

The Buddy Program Guide for Parents

- Benefits of Mentoring: Young people who have *more* caring adults in their lives do better in school, engage in fewer risky behaviors, and are more likely to become caring, healthy, and responsible adults.
- Having a Big Buddy in your child's life can actually reinforce the good habits that you are trying to teach your child.
- Having a Big Buddy may improve the relationship between you and your child.
- The Buddy Program's goals are to:
 - Increase youth's self-esteem
 - Increase youth's attendance at school and attitude towards learning
 - Increase youth's ability to make healthy, positive decisions
 - Increase youth's ability to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults

Roles of the Big Buddy

- A friend and role model – Big Buddies are supportive and try to set a good example.
- A confidant – A Big Buddy is there to listen to your child's dreams, hopes, and fears, while encouraging them as a person with many life possibilities.
- Another person who is proud of your child – A Big Buddy can help your child channel his/her gifts towards positive actions and help expose them to new opportunities.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a mentor to the family, a social worker or doctor, a financier, a babysitter, or chauffeur, a disciplinarian, a substitute or foster parent, or a savior – A Big Buddy provides special attention to one child while maintaining healthy boundaries and not overstepping their role as a mentor.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a religious or spiritual advisor – the religious doctrine and teaching will be left to the parent.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a significant other for the parent – these actions could well interfere with the relationship your child has with their mentor.
- A Big Buddy is NOT there to replace *you*. You are your child's parent and nothing will ever change that. You can set aside your own special time with your child too.

Roles of the Parent(s)

- A good listener- Share in your child's excitement and concerns about his or her Big Buddy.
- A schedule keeper- Help your child plan time with his/her Big Buddy, and find ways to remind him or her about upcoming meetings.
- A voice of gratitude- Help your child show their appreciation to their Big Buddy. Find ways to show your appreciation and say "thank you".

How you can support your child's relationship with their Big Buddy

- Be positive.
- Tell your child the positive skills you see him/her developing as a result of having a Big Buddy.
- Let the Big Buddy know how much you appreciate that they are a part of your child's life.
- Be available to the relationship but not overbearing. Show your interest but don't make demands.
- Share feedback from your child with the Buddy Program staff.
- Give your child's Big Buddy copy of school, sports or performance calendars.

- Let the Buddy Program staff know if there has been a change or incident in your child's home life that the Big Buddy should know (examples- moving, death in the family, financial stress).
- Be prepared that eventually the Buddy relationship will end.
- Your role in your child's mentoring relationship is very important. The more supportive you are, the more likely their relationship will be a healthy and successful one!

Roles of the Mentoring Program Coordinator (each youth will be assigned a Buddy Program MPC)

- Interviewing referred youth and their families, and overseeing required paperwork that goes along with such duties.
- Recruiting, screening, training, and matching adult volunteers with appropriate youth.
- Offering on-going support throughout the youth's participation in the program: counseling services, scholarships, activities, and referrals to other agencies.
- Offering on-going Case Management throughout the youth's participation in the program. Mentoring Program Coordinators contact the youth on their wait-list every three months. Once a youth is matched with a volunteer, MPC contact the youth, his/her family, and the volunteer bi-monthly during the first 6 months and monthly after that.
- Assisting youth and their families with any needed paperwork in regards to their participation in our programs (ex. parent permission forms, updated policies and procedures, etc.).
- Please do not ask your Mentoring Program Coordinator to do anything that is not related to your child's involvement in the Buddy Program. She/he will be required to say no.