

## Ideas for staying connected:

- Start with the Bigs! Ask them how they are comfortable staying connected with their Littles, then call the Littles' parents to explain how the Big wants to connect and try and establish a routine.
- Create a Bigs Council - pick a few Bigs to collaborate with to come up with ideas to connect that they think are plausible for them and for their Littles
- Find a platform similar to Mentor 2.0 that would allow Bigs/Littles to email each other in a monitored environment
  - Could Mentor 2.0 share their software with us?
- Use a google classroom that all of the Bigs and Littles can be placed into. Have the Bigs upload videos of themselves, letters, etc, to the google classroom, and then send an email notifying parents that the content has been uploaded
  - Difficult if all emails are not within the same school district
- Use a google drive folder - separate matches into shared folders that they can upload content for each other into. With high school Bigs, this can be their homework - uploading something weekly -- email [lexia@bbbsync.org](mailto:lexia@bbbsync.org) if you would like to discuss this idea further
  - Such as a video, a letter to their little, keeping a running document of their writing back and forth.
- Pen pals: mail things back and forth
- Create a BBBS youtube channel and have Bigs upload videos of them reading a story, doing a tutorial in something that they're good at/enjoy - think of this as not necessarily 1 big/1 Little, but Littles will have access to all of the Bigs' content
- Use Tik Tok - Difficult to monitor, but kids are obsessed with it currently. We could start a "tik tok challenge" and have all the Bigs do the dance, and send it out to their Littles
- Games such as "Chess Kids" that can be played virtually.
- Use Remind to stay connected
- Use imentor?
- Older kids could be "journal buddies" with a digital journal - with a google tool - slides, docs, etc.  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1uiC0FX0HDseD076yomnbGqwX7E5loKoi2IA\\_6r8n50/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1uiC0FX0HDseD076yomnbGqwX7E5loKoi2IA_6r8n50/edit?usp=sharing)
- <https://www.journalbuddies.com/>
- As far as journaling goes - could also use Boomwriter - <https://boomwriter.com/> and give kids log-ins. They can collaborate. <https://storybird.com/> also lets you create stories with artwork and people can collaborate too. Additionally, since it can have a class entered, the teacher or program coordinator can access it.
- Make a zoom schedule and sit in with a big and little to have time to play a game or something digitally. Maybe it's a question answer kind of game, or maybe a dice game if they both have dice at home or pull up some digital dice online for them to both see while playing a game with it.

- Buddies Youtube Channel - If we can have some restricted settings, but if a parent shares it with us to upload, maybe it doesn't matter if it is on youtube as youtube.
- Facebook - while not everyone utilizes it, maybe this wouldn't be a bad time to start. If you create a group and customize the address in the settings, then change it to social learning, it will allow for groups to be set up within the group and you can also add events like watch parties or times when the group can be on at the same time. Up to 50 people can be in messenger, showing the six most recent people who speak by video if that is turned on. We are trying to get parents - not kids - in a parents group, and our high school bigs in a group and then have events that we invite them both to so we can monitor. Within the group app program coordinators can set up times for bigs and littles to have a chat in messenger by being the one who invites them both to the video messenger. It's not ideal, but with a little extra time facilitating meetings this way, at least the littles will be able to see their big and talk while being monitored. You don't have to be friends with everyone if you just share the group link to your bigs and parents. I'm still working on how this is working, but we are also going to try using it with a mentoring group that helps with school work. This group is high school students and adults, so they are going into the same group instead of separate (and I left the bigs and littles separate for the little kids since it was parents and kids - I also wanted to be able to have them fill out recruitment info and such for next year, and didn't want them to think it was ok to just add each other as friends.) On another note, I have friended several of the parents and high school students. It has definitely helped me get a good grasp on what issues our parents and high school students are having right now.
- Google voice: Use a scheduling system (such as zininvite) to ask Bigs and Littles/families about their availability and then follow up individually to let them know what time the call will be scheduled. If your phone is compatible, you can coordinate a 3-way call with the Big, Little/family. By using the 3-way call, the other party's number will only be visible to you and you will be able to monitor the call.

### **The biggest problems that we foresee:**

- Bigs and Littles not being able to talk/set aside the same period of time to video chat. This is why uploading videos, pictures, and email is ideal.
- Oversight - making sure whatever environment we create for them to interact on is monitored by staff to a certain extent
- Children 4th grade and under not having devices/internet/emails
  - Most districts are being forced to go 1:1 with devices since school is going virtual, or they could use their parents' when allowed to check the email/google folder/etc.
  - We also might not be able to engage every single Little. We need to focus on engaging as many as we can.
- Many parents don't have email
- This isn't the priority right now for many of our families. Survival is. How can we accompany and support them along this journey?

- Additional challenges for parents if we make something that is too difficult or requires multiple log-ins when they are already trying to do so much.