



VISITS RESOURCE GUIDE

Scheduling visits

- How do I schedule visits?
- Can I schedule directly with my mentee
- When should I schedule a visit
- Do visits need to always be same day/same time
- What if we miss a visit

You will coordinate visits with the caregiver. You should talk to them about your mentee's schedule and availability and let them know yours, as well. Keep in mind that your mentee's schedule may fluctuate.

You may be able to schedule with your mentee if they are around the age of 15 or older, but you should discuss this with the caregiver. It may be best to schedule with the child and then inform the caregiver to ensure they are aware. If you are communicating directly with the child, you must keep in mind that the mentor is ultimately responsible for getting visits scheduled and you should not wait too long on the child to respond or pick a day/time. If they are not communicating well, you should just go through the caregiver. If you do not hear back from the child at all, you should only wait about 2 days and then reach out to the caregiver instead. It is common for children to get their phones taken away, lose privileges, or otherwise be unable to respond.

You should be reaching out to your mentee's caregiver *at least* 3 days ahead of time to schedule a visit with your mentee. More notice is better, though, and it's advised to schedule your next visit when dropping your mentee off if possible.

It is ideal to set up a regular routine (day/time). This helps provide consistency for your mentee. However, it is ok to vary visits as some activities may be better suited for other days/times. Your schedule or your mentee's schedule may also cause a need to adjust your visit times occasionally. As long as you are communicating with your mentee and their caregiver to build assurance, there is flexibility in scheduling.

If you need to cancel or reschedule a visit, you should communicate this as early as possible (at least 24 hours in advance). If possible, you should schedule your next visit at that time or at least let your mentee know when you will reach back out. You should talk to your mentee directly when possible and not assume that the caregiver will convey your message completely or properly.

How do I plan activities and manage our schedule?

When determining activities for your visit, it is important to do some planning ahead of time. You should discuss ideas for future visits when you and your mentee are together. You should take time between visits to see what upcoming events might be available to you and have a few ideas in mind before you arrive to pick up your mentee. It is good to vary your visits. That may look something like this:

- Week 1: Something fun (ex. trampoline park)
- Week 2: Something new (ex. new sport or take a class)
- Week 3: Volunteer
- Week 4: Learn (ex. museum or life skills)

You can each keep journals to jot down ideas. You could also try making a list of things you'd like to try and learn and try to do one item from that list per month. Your coordinator can help provide guidance and resources if you are struggling.

How can I find activity ideas?

We have many different resources to help mentors find activities. You should always check your newsletters for events, activity ideas, and ticket opportunities. Arizonans for Children has an [event page](#) on Facebook that anyone can view which shares free and low cost events around the valley. You can also check out all [events on Facebook](#). There are other websites mentors can use like [Macaroni Kid](#), [EventBrite](#) and [VisitPhoenix](#).

Your mentee's caregiver can help provide you with ideas of what the child enjoys doing and can tell you more about what is available around their placement. You can talk to other mentors on our [Facebook group](#) to get more advice and your coordinator can help provide individual guidance and resources if you are struggling to find things that will work for you and your mentee.

Can I cook/bake with my mentee?

Your mentee's placement may be a good option to cook or bake together. This will depend on the placement type. You should coordinate with the caregiver ahead of time to see if this will be possible and to "reserve" the kitchen during the time of your visit.

Although mentors cannot take mentees to their own homes, you can take them to a friend or family member's home. You should also consider any public places you use, like churches, to see if you can utilize their kitchen.

How can I get my mentee engaged at the beginning of the relationship?

You should start slow and keep expectations realistic. It can take weeks, or even months, to build a bond with your mentee. Plan activities that allow for, but do not require, conversation. For example, playing a board game versus going out for ice cream or seeing a movie. Those aren't bad activities, but doing something like getting ice cream might create pressure and watching a movie doesn't allow for conversation. Creating an environment that feels safe and comfortable will help the child open up at their own pace.

What are common social/life skills that are important to focus on?

Explore your own interests for direction. If you enjoy hiking, you can teach your mentee about outdoor safety or health. You can dedicate entire visits towards working on life skills or implement those skills into your visits. This will depend on what you are focusing on. If you want to help your mentee with budgeting, for example, this can be discussed throughout any type of visit. On the other hand, you can dedicate a day to showing your mentee basic car maintenance.

You could try volunteering or shadowing at places that fit your mentee's career goals or interests. If you or someone you know works in an industry that may be a good fit for them, see if there are options to spend some time with them seeing what they do and learning about what it takes to get there.

Why are mentees not allowed at mentor's homes?

Due to our agreement with DCS, mentors cannot take mentees to their homes. This is a liability concern and it is for the safety of the mentor and the child. You are allowed to take your mentee to gatherings if they are held at a friend or family member's home.

Activity ideas for summer time in Phoenix

A lot of free or low cost activities tend to be outdoors so summer time can be tricky! Here are a few ideas to help beat the heat!

Bookstores & Libraries: There are so many unique bookstores around the valley and many have affordable books. Some of these shops may have areas where you can sit and read or host fun events. Most libraries host free events for children of all ages!

Tours & Museums: Many Valley museums offer low cost or free admission. The [Phoenix Art Museum](#) has free first Fridays and pay-as-you-wish Wednesdays. The [Mesa Art Museum](#) offers free pre-registration tickets. The [Arizona Museum of Natural History](#) has low cost tickets.

The [Phoenix Historic Walking Tour](#) has free days available and the [Arizona Capitol](#) is always free. Note: Capitol tours are temporarily closed so keep an eye out for when they will resume! [The Desert Botanical Garden](#) offers free admission on Community Days, the second Tuesday of each month.

Water: Pools, splash pads, and lakes can be found all over! You can click [here](#) for a list of pools and splash pads in Phoenix. There are also splash pads at many malls like Tempe Marketplace, Desert Ridge, or the Anthem Outlets. There are plenty of places to visit (or fish) within [city limits](#) or you can take a short road trip and check out [these nearby lakes](#). The [Arizona Falls](#) is a free (and air conditioned) site that anyone can enjoy.

Request Donations: If there's anything you and your mentee want to check out, try asking them to donate passes! You can explain your role and even provide your coordinator's contact information if they want to confirm or get additional information. We've had mentors receive tickets for go kart racing, comedy clubs, and more. It never hurts to ask!

Please be sure to always contact your coordinator if you are struggling at all. This information helps with a lot of scenarios but your coordinator can always offer specific advice to your unique situation.