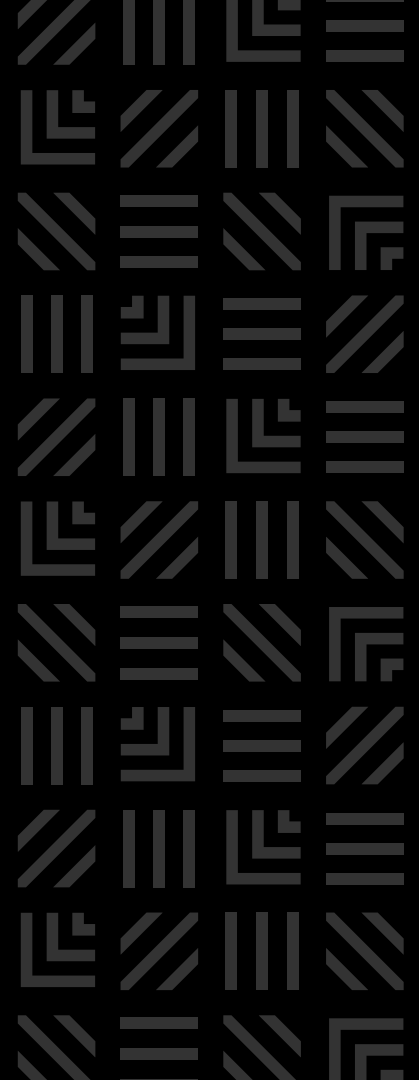




**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**

**OF MARQUETTE &  
ALGER COUNTIES**

# PARENT/GUARDIAN ORIENTATION



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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Your child will be matched one-on-one with a Big with the commitment to spend a minimum of 4-6 hours a month for one-year. Once matched, matches can stay open until the Little turns 18.

- Bigs, Littles, & Parents communicate on scheduling outings that work with everyone's availability.
- Outings are to be low to no-cost – the focus is spending time versus spending money
- Outings can take place at the Big's home with parent/guardian consent
- Overnights can take place after 6-months of being matched.




# ELIGIBILITY

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**Big Brothers Big Sisters has the right to accept or deny participants, or close a match at any time.**

## Youth Eligibility:

- The child must be 7-15 years of age.
  - The custodial parent/guardian and child are all able to find the time in their schedules to keep the match open for the required year, 4-6 hours a month.
  - If the child's parent/guardian is divorced or separated there must be a clear resolution of all child custody issues.
  - The youth must want to participate in the program.
  - The parent/guardian must be willing to support the mentoring relationship
  - The youth should be mentally, emotionally, and physically able to participate
  - The youth has the ability to form a relationship.
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# ENROLLMENT PROCESS

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Becoming a Little involves a one-year commitment. A series of steps are used to tell you more about the program and for us to learn more about you and your child.

- Completion of PowerPoint Orientation
- In-home interview with parent/guardian & child
- Acceptance/Denial decision made by staff
- If accepted, BBBS staff contacts you about potential Big for your child.
- **Pre-Match Meeting:** Parent/Guardian meets with potential Big and BBBS Staff.
- **Final-Match Meeting:** Takes place at Little's home. Final paperwork and ground rules signed. Little meets their Big for the first time!
- **Match Support:** Monthly communication with BBBS Staff.


# ROLE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

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Parents/guardians are not only part of the process – They are part of the success.

It should come as no surprise that we need the parents/guardians to be involved in every step of the way, starting from the beginning of the match.

Once the match is made, you remain closely involved in many ways, including:

- Approving activities & outings.
  - Working equally with the volunteer on scheduling and putting forth the same effort.
  - Asking questions about the outings and sharing what you learn with BBBS staff.
  - Reporting your child's progress and milestones to BBBS on a regular basis.
  - Communicate with BBBS staff monthly.
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# WHO ARE OUR BIGS?

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Our Bigs (ages 21+) all have a sincere interest in being a friend and mentor to the youth. They are not paid – all of their time is volunteered. Role models come in all shapes and sizes, they are regular people just like you. Bigs do not need any special degrees or job skills. They're positive individuals seeking to provide guidance to youth.

## A BIG IS:

- ✓ Consistent
- ✓ Reliable
- ✓ Caring
- ✓ Open Minded
- ✓ A Friend
- ✓ Encouraging
- ✓ Supportive

## A BIG IS NOT:

- A Parent
- A Social Worker
- An ATM
- A Babysitter
- A Taxi Service

# MATCH SUPPORT

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BBBS works hard to support the relationship between Bigs & Littles. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone. Bigs, Littles, & Parents/Guardians work with their Match Support Specialist from their BBBS agency.

BBBS staff is required by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to have monthly communication with all parties.

Monthly updates can, but not limited to, include:

- What your child and Big have done together since the last contact
- How often outings are happening and how they are planned/scheduled
- What your child is telling you about their time with their Big
- Any changes at home or with the child (address, phone, school, living situation, etc.)
- How the match relationship is progressing
- Questions or concerns
- Suggestions/feedback for BBBS

**Failure to contact BBBS regularly or respond to our attempts to reach you could lead to suspension and/or closure of the match.**



# WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL MATCH?

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## **HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

- New relationships take time and the impact of the match may not be easy to see, especially early on.

## **CREATE A BUDGET**

- We encourage free to low-cost activities but understand that there will be times when there is a cost. Money is often a sticky subject, so the sooner a budget is discussed, the more relaxed everyone can be when choosing activities. Determine how much each person is able and/or willing to contribute and stick to it.
- Make sure your child knows the budget and help remind them that the focus is spending time versus spending money.

## **COMMUNICATE OPENLY, HONESTLY AND OFTEN**

- Keep the Big updated on any changes with life or school. If they have a sporting event or a band concert, let the Big know so they could come watch.
- Life happens, and that's ok! But if it is something that may affect the match relationship, let each other know.

## **BE PATIENT**

- Like all relationships, you will experience the occasional ups and downs. Particularly in the middle stages, as children become very comfortable in the relationship, there may be a periodic challenge. This is normal. There is no such thing as a perfect relationship!



# CHILD SAFETY RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) wants to be apart of the solution toward reducing violence and victimization in children's lives. Talking about child sexual abuse is difficult but having an honest discussion about effective approaches to prevention can help keep your child safe from harm. For that reason, we have provided some additional resource documents for you to review.

At BBBS, we are deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of all children – not only in our local programs, but in their daily lives. These documents will increase the understanding of the risks of child sexual abuse and how to better recognize signs of abuse. Please click on each link to open up the additional document.

[Talking to Your Children About Consent](#)

[Tips for Parents: Safety Scenarios](#)

[Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[Tips for Parents: Setting Physical Boundaries](#)



# THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE ORIENTATION!

Please click below to complete the form. Once BBBS receives notice of your completion they will be in contact with you to schedule the interview.

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE FORM](#)

