

INTRODUCTION TO VIRTUAL MENTORING

HOW TO STAY CLOSE FROM AFAR



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters.®**

OF TAMPA BAY



Agenda

- The Basics of Virtual Mentoring
- Your Role as a Big
 - Be Mindful
 - Be Intentional
 - Be in it Together
 - Be Communicative
- Special Considerations for Site/School-Based Matches
- Ways to Connect
- Internet Safety
- Match Activity Ideas
- Final Tips & Tricks





Basics of Virtual Mentoring

Though similar, Virtual Mentoring is *slightly* different from our community- and site-based programs. Specifically:

- Bigs and Littles are encouraged to connect **once per week** to help maintain consistency.
- Bigs and Littles are required to contact BBBSTB Staff at least **once per month** for match updates.
- All activities are done **virtually** (duh).

Your Role as a Big

Your role as a Big hasn't changed, but:

- **Be mindful** of your Little's trauma and how the pandemic might be impacting them.
- **Be intentional** about preserving continuity in the relationship
- **Be in it together** and let your Little know you are in this together and are here to help.
- **Be communicative** about your relationship, stay healthy and strong.





Be Mindful

- It's important to remember the trauma impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on you and your Littles.
- Be mindful of you and your Littles' reactions that might include:



Be Mindful

- How to be practice mindfulness:
 - Check-in with yourself
 - Stay rooted in your match history
 - We all will react differently to the changing world around us
 - Reach out to Match Support!

Life Lesson: Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others.



Seriously, you can't help anyone if you're dead.





Be Intentional

- Children and youth are going to be experiencing feelings of uncertainty.
- It's essential your Little knows you are still his/her Big, their mentor, and that your intentions remain unchanged.
- Being a mentor is guiding your Little through tough situations, just like what we're all experiencing today.
 - There are several ways you can help teach your Little how to be resilient and remain focused on their goals.

Be Intentional

How you can practice intentionality in your match:

- Schedule regular virtual visits
- Have a plan in place, specific activities for you and your Little.
- Don't be afraid to ask your Little how you can be helpful
- Provide 100% attention
- Be consistent and reliable





Be In It Together

- Remember, like you, your Little might be feeling alone, anxious, isolated, and even traumatized by what's going on in the world today.
- It's important that you are available to your Little if they want to talk and remind them that they are not alone.



- There are many useful resources on how to talk to your Little about COVID-19 and the anxiety/stress they may be experiencing.
 - A great place to start is our Virtual Mentoring Toolkit for links to information that may be helpful.

Be In It Together

How you can stay together from afar throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Ask** how your Little and the family are doing
- **Listen** and be compassionate
- **Check in** with the Parent/Guardian periodically, not just with your Little
- **Communicate** with the Parent/Guardian and with your Match Support Specialist
- **Work together** to help support your Little

Big, Little, Parent/Guardian, Match Support Specialist
We're all in this together!





Be Communicative

Communication is key in developing and maintaining all healthy and supportive relationships, but especially now.

Communicate with your Little:

- Connect by phone, mail, Facetime, etc
- Practice active listening
- Be empathetic
- Be patient and open minded
- Initiate contacts

Be Communicative

Communicate with Parents/Guardian

- Can't get through, or have a younger Little? Call his/her parent directly to check-in, schedule virtual visits, and ask how you can help. Be a team.

Communicate with your Match Support Specialist

- Monthly updates are required, but we're here every day to be sure you and your Little have what you need!





Special Considerations for Site-Based

- How to get started and transition from Site-Based to Virtual Mentoring
- Once you're connected virtually and planning your first contact with the your Little and their family, here are a few things to keep in mind:
 - Communication is key! Your goal is to connect, check-in, and support; your goal is not to fix!
 - Your Match Support Specialist are here to support you!
- Thank you for your continued commitment!

Ways to Connect

- It's important to connect, but how to do so is not always so obvious.
- Here are some platforms we recommend:
 - Zoom
 - WhatsApp , Skype , Google Duo,
 - Phone calls & Text Messages
- Please remember, check with the parent on what they're comfortable with





Internet Safety

Little

Encourage your Little to use child safe, parent approved apps, virtual games, and platforms.

Explore applications your Little mentions using

- Look for pop ups that may lead to inappropriate content/malware.
- Does the app protect the Little from being contacted by people they do not know?
- Will the Little be exposed to inappropriate conversations between other users?

Communicate with your Little's parent and your Match Support Specialist before communicating with your Little on any new platform

- Explore the app new app yourself
- Get approval from both your MSS and Littles Parent/Guardian

Match Activity Ideas

- **Be creative**, but be sure to get Parent/Guardian approval first.
- The Virtual Mentoring Toolkit has many ideas, resources and links. Here are a few highlights:
 - Take a walk together on FaceTime
 - Send coloring pages, craft kits, puzzles, or lego sets and get video or text updates on progress and finished work
 - Have a virtual movie night or book club
 - Virtually check out a zoo/museum
 - Learn a new skill/talent - learn to draw, do a science experiment, cook/bake - over FaceTime
 - Help with remote learning work





Final Tips & Tricks

Remember, your role has a Big hasn't changed just because your relationship is now virtual.

- **Be trustworthy.** Trust is the cornerstone of all human relationships and it is maintained trust by proactive, honest communicating and problem solving.
- **Be empathic.** Don't just listen, seek to understand and appreciate with quick judgment or unsolicited advice.
- **Be Authentic.** *Be you!* Be honest with your feelings, be open to explanation when you don't know, and be curious to learn more when you're not sure.

Final Tips & Tricks

Remember, your role has a Big hasn't changed just because your relationship is now virtual.

- **Be patient.** Provide grace and give the benefit of the doubt.
- **Maintain communication.** With everybody, especially now.
- **Be consistent & dependable.** Don't make any promises you can't keep and maintain consistent contact with your Little by checking in with your Little once per week.
- **Don't forget we're here to help!** Don't hesitate to call your MSC anytime.



**FOR A LIST OF RESOURCES TO HELP
DEAL WITH THE CURRENT CRISIS,
PLEASE GO TO**



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