

After-school Program Volunteer Orientation



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OUR MISSION at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County is to create and support 1-to-1 mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth!

OUR VISION is that all youth achieve their full potential.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County is housed by the Johnson County Extension office of Iowa State University. We have partnered with Iowa State and 4-H youth development for over 30 years.

Our mentoring programs

- **Community Based:** A volunteer Big & Little meet in the community at a time convenient for both. Matches have 2+ contacts per month for 6+ hours per month (flexible during covid).
- **E-mentoring:** Exclusively online. Details forthcoming.
- **PAUSED FOR COVID (Elementary) School Based:** ~~Bigs meet with a Little at the Little's elementary school. Matches meet at the same day and time each week for at least two semesters. Bigs and Littles play games or make crafts, and eat lunch. These matches do not meet outside of the school. This program requires an interview and background checks.~~
- **PAUSED FOR COVID (Secondary School Based:** ~~Bigs meet with a student at either a Junior High or High School. The goal is to form a friendship and support the student's school success. The volunteer and student meet at school. If the relationship develops to a point where contact outside of school would be beneficial to the relationship further permission from the parent/guardian is required.~~
- **ADAPTING FOR COVID Noble Knights:** Support 7th and 8th grade youth. Meet on Wednesdays from 3:45-5:15 pm at the North Liberty Library. Volunteers and youth are matched and supported in 1-to-1 caring relationships, while also growing individually and as a group with fun, hands-on, and interactive activities. Members define core values and activities focus on students' interests, challenges, and strengths.
- **ADAPTING FOR COVID Spartan Life:** Support 6th-8th grade youth. Meet on Thursdays from 1:45-3:15 pm at Solon Middle School. Volunteers and youth are matched and supported in 1-to-1 caring relationships, while also growing individually and as a group with fun, hands-on, and interactive activities. Members define core values and activities focus on students' interests, challenges, and strengths.



**All programs require a MINIMUM 18-month commitment (24 months preferred)
from the time you meet your Little.**



Contact Us

You will come into contact with many members of the BBBS staff throughout your volunteer experience. Please feel comfortable speaking with any staff member about a question, concern, or update!

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Whom do we serve?

While BBBS youth range in age from 6 to 18, our after-school clubs serve youth in 6th-8th grades.. They are referred by teachers, counselors and parents. Sometimes, youth call for themselves. No matter who refers a child to the program, the parent and the child must agree to participate.

Parents/guardians fill out an application before being accepted into the program, and work with our agency in an on-going basis.

We strive to match all children who want and need an additional adult relationship in their lives.

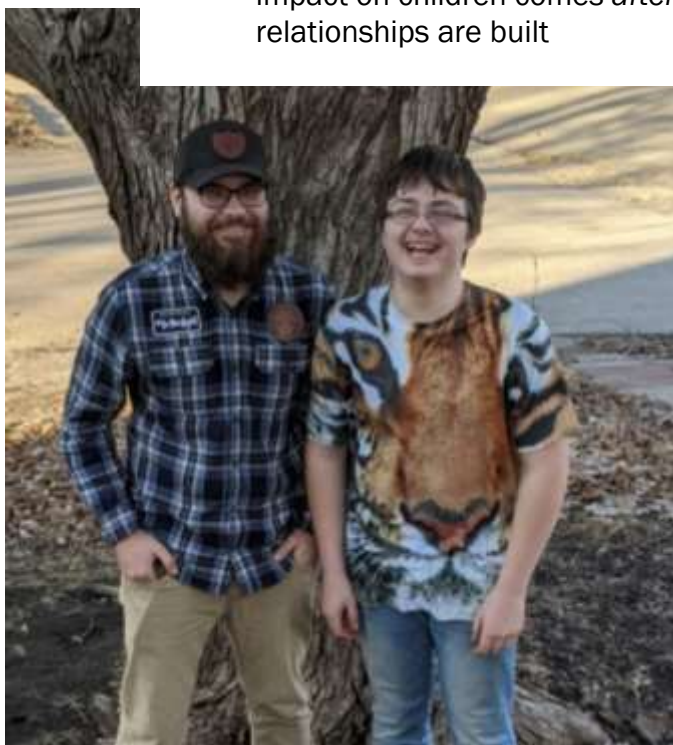
What makes a Successful Big?

Big Brothers and Big Sisters Should...

- Put child's safety/well-being first
- Emphasize friendship over changing the behavior of a child
- Decide activities together with Littles
- Be consistent and dependable
- Have realistic expectations
- Be patient
- Focus of having fun
- Set boundaries and limits
- Acknowledge that positive impact on children comes *after* relationships are built

Big Brothers and Big Sisters Are NOT...

- Parents
- Financial Support
- Taxi Service
- Babysitters
- Peers
- Therapists



BBBS: What's your advice for new mentors?

"Being patient and not taking anything very seriously. Because at first they don't want to talk to you at all, I'm like, 'Geez, what am I doing wrong?' But just understanding you're different to them..."

I think having the patience that eventually they will open up... with Mackenzie, a couple of months later she became a different person. Being consistent helps with that, because if I'm gonna be there every day, she sees that and recognizes I'm not gonna ditch her."

—Big Sister Becca, former Noble Knight

Guidelines for Big Brothers Big Sisters Volunteers

The Basics

- You should have regular contact with the youth; showing up each week is the most important part!
- Be dependable and patient! Relationships and trust develop slowly over time.
- No expectation or obligation, but sometimes matches transition into the Community-Based program if the Little, family, and Big all want to (required: 6+ months matched).



Working with your Little's Family

- In the after-school clubs, you may or may not meet the Little's parent/guardian, depending on their preference and availability.
- Your relationship with your Little should strengthen, not weaken, his/her family relationship. Please be respectful of the family's culture, beliefs, and lifestyle.
- Respect family choices and keep family information confidential. You will be asked to sign a statement of confidentiality.

Your Friendship with your Little

- As a Big, you do have the option to transport your Little to and/or from club, if needed.
- The emphasis of the match is on your relationship, not on the money spent. You may bring in gifts that cost little or no money if you would like, for special occasions. Hand-written cards and notes work well.
- This is an adult-child relationship. You are friends, but you are not equals. Rules for behavior are necessary.
- Avoid making promises that will be difficult to keep. Be consistent with boundaries.
- **You are the only person approved to drive** your Little. Do not leave your Little in someone else's care or allow them to transport your Little. If a volunteer has more than 2 moving violations in 12 months, BBBS agency approval is needed for a Big to continue having driving privileges.

Child Safety

- **Before you and your Little are allowed to go to your home**, the two of you are required to:
 1. Receive permission from the Little's parent/guardian
 2. Receive permission from your Mentoring Specialist
- As a Big, you will not physically punish the child under any circumstances, even if requested by the parent.
- Even if you are of age, don't use alcohol or drugs (including tobacco or vaping) before or during time w/ your Little.
- If you are driving them, seat belts are required. Driver must pull over before making or taking any calls or texts.
- Communication via social media is fine, within the following guidelines:
 1. Check your bio, pics, and posts first to ensure everything is youth-appropriate
 2. If you become "friends" with your Little on a social media platform (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc), you must first get parent/guardian permission and inform your Mentoring Specialist.



Figure 1 1st day of being matched!

Your Relationship with BBBS

- It is your responsibility as a Big to communicate with your Mentoring Specialist at least once a month during the first school year. **If you do not maintain this monthly contact, your match will be closed.**
- **Should problems arise**, such as attendance issues for you or your Little, or a concern in your relationship, **contact your Mentoring Specialist as soon as possible!** A message can be left at any time via voicemail or e-mail.
- If you feel you have problems with your Mentoring Specialist, please contact BBBS Program Supervisor Chanel Meredith at (319) 337-2145, ext. 112 or Executive Director Daleta Thurness at (319) 337-2145 ext. 144.
- Thank you in advance for completing occasional surveys from BBBS throughout your match.
- Please notify your Mentoring Specialist of any criminal charges or convictions if they occur during your match.
- If you are driving your Little, notify your Mentoring Specialist of any moving violations immediately (speeding, etc.)

Every relationship formed through Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is professionally supported by the BBBS staff. You will have a designated Mentoring Specialist who will stay in touch with you, your Little and the Little's parent/guardian to ensure safety and offer support.

Your Mentoring Specialist will:

- Share ideas about low-cost, fun, and engaging activities
- Provide info on specific topics related to your youth and/or youth mentoring
- Help you work through any challenges with your Little or his/her family



Child Safety: Types of Child Abuse

- **Physical:** Any non-accidental physical injury sustained by a child that is perpetrated by the child's caretaker; there may or may not be evidence of a physical injury; behavioral changes may also be indicators, however DHS will need to hear that a physical injury *hurt* the child

Physical Indicators: Bruises on back-side of body, welts, burns, lacerations, fractures, bruises at various stages of healing (different colors = different times), head injuries, many bruises

Behavioral Indicators: Extreme aggression, withdrawal, discomfort with physical contact

- **Mental (Failure to Meet Emotional Needs):** Any mental injury to a child's intellectual or psychological capacity that is caused by the child's caretaker; this is indicated by the child's inability to function within his or her normal range of performance and behavior

Some Examples: Ignoring or neglecting necessary stimulation, responsiveness, and validation of the child; rejecting the needs, values, and requests for nurturance from the child; isolating, terrorizing, or verbally assaulting the child

Indicators: Child unable to relate to peers; inappropriate behavior; over-submissiveness; hyperactivity or withdrawal

- **Sexual:** Interaction between a child and adult when the child is used as an object of gratification of adult sexual needs and desires.

Behavioral Indications: Age inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge; new fears not present in past behavior; problems in school; shy and withdrawn; age inappropriate assumptions of responsibility for other family members; unusual irritability; problems sleeping and/or eating; regression

- **Denial of Critical Care:** Pattern of failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision and protection.

Indicators: Excessive responsibility relative to age; malnourishment; inappropriate or inadequate clothing (ex. No warm coat in sub-zero weather)

- **Denial of Proper Supervision**

Indicators: Young child left alone for long periods of time; adolescents left unsupervised while parents out of town for long periods

- **Presence of Illegal Drugs:** Occurs when an illegal drug is present in the child's body as a result of the acts or omissions of the caretaker
- **Manufacturing or Possession of a Dangerous Substance:** Occurs when the caretaker manufactures a dangerous substance in the presence of a child; *or* when the caretaker possesses a dangerous substance with the intent to use it in the presence of a child

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures for Big Brothers Big Sisters Volunteers

The Big Brothers Big Sisters program is a mandatory reporting agency. That means we must notify the proper authorities within 24 hours of a suspected abuse case that is brought to our attention. We ask that our volunteers take the following steps in a suspected abuse situation:

Step 1-Support the Child

Your Little Brother or Little Sister tells you they were the victim of physical or sexual abuse (other types of abuse are typically determined by patterns over time and should be discussed with your Mentoring Specialist; see previous page for description).

Support the child: Give the child some words of encouragement to let them know they have done the right thing in telling you.

Examples: “I am glad you told me,” or “You have the right to be safe.”

Step 2-Tell the child that you need to tell what has happened to your Mentoring Specialist

Inform the child that the information must be shared with your Mentoring Specialist. The child may feel uncomfortable with this at first, feeling like they have shared a secret that should not be shared with anyone else. Talk with the child about this—it is a secret that is harmful to people and the reason it needs to be shared is so the person can be stopped from hurting the child or others.

Step 3-Call your Mentoring Specialist

CALL YOUR MENTORING SPECIALIST! If the incident has been reported to you during regular business hours, call the Big Brothers Big Sisters office at (319) 337-2145. If your Mentoring Specialist is not in, ask to talk to one of the other Program Specialists, Program Director, or Executive Director. They will help you or help you reach your Mentoring Specialist. If you are calling before or after hours or on the weekend, please call your Mentoring Specialist. You will be given your Mentoring Specialist’s phone number at the time of your match.

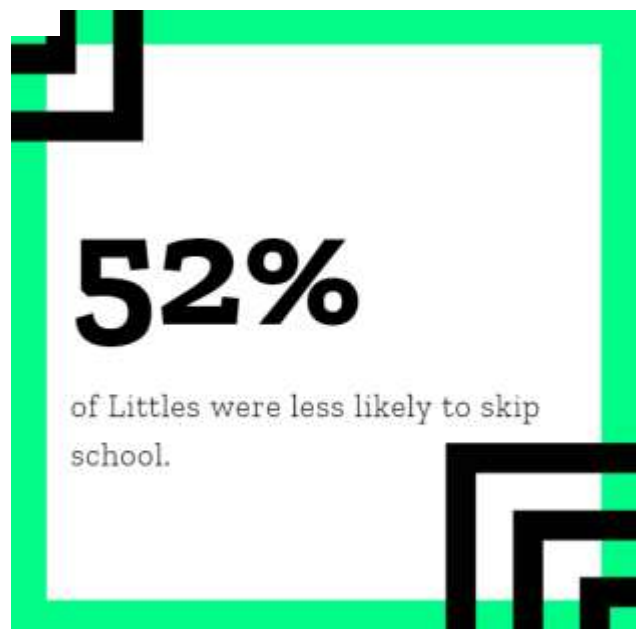
If all attempts fail to reach any of the Big Brothers Big Sisters staff, call the Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-362-2178.

Step 4-BBBS Staff will make the report to the proper authorities

The Big Brothers Big Sisters staff will make the report to the proper authorities. No one who makes a report is held liable for a report that, upon investigation, is found to be unsubstantiated, as long as it was made in good faith. You might be called upon to answer questions or, if the case were to go to court (which is unlikely), to testify. Confidentiality is honored at all levels so the identity of the reporter is not revealed to the family. Also, the outcome of the investigation is kept confidential for the protection of the child and his or her family.



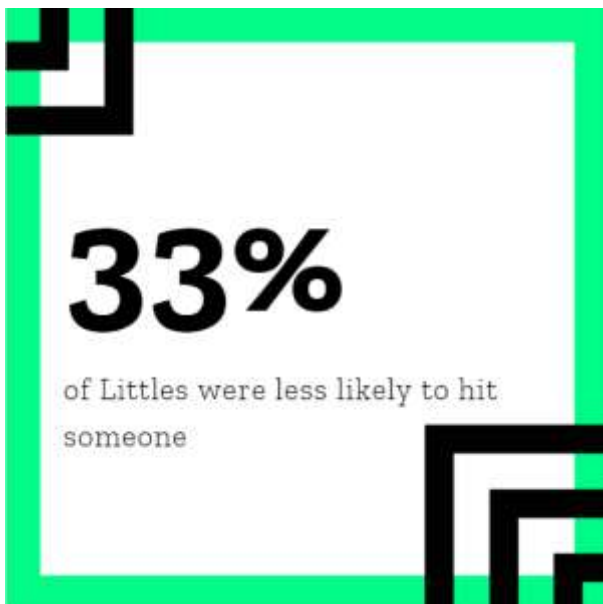
Figure 2 Caring Bigs like Tiffany expand possibilities for Littles like Burah



What is the process to become a Big Brothers Big Sister Volunteer?

What happens today?

- If you haven't already completed the your application form we will ask you to finish it before you leave the office today
- You will complete the orientation and interview today
- Our office will gather references, background checks, and do a social media check
 - we may ask to visit your home or
 - we will talk with your significant other
 - we may also ask you to return to the office for a second meeting
- Within two weeks we will communicate with you regarding the status of your application.
- PLEASE feel free to call us back at any time with any questions or concerns you may have
- PLEASE refer back to the information you received today to help answer questions and help you decide if you want to continue on to be a matched with a child in this program.





And after today?

Consultation: If you are approved to be a Big Brother or Big Sister volunteer a Mentoring Specialist will contact you to discuss a possible child for you to be matched with. The Mentoring Specialist will give you as much information as possible to help you make your decision. You can take time to think it over, if necessary. If you choose to be matched with the Little described to you the Mentoring Specialist will contact the Little's parent/guardian and give a brief summary of you information (age, occupation, interests, etc.). If the parent is agreeable, the Mentoring Specialist will schedule the match meeting.

Match Meeting: This is the meeting where you get to meet your Little! Typically, this meeting is held at the Little's home. The Mentoring Specialist meets with you, the Little, and the parent/guardian to discuss everyone's roles and responsibilities in the match. Both you and the Little will receive a Match Folder containing **important** information about your Little, about community resources, and other program details. You will also receive an emergency card signed by the parent. This card also serves as your volunteer identification card. **HAVE THIS**

CARD WITH YOU WHENEVER YOU ARE WITH YOUR LITTLE. Also please keep the folder handy.

When will this happen?

This will vary, depending on the number of available Littles (for example we may have more boys than girls, more older girls than younger girls) as well as the preferences of both the Littles and Bigs. We make every effort to meet everyone's preferences in order to increase the likelihood that it will be a good match. This can take some time, anywhere from two weeks to six months. We do our best to move everyone through the process efficiently. We will keep in touch, but never hesitate to contact us if you have a question.

Please note*

We do not accept everyone who applies to be a volunteer (nor are you obligated to volunteer just because you completed an application and/or interview). If we decide this is not the right volunteer opportunity for you we will not disclose the details surrounding this decision.

THE 3 C'S OF BEING A MENTOR

CONSISTENCY * CONTACT * COMMITMENT

Even though being a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor is a volunteer experience, it also has the potential to have a great, lasting impact on the life of a child.

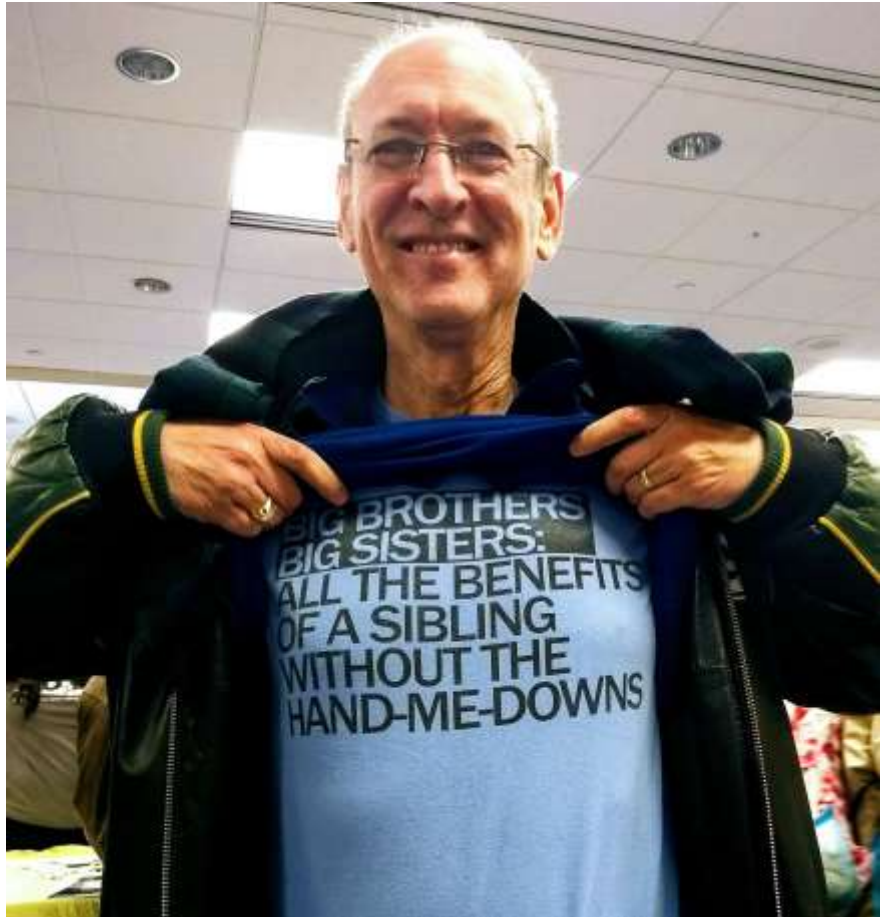
Please consider carefully if you are able to **COMMIT** to your match, be a **CONSISTENT** mentor, and keep **CONTACT** with your Mentoring Specialist. As a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor, you are not alone, but you *are* required to be highly

independent. Your Mentoring Specialist will help you problem-solve a number of issues. However, you must be able to follow through with setting up regular visits and keeping in contact with the family and the agency.

- You must be able to be consistent in your visits with a child *throughout the duration of your match*. Many of the children in BBBS have experienced inconsistencies and disappointments. A Big Brother or Big Sisters is meant to be a stable component of their lives.
- Please plan ahead so that cancellations with your Little are rare. For example, if you need time for finals week, or have an exceptionally full schedule, tell the family in advance that you need a specified period of time off. **Asking for time off is much better than avoiding calls or canceling plans.**

The kids enrolled in Big Brothers Big Sisters need adults who can provide safe, fun, dependable relationships. In the time between being interviewed and being contacted about a potential match, you'll have a few weeks to reflect on the information you learned today and your interest in volunteering.

Please use this time to reconsider the commitment you are agreeing to make. It is much better to realize that you cannot commit **BEFORE** meeting a child, than to be introduced to a child and then not be able to follow through.



Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss any questions or concerns.
We very much appreciate your interest in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program.
Thank you!

Please note*

We do not accept everyone who applies to be a volunteer (nor are you obligated to volunteer just because you completed an application and/or interview). If we decide this is not the right volunteer opportunity for you we will not disclose the details surrounding this decision.



Match Transition: Closing

Good Match Closure	Poor Match Closure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done with the consent and supervision of your Mentoring Specialist. • Give yourself a minimum of four weeks to close, or as much time as possible. Involve your Little in discussions regarding closure. • After informing your Mentoring Specialist, inform your Little and their family in-person. This helps prevent misunderstandings and facilitate closure. • Be honest and don't procrastinate. Tell why you are closing and share your feelings about the relationship, reassuring them that it's not their fault. Give the Little the opportunity to talk about his/her feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done without consulting Mentoring Specialist. • Close on the same day you inform your Little of closure. • Call or text your Little/family about closure, or don't communicate at all. • Delay or mislead about the reasons for closing. Don't share your feelings or give your Little a chance to share.

It is helpful to evaluate the relationship. This should be done by the Big and the Little through an open-ended conversation about the past years and what the relationship has meant to each of you. It is a way of reminding each other that the relationship was worthwhile to you both.

Your friendship will last beyond your official closure as a Big. Feel free to keep in touch by phone, mail, or e-mail with your Little if all parties included agree. Activities or interactions, such as exchanging pictures, keeping and sharing journals, making a scrapbook, etc. will keep memories bright for you and your Little.

Consider encouraging a friend, family member, or coworker that to apply and be matched with a new child! What a powerful way to keep your impact growing!



Mental Characteristics

11 - 13 YEAR OLDS

- The

ir idea of fairness becomes a big issue.

- Are eager to answer questions.
- Very curious, collect everything. May jump to other objects of interest quickly.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation/Skill learning
- Team play.



General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good. Interests in art, crafts, models and music is high.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- Are very concerned with their appearance, and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

Social Characteristics

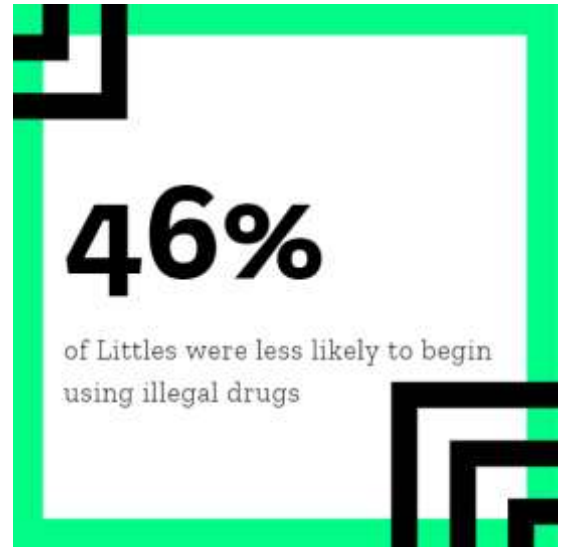
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.



14 - 16 YEAR OLDS

General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Going to extremes, emotional instability with "know-it-all" attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with an admired adult.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.

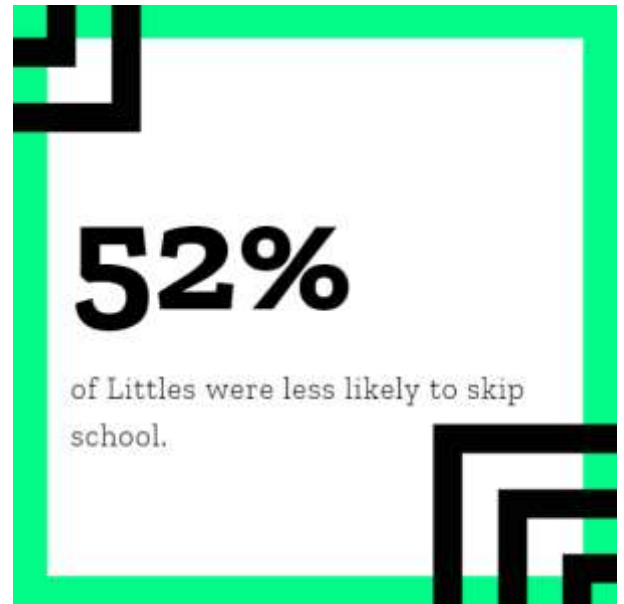
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- Can better understand moral principles.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

Developmental Tasks

- Physical maturation.
- Formal operations.
- Membership in the peer group.
- Relating to the opposite sex.



Other Ways to Help Grow 1-to-1 Mentoring

Become a BBBSJC Ambassador via The Big Alliance

After you've been matched 3 months, we'll mail you an invitation to consider joining The Big Alliance. Some of the optional opportunities include volunteering at community events, collaborating strategically on social media, arranging for us to present in front of your business or organization, etc.

Invite a Board Member

We have a dynamic and dedicated board of volunteers from a variety of industries and backgrounds. Board terms are 3 years, with a 2-term limit. Therefore, we are always looking for talented and passionate people who help make us better, more diverse, and more impactful!

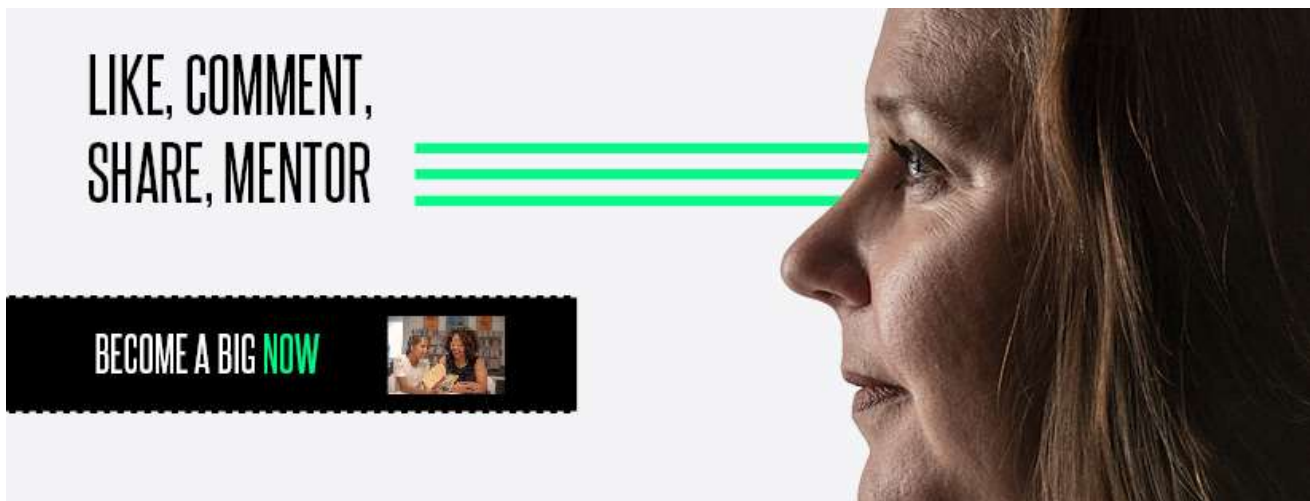
Support Fundraisers like Bowl For Kids' Sake! (virtual options)



Our biggest annual fundraiser, Bowl For Kids' Sake funds over 100 Big-Little matches each year. This party takes place the last weekend of February and is always an amazing experience with a unique theme each year!

We aim for 100% Big participation in some way - whether through personal donations, informing family and friends how to donate, volunteering during the event, or forming a bowling team with five of your friends. The easiest way to get involved is to set up an online fundraising page using the free resource we will share with you closer to the event. BFKS is a great way to have some amazing fun while also creating a giant impact for young people!

Questions? Let us know! We are here for you!



Don't miss out, follow us on social media!

For activity ideas, tips & knowledge, photos/videos and fun contests, **like and follow** Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County on all of the following:

- [Facebook \(@bbbsjc\)](#)
- [Instagram \(bbbsjohnsoncounty\)](#)
- [LinkedIn \(bbbsjohnsoncounty\)](#)
- [Twitter \(@BBBSmentoring\)](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- And remember to use www.bbbsjc.org/resources, your agency webpage with discounts, youth development resources, events & more!

Thank you for reading/ becoming a more informed mentor!

