



Big Brothers
Big Sisters®

OF CENTRAL
MASS & METROWEST



10 WAYS
TO BE A BETTER
MENTOR ...
EVERY DAY!

We believe all children deserve a great mentor and that positive mentoring relationships transform both mentors and mentees to become the best versions of themselves. One-to-one mentoring relationships support the social and emotional development needed by youths to build resilience, mental health, and well-being. These relationships enrich the lives of youth in our communities and build brighter futures.

Mentors are a consistent adult presence in the lives of mentees celebrating their successes, facing challenges together, and helping them reach their full potential through activities such as working on homework, attending a sporting event, taking a hike or walk, cooking a healthy meal, doing a science experiment, and so much more. The essential activity is quality, uninterrupted time between a reliable, caring mentor and a child in need of additional adult support with their best interests in mind.

Remember, being a mentor is being a trusted advisor and delivering support and advice to a child or teenager when they need it in a way that makes sense to them. Effective mentoring is not as difficult as you might think, here's ten tips on better ways to make positive difference in someone's life.





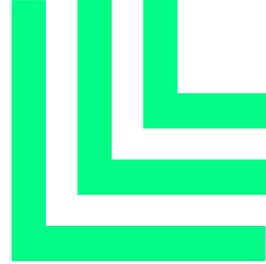
1. BE RELIABLE

Being a mentor doesn't take much time, but it does take commitment. Effective mentors keep their commitments to their mentee. Keep your word to the child or teenager you are mentoring, especially when it comes to negative consequences. The child you are mentoring must know that you say what you mean, and you mean what you say. You must be one of the most reliable and dependable people in their lives. Being a good mentor is about being a reliable promise-keeper. Respect the trust the mentee places in you.



2. SHARE YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Everyone has a unique set of skills, knowledge, and expertise. Your life experience and wisdom asks to be shared with young people who want to learn but have no one to turn to. Illustrate to the child you're mentoring how you got to where you are and what potential pitfalls they should avoid. Help them grown and learn from your experience.



3. BE HONEST

It is crucial that, as a mentor, you be a person of integrity. Your character is who you are when nobody's looking. Having integrity makes you secure and confident in who you are as a person. Being an upstanding person of your word; being someone that everyone knows they can count on; being objective, fair, and diplomatic are all qualities that create a bond of trust and make you a great mentor. Always demonstrate your integrity when mentoring and set a great example for them to emulate.



4. SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

Broaden the horizons of your mentee by sharing your favorite museums, sports, music, movies, restaurants, historic sites, and festivals. It's likely that your mentee will come from a different background and socioeconomic status and your interests can broaden the mind of a child or teenager who has never had the chance to have such experiences. In turn, your mentee may then share their favorite things with you, broadening your horizons as well. It's about doing things you enjoy together, and learning together in a safe, positive environment. Allow the mentee to have voice and choice in deciding on activities and remember to have fun!



5. BE CONSISTENT

You can't be an effective "part-time" Being an effective mentor requires "full-time" consistency. Mentoring is about building and maintaining relationships and your mentee should know you will always be there for them when they need you the most. Always strive to stay in constant contact with your mentee.



6. EMPATHIZE

Every person sees and understands the world differently. An effective mentor can understand and share the feelings of the child or teenager they are mentoring so they can see the world through their eyes. Remember, the experiences that have shaped what you think and feel may be significantly different from the person you're mentoring, therefore it's important to take the time necessary to understand your mentee's world thoroughly. Asking questions is a powerful way to understand and empathize with your mentee effectively.



7. MOTIVATE AND ENCOURAGE

Positive reinforcement goes a long way and is highly beneficial for young people as a motivational tool – it does wonders for their self-esteem. Encouragement positively impacts mental health and can help quiet self-doubts that can prevent someone from trying new things or sharing thoughts and ideas. As your mentee tries new things, begins a new hobby, takes on new opportunities and/or makes active decisions toward achieving their goals, let them know you see them progress and you are happy and excited for them.



8. BECOME PARTNERS WITH THE PARENT

It takes a village to raise a child. An effective mentor and the mentee's parent(s) need to trust each other and work together to provide stability and support for the child. Remember, an effective mentor should work together with the mentee's parent (s) to help the child reach his or her full potential.



9. LISTEN

Effective communication is essential to building a trusting and strong mentoring relationship. Young people are still learning how to communicate, and they often rely on their mentors to take the lead and teach them how. When communicating with their mentees, effective mentors listen - they don't lecture. Active listening requires hearing, interpreting, and responding to what someone says. Pay attention and give your mentee your undivided attention. Demonstrate that you are listening and reflect on what has been said.



10. BE YOURSELF

Mentoring isn't about having a special talent or a degree in psychology — it's about being yourself. If you can smile, be patient, a good listener, a positive role model, and a supportive friend, you've got what it takes to mentor effectively. It's just that easy.