

# **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.

Revised 1/97

# **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area Parent/Guardian**

## **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

### **Access to Confidential Records**

In order for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area to provide a responsible and professional service to clients, it is necessary for volunteers, clients, and parents or guardians of clients to be asked to divulge extensive personal information about themselves and their families. The agency respects the confidentiality of client and volunteer records and, with the exception of situations listed below, shares information about clients and volunteers only among the agency and professional staff.

All records are considered the property of the agency and not the agency workers or clients or volunteers themselves. In order to provide a service which is in the best interest of the children served by the program, information from outside sources, including confidential references must be assessed along with information available for review by the clients or volunteers. At the time of application, clients and volunteers shall be provided a copy of the limits of confidentiality along with the exceptions which define the limits of confidentiality. Clients and volunteers shall sign a confidentiality statement that he or she has read and understands the agency policy on confidentiality and agrees to program participation under the guidelines it sets forth.

### **Limits of Confidentiality**

1. Information contained in client or volunteer records will be released to other individuals or organizations only upon presentation of an authorized "consent to release information" form appropriately signed by the client or volunteer.
2. Identifying information regarding clients and volunteers may be used in agency publications or promotional materials, unless the client or volunteer specifies that it is not be used.
3. For the purpose of program evaluation, audit, or accreditation, and with the prior approval of the Board of Directors, certain outside bodies such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America may have access to client and volunteer records. These outside organizations shall be required to respect the agency policy on confidentiality. Outside parties shall be required to use information only for the purpose(s) stated in the approval action of the Board of Directors.

4. Members of the Board of Directors have access to client files only upon authorization by formal motion of the Board of Directors. The motion shall state who shall be authorized to review records, the specific purpose for such review, and the period of time during which access shall be granted. Members shall be required to comply with the agency policies on confidentiality and may use the information only for the purposes stated by the approved action of the Board of Directors. Known violations shall be reported to the Board of Directors. A violation of the agency's confidentiality policy by a Board Member shall result in immediate removal from office.
5. Information shall only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
6. Information shall only be provided to an agency's legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
7. State law mandates that suspected child abuse be reported to the appropriate authorities (Department of Health and Human Resources).
8. If an agency worker received information indicating that a client or volunteer may be dangerous to himself or herself or to others, necessary steps may be taken to protect the appropriate party. This may include a medical referral or a report to the local law enforcement authorities.

**I have read, and do hereby understand, the above document which states the agency policy with respect to confidentiality of client and volunteer records. I agree to program participation under the conditions it sets forth.**

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

## **PARENT FACT SHEET**

### ***What is Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area?***

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kanawha/Putnam Area is an agency that serves children from single-parent homes. The child is introduced to an adult volunteer who we call Big Brothers, Big Sisters, or a Big Couple (a married couple) who will spend time with your child as a special friend at least twice a month for a minimum of one year. Once the child and volunteer are introduced, we call this a match. Girls or boys are matched to Big Sisters, and boys are matched to Big Brothers. A married couple is usually matched to a boy, but can be matched to either a boy or a girl.

### ***How can my child qualify to be a Little Brother/Sister?***

Your child can qualify for our services if either the mother or the father is absent from the home and you feel he or she could benefit from and enjoy the company of a Big Brother or Big Sister. Your child also needs to be between the ages of 6-14 And reside in Kanawha or Putnam Counties.

### ***How can my child benefit from this program?***

If your child is a boy who has little or no contact with his father or another male, he could benefit greatly from the companionship of an adult friend to do father/son type activities with him, whether it is going to a game, washing the car, or just talking over dinner. For girls, a Big Sister can also be a special friend with whom to confide in and do things, even if the mother is in the home. Sometimes when moms work and/or have several other children, they find that a Big Sister can add enjoyment to their daughter's routine by giving them a chance to experience different activities and get to know another adult closely. If your child has special needs or could benefit from spending time with a married couple, you may prefer that they be matched to a Big Couple.

The main goal of your child's relationship with a Big Brother or Sister is FRIENDSHIP and that alone, so the volunteer will not be taking your place or the place of the absent parent. The volunteer will not be responsible for disciplining your child nor will he or she serve as a baby-sitter or gift-giver--just as a friend.

### ***Does it mean that I am not a good parent if I realize that my child needs a friendship such as that of a Big Brother/Big Sister?***

No, not at all. In fact, the opposite is true. We realize that as children grow up they have many needs and interests that need to be met. By allowing your child to have a Big Brother or Sister, you are helping him or her to enjoy the special company of another person who can share with you in your child's best interest.

***What types of people volunteer to be Big Brothers Big Sisters and how do you know that they will work well with children?***

Volunteers who serve as Big Brothers or Big Sisters are 19 years of age and older. We are very careful in whom we select to spend time with your child, and we only accept people who we feel possess a sense of maturity and responsibility. We screen them carefully through several interviews, one of which is held in their home. We check references, run a police check, and the volunteers must attend a training session prior to meeting your child. Once a Big Brother/Sister is matched to a Little Brother/Sister, their case manager stays in touch with each of them to ensure the relationship is a positive one.

***What must I do to enroll my child in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program?***

Just fill out the applications and mail to us. If you do not have an application packet, please call 746-7900 and we will be happy to mail you the forms. Upon receiving the applications, we will contact you to schedule a time for the Case Manager to come to your home to meet you and your child and talk with you to determine your child's eligibility and needs.

***How soon will my child be matched to a Big Brother Big Sister or a Couple?***

Because Big Brothers Big Sisters is a voluntary program, it is our biggest challenge to recruit new volunteers who are willing and able to give the time required. We have a waiting list of children to be matched, although this does not mean that we match each child according to when he or she enrolled in the program. The average wait is a few months to a year. Of course, we give first consideration as to how long a child has been on the list, but our main goal in each match is to find the right volunteer for each child. This is mainly based on the interests and hobbies that they have in common, since it is from the activities they do together that their relationship grows.

**Thank you for your interest in our program !!**



How does your child feel about getting a Big Brother/Big Sister? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think your child needs a Big Brother/Big Sister? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe your child's relationship with the absent parent? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How often does your child see the absent parent? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe your child's basic personality? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe your relationship with your child. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does your child feel about school? \_\_\_\_\_

How does your child get along with other children? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any physical or mental limitations that your child may have. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is your child on any medications continuously? If so, what medications?

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What physician is prescribing these medications? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date