



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What are the requirements to become a mentor?**

Mentors must be at least 21 years of age and have a high school diploma. You must have reliable transportation, a valid driver's license, and proof of vehicle insurance. Mentors must also be willing to complete a background check and participate in an initial orientation and interview.

Applicants must be willing to commit to a minimum of 8 hours per month with their mentee for a total of at least 1 year. Children in our program range from 5-18 years old.

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## **What are the different placement types?**

The three most common placements that we work with are group homes, kinship placements and foster homes. We most commonly work with group homes, which are run by a house manager and their staff. We also work with kinship placements, which are typically family members or family friends. Finally, there are foster placements which means a foster parent or parents take in the child.

You may also work with a child in a shelter placement (temporary placement), a child who has been reunified (living with parents), or a child in independent living (similar to a small apartment complex overseen by a site manager).

The caregiver refers to whomever is "head of the placement", whether it's a house manager, aunt, uncle, grandparent, foster parent, etc.

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### **What kind of activities can I do with my mentee?**

Most of the time, they just want to get out for a while and be kids/have fun. Other times they will need academic support and help with life/social skills. This can mean going to the library to do homework, hitting the park to play sports, or attending an event around town. You might also go to the movies, grab some food, or almost anything else you can think of. Community-based mentoring relationships involve one-on-one outings and activities together, like:

- Having lunch
- Going to the library
- Helping with homework or reading
- Volunteering together for a local cause
- Hanging out and talking
- Swimming, bowling, or playing in the park

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### **Who will pay for the activities for the mentor and youth?**

Mentors always pay their own expenses and are allowed to pay for the child's expenses. Mentors are not required to pay the child's expenses and may ask the child to use his/her allowance for some things. Mentors may ask the caregiver to cover the mentee's fees, as well, but this will vary from home to home. We encourage mentors to plan free or low cost visits as much as possible and provide ideas regularly. The most important part of the mentoring program is the relationship between the mentor and the youth, not a lot of costly activities.

However, because activities help build competence, we hope all mentor/youth pairs can do special things occasionally. The youth should not expect the mentor to buy things for him/her. As with any friend, gifts should be appreciated when and if they are given, not expected on a regular basis.

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### **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.

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