

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area

GUIDELINES AND GROUNDRULES FOR SUCCESSFUL MATCHES

BIGS/LITTLES/PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The following are ground rules expected of all Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Couples, Littles and Parents/Guardians. It is important that they be followed for the benefit of the match. Failure to comply with the following rules could result in closure of the match.

1. Each match is responsible for contacting their Case Manager within two weeks of the match date to check in and then once a month until the anniversary of the first year. If the match is more than one year of age, contact should be at least every three months. Failure to stay in contact with the Case Manager could result in match closure.
2. Parents/Guardians and Bigs are strongly encouraged to use the services provided by Case Managers when problems or the need for support arises. Do not hesitate to call!
3. Keep the BB/BS/Parent/Guardian and Agency informed of any of the following: long-term illnesses, vacations, business trips, as well as changes in your job, home address, phone number, or marital status.
4. No match activities are permitted in the Bigs' home the first month of the match. No exceptions can be made without special permission from your Case Manager.
5. Overnight visits to the Bigs' home are not permitted. No exceptions will be made without special permission from the Case Manager.
6. In the event it becomes necessary to close the match relationship, contact your Case Manager immediately. Negative effects of closing the matched can be minimized if coordinated properly by the Big, Parent/Guardian and the Case Manager.
7. Honest communication between the Big and the Parent/Guardian regarding finances is essential! The emphasis is on the relationship, not the money spent. It is best to spend as little on activities as possible but it is assumed that the Big is paying if they invite their Little to participate in something that requires money. If the parent is able to send extra spending money with the child, it is always appreciated!.
8. You will be asked to participate in an evaluation of the match relationship after the first three months of the match, again at the one year anniversary, and at subsequent anniversaries. This can be done during your monthly call to your Case Manager.
9. Contact is an important part of your match. Failure to respond to phone calls/letters could result in closure of your match.

BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS/COUPLES

1. Seeing your Little consistently, at least twice per month for one year, is one of the most important things you can do as a Big. If something unforeseen comes up and you are unable to see your Little personally, contact him/her by phone or mail.
2. Arrange your outings with your Little, and be sure to get them cleared with the parent/guardian.
3. Find out from parent/guardian what to do if they are ever not home when you return with the child.
4. You may wish to include your Little in your family activities occasionally but be sure to give some personal attention to your Little during those activities.
5. Never drink alcohol or use drugs prior to or during match activities.
6. Use good sense in protecting your Little from harm when you are out together. Insist that he or she wear a seat belt in the car and a life vest when boating.

7. Keep personal information about the Little and the Little's family confidential.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. You are expected to help your child keep every appointment with the Big unless it is absolutely impossible. If it is necessary to break an appointment, the reason should be honestly and fully explained as far in advance as possible.
2. The Big has no financial responsibility toward the child or the family.
3. You should not prevent your child from seeing the Big as a form a punishment. This relationship is intended to be a regular part of the Little's life -- not a reward for being good.
4. Please don't discuss your personal problems with the Big whether or not these have to do with the child. The Case Manager is available for this purpose, and parents/guardians are encouraged to give them a call for any reason.
5. Please do not ask or hire the Big for household assistance, transportation, baby-sitting, etc . .
6. Try to help your child be considerate of the Big by remembering birthdays, making occasional phone calls, etc . . .
7. Talk to your child after each outing to see how he or she felt about the visit with the Big. If your child begins to feel negative about the Big or doesn't want to go out with him or her, try to find out why and call your Case Manager right away.
8. Remember, the relationship that exists is between your child and the Big. Don't ask that others (siblings, child's friends, etc . . .) be included on outings.
9. Forgive minor mistakes in judgment. The Big is not a trained professional, nor is he or she perfect. You will probably disagree with the Big sometimes.
10. If you do not have a phone, you must provide the Case Manager and Big with a number where messages can be left for you.

LITTLES

1. Remember that you are not to visit your Big's home the first month of the match. Please don't put your Big in an awkward position by asking to do so.
2. No overnight visits are allowed. Please don't ask your Big to allow you to do so.
3. Let your Big know when you feel happy or sad.
4. Say thank you after each outing.
5. Remember that friendship doesn't mean your Big will spend a lot of money on you. We have asked them to do things with you that don't require a lot of money.
6. Remember that if your brother or sister is matched in our program that they will be doing different things than you. Don't expect your Big to do what the other Big(s) are doing.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CASE MANAGER AND THE AGENCY

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Agency will provide pre-match training for Bigs which is mandatory. After the match is made, Big Brothers/Big Sisters will offer additional training to Bigs on an optional basis.

Bigs, Littles, and Parents/Guardians will receive information specifically on the issue of abuse prevention and detection.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area will maintain liability coverage for the Big as a supplemental rider to the coverage carried by the volunteer. This coverage is effective only to the extent that the Big, Little, and Parent/Guardian adhere to the above rules.

These rules are important and constitute a list of guidelines necessary to maintain a successful match. Violation of these rules may result in the termination of the match.

All Big Brothers/Big Sisters/Couples have been carefully screened to ensure that the best possible volunteer is provided to work with your child. The following procedure has been utilized:

The volunteer has been interviewed twice (once in our office and once in the potential volunteer's home). We have checked at least three references and have run a police check to help us determine whether he or she will be accepted into our program. If the "Big" is married, then his/her spouse has been interviewed also. (If they are a couples match, each is interviewed individually and together along with reference and police checks being done.) Our agency refuses any volunteer who does not meet our high standards so you may feel confident that the person who will be working with your child has "passed the screening procedure."

Also, due to the increased awareness of child sexual and physical abuse, we feel it is our responsibility to ask your cooperation in reporting to us anything you feel may be unusual about your child's relationship with the Big. Our greatest concern is for the safety and happiness of the children we serve. With your help we can ensure that safety and assist your child with a most valued service: that of friendship.

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