

# 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.