

Barrow County School System

Boldly Committed to Student Success

Barrow County School System

Mentor Program

Making a Difference One Child at a Time



Program Handbook

for

Mentors

Barrow County School System
Program Handbook for Mentors

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter

Roles of Program Team Members

Policies and Signature Pages:

 In-School Program

 Mentors as Mandated Reporters

 Confidentiality

First and Last Days

 Your First Day

 Getting to Know You

 End-of-the-School-Year Tips for Mentors

Positive Closure in a Mentoring Relationship

Characteristics of Children and Youth

In-school Activities:

 Activities We Can Do at School

 Fun Learning Activities for Mentors and Tutors

 Activities for Mentors and High School Age Youth

How to Converse with Mentees:

 Discussion between Mentors and High School Age Youth

Resources for Mentors



Barrow County School System
Boldly Committed to Student Success

179 West Athens Street, Winder GA 30680
Voice: 770-867-4527 Fax: 770-867-4540

August 1, 2015

Dear Friend and Mentor:

You are embarking on an amazing journey! As a role model, listener and friend, you will offer a child the potential to achieve personal and academic success. Research tells us that mentored students have better school attendance, fewer behavioral problems and a better likelihood of going on to higher education.

On behalf of all children in Barrow County I want to thank you for giving your time, a most precious gift, in order to make a difference in the life of one child.

With warm regards,

Paige McGahey

District Mentor Coordinator

Roles of Mentor Program Team Members

The role of the Mentor Coordinator in each school:

- Be the primary school contact for mentors, parents, teachers and student.
- Forward information from the district office to mentors.
- Assure that mentors and the school follow procedures for sign-in and sign-out, record keeping and visitation.
- Maintain mentor program records.
- Match mentors to students keeping mentor availability and student class schedule in mind.
- Review volunteer sign-in and sign-out procedures, show the mentors the areas where they can meet with students, and review all school rules and any policies that apply to mentoring with each mentor before he or she meets with a student for the first time.
- Provide orientation and program updates as needed.

The role of the District Mentor Coordinator:

- Receive mentor applications from the schools.
- Alert school mentor coordinators when a mentor background check is complete.
- Provide orientation to mentors.
- Alert school mentor coordinators when the mentor has completed orientation and can begin.
- Maintain mentor program records.
- Conduct an evaluation of the mentor program with mentors, students and school coordinators to discover areas of strength and areas for growth in the program. Surveys, on-site observation, phone calls, or small group feedback sessions can be used as evaluation tools.

The role of Human Resources:

- Conduct annual background checks through Barrow County Sheriff's Office and notify district mentor coordinator when complete.
- Maintain records regarding background checks.

The role of Mentors:

- Attend new mentor orientation or review updates to the program if you are returning.
- Commit to meet with the mentee one-half to one hour per week at school for one year.
- Be a role model in your attire, speech and behavior.
- Keep information about your mentee and his/her family confidential. The exception is when there is a potential for harm to the mentee or others. At that point, tell a school official. Please refer to Mandated Reporter Information and Resources.
- Sign in! The program needs an official record of your visit.

Policies and Signature Pages

Mentors will learn about the following policies during orientation and will sign acknowledgement forms for each.

In-School Program – Barrow County School System Mentor Program is a school-based program and does not require or encourage me or other mentors to spend time with mentees outside of school property or school functions.

Mentors as Mandated Reporters - Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) requires school system employees and volunteers (mandated reporters) who have “reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused” to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authority according to the local child abuse reporting protocol.

Confidentiality – Over the course of time, you may gain information about a student or his/her family that may be considered personal and/or confidential and should be treated accordingly. To protect the mentor-student relationship, it is important that information not be disclosed except when that information would cause or prevent harm to an individual.



Barrow County School System

Boldly Committed to Student Success

School-Based Program Acknowledgement

I, _____, understand that the Barrow County School System Mentor Program is a school-based program and does not require or encourage me or other mentors to spend time with mentees outside of school property or school functions.

Furthermore, I understand that the Barrow County School System and the Barrow County School System Mentor Program or any group working on/with this program is not and cannot be responsible for any time I might choose to spend with my student mentee off of school property. I understand that any time spent with my mentee off of school property is not considered to be a part of the Barrow County School System Mentor Program, which is a school-based mentor program.

However, for my own protection, the Barrow County School System Mentor Program has strongly advised me to seek written parental or guardian consent for each event if I ever choose to be personally responsible to see the child off school property. Any time spent outside of school does not mean that I should forego the face to face time on the school campus with Barrow County School System Mentor Program.

(Printed name of applicant) _____

(Signature of applicant) _____

(Date) _____

Mandated Reporter Information and Resources

Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) requires school system employees and volunteers (mandated reporters) who have “reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused” to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authority according to the local child abuse reporting protocol. Within the school setting the designated person to receive reports of suspected abuse is the school counselor or school principal/assistant principal. Any mandated reporter who makes a report to the designated person in the local reporting protocol “shall be deemed to have fully complied” with the law.

Reports of suspected child abuse should be made immediately. Any reporter who makes a report in “good faith” is “immune from any civil or criminal liability.” However, any mandated reporter who “knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

Reporting Information

You only need to suspect abuse to make a report. Do not try to investigate or “get all the details.” Often the first thing a student tells you is the most important. Write down the actual words used by the student. The first statement made spontaneously has forensic significance to the investigators and the exact words can be important. Above all, minimize the number of questions, if any, you ask the child and avoid the use of leading questions (questions that suggest an answer).

Once you suspect abuse immediately make a report to the school counselor or principal. Do not delay in making this report. Be prepared to share exactly what you saw and heard. Once you have made the report to the school counselor or principal, he/she must forward the report to investigators. You will have fulfilled your responsibility as a mandated reporter.

Resources

Additional resources can be found at the following link: <https://oca.georgia.gov/mandated-reporter>

On this page you will find links to the Georgia Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Law (OCGA 19-7-5), a ten-page Child Abuse Prevention handout, more detailed procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, and a Child Abuse Reporting Video. You are encouraged to take the time to review these additional resources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of your role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse.

Contacts

If you have additional questions or concerns you may contact your school counselor listed below. Do not use email to make a report.

School Counselor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____



Barrow County School System

Boldly Committed to Student Success

Mandated Reporter Acknowledgement Form for School Volunteers

Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) requires school system employees and volunteers (mandated reporters) who have “reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused” to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authority according to the local child abuse reporting protocol. Within the school setting the designated person to receive reports of suspected abuse is the school counselor or school principal/assistant principal. Any mandated reporter who makes a report to the designated person in the local reporting protocol “shall be deemed to have fully complied” with the law.

Reports of suspected child abuse should be made immediately. Any reporter who makes a report in “good faith” is “immune from any civil or criminal liability.” However, any mandated reporter who “knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

By signing this acknowledgement form I, _____, acknowledge that I have been informed of my responsibility as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse according to Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5). I have had opportunity to have all of my questions about this responsibility answered prior to beginning my volunteer work. I have also been provided with additional resources to help me better understand my responsibility as a mandated reporter including contact information should I have additional questions in the future.

Signature of Volunteer

Date



Barrow County School System

Boldly Committed to Student Success

MENTOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that I may gain information about a student that may be considered personal and/or confidential and should be treated accordingly. I agree that I will not disclose information obtained through my mentor relationship with a student to any third party who is not affiliated with the student's teacher or school administrator, or the staff of the Barrow County School System Mentor Program.

I further understand that any unauthorized disclosure of student information may be a violation of Georgia and/or Federal law.

Information considered confidential:

- student academic and disciplinary records
- personal confidences
- health and medical information
- family status and/or income
- assessment/testing results
- any other personal or family information a student or family member may disclose

Signature of Applicant _____

Date Signed _____

First and Last Days

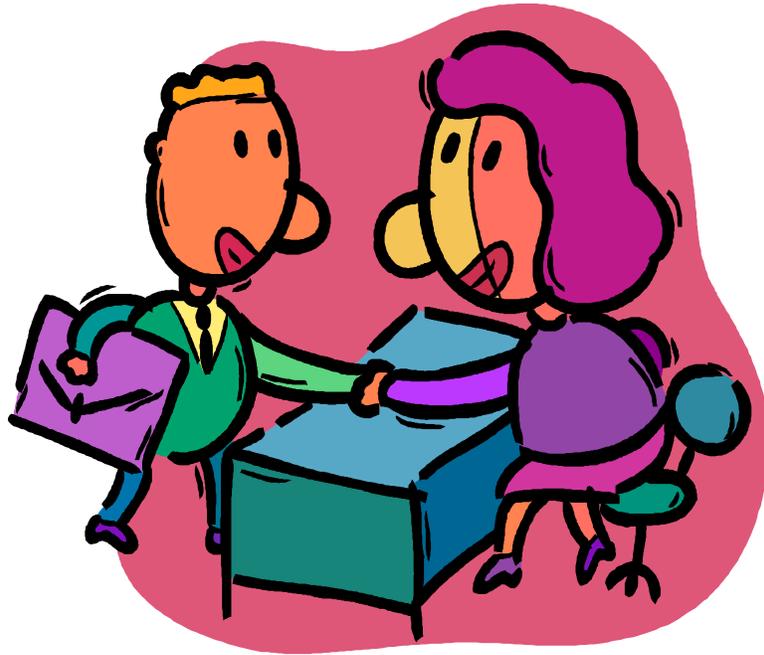
Your First Day – This is what the School Mentor Coordinator will review with you your first day “on the job.”

Getting to Know You – These are some easy tools suggested to help you and your mentee get to know one another on the first day. You can complete these and share the information, or you can use them as “interview” tools to encourage conversation.

End-of-the-School-Year Tips for Mentors – This provides suggestions for ending the current school year and making plans for reconnecting in the new school year. Ending the school year on a positive note and making plans for the new school year will make your mentee feel confident and give him/her something to look forward to during the school break.

Positive Closure in a Mentoring Relationship – Saying goodbye and having positive closure in your mentoring relationship is just as important as everything you’ve done up to this point. In fact, in order to ensure your mentee retains a positive view of your influence, it may be more important. These suggestions may be helpful when you come to the end of your mentoring relationship, whether it is at the end of a formal program or if you’ve continued on your own outside of the program requirements and you or your mentee is unable to continue seeing each other on a regular, consistent basis. These ideas might also be useful if you or your mentee is unable to complete your commitment; many mentees have had losses of important relationships with adults prior to this one. Negative effects of this ending can be minimized if you handle closure carefully and intentionally.

Your First Day



Meet with the school mentor coordinator to review the following:

- times when I can visit with my mentee
- school volunteer sign-in and sign-out procedures
- designated areas where you can meet with your student
- school rules
- other policies and guidance that may apply to you as a mentor.

Meet your mentee!

Getting to Know You

Mentee

Name: _____

Age: _____ Birthday: _____ School: _____

What do you like most about school? _____

What class is most challenging for you? _____

When I am not at school I like to _____

Something I do well is: _____

Something I would like to learn about or to do is: _____

My favorite holiday is _____, because

Someone I look up to or admire is _____, because

If I had a day I could do anything I wanted I would: _____

When I grow up, I would like to: _____

Getting to Know You

Mentor

Name: _____

Age (optional): _____ Birthday: _____

Employer: _____

What do you like most about your job? _____

What is the most challenging thing about your job? _____

When I am not at work I like to _____

Something I do well is: _____

Something I would like to learn about or to do is: _____

My favorite holiday is _____, because

Someone I look up to or admire is _____, because

If I had a day I could do anything I wanted I would: _____

In the future, I would like to: _____

End-of-the-School-Year Tips for Mentors

For mentors who will continue with the same student in the next school year:

- Inform your school mentor coordinator that you will continue next year.
- Speak positively to your mentee about the new school year, especially if it involves a new school.
- Talk with your mentee about whether you will stay in contact over the summer, through texts, phone, email, postcards, etc.
- Remember that the mentor program is an in-school program. Summer contact would be an arrangement you make with the permission of the mentee's parent/guardian and is not part of the mentor program.

For mentors who cannot continue...

- Don't wait until the very last meeting to say goodbye; start slowly bringing it up as soon as you are aware that the relationship will be coming to a close.
- Model appropriate behavior, expressing thoughts and feelings about the end of the relationship.
- Assuming you are stopping mentoring because of time limitations, a move, etc., make sure the mentee understands s/he did not do anything to make you leave.
- Let the mentee know the things you like about them.
- Be positive and supportive, especially about what the future may hold for your mentee.
- Some departing mentors have identified people (classmates, relatives) who might be able to be matched with their mentees - - after orientation, background checks, etc.

For ALL mentors:

- Talk with your mentee about the rest of the school year. How many more times will you come to visit? Perhaps complete an "end of the year project." Modify the project for the age of your mentee. Some examples are:
 - Take a photo together and make/decorate a frame to put it in
 - Make a book – what you did together, what to do over the summer, or goals for next year
 - Address and stamp envelopes or postcards for being summer Pen Pals
 - Give/make a journal/diary/notebook for your mentee to write/draw in over the summer.
 - Give a book for summer reading (Your school mentor coordinator can tell you your mentee's grade and/or reading level)
- Make a plan for how to stay in touch - - calls, emails, letters, visits - - OR talk about why this won't/can't happen.
- Look back at your year together – what was the most fun activity? What did you learn from each other?
- Don't make any promises you might not be able to keep (e.g. that you will keep in touch.)

POSITIVE CLOSURE IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Adapted from Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute Connections 9.11.12

Saying goodbye and having positive closure in your mentoring relationship is just as important as everything you've done up to this point. In fact, in order to ensure your mentee retains a positive view of your influence, it may be more important. These suggestions may be helpful when you come to the end of your mentoring relationship, whether it is at the end of a formal program or if you've continued on your own outside of the program requirements and you or your mentee is unable to continue seeing each other on a regular, consistent basis. These ideas might also be useful if you or your mentee is unable to complete your commitment; many mentees have had losses of important relationships with adults prior to this one. Negative effects of this ending can be minimized if you handle closure carefully and intentionally.

If your program has a formal closure process in place, such as at the end of the school year or your commitment, these ideas can enhance your experience of saying goodbye. It's important that you follow your program's policies and requirements and think of these ideas as a guide for your conversations with your mentee when you're saying goodbye.

If you know in advance that your mentoring relationship won't be continuing, be sure to bring it up at least a month or two before you have to say goodbye for the last time. If you've built a close relationship with your mentee, it may be hard for him to process that he won't continue to see you. Give him time to get more comfortable with the idea before you have a final meeting. It's also not unusual for young people who have had poor endings with other significant relationships to want to say goodbye first, perhaps by no longer showing up to meet with you. If this happens, be patient, continue to be in contact with your mentee and plan meetings, and let your program coordinator know. If your program is coming to an end, such as the end of a school year, but you can continue your mentoring relationship, make sure that your mentee understands this. Young people may not completely understand program policies around continuing and may believe the mentoring will be coming to an end, so they may try to take control of the process and end early on their terms.

One way to structure the process: the **CARE** method, adapted from LA's *Youth Mentoring Connection*.

Confront the reality of the situation

Be upfront and direct about ending your mentoring relationship. Think back to any of your own relationships that didn't have any kind of official or marked ending - did you often wonder what happened to the other person? Or were you perhaps expecting to continue contact in some way but you never heard from him again? When you've had a bad ending to a relationship, it's normal to only think about that negative part; it becomes more difficult to remember the more positive aspects, too. By being honest about what is happening, you can help your mentee know what is happening without creating any false expectations that could diminish your mentee's view of the rest of the mentoring relationship. For example, you can start with something like, "This mentoring relationship [as a part of the program] is now ending."

This is also the time to agree upon the type of contact, if any, you will both now expect. If you can continue seeing each other on some level, and it is permissible with your program, be clear about how often that would be, e.g., monthly, once every two or three months, or continuing on the same. You can also agree to exchange greetings for special occasions, like holiday cards or birthday calls.

If you or your mentee are unable to continue any kind of contact, be realistic about it and don't make any false promises. While it sounds easy in theory, in practice it can be difficult to be true to your intention. Stick to simple statements like, "I'm really glad we got to know each other. I'm sad that we won't be continuing to see each other, but we both have our memories of what we did together." It is far better to be clear about not having contact now - and experience difficult emotions now - than letting your mentee believe you will be continuing, only to discover later that you aren't living up to your promise.

POSITIVE CLOSURE IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP (cont.)

Acknowledge the learning

Before your last time together, spend some time thinking about what you learned from your mentee. Then, when you're together, share your thoughts and ask your mentee to share his. You can ask questions like,

- What did I learn about myself through this experience?
- What did I learn about relationships and dealing with others?
- What else did I learn because of this other person?
- How did my mentee influence me?
- How did I change as a result of this relationship?

Reflect on the positives

Make sure that you spend time talking about what was good about this mentoring relationship and your mentee's positive attributes. Think about times when he showed initiative or was polite or maybe how he's changed over your mentoring relationship. It's important to be detailed here - young people are changing all the time and may have forgotten about behaviors or patterns from even six months ago. Your reflection and description of what you remember will help your mentee also feel like you cared enough about him to remember the small stuff. You can start by sharing your answers to questions like,

- What is my mentoring relationship like? How would I describe it?
- Do I enjoy spending time with my mentee?
- What was my favorite activity? What didn't I like and why?

Express feelings and thoughts

To yourself, first acknowledge all feelings, happiness, relief, and anger, alike. Then decide what is best to share with your mentee. If you are unsure, consult with your program coordinator.

You can also use the following sentence completions with your mentee. Finish the sentences separately and then read aloud together:

- Thank you for
- What I really like about our friendship is
- What I really like about you is
- My favorite activity was
- What I learned from you is
- What I'll never forget about you is
- One thing that I wish for you in the future is

The most important factor in this process is how you handle saying goodbye. You are continuing your role modeling, up to the very end, so show your respect to your mentee and your mentoring relationship by taking it seriously, but not too seriously. Remember to use your own words or phrases so it doesn't sound too formal or artificial. Be genuine, respectful, and positive to help your mentee have a better ending to an important relationship with an adult.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

5- to 7-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

- Eager to learn; easily fatigued; short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they are active while learning.
- Self-assertive, boastful; less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics

- Very active; need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
- Need rest periods—good quiet activities include reading books together or doing simple art projects.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles (for example, building models that have small pieces) are difficult.
- May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics

- Enjoy organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
- Can be very competitive—this may lead them to cheat at games.
- Very imaginative and involved in fantasy-playing.
- Self-assertive, aggressive, boastful, want to be first; becoming less cooperative.

Emotional Characteristics

- Alert to feelings of others but unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
- Inconsistent in level of maturity; regress when tired; often less mature at home than with outsiders

Mental Characteristics

- Very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.
- Difficulty making decisions.

8- to 10-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

- Interested in people; aware of differences; willing to give more to others but also expect more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm; may try too much; accident prone; interested in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism; recognize failure; have capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest; may make their own plans.
- Decisive; dependable; reasonable; strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion; often outspoken and critical of adults, although still dependent on adult approval.

8- to 10-Year-Olds (cont.)

Physical Characteristics

- Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
- Early maturers may be upset about their size—as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
- May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends.
- Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
- Team games become popular.
- Often idolize heroes, television stars, and sports figures.

Emotional Characteristics

- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
- Because friends become very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules—your honesty and consistency can be helpful.

Mental Characteristics

- Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.
- Eager to answer questions.
- Very curious; collectors of everything, but may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence while knowing they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

11- to 13-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

- Testing limits; a “know-it-all” attitude.
- Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
- Identification with admired adults.
- Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.
- Physical Characteristics
- Good coordination of small muscles; interest in art, crafts, models, and music.
- Early maturers may be upset about their size—as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
- Very concerned with their appearance; very self-conscious about their physical changes.
- May have bad diet and sleep habits and, as a result, low energy levels.

Social Characteristics

- Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
- Cliques start to develop.
- Team games become popular.
- Often have “crushes” on other people.
- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to “belong.”
- Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
- Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.
- Interested in earning own money.

11- to 13-Year-Olds (cont.)

Emotional Characteristics

- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
- Because friends are very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
- Caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists; if they try to attempt too much, may feel frustrated.
- Want more independence but know they need guidance and support.
- May have lengthy attention span.

14- to 16-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

- Testing limits; a "know-it-all" attitude.
- Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
- Identification with admired adults.
- Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Very concerned with their appearance; very self-conscious about their physical changes.
- May have bad diet and sleep habits and, as a result, low energy levels.
- Often a rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence; enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to "belong."
- Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
- Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.
- Go to extremes; often appear to be unstable emotionally while having a "know-it-all" attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with admired adults.

Emotional Characteristics

- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
- Caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

- Can better understand moral principles.
- May have lengthy attention span.

Resources:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (1991). *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. Philadelphia, PA. Author.

Activities We Can Do at School

Read a book, especially in a new genre
Join or find out about a school club, sport or activity
Create academic goals
Do research on the Internet
Explore the school library
Play active games or exercise
Talk about what happened during the school day
Talk about successes (and disappointments) at school
Create a notebook or organize school work
Write a story together
Practice a hobby like photography
Discuss strategies for taking tests and effective study habits
Discuss managing time effectively
Make a collage that illustrates the mentee's values or goals
Plan a service project for the school (involve other mentees and mentors)
Build a website together
Make a mentoring journal about your time together
Research some interesting or unusual careers
Write a letter to the editor together about a topic of interest to your mentee
Learn about a country your mentee would like to visit someday and plan a fantasy vacation
Talk about your family heritage and research your roots
Pick a foreign language neither of you know and learn some basic words and phrases
Take pictures to create a school "scrapbook"
Fly a kite at recess
Help your mentee make holiday cards
Learn to read a map or bus schedule
Plant a container garden for the office
The options are limitless...



Fun Learning Activities for Mentors and Tutors

Mentors can best support children's academic development by having fun learning activities prepared to engage in if the child needs a change in academic/tutoring activities, there is extra time available, or when child is having a tough time concentrating. The following activities are transportable, literacy-based, and learning-rich. They require minimal materials and, best of all, they're fun!

Icebreaker Activities

Use these activities when meeting a child for the first time. Instead of jumping into schoolwork right away, take some time to break the ice. These activities will allow you to learn a little bit about the child and get comfortable with one another.

Getting to Know You Game

Supplies:

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils

Directions: On an index card, have each person (including yourself) do the following:

1. Write an alliterative nickname for yourself (i.e., Adventurous Andrew) in the middle of the card.
2. Write something that is important to you in the upper right-hand corner of the card.
3. Write something you want to learn in the top left-hand corner of the card.
4. Write something you are good at doing in the bottom right-hand corner of the card.
5. Write the name of your favorite food in the bottom left-hand corner of the card.
6. Share answers with each other.

Variation: If working in a group, have children pair up and share answers with each other, then introduce their partners to the group.

Conversation Starters

Directions: Ask open-ended questions to put the child at ease and to get to know each other a bit. Some openers might include: *I bet your teacher reads stories to your class. One of my favorites is The Cat in the Hat. What are some of your favorite stories?; or I love animals. My favorite is the cheetah because it can run very fast. Which animals do you like?; or I know lots of kids watch television. Can you tell me about some TV shows that you like to watch?*

NOTE: Remember that a conversation is an exchange. Offer your ideas but focus most on what the child says. The goal is to encourage the child to speak. A good way to do this is to say, *That's interesting—tell me more.*

Creative Brainstorming

Supplies:

- Everyday object (i.e., comb, fork, etc.) in a baggie

Directions:

1. Show the child the item.
2. Have the child take 5 minutes to brainstorm creative uses for this item. For example, a comb might be a musical instrument (by strumming the teeth); a fork might be a comb or a backscratcher, etc. The idea is to come up with a number of “new” ideas for the object.

Variations:

- Both you and the child can come up with ideas independently and then share with each other.
- If the child is particularly enthusiastic about one of her ideas, use it to create a story out in your next session.
- Invite the mentee to bring an object from home for the next session.

Naming Activity

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- Timer or stopwatch

Directions:

1. Set a timer for 3 or 5 minutes.
2. Ask your mentee to make a list of everything he can see from where he sits, while you do the same.
3. Compare notes when time is up, and cross off any objects that appear on both lists.
4. Players earn a point for every object that does not appear on another player’s list.

NOTE: The child will most likely choose the most obvious objects. In order to give him a chance, begin your list with things that he may not focus on immediately or may not know the name of—i.e., ventilator, hinge, clasp, etc.

Variation:

- If working with a very young child, have him name the things he sees around the room, rather than write them down. Take turns naming objects.
- If working with a very young child, play “I Spy”

Drawing Activity

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pencils, crayons, or markers

Directions:

1. Ask the child if she likes to draw.
2. If so, invite her to draw a picture.
3. Ask her to describe or tell you about what she's drawn.

Variation: Depending on skill level, invite the child to write a caption or short story that describes her drawing. If the child is very young, have her dictate a caption or story for you to write down.

Pair Writing

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Ask your mentee to choose a number between one and ten. (With beginning writers, choose a number between one and five.)
2. The first person starts a story, only writing as many words as the number you have chosen. For example, if you chose the number four, you can only write four words at a time.
3. The next person starts where the last player left off. For example, the first writer begins, *The great, green, slimy...* The second writer adds the next four words, such as *alien drank from the...*
4. Continue writing together until you agree the story is complete.

NOTE: The story can get a bit silly but it should still make sense as a whole.

*Variation: Use a die rather than one specific number to designate the amount of words written per turn. In this case, each writer rolls the die when it's her turn. The number she rolls tells her how many words to write on that turn.

I'm Going on a Trip

Directions:

1. Begin with the phrase, *I'm going on a trip and I'm going to pack...* Each player decides how to finish the sentence.
2. The first player might begin: *I'm going on a trip and I'm going to pack a book.*
3. The second player repeats the phrase with the first player's item and an item of her own: *I'm going on a trip and I'm going to pack a book and a lizard.*
4. Continue, with each player repeating all the previous items and adding something to the list until someone makes a mistake. If the child is young and/or has not played this game before, pick a theme with which she is familiar, such as animals, sports, or another appropriate category.

Variation: Create rules for what players can or cannot bring on the trip. For example, items to be packed can only begin with a certain sound; they must rhyme; they must end with a certain sound; or they must have something to do with a particular subject.

Echo Reading

Directions:

1. Select a story to read.
2. Read one page or one sentence at a time. Then have your mentee echo read the same sentence or page aloud.
3. Engage the student in a conversation about what you have read.

Read Aloud

Directions:

1. Select a short piece to read to your student.
2. Read the story aloud.
3. Engage the student in a conversation about what you have read.

Opposites

Directions:

1. Ask the child a question about a subject that has an opposite. For example: *What's the opposite of light?*
2. The child answers your question and then asks you a question in a similar manner. Example: *Dark. What's the opposite of hard?*
3. Answer the student's question and pose one in return. Example: *Soft. What's the opposite of on?*
4. Continue until you can no longer think of a new set of opposites or as long as appropriate.

Folded Drawings

Supplies:

- 8 ½" x 11" sheets of paper
- Crayons or markers

Directions:

1. Fold a sheet of paper into four parallel segments (as one would to make a paper fan).
2. Together, decide on something to draw, such as a person, dragon, animal, building, etc.
3. One person begins the drawing in the top segment of the folded paper. The other person should not look. Continue a bit of the drawing over the fold that divides the top segment of the paper and the second segment so your partner has something to start with when it's her turn.
4. Fold the segment back so your partner can't see what you drew and then pass her the paper.
5. Without looking, the second person continues the picture based on the only part that is visible. She makes her piece of the picture, again with a small part of it extending over the next fold, folds her part back, and hands the paper back to the original artist.
6. Take turns until each folded segment of the paper has been used and the drawing is complete.
7. Unfold the paper and see what you've created together!
8. Have your mentee write a caption or story about the picture.

Variation: Instead of writing a caption or a story, engage the child in an extended conversation about the drawing.

Pictures

Supplies:

- A variety of pictures from magazines and newspapers

Directions:

1. Choose some pictures corresponding to a topic that interests your mentee. Animals are almost always inspiring subjects.
2. Bring in a few pictures and have the child sort through them to find one that is interesting.
3. Have a conversation about the picture to help him take note of its details.
4. Ask him to describe and write a scene or story to accompany the picture.

Variations: A younger child can dictate the story for you to write down. Ask your student to make a drawing to show what might happen before or after the chosen picture.

Concentration

Supplies:

- Index cards or cardstock
- Pen, pencil, or marker

Preparation:

1. Cut index cards in half or cut cardstock into roughly 2" x 2" squares.
2. Create pairs of cards with the same word on each. Example: two cards with the word *fan*, two with the word *kick*, and so on. Use words appropriate to the mentee's ability or from a text he is reading.
3. Create a deck of cards containing about 14 pairs (for younger kids) or 30 pairs (for older kids).

Directions:

1. Shuffle the deck and place cards face down.
2. On each turn, a player turns one card over, leaves it face up, and reads it aloud.
3. On the same turn, he selects one more card to turn over and read. If the two cards match, he takes them and places them in his personal pile. If they don't match, he flips them back over, leaving them in the same spot. (Hint: Try to remember the location of the cards for future turns.)
4. When all cards have been matched and the board is empty, players count their pairs. The person with the most pairs is the winner.

NOTE: Play this game more than once with your mentee and may make new sets of cards based on his needs.

Variation: Use the same deck of cards to play *Go Fish*.

Partner Drawings

Supplies:

- Paper
- Crayons or markers

Directions:

1. With the child, agree how many turns you will take to make a drawing together.
2. Make a line or small part of a drawing on the paper.
3. Have the child continue the picture by adding another line or series of lines.
4. Take turns until you reach the number previously agreed upon.
5. Together, decide what you have created.
6. Have your student write a caption or story to accompany the drawing, offering him support as needed.

Word Chains

Directions:

1. Begin by saying a word aloud (you or the mentee can go first).
2. The next player says a word that starts with the last *sound* of the first player's word.
3. The next person begins his word with the last one's ending sound.
4. Take turns making words, following this pattern. For example, *cat — ton — nut — take — cane — nothing*, etc. Note that *cane* begins with a hard /c/ sound and it fits the pattern because *take* ends with a hard /c/ sound. The *e* is silent. Focus on the last *sound* heard in the word rather than the last *letter*.

Variation: Depending on the skill of the player(s), you can make all sorts of additional rules—e.g., the words must be only 3 letters long, the words must be more than 3 letters long; the words must rhyme, etc.

Guess My Number

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Write the numbers 1 through 20 on a sheet of paper.
2. Silently choose a number.
3. Have the child guess your number by asking yes-or-no questions. The idea is for him to ask questions that will eliminate as many numbers as possible versus just trying to guess the number. For example, *Is it an odd number?* yields more information than a wild guess such as, *Is it 19?*
4. Have the child cross out the numbers that have been eliminated by your answers to his questions.
5. The child can ask a total of 20 questions to guess your number correctly.

Questioning Games

The following activities, done over time, will encourage a child to think more critically. Critical thinking is one key component in reading comprehension. Good readers interact with a text; they apply their own thoughts, ideas, and knowledge in order to gather meaning from what they read. Therefore, learning how to ask critical questions is an important skill.

20 Questions

Directions:

1. Think of something specific and tell your mentee whether it is a person, place or thing.
2. Give her as many as 20 yes-or-no questions to figure out what you've got in mind.
3. Encourage her to ask meaningful questions rather than guessing something right off the bat. For example, *Is what you're thinking of bigger than a book?* will be more helpful than simply guessing the answer at random with questions such as, *Is it a pencil?* or *Is it my chair?*

Talk on a Chosen Topic

Directions:

1. Ask your student a question about a mutually interesting topic. This might be a book, a movie, a certain kind of food, a hobby, or anything in which you are both interested.
2. The child answers the question you pose and then asks you a question on the same topic in return.
3. Answer the student's question and then ask him something else. As you take turns, model inferential or thoughtful questions as opposed to literal, less substantive questions. For example: *What part of the character was most like you?* versus *What was the character's name?*



Presented by Virginia Mentoring Partnership



Activities for Mentors and High School Age Youth

Learn how to write editorials to the newspaper and letters to your local politicians.

Make mix CDs for each other.

Make t-shirts together with markers, fabric paint, screens, or spray paint and stencils, or transform old t-shirts. There are online guides with hundreds of ways to remake a t-shirt into a new t-shirt, bag, backpack, leggings, skirts, etc.

Make a 'zine (a mini-magazine) about whatever you both have in common. It could be a comic book, literature, poetry, or journals. Photocopy your 'zine and hand it out.

Pick out magazines and tell each other about the strange and fascinating things you find inside. Learning about other cultures and people builds understanding and tolerance.

Take old photos and make a scrapbook. Share with each other as you sort through the old photos.

Play a board game together. Learning about healthy competition and sportsmanship fosters integrity.

Make up your own "dice" game, and after you both agree on all the rules, play it!

Plan a week's worth of meals or plan and cook one meal together.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) - learn how to make something together that you'd never thought you'd learn how to do. www.instructables.com and www.wikihow.com are loaded with low-cost or free DIY projects, reliable information, and extremely creative (and sometimes zany) ideas.

Fly a kite.

Take turns teaching each other how to do something you are good at.

Volunteer together. Conduct a drive for supplies or winter clothes at school. Plant a school garden.

Make stencils for custom spray paint decorations on furniture or walls.

Build or fix something together (e.g. Tree fort, school's broken fence).

Learn how to fix a car, or part of a car together, like checking/changing the oil or removing a flat tire.

Work on a resume.
Shoot some hoops.

Learn to write a thank you note.

Find a summer job.

Work on homework together.

Conversation Skills

Whether you're an expert conversationalist or just getting started in talking to kids, the points below are important to keep in mind. These tips go for everyone—parents, teachers, program staff, faith community leaders—and apply to conversations everywhere.

Listen First

Focus on talking *with* kids, not talking *to* them. Because adults spend much of their time talking *to*, we sometimes have to stop ourselves and listen first.

Ask open-ended questions. Give a little silence that opens the space for young people to find their own voices.

Create a Feeling of Safety

In order for many people to talk about their dreams and passions, they need to feel safe. That may mean knowing they won't be made fun of or put down. It may mean talking while walking or driving, so they don't have to make eye contact. It may mean talking after spending quite a bit of time together doing other kinds of activities and getting to know each other well.

Practice making it safe for young people to talk with you. Keep their confidences if they ask you to (unless, of course, it entails harm to them or others). Respond with respect, interest, and positive ideas. Try having talks in different kinds of situations and see which situations seem to feel safest to the young person you want to talk with.

Allow for Individuality

Keep in mind these factors that affect a young person's personality:

Age: Remember that young people have different abilities at different ages. The youngest children may well reveal that they have passions and talents, but be unable to focus on them for very long. And the difference in planning, decision making, and problem solving between a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old can be huge. Have high expectations for kids of any age, but make sure they are age-appropriate.

Temperament and personality: Is the girl or boy you're working with outgoing or shy? Talkative or reserved? The kind of person who laughs out loud or who chuckles quietly? Does he or she shake off disappointments or take them to heart? Does he or she prefer things to move in logical, predictable directions, or to just jump in and see what happens? A performer or a behind-the-scenes person? The answers to these questions may inform how you approach talking with a particular child. Some kids are very enthusiastic, and need help with planning and taking the proper steps. Other kids need encouragement to take action. Pay attention to the child's personality and his or her specific needs.

Stages of development: Several aspects of a young person's development, including cognitive, physical, emotional, and others, need to be accessed for a young person to thrive. Yet few, if any, people develop at the same rate in all aspects. Part of your responsibility as a spark supporter may be to notice a young person's strengths and challenges, and look for ways to help her or him raise the levels of any developmental areas that need it.

Conversation Skills (cont.)

Affirm Different Pathways to Thriving

Some people seem to know what their spark is from the time they are very young. Others discover their passion during elementary, middle, or high school. Many really “find themselves” in the exciting intellectual atmosphere of higher education.

Others seem to continue searching, even give up searching for awhile, then later in life suddenly emerge as a writer or an artist or a teacher. In fact, the existence of the common term “late bloomer” testifies to the relative commonness of the latter experience.

Finding your spark can take a number of pathways, so it’s important to not try to force a particular trajectory on any particular young person. Instead, do your best to discover the young person’s natural pace and rhythm. Sometimes he or she may need to time to think about the possibilities, or a nudge to start looking for new ones.

Conversation Starters

A great way to help people open up is to ask them fun questions that allow them to express their personality or interesting things about them. Here is a list of icebreaker questions to help break the ice:

- If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- What is one goal you'd like to accomplish during your lifetime?
- When you were little, who was your favorite super hero and why?
- Who is your hero? (a parent, a celebrity, an influential person in one's life)
- What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?
- If they made a movie of your life, what would it be about and which actor would you want to play you?
- If you were an ice cream flavor, which one would you be and why?
- What's your favorite cartoon character, and why?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose to go and why?
- What's the ideal dream job for you?
- Are you a morning or night person?
- What are your favorite hobbies?
- What are your pet peeves or interesting things about you that you dislike?
- What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
- Name one of your favorite things about someone in your family.
- Tell us about a unique or quirky habit of yours.
- If you had to describe yourself using three words, it would be...
- If someone made a movie of your life would it be a drama, a comedy, a romantic-comedy, action film, or science fiction?
- If I could be anybody besides myself, I would be...
- If you were a comic strip character, who would you be and why?
- What thought or message would you want to put in a fortune cookie?
- If you had to give up a favorite food, which would be the most difficult to give up?
- What is one food you'd never want to taste again?
- If you won a lottery ticket and had a million dollars, what would you do with it?
- You've been given access to a time machine. Where and when would you travel to?
- If you could be any superhero and have super powers, which one would you like to have and why?
- Mount Rushmore honors four U.S. presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt. If you could add any person to Mount Rushmore, who would you add and why?
- What award would you love to win and for what achievement?
- If you could transport yourself anywhere instantly, where would you go and why?
- In your opinion, which animal is the best (or most beautiful) and why?
- What is one item that you really should throw away, but probably never will?
- Growing up, what were your favorite toys to play with as a child?



Topics for Discussion between Mentors and High School Age Youth

1. Time line for after high school – in 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years
2. Realistic and attainable goals
3. Examination of personalities and style of functioning
4. Personal interests of both mentor & mentee
5. Financial independence – personal credit cards, budgeting, ATMs and setting up a bank account
6. Balance time – time management
7. Get organized – does the youth have a calendar and organizer?
8. People you admire – your heroes
9. Communication skills
10. Workplace-readiness skills
11. Employability indicators – attendance, punctuality, appearance, initiative, maturity, courtesy, attitude, quantity of work, quality of work, flexibility and cooperation
12. Job opportunities – job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships
13. Career interest inventory
14. Job exploration
15. Mock applications for work and post-secondary education
16. Applications for financial aid, scholarships and awards
17. Creating a resume
18. Practicing interview skills
19. Exercise and eating right
20. Personal mission statement
21. Driver's license
22. Well-rounded youth: involvement in school clubs, community activities
23. Reviewing report cards
24. Appreciating cultural differences
25. Manners: etiquette (including cell phone and pager)
26. Visiting a local college
27. Designing a business card
28. Advice regarding risky business (alcohol, drugs, sex, cigarette smoking, gang activity, peer pressure)
29. Getting ready for the prom
30. Summer plans
31. Relationships
32. Values of both mentor & mentee
33. Taxes
34. Health Insurance
35. Savings and investments
36. Credit cards
37. Finding a summer job

Topics for Discussion between Mentors and High School Age Youth (cont.)

38. What it takes to get ahead and get along
39. Making connections
40. Dressing for success
41. Talking about your first job
42. Planning a career

Source: Dr. Susan G. Weinberger, Mentor Consulting Group

Edited by: Virginia Mentoring Partnership, 2009

End-of-the-School-Year Tips for Mentors

For mentors who will continue with the same student in the next school year:

- Inform your school mentor coordinator that you will continue next year.
- Speak positively to your mentee about the new school year, especially if it involves a new school.
- Talk with your mentee about whether you will stay in contact over the summer, through texts, phone, email, postcards, etc.
- Remember that the mentor program is an in-school program, and summer contact would be an arrangement you make with the permission of the mentee's parent/guardian.

For mentors who cannot continue in the new school year:

- Don't wait until the very last meeting to say goodbye; start slowly bringing it up as soon as you are aware that the relationship will be coming to a close.
- Model appropriate behavior, expressing thoughts and feelings about the end of the relationship.
- Assuming you are stopping mentoring because of time limitations, a move, etc., make sure the mentee understands s/he did not do anything to make you leave.
- Let the mentee know the things you like about them.
- Be positive and supportive, especially about what the future may hold for your mentee.
- Some departing mentors have identified people (classmates, relatives) who might be able to be matched with their mentees - - after training, background checks, etc.

For ALL mentors:

- Talk with your mentee about the rest of the school year. How many more times will you come to visit? Perhaps complete an "end of the year project." Modify the project for the age of your mentee. Some examples are:
 - Take a photo together and make/decorate a frame to put it in
 - Make a book – what you did together, what to do over the summer, or goals for next year
- Address and stamp envelopes or postcards for being summer Pen Pals
- Give/make a journal/diary/notebook for your mentee to write/draw in over the summer.
- Give a book for summer reading (Your school mentor coordinator can tell you your mentee's grade and/or reading level)
- -Make a plan for how to stay in touch (calls, emails, letters, visits), or talk about why this won't/can't happen.
- -Look back at your year together – what was the most fun activity? What did you learn from each other?
- -Don't make any promises you might not be able to keep (e.g. that you will keep in touch.)

Resources for Mentors

Research supports the value of mentoring. Mentors keep students in school and help improve their self-esteem. Mentors make a difference to the youth in our community.

The resources shared in this section are for information purposes only and are in no way endorsed or promoted as required materials for the mentoring program of the Barrow County School System. It is our hope these materials will serve as a reference and springboard for discussion as we strive to strengthen the Barrow County School System Mentoring Program.

You are our best resource. Do not hesitate to recommend books or websites you have found to be helpful while serving as a mentor.

Books

Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future, Elmore, Tim

The one book every parent, teacher, coach, and youth worker should read. This landmark book paints a compelling -- and sobering -- picture of what could happen to our society if we don't change the way we relate to today's teens and young adults. "A timely and perceptive study... more importantly, a must-read guide for parents, mentors and teachers... a valuable and wise resource."

Habitudes for Communicators: the Art of Engaging Communication, Dr. Tim Elmore, 2012

This new book is filled with sixteen communication principles and images, to be read, discussed and applied as a team. Each chapter contains discussion questions as well as personal application and practical suggestions for you to use to develop your communication. In the "Habitudes of an Effective Communicator" you will learn: How to captivate even young audiences with your message. How to walk listeners through the mental "seasons" of a presentation. How to feel poised from start to finish during your delivery. How to get your point across in a matter of minutes. How to engage people at the heart level and foster life-change. How to craft the stages of a message which will prepare listeners to act. How to motivate listeners to "own" your message. Habitudes for Communicators is ideal to use for discussion and training among: School Faculty, Business Executives and Leaders, Pastoral Staff, Communication and Leadership Classes for Students.

Artificial Maturity: Helping Kids Meet the Challenge of Becoming Authentic Adults, Dr. Tim Elmore, 2012

Today's Generation iY (teens brought up with the Internet) and Homelanders (children born after 9/11) are overexposed to information at an earlier age than ever and paradoxically are underexposed to meaningful relationships and real-life experiences. Artificial Maturity addresses the problem of what to do when parents and teachers mistake children's superficial knowledge for real maturity. The book is filled with practical steps that adults can take to furnish the experiences kids need to balance their abilities with authentic maturity.

Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults, Kristie Probst, 2006

Mentoring gets a face lift in this handbook for fostering a healthy, successful mentoring program. Developed with input from Big Brothers Big Sisters and MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership, this guide provides a comprehensive approach that factors in the needs of the entire mentoring team, including program leaders, mentors, mentees, parents, and caregivers. Ideal for schools, organizations, and communities starting new mentoring programs or seeking fresh ideas for an existing one, the included activities address such topics as mentor recruitment, the mentor's role, conversation starters, low-cost activities, and practical ways for parents and caregivers to influence the mentor–mentee relationship. More than 50 reproducible materials provide program leaders with easily administered, ready-made tools and activities.

Mentor Youth Now - A Guidebook for Transforming Young Lives, Ms. Jill Gurr, 2011

Mentor Youth Now covers all aspects of mentoring, from the basics to setting boundaries, teaching life skills and how to end a mentoring relationship. This guidebook is packed with detailed information on the process of becoming a mentor, field-tested projects through creative arts mentoring, solutions to challenges, inspirational stories about mentors from around the country, dozens of mentoring organizations in the U.S., more than 100 fun places to visit and things to do, sample templates plus The State of America's Youth, a 30-page cited report. With this book, anyone can become a powerful and confident mentor to help impact young lives. 20% of the proceeds will benefit Create Now (www.createnow.org), which provides creative arts mentoring to thousands of troubled kids.

A Guide to Youth Mentoring: Providing Effective Social Support, Pat Dola, Bernadine Brady, 2011

Youth mentoring can be an effective way of supporting troubled youth, helping them sustain positive mental health, cope with stress, and lead successful lives through adolescence and into adulthood. This book is a comprehensive guide to youth mentoring programs, illustrating how, if managed well, they can increase the social support available to young people. It outlines the objectives and benefits of mentoring, how it works, and how to mentor successfully. Youth mentoring in community and school settings is covered, as well as mentoring for vulnerable youth. This book illustrates different mentoring models and provides practical strategies for assessing, setting up, and monitoring the mentoring relationship and its outcomes for the young person. The challenges and difficulties associated with mentoring programs and strategies to overcome them are also addressed. This will be an essential guide for anyone working with young people, including youth workers, social workers, residential care staff, foster caregivers, community development workers, teachers and community police

Internet Resources

“An Overview of Youth Mentoring” - <http://www.nationalfamilies.org/parents/mentor.pdf>

“The Value of Mentoring” - http://www.mentoring.org/about_mentor/value_of_mentoring/

10 Ways to be a Good Mentor http://www.blueskycoaching.com.au/pdf/v4i10_mentor.pdf