

Mentor Tips:

MENTORING MISSION

As we move through the school year in our programs, it's important to reexamine our commitment to the stated goals of our mentoring mission. Often we are more attuned to reading goals and achievement, and give little attention to the other 50 percent of our focus – the job of mentoring a child. Below you'll find a few basic but important points, drawn from the Big Brothers/Big Sisters toolkit. Keep them in mind as you work to make a difference in our students' lives.

Praise is Power Did you know that it takes 10 positive statements to counteract the effect of one negative statement directed at a person? A word of praise in a critical world works miracles in the life of a child. Find ways to be positive about everything you discuss in your sessions together.

Set boundaries Most mentoring relationships develop and flourish without problems. Occasionally, however, something comes up. Mentors have an important role, but this doesn't include replacing family or social service professionals. In our programs, a mentor's job is to turn to our program staff, who will contact the appropriate source for additional help.

Celebrate differences Experienced mentors report that working with a young person from a different background broadens their own horizons and deepens their understanding of other people and cultures. Sometimes it is the differences that make the difference.

be Positive Ask yourself, "What encouragement can I give if my young friend disappoints himself or herself?" Mentors are in the business of helping young people make the most of their lives. Allow the child to share his or her "growing" mistakes when they learn new things, and be supportive, not judgmental.

believe Many children in our programs struggle with self-esteem. Your faith in them, and your interest in them, can be the greatest gift you give.



Readers Are Leaders Pair Ayanna Moore and Samayah Washington sound out a difficult word.