cause the parent to feel a loss of control. An abusive parent is **unable to establish or utilize outside support systems.**

- They cannot acknowledge that they need or want help.
- This can cause great anxiety that can escalate into abusive behavior.
- The potential for abuse intensifies as the parent's stress accumulates.

Abusive parents are usually involved in **non-nurturing relationships with marriage partners**, neither of which can meet the other's emotional needs.

- Effective communication is non-existent,
- Interactions frequently involve arguing and fighting.
- Children in these homes are the victims of the parents' displaced anger.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

Within the last ten years, our society has become increasingly aware and involved in the prevention of domestic violence. Studies have found a correlation between spouse/partner battering and children being abused and neglected in these homes. Some children are unintentionally injured in the crossfire of violence between adults, while other children are the intentional targets. Children who have witnessed their parent being abused can develop traumatic psychological scars. These children need to be protected and should not have to live in fear for themselves or their family members.

Many resources are available to assist domestic violence victims.

DCF has implemented a statewide initiative to keep children and families safe. "Safe houses" exist for families who need to escape from the battering caregiver, and crisis counselors are available to help victims address their needs.

Taking Action

Whenever abuse has been disclosed or observed, **please contact your Match Support Specialist immediately.**

When abuse or neglect is suspected, contact your Match Support Specialist. If your Match Support Specialist is unavailable, you can talk with any of the BBBS staff. If you have an emergency and cannot reach BBBS staff people, please contact your local police department or Department of Child & Families.

Keep in mind the section of this training entitled “**What to do if a Child Discloses Abuse.**”

You will find these suggestions to be helpful in creating a comfortable setting in which your Little can talk openly and express his/her emotions.

Never “put down” or berate the child’s abuser.

The child wants the abuse to end, but usually is very anxious about consequences for the abuser, especially if the abuser is a parent. Typically, abused children are usually close to the abuser. For example, a mother may hit her child, but the child would not want to be separated from her/his mother under any circumstances.

Treat all disclosures of abuse very seriously.

Listen closely to children. Be observant. Be caring and sensitive. Do not be quick to make judgments on the family. Most importantly, be yourself and a positive support for your Little.

Resource Telephone Numbers

During business hours, please contact BBBS staff with any concerns. These phone numbers are for your information and use after business hours and on weekends.

- Statewide Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: **1-800-KIDS-508** or **1-800-543-7508**
- *Child At Risk Hotline/Children’s Center: (after hours) 1-800-792-5200*
- Teen Peer Line (Teen peer guidance & support via phone): **1-800-238-7868**
- **Department of Child & Families Central Office (central office for statewide DCF information): 1-617-748-2000**
- Helpline (phone numbers for human service resources in the area): **1-800-486-3730**

- Childhelp USA (Hotline counselors provide referrals and reporting numbers) **1-800-792-5200**
- Department of Mental Health Crisis Hotline: **1-800-352-7742**
- Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC): **1-508-586-2660**

BBBSCM Overnight Policy
Effective September 1, 2016

- Match must be in effect for at least 2 years.
- The child (Little) must be at least 11 years old.
- The match must apply with at least 2 months' advance notice (ask your Match Support Specialist for application). Application must be completely filled out and submitted back to the Match Support Specialist.
- In order to qualify, the request should be for something that enriches the life of the child and may be considered a "once in a lifetime" type of event.
 - Some examples may include: a college tour, a trip to a place the child would otherwise not get to see/has not been to before, a special event such as a performance or awards ceremony.
- Any other adults present must submit background checks and be cleared.
- Overnights may **not** take place more than 1-2 times in a calendar year.
- An application may be denied based on failure to meet any of the above criteria.
- All approved requests must be submitted to and signed by the CEO.
- All parties (child, parent, and volunteer) must check in with the Match Support Specialist no earlier than 3 days before the overnight and again no later than 3 days after the overnight.

Overnight visits are a privilege and can be taken away completely at any time if the agency feels that the match has abused the privilege.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

5-7 Year Olds

General Characteristics:

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

Physical Characteristics:

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods. Good quiet activities would be reading books together or doing simple art projects.
- Large muscles well developed. Activities involving small muscles will be difficult (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 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; regresses 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 big issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Be patient, encouraging and flexible.
- Give supervision with a minimum amount of interference.
- Give praise, opportunities for successful completion, and suggestions on acceptable behavior.

Suggested Activities:

- Bake cookies.
- Visit playground or zoo.
- Play UNO, Checkers, Bingo.
- Read stories.
- Ride bikes.
- Activities involving animals.
- Throw a ball.

8-10 Year Olds**General Characteristics:**

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others, but expect 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.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Children who are more physically developed may be upset with their size. A listening ear and your explanations will help.
- May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics:

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their about their friends: BOYS LIKE BOYS; GIRLS LIKE GIRLS.
- 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 friends' rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

Mental Characteristics:

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious, and are collectors of everything. However, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they will need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Recognize allegiance to friends and “heroes”.
- Remind child of responsibilities in a two-way relationship.
- Acknowledge performance, “Hey, watch this”.
- Offer enjoyable learning experiences. It’s a great time to teach about different cultures.
- Provide frank answers to questions about upcoming physiological changes.

Suggested Activities:

- Board Games
- Miniature Golf
- Horseback Riding
- Video Games
- Craft Projects
- STEM
- Drawing
- Swimming

11-13 Year Olds**General Characteristics:**

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

Physical Characteristics:

- Small muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Children who are more physically developed may be upset with their size. A listening ear and explanations will help.
- 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, and may begin sexual activity.

Social Characteristics:

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes on peers are common; girls are typically ahead of boys.
- 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 and “showing off” 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.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Offer alternative opinions without being insistent.
- Be accepting of different physical states and emotional changes.
- Give frank answers to questions.
- Offer money-making responsibilities.
- Share aspects of professional life and rewards of achieving in world of work.
- Do not tease about appearance, clothes, boyfriends, and sexuality. Affirm often.

Suggested Activities:

- Trivial Pursuit
- Skating
- Bicycle Trip, Movies
- Creative Writing

- Music - especially current style or group
- Take To Your Workplace
- Help With Homework

14-16 Year Olds

General Characteristics:

- Testing limits, “know it all” attitudes.
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- 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 rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to confirm. 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. Strongly idealistic.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than boys are in girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Emotional Characteristics:

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

Mental Characteristics:

- Can better understand moral principles.
- Attention span can be lengthy.
- Argumentative behavior may be part of “trying out” an opinion.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Give choices and don’t be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
- Use humor to diffuse testy situations.

- Be available and be yourself, with strengths, weaknesses, and emotions.
- Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust.

Suggested Activities:

- Fitness Classes
- Ethnic restaurants/Cooking
- College Tours
- Movies
- Concerts
- Walks and talks
- Shared community service project