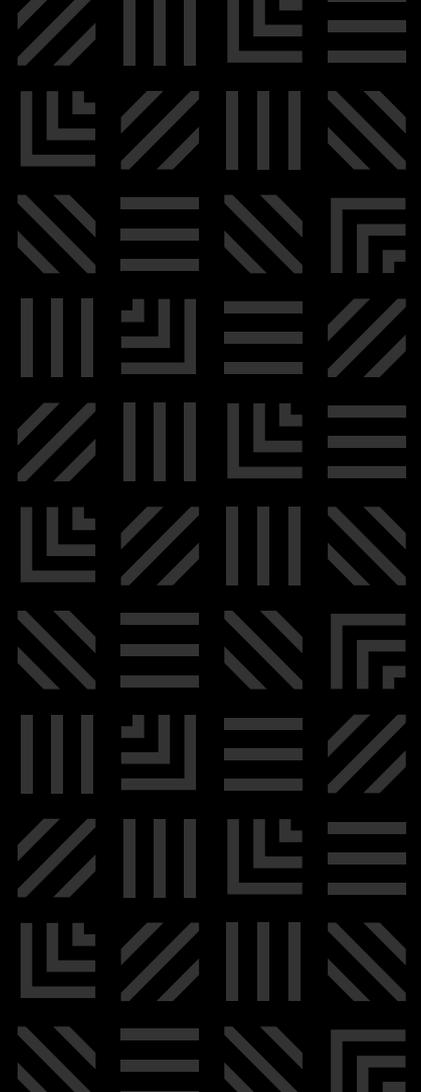




**Big Brothers
Big Sisters®**

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION



OUR MISSION is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

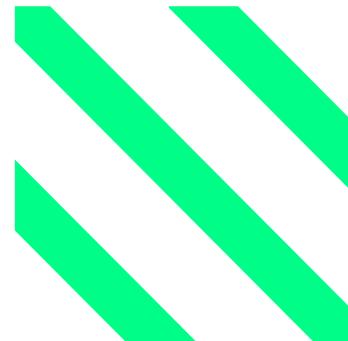
OUR VISION is all youth achieve their full potential.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As a Big in the Community-Based Program you will be matched one-on-one with a child (Little) ages 7-15 with the commitment to spend a minimum of 4-6 hours a month together.

- 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 after three months of being matched (approval process from BBBS staff needed in advance).
- Overnights are strictly prohibited.



ELIGIBILITY

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

Volunteer Eligibility:

- Volunteer must be 21+ years of age with a valid driver's license and proof of car insurance.
- The volunteer is able to find the time in their schedule to commit to 4-6 hours a month with their Little.
- Everyone living in volunteer's home must be supportive of their participation in BBBS.
- Volunteer must be in compliance with all layered criminal background and driving checks.



ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Becoming a Big Brother/Big Sister 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.

- Complete an application
 - Review the volunteer orientation
 - In-person interview
 - Volunteer Online Training
 - Acceptance/Denial decision made by staff
 - If accepted, BBBS staff contacts you about potential Little.
 - **Pre-match Meeting:** Volunteer meets with Parent/Guardian and BBBS staff.
 - **Final-Match Meeting:** Takes place at Little's home. Final paperwork and ground rules signed. Big and Little meet for the first time and officially matched!
 - **Match Support:** Monthly communication with BBBS Staff.
-

APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS OF BIG

It doesn't take special skills, lots of money, or any specific personality type. All it takes is someone who will stand with a child as a friend.

- Be involved by being understanding, kind, patient, and open-minded.
- Commit unconditionally – be aware the youth we serve come from all different life experiences (substance abuse, poverty, divorced families, foster homes, etc.). Their home and family dynamic could be different than the ideal traditional family.
- Be a consistent and reliable presence in the Little's life.
- Put the Little's safety and well-being first.
- Be a positive role model.
- Your role is not to change who your Little is, but to accept them for who they are.
- Maintain open communication with the Little.
- Focus on having fun.



APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS OF BIG

- Introduce the Little to new and challenging opportunities (money management, car repair, cooking, hiking Sugarloaf, etc.)
- Share your own skills and talents with your Little.
- Create “Teachable Moments” out of difficult decisions or situations.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Set clear limits for acceptable behavior during time with your Little.
- Emphasize positive behaviors rather than simply pointing out negative ones.
- When serious problem situations arise, act as an advocate to ensure successful intervention.
- Support and help your Little’s growth and development.
- Communicates openly and honestly with your Little, the parent/guardian, and BBBS.
- Do not be judgmental of your Little or their family.
- Encourage expression of positive and negative emotions and feelings.



WHO ARE THE LITTLES?

Littles are between that ages of 7-15. Once matched, Littles can remain in our program until they turn 18. Alumni Littles can then decide on joining the Big Futures program where they continue until they are 24.

All children and their parent/guardian must want to be in our program. If the child does not want to participate, we do not enroll them.

Youth are not necessarily "at-risk," but **their daily influences (peers / neighborhoods, etc.) could cause them to become "at-risk" without intervention**

Children and families participate in an enrollment process similar to yours.



MATCH SUPPORT

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 a 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 you and your Little 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 your Little (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.

AGES & STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

8-10 Year olds

General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.

Social Characteristics

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

Emotional Characteristics

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

Mental Characteristics

- Their idea of fairness becomes a 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 need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks

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

11-13 Year olds

General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

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

Social Characteristics

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

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

Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

14-16 Year olds

General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

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

Social Characteristics

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Going to extremes, emotional instability with "know-it-all" attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with an admired adult.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Emotional Characteristics

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

Mental Characteristics

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

Developmental Tasks

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

CHILD SAFETY & YOUTH PROTECTION

Research demonstrates that children need caring adults in their lives to build protective factors that help reduce their chances of victimization. Big Brothers Big Sisters is committed to being a part of the solution towards reducing this violence and victimization in the lives of all children.

- ✓ We professionally screen all participants, Bigs, Littles and families. Our interviews are very in-depth for this purpose. We also complete layered background checks and references for our volunteers.
- ✓ Everyone in our program receives child safety education - Bigs, Littles, Parents/Guardians, & Staff
- ✓ We have ground rules and policies to ensure child safety in our match relationships. You will receive all of these in your volunteer handbook and you will also sign a copy during your interview.
- ✓ Match Support contacts with your Match Support Specialist are required. We discuss child safety at home, in school, and in the match. It is our number one priority!



COMMON STAGES OF MATCH RELATIONSHIP

Stage 1: The Contemplation Stage In this stage, you are contemplating becoming a Big. When contemplating, be sure to consider the commitment, expectations of the program, and the role of being a Big!

Stage 2: The Initiation Stage This is when you meet your Little for the first time and start your relationship. Being nervous or excited is very normal for both you and your Little. During these first few months, be very patient with your Little.

Stage 3: The Growth and Maintenance Stage This should be the longest stage of your relationship. By now you have probably figured out where you fit in your Little's life – where they need support and where they excel.

Stage 4: Closure or Redefinition This stage is often marked by a fork in the road – a transition, usually. This could be a life change (you move, your Little moves, etc.) or it could be developmental. When these transitions arise, be open and communicate about them with your Little and your MSS. Be honest with yourself and be realistic.

"It's not a straight path. It's a twisting path with some bumps in the road and a few dead ends that you need to get past. Luckily there are lots of people with great experience and advice to help you out. Take advantage of these people. They've traveled the path and can guide you past the potholes. A fabulous future awaits you and your Little."



SOME REMINDERS TO A SUCCESSFUL MATCH

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.

YOU'RE NOT A PROFESSIONAL

You are an adult friend. You are not a tutor or a social worker or a therapist – even if you play that role in real life!

AS A BIG, YOU ARE A MENTOR TO YOUR LITTLE.

It is not your role to mentor the whole family – this includes mentoring other siblings in the home or even mentoring the parent or guardian.

YOU ARE NOT YOUR LITTLE'S PARENT.

They have someone in that role. You bring something unique to the table as an adult friend!

COMMUNICATE OPENLY, HONESTLY AND OFTEN

Keep the parent/guardian and child updated with any changes or time constraints that would impact the match (going on a vacation, work commitments, etc.)

ADDITIONALLY, YOU ARE NOT A PEER

Please do not act your Little's age – that is awkward for everyone! Please bring your adult wisdom, role modeling, and insight. They have peer friends – your friendship is different!

FINALLY, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS HAVE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES.

You will say no to your Little – we want you to! It is important to have financial, emotional, and physical boundaries in your match relationship!

THANK YOU FOR REVIEWING THE ORIENTATION!

