



Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Grande Prairie and Area

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### **What is the In-school Mentoring Program?**

- ◆ A program offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters and your child/youth's school
- ◆ It involves either an adult or teen volunteer being matched with a grade 1-6 student
- ◆ An opportunity for children to benefit from a one-to-one relationship with a caring, reliable adult/teen
- ◆ A way to expand the child's information about the world beyond their own family and neighbourhood

#### ***How does it work?***

- ◆ Each volunteer, who is accepted as a mentor, will be matched with a child
- ◆ Mentors visit with their mentee at the child's school
- ◆ Visits are during school hours for one hour per week over the course of the school year
- ◆ The *Mentee* and the *Mentor* spend their time in ways that are of interest to the child (ex: physical activity, playing board games, visiting the school library, talking, drawing, making things, etc.)

#### ***Who are the Mentors?***

- ◆ Our mentors are adults (over 18 years old) OR teens (Grades 7-12); this will depend on the program being offered at the school
- ◆ People who like children, relate well to them, and want to be helpful
- ◆ Reliable adults/teens who provide their mentee with consistency
- ◆ People who have been screened, trained, and supervised by the Big Brothers Big Sisters agency
- ◆ People who commit themselves to this volunteer work for one school year and may be available to continue with the same child for a subsequent year

#### **What is the role of a parent?**

- ◆ Support the child's friendship with the *Mentor* by letting the child know the parent is glad he/she is involved
- ◆ Know that the parent is welcome to meet the *Mentor* at the school, at a planned *Meet the Mentor Meeting*
- ◆ Notice how the child reacts to the *Mentor's* visits (whether they look forward to them)
- ◆ Report any concerns to the school or Big Brothers Big Sisters immediately
- ◆ Allow the child to take things to school to show the *Mentor* or to play with during their visits
- ◆ Sign a release of information form before the program begins
- ◆ Inform the agency if your child wishes to attend a monthly Big Bunch Event – information sent out by email
- ◆ Give information about the child's interests and needs so a suitable match with a *Mentor* can be made
- ◆ Call the school or inform the agency, when the child is absent on the day that the visit is scheduled
- ◆ Ask questions about the program before agreeing to participate
- ◆ Give an opinion on the program if asked by the *Coordinator*
- ◆ Be aware that there are a limited number of *Mentors* available, and matches may not be possible for all children.
- ◆ Be willing to volunteer for an agency event at least once per year, if the opportunity arises.

***What is the role of the school in the Mentoring Program?***

- ◆ Carefully consider which children would benefit most from the program
- ◆ Contact parents about the opportunity for *Mentoring*
- ◆ Contact children whose parents agree to the *Mentoring Program*
- ◆ Observe children's reactions to visits
- ◆ Report any concerns to the Big Brothers Big Sisters agency
- ◆ Make locations for visits available in the school

***What might be the benefits of this extra adult attention for children?***

- ◆ Children may feel more important
- ◆ Children may become more self-confident in their ability to succeed
- ◆ Children may become more comfortable in making friends
- ◆ Children may become interested in the kind of work the *Mentors* do and see the importance of staying in school
- ◆ School work may improve because of this positive experience during the school year

***What DON'T Mentors do?***

- ◆ Counselling
- ◆ Tutoring
- ◆ Contact children outside school hours
- ◆ Give children expensive gifts
- ◆ Punish (for example: visits will NOT be cancelled if children have misbehaved at school)