



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**



# **Preparing Volunteers Guide**





## Preparing Volunteers Guide

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## Preparing Volunteers Guide

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## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### About BBBS

**B**ig Brothers Big Sisters has been bringing a little magic into the everyday lives of children by matching them with adult volunteers in fun and rewarding relationships since 1904. Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. In 2002, the organization served more than 200,000 in 5,000 communities across the country, through a network of 470 agencies. National research has shown that the positive relationships between Big Brothers and Big Sisters and their Littles have a direct, measurable, and lasting impact on children's lives.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon serves Deschutes County, Crook County and Jefferson County. Program services are provided to children primarily on a one-to-one basis through a match with an appropriate adult volunteer. The role of the volunteer is to provide friendship and support to the child. The agency staff assesses the child's needs, determines the best match with a volunteer, makes a match, and continues to support and supervise the match throughout the relationship.

- **Traditional Big Brother/Big Sister**  
As a traditional Big Brother or Big Sister, you will meet with your Little Brother or Little Sister for 6-12 hours/month in the community. Often activities can include riding bikes, walking in the park, or cooking together.
- **Couples Match**  
This match includes a couple working together as a team to mentor a child. They are screened individually and are matched with one Little Brother. Couples matches are designed for couples that have been together for at least one year.

#### **Who are our Littles?**

- Children who could benefit from having a positive adult role model.
- Children who like to have fun.
- Age 6 to 15 years

#### **How do children come into the program?**

Most children in our community-based programs come to us through their parent or care-giver. Most children in our school-based programs come to us through a teacher or counselor. We also reach out to involve children through churches, youth service agencies, and other referrals. **All children and their parents must want to be in our program.**



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Your Role

**T**he success of the match friendship depends greatly on the efforts of the Big, the Little, and the Parent. Each one plays an important role in helping build a meaningful friendship.

**What is Mentoring?** Mentoring refers to a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced person and a younger person. This relationship involves mutual commitment, caring and trust. Through our program, a mentor should enriches a young person's skills, self-reliance and buffer the inevitable stresses of childhood. There are several other roles you may serve as described below:

#### Friendship

- Be accepting of who he/she is. Assume a non-judgmental attitude.
- Children need acceptance in order to grow.

#### Role Modeling

- Help your Little develop stronger values, standards and goals.

#### Listening

- Many young people do not have anyone at home who is able to devote one-on-one time to listen to them.
- Help a child sort out their problems and arrive at their own solutions.

#### Coaching

- Giving advice and providing feedback are important as a young person takes on new challenges.
- Coaches give praise for a job well done, encouragement when the going gets tough, and constructive feedback when changes need to be made.

#### Educating

- A mentor is also a teacher.
- Littles will benefit more if they are taught how to handle the problem for themselves.

#### Opening Doors

- Introduce your Little to new people, activities, and organizations. Opportunities like these may open new horizons.

#### Respect Your Little as an Individual

- Allow you and your Little to express his/her thoughts and feelings.
- Try a variety of activities together. Don't underestimate the range of his/her interests. Support and praise your Little when trying new things.



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Guidelines for Volunteers

#### Be Consistent and Reliable

- Obtain guardians permission before having an outing and inform where you are going and when you will be back.
- Begin and end your match outings at the agreed upon time.
- Spend “telephone time” with your Little if an outing has to be cancelled.

#### Set Limits

- Insist that safety rules always be followed.
- Agree that the Little will be ready when you arrive to pick him or her up.
- Determine that someone will be at home when you return.

#### Maintain a One-to-One Relationship

- Limit family members or friends on outings.
- Occasional group outings are okay but get permission from the child and guardian.
- Contact your Match Support Specialist if the family needs any assistance. Remember that your main purpose is to spend time with your Little.
- Never leave your Little in the care of another adult.

#### Avoid Emphasis on Money

- Select low-cost or no-cost activities during the first few months.
- Keep expenditures small.
- Keep the lines of communication open with your Littles’ guardian on your outings and the potential need for money. Most parents’ do not want the financial burden to be placed on you and are willing to help out!

#### Be Involved and Participate in Agency Activities

- This connects you with other Bigs and Littles and allows your Little to interact with other kids in the program.

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#### Realize that Problems may come up

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

#### Report to your Match Support Specialist

- Report any major changes in your life to your Match Support Specialist
- Monthly/quarterly phone calls and emails and 6 month and annual surveys are mandatory and should be returned to your Case Manager in a timely fashion.



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Overnight Visits

Big Brothers Big Sisters permits overnight match activities only on a special occasion basis that will enrich the child's life. The following conditions must be met before an overnight can occur:

- The match must be one year or older.
- The volunteer has demonstrated good judgment and reliability in his/her commitment to the Little and has adhered to program ground rules.
- The volunteer, parent and Match Support employee must discuss overnight plans, sleeping accommodations and any health considerations with before an approval is granted for the overnight.
- Only two outings can occur in one calendar year.
- All adults present will need to pass a background check on a cost to them.
- The volunteer must provide separate sleeping accommodations for the Little (separate beds, sleeping bags, etc.) and provide a safe & secure environment.

### Social Media

Big Brothers Big Sisters permits social media contact with certain rules in place. All Bigs need to speak with Parent and Guardian and Match Support Specialist prior to engaging in cyberspace with Little. The following topics need to be discussed prior to interactions between Little and Big:

- All site rules must be followed.
- If using Facebook, you must "Friend" your Match Support Specialist prior to "Friend"-ing your Little
- You must turn on the feature, "Review posts friends tag you in before they appear on your timeline" on Facebook.
- Never post any pictures of your Little unless you have the written consent of the child's guardian. That consent form should be filed with BBBS.
- Never post the last name, contact information, or identifying information of your Little.
- When in doubt about whether or not something is appropriate to post, consult with your Match Support Coordinator prior to posting.
- Any information a Little posts to his/her social networking site that presents concern for his/her safety must be reported to a Match Support Specialist.

Formal forms can be found in our "Bigs Only" tab on our [BBBS.org](http://BBBS.org) website. All matches will agree to these rules prior to match. Failure to follow these policies will result in the closing of the match.



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

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

**P**arents have entrusted their child to you. They remain the leaders in their family and our role is to support them whenever we can when appropriate. It's important that we respect and honor that. The parent's support is critical to the success of the match. It may take a while to establish your role with the parent. Listed below are some ways you can work with the Parent/Guardian.

- **Communicate with them before and after an activity. Describe what you plan to do and what you've done together.**
- **Make sure they are aware of activity plans, and ask if the activity is ok (do not rely on the Little to tell the Parent/Guardian about plans).**
- **Let them know about any changes in plans.**
- **Respect the privacy and confidentiality of your Little's family.**
- **Maintain a primary relationship with your Little and do not become overly involved with the rest of his/her family.**
- **Talk to your Match Support Specialist about any concerns you have about your Little/Little's family or your Little's well-being.**

### As a Big You Are NOT:

- **Parent**
- **Financial support**
- **Taxi service**
- **Babysitter**
- **Peer**
- **Therapist**





## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### BBBS Support - How BBBS Works with You

**B**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. Bigs and Littles work with their Match Support Specialist from their BBBS agency.

Along the way to forming a safe and lasting friendship your Match Support Specialist will be in touch with all of you to help you and your Little. Sometimes they will call, meet you in person, or email you to make contact. **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.

**That's not all that the Match Support Specialist provides. He/She also:**

- Provide you feedback on how you're making a difference.
- Find information and resources that you might be interested in.
- Offer group activities and give you activity ideas for you and your Little.
- Hook you up with 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. Please call:**

- To get feedback from the Little and Guardian(s) about the match.
- 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.

#### **30-day Match Contact Policy:**

BBBSCO requires that all match parties/participants (volunteers, clients and parents) remain in contact with their Match Support Specialist and/or Program Coordinator on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly, depending on the length of the match). All match parties must contact the agency within 30 days of an initial match support contact attempt. If a volunteer, client or parent does not adhere to this policy, the match will be closed after the 30 day grace period. BBBSCO enforces this policy in order to ensure the safety of the children we serve, to remain in compliance with our National office's program delivery policies and to cultivate a support system throughout the lifespan of the match. BBBSCO thanks its volunteers, clients and parents for their participation in regards to this policy.



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Strategies for Common Problems

**O**ver the years we have seen some common problems that can occur in any match. These are called common because they are, well... *common*. It's normal for Little/Big relationships to experience some of these situations.

We've collected some examples of these common problems and included the problems in the next pages. After your match gets going, if you are experiencing one of these challenges, you can bring the issue up with your Match Support Specialist and discuss in more detail how to proceed in a successful way.

#### **“What do I do?”**

- ***“My Little doesn't show appreciation.”***
- ***“My Little doesn't share feelings and/or initiate conversation.”***
- ***“My Little never calls me.”***
- ***“My Little doesn't act appropriately.”***
- ***“My Little doesn't seem to need me.”***
- ***“My Little doesn't make time for me.”***
- ***“My Little doesn't want to improve.”***
- ***“My Little asks me to buy something for him.”***
- ***“My Little asks age inappropriate things from me.”***
- ***“My Little Brother wants me to keep his abuse a secret.”***
- ***“My Little never helps me plan outings or has any suggestions.”***
- ***“Nobody was home when I went to pick up my Little.”***
- ***“My Little has a problem with hygiene and body odor”***
- ***“My Little's guardian tells me their personal problems.”***
- ***“My Little's guardian doesn't give money when said she would”***

Please refer to our “Bigs Only” tab on our [BBBSCO.org](http://BBBSCO.org) website



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Children - Ages & Stages

If you haven't had recent experience with a child in the age group you'll be matched with, we have some information to help you work successfully with your Little. We've created handouts for each of the age categories listed below. These handouts are designed to provide you with some general characteristics of children in each of the four different age categories:

- 5-7 year olds
- 8-10 year olds
- 11-13 year olds
- 14-16 year olds

These handouts may help you understand what your Little might be like depending on his/her age. They also include some suggested activities.

As you read the handouts:

- Keep in mind that they are generalizations.
- While they may provide a description of children in general, you may encounter something slightly different with your Little. This does not mean that there is something wrong with your Little. It may mean that they are not like the average child.
- Sometimes a child's development may be delayed because of trauma or negative experiences or simply a slower or faster development than others, so the stage they're in at present may not correlate to their age in years.

You can view characteristics for the noted age groups on our "Bigs Only" tab on our [BBBSCO.org](http://BBBSCO.org) website:

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## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Activities

Age			
5-7	8-10	11-13	14-16
Bake and frost cut out cookies	Start a scrapbook of your activities	Mow the lawn or wash the car together	Plan, shop for ingredients and cook dinner together
Fly a kite on a windy day	Go on a camera scavenger hunt	Take a dog to the dog park and meet a new friend	Go to a concert featuring a favorite performer
Go on a walk and collect interesting rocks, leaves or other items	Make greeting, get well or holiday cards to give to special people	Go to Painted People Ceramics to decorate friendship mugs. (Little's Item is ½ off)	Check out the classified ads and discuss what each job requires in terms of education and experience
Go to a Library and read your favorite children's book	Rent a bike (for free) at Wheel Fun Rentals in Old Mill	Visit the DD Ranch in Terrebonne to learn about farms and their animals	Research what happened on the day and year each of you was born
Make a present for upcoming holidays to give to family and friends	Visit the High Desert Museum and see the Otter display. (Littles get in free)	Visit the Bend Rock Gym for 2 for 1 on costs of climbing rental and admission.	Go out for dinner at an ethnic restaurant; who else is eating there? Favorite dishes?
Get a frozen yogurt at Cuppa Yo (2 <sup>nd</sup> is ½ off)	Go to the Crooked County Round-up or Madras Drag Strips	Try Frisbee golf at your local course. (You can get Frisbee's at convenient stores)	Get free snowshoe rentals at SunnySide Sports and visit the Cascade Lake Trails.
Bowl 2 games for free at Sun Mountain Fun Center	Go Swimming at the indoor pools (Little is free at both Cascade Swim Center and Juniper)	Contact the Humane Society to find the requirements for dog walking	Go to a Central Oregon Community event. (Google Cyclocross and Visit Bend for some upcoming events)
Go to Bouncing Off the Walls)	Play Monopoly, Life, Sorry, hangman	Plan and plant a garden or help at a community garden	Go to an Elk's or Local high school game
Have a picnic with hot cocoa	Go Sledding (at Wanoga for free or with your discount at Hoodoo)	Volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House or with Family Kitchen on Prep Squad	Try mastering something difficult: juggling, cooking a soufflé, water color painting
Visit Peterson's Rock Garden and see the peacocks	Call ahead and visit the local fire station or police station	Hike Tumalo Mountain, Pilot Butte, Dillon Falls, Crooked River Canyon, or Smith Rock	Visit McMenamin's for the free Last Tuesday Historical Videos in the Movie House



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Match Life Cycle

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

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

**The Honeymoon Stage** - This stage occurs from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to approximately the 4 month date.

- Beginning a new relationship is fun and exciting but anxiety and uncertainty is also a common feeling when developing a new relationship.
- Kids will test the limits with you.
- Another common phenomenon in early match development is the expectation that we are going to immediately impact our little's life.

**Growth Phase** - This stage typically takes place from the 4 month to one year.

- Trust will develop.
- Guilt may also occur during this stage if outings need to be changed.

**Maturity Phase** - This stage typically takes place from one year on.

- You will notice that your relationship with your Little has become more positive and realistic.
- As your match matures, it will be easier to accept negative feedback.

**Match Closure** – Many reasons lead to Match Closures and can occur during any stage.

- We will work with each match to decide the appropriate closure.
- As of this date, Big Brothers Big Sisters will no longer be apart nor responsible for the relationship.

[Visit the "Bigs Only" tab on our Website BBBS.org to read further into these stages](http://www.BBBS.org)



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### General Liability Statement Provided by Sage Insurance

#### **\*BBBS of Central Oregon is a program of J Bar J Youth Services\***

Volunteers are covered under J Bar J Youth Services, Inc general liability policy for "bodily injury" or "property damage" that they may do to others while they are performing duties related to the conduct of the business of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon & J Bar J Youth Services, Inc. There are specific limitation and exclusions but basically the volunteers are covered for liability like an employee would be.

Personal Property of the volunteers are covered up to \$25,000 (this does not apply to money or securities) The limit drops to \$400 when personal items of the volunteer are in a vehicle owned by J Bar J Youth Services, Inc.

Volunteers are also covered under J Bar J Youth Services, Inc professional liability policy if they are providing services for insured but only 1.) If the volunteer is officially appointed as such by the insured; and 2.) If the volunteer is performing services specifically assigned by the insured.

However, the following are not insured, even if they are volunteers, unless they are included by written endorsement to J Bar J Youth services Policy:

- a.) Osteopathic or medical doctors,
- b.) Dentists, optometrists, chiropractors or podiatrists,
- c.) Nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists or
- d.) Veterinarians.

Again, there are specific limitations and exclusions that do apply and are set forth in the policy language.

Volunteers are covered under J Bar J Youth Services Inc sexual misconduct policy just like an employee of J Bar J Youth Services. Coverage does not apply if the volunteer commits sexual misconduct as defined by the policy or has knowledge of a person committing sexual misconduct and remains passive or fails to take action to prevent a recurrence of sexual misconduct.

Volunteers are responsible for providing coverage for their own vehicles (liability and physical damage) J Bar J Youth Services policies will not defend the volunteer from liability suits or repair volunteers car damaged while used during the course of conducting business or services for J Bar J Youth Services.

Clients of J Bar J Youth Services including "littles" in the Big Brother/Big Sister Program either have their own health insurance or are covered by J Bar J's accident policy with coverage up to \$50,000.



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### Tax Information

Remember that although you mentor for the benevolent purpose of helping a child in need, there are tax benefits of which you may take advantage to the special times you spend with your Little. Here are the answers from the experts at H & R Block to some frequently asked questions:

**Q: I volunteer for several organizations and am unclear about what kind of records I should keep for my volunteer duties. Can you give me some general guidelines?**

**A:** There are three primary kinds of record keeping: for cash contributions, for contributions of property, and for actual volunteer services you perform. Here are some highlights.

- The cost of driving a car for volunteer purposes are deducted one of two ways:
  1. Actual cost of parking, tolls, gas, and oil; or
  2. \$0.14 per mile plus parking and tolls. Qualified transportation includes going between your home and the location where volunteer work is performed. Keep a logbook showing the date, destination, purpose, and mileage of all your charitable driving.
- The IRS has ruled that “reasonable” un-reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses that you incur related to your volunteer work for Big Brothers Big Sisters are deductible. Such expenses include amounts you pay for your Little Brother’s participation in activities. The IRS uses examples of swimming, attending movies, going out to dinner, and the like as “reasonable.” To deduct the cost of taking your Little Brother along with you on vacations, you will bear the burden of proof that the amounts and the activities are “reasonable.” Be sure to keep your receipts. Of course, the vacation costs for you and your family are not deductible.
- Usually the full amount of the cash you contribute is deductible. There are some expectations, so be sure to check with your H & R Block tax professional if you are not sure. Your canceled check or a receipt from the organization will normally provide enough documentation. However, for contributions of \$250 or more made at any one time, you must have a written confirmation of the donation from the charitable organization.



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### THANK YOU!

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

We wish you all the best in your match with your Little Brother or Little Sister. Have great fun. Take pride in your contribution to the happiness of your Little. We will be with you, supporting you, throughout your journey.



\*The child and volunteer intake process used by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon is a consistent process to determine eligibility of children, youth and volunteers for services based upon written eligibility criteria. Children, youth and volunteers are not excluded on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or marital status of parent. (*Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Standards of Practice for One-to-One Service for Programs Operating Within Affiliated Sponsoring Organizations, October 2003, V-15, page 7*).