

# TeamMates Mentoring Program Parent/Guardian Information Letter

To the Parents/Guardian of:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Congratulations, your student has been nominated to participate in the TeamMates Mentoring Program. The TeamMates Mentoring Program matches a community volunteer with student to serve as a one-to-one mentor. A mentor is someone who serves as a model, friend, champion, coach, or guide. A mentor will take a personal interest in the growth and development of your student and they will be a part of TeamMates until completion of high school, unless you are notified otherwise.

It is TeamMates policy to match adult males with male students and adult females with female students. Adult females may also be matched with male students. The TeamMates mentor will be meeting with your son/daughter once a week during school hours, on school grounds. Mentors should not have contact with your child outside of school through phone, text or email unless they are in high school **and** you have given written permission. Elementary students are not eligible for any individual outside of school meetings or contact via text, email or phone. They are only eligible for group meetings. Any meetings outside of school must be approved by you and include a third party over the age of 18 years. You will be notified of all group meetings. An out of school form must be signed and returned to the TeamMates Coordinator before a meeting can take place outside of the school setting. You can address any concerns you have by calling the **TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727**.

We hope you will agree to have your student become a part of the program and will offer active support and encouragement to make this a successful experience for them.

If you would like for your student to have a TeamMates Mentor please complete the enclosed parent permission form. In effort to better serve students and assess program effectiveness, we request your permission to use your student's grades and attendance information. This information will only be reported in a general way, in group form and will not identify individual students. By signing this form you have granted permission for your student to participate in this worthwhile program.

Thank you for your support of the TeamMates Mentoring Program.

Sincerely,



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Together We Transform Lives

*Guide to TeamMates Mentoring  
Program  
For Parents and Guardians*

This Parent Guide will help you learn about the TeamMates Mentoring Program, how our program works, and the important role that you play in making the experience a successful one for your child. Remember, our staff is just a phone call away, so if you have questions after reading this guide do not hesitate to call.

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## Who We Are

The TeamMates Mentoring Program is a school-based one-to-one mentoring program that began in 1991. Tom and Nancy Osborne founded the TeamMates Mentoring Program in an effort to provide support and encouragement to school aged youth. The goal of the program is to see youth graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. To reach this goal, youth meet one hour per week with a caring adult who serves as a mentor. Mentors are volunteers from the community who have dedicated themselves to making a difference in the life of a young person. Mentors support the strengths of the youth and help build a sense of hope, purpose and vision. The youth in the TeamMates program are called mentees.

We have more than 7000 mentor/mentee matches meeting in schools in Nebraska and Iowa.

## Our Mission

The mission of TeamMates Mentoring Program is to positively impact the world by inspiring youth to reach their full potential through mentoring.

## Our Core Values

*Commitment to youth* -- We are committed to serving youth with compassion and respect.

*Safety* -- The safety and protection of the mentee and mentor is first priority.

*Integrity and Trust* -- We are committed to integrity and trust in all relationships.

*Inclusion* -- We are committed to the inclusion of mentees and mentors from diverse backgrounds.

## Program Details

### Why Was My Child Selected for TeamMates?

*All* children need the support of caring adults in order to be successful, not only within their family but at school and in their communities. Your child may have been nominated by you, someone in the school, or asked for a mentor. Having a variety of people positively involved in a child's life provides her with new opportunities and experiences that will help her grow and gain self confidence. A mentor can give your child someone else to talk to — a safe, concerned, and responsible friend who can listen and be supportive. A mentor can also help your child thrive in school by encouraging him/her in his or her studies and after-school activities, and by getting your child to think about his or her future goals and dreams.

### What is a mentor?

A mentor is a caring and responsible adult who takes time to be a friend to a young person. A mentor listens, supports, and guides a young person on a consistent basis over a specified period of time, usually at least one year.

A mentor develops this friendship with a young person—whom we call a “mentee”— in order to help him/her be successful at home, at school, and in the community. By developing this positive relationship, a mentor can help a young person identify their strengths and ‘sparks’.

Mentors are not meant to take the role of parent, guardian, or teacher. A mentor's main role is to spend time with the child doing positive and fun activities that help the mentee become more self-confident and indentify their interests and strengths. By doing this, the mentor becomes part of the team of caring adults who support the healthy development of your child: parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, and friends.

### Who serves as mentors?

Mentors are as varied as the people in our community, but they all share in their desire to make a positive difference in the life of a young person. TeamMates Mentoring Program has mentors, 18 or older, who are male and female, young and old, single and married, from diverse cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, and with a wide range of skills and interests. Mentors are carefully screened and selected, and they receive initial and ongoing training so that they are ready to work with your child.

## How are matches made?

Prior to being matched, all TeamMates mentors and youth go through an orientation and training that prepares them for the journey ahead. During this time, we get to know new participants and learn about their personality and strengths so that we can match them with someone they will enjoy spending time with. Parents and guardians will have an opportunity to meet in person with their child's mentor if they desire.

## Where does mentoring take place?

TeamMates is a school based program and the meetings between the mentor and the mentee happen at school. Meetings off school grounds are rare occurrences, generally in a group setting and allowed only with written parent/guardian permission and approval of the program coordinator. The TeamMates mentor will be meeting with your son/daughter once a week during school hours, on school grounds. Mentors should not have contact with your child outside of school through phone, text or email unless they are in high school and you have given written permission. Elementary students are not eligible for any individual outside of school meetings or contact via text, email or phone. They are only eligible for group meetings. Any meetings outside of school must be approved by you and include a third party over the age of 18 years. You will be notified of all group meetings. An out of school form must be signed and returned to the TeamMates Coordinator before a meeting can take place outside of the school setting.

## What do matches do when they meet?

Mentors and mentees begin by just getting to know one another, learning about each other's interests, strengths, likes, and dislikes, and talking about when they will meet and what they want to do when they get together. Once they have become acquainted and their relationship has developed, mentors begin helping mentees set some personal goals that they want to accomplish. Mentors and mentees will plan activities each week that will help mentees accomplish their goals, but the focus of their time together is one of friendship. Just having a friend to talk to about their goals can help young people gain confidence and develop new interests. Regardless of the specific activities, TeamMates mentors are encouraged to take a relationship-centered approach to working with their mentee.

## How do I know the program is safe?

We know that you're putting your trust in our program and in the mentor we assign to your child. For 20 years, TeamMates has been in the business of finding qualified, safe, and dedicated adults who truly want to support the strengths and interests of young people. Everyone who wants to be a volunteer mentor goes through these steps:

Complete application  
Criminal history background check to include abuse and neglect  
Three personal/employer references checked  
Mentor interview  
Mentor Training session that includes information about child safety and TeamMates policy

Safety doesn't stop when the mentor is matched with a child. Our staff checks in with all mentors and mentees as long as the match is active. These check-ins help us see how things are going and if there is anything we can do to help the relationship develop. We also encourage you to call your TeamMates Coordinator any time you have a concern or question or call the TeamMates Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727.

We are confident that our volunteer screening procedures and the program rules and guidelines we have developed ensure that our program is safe for your child. We ask all our parents to help keep it this way by:

- Reading the program policies/guidelines at the end of this guide.
- Not approving any activities outside of those that the program has approved (for example, an unscheduled weekend trip or an invitation for an overnight visit to the mentor's home, or activities with the mentor without another adult present).
- Keeping the lines of communication between you and your child open so that he feels comfortable letting you know if there's a problem.
- Reporting any concerns to the mentoring program staff immediately, such as a change in your child's behavior or a concern about how the match is progressing. Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727.

## TeamMates Works!

TeamMates has been collecting general information on the success of mentor matches for more than 10 years. Your support of this endeavor is important. Please say "YES" on the permission slip to allowing TeamMates to collect the grades, attendance and discipline reports on your child. They will **never** be reported on an individual student but only on a total group in general. We also survey youth about their satisfaction with the programs and offer opportunities to participate in Gallup Strengths Finders. If you have questions please contact Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727.

## What is a Parent's Role in the Mentoring Relationship?

The friendship that is developed between a mentor and mentee is a special relationship just for them, but you have an important role in helping that relationship be successful.

Here are some specific ways that you can help make your child's mentoring experience successful:

*With your child:*

Encourage your child to keep all meetings with the mentor.

Be positive about the relationship, and let your child see you are happy that he/she has a mentor in her life.

Ask open-ended questions about how things are going. For example, "What was the best thing you did with your mentor today?"

Listen to your child and be supportive of her feelings. She may be shy or nervous with her mentor at first and may go through periods of "testing" the mentor as the relationship develops. Be patient and encouraging. If your child continues to have trouble with the relationship, talk to the Match Coordinator.

*With the mentor:*

Remember that the mentor is there for your child, not for you or other children in your family. Don't ask the mentor to take other siblings along on outings or to become your friend or counselor.

*With TeamMates staff:*

Complete and turn in any needed paperwork in a timely manner.

Tell us anything you think we should know about your child that may not be covered in the application.

Let the Match Coordinator know right away about any changes in your contact information or other changes that may affect the mentoring relationship, such as moving away from the area or a loss in your family.

**Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?**

Your main point of contact will be your Match Coordinator, \_\_\_\_\_.  
The Match Coordinator conducts all check-ins, provides solutions to problems as they come up, and coordinates the support you receive from other staff.

## *Key Policies and Guidelines*

**Permission to Participate in TeamMates**-We require parent/guardian permission for your child to participate in the TeamMates Mentoring program. You will only complete one permission form for the duration of your child's participation in TeamMates, unless they change to a different school district with a TeamMates program.

**Out of School Meetings/Contact**-TeamMates is a school based mentoring program. Meetings outside of school are rare occurrences. Meetings off school ground are not permitted without written permission from parent/guardians and the TeamMates program coordinator. Elementary Students can only participate in group meetings out of school. Middle and high school students must be matched at least 6 months with their mentor before meeting outside of school other than group meetings. Only high school student can communicate with their mentor via phone, text or email and you must give written permission for them to do so.

- Special TeamMates paperwork must be completed before **any** out of school activity or event. A third person over the age of 18 must accompany the mentor and mentee. Mentees may not go to their mentor's home or spend overnights with the mentor. Certain higher risk activities, such as hunting, are not allowed.

**Gift Giving**-TeamMates mentors are not to give gifts to their mentees. Gifts do not include items of nominal value provided for immediate consumption such as food and beverage, admission to events or activities, and supplies needed for mentoring activities.

**Physical Contact**-Mentors are specifically trained in appropriate boundaries for physical contact. We encourage physical contact be limited to a pat on the back or arm or a handshake.

**Image Release**-TeamMates requires a specific image release from you for the use of your child's image for photographs, recordings, TV appearances, newsletters, websites.

**Secondary Organization**-If your child has a relationship with the mentor outside of the TeamMates program, such as scouting, youth group or coach, you must inform the match coordinator so that a Secondary Organization form can be completed. This helps TeamMates clarify what contact is specific to mentoring.

**End of Match**-It is the goal of TeamMates for matches to stay together until the mentee graduates from high school. Matches can end prematurely for a variety of reasons: a family moves away, a mentor's life circumstances change, even the reality that sometimes a match just doesn't "click." If a match ends early, and the child is interested in having another mentor, TeamMates keeps the child enrolled in the program in an effort to rematch as soon as possible. When matches do end, TeamMates offers a structured process that provides closure and positive feelings for all involved. Parents/guardians will be notified, in writing, when a match ends.

# TeamMates Mentoring Program Parent/Guardian Permission

STUDENT LEGAL NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Last Name

STUDENT NICKNAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GENDER: Male Female

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT ID \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT GRADE LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

LEGAL GUARDIAN NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Last Name

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMERGENCY PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## What is your relationship to the child?

- |                                      |  |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother      | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Case Worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father      | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent | <input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent     | _____                                |

Does this child live with someone **other** than the legal guardian? Yes No

## Who does the child live with?

- |  |  |                                       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Parents                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent     | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Parents (joint custody) | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Parent               | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent     | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know   |

Does your child have any allergies/medical conditions we should be aware of? Yes No  
If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ethnic Indicator

Hispanic/Latino  Yes  No

## Race

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                         | <input type="checkbox"/> White            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | I give permission for my student to join the TeamMates Mentoring Program.  |
| Yes | No | I have read and understand the mentor/mentee agreement my child will be signing.   |
| Yes | No | I give permission for my student to be photographed, recorded on film, and/or taped while participating in TeamMates related activities.   |
| Yes | No | I give permission to use my student's discipline records for general evaluations purposes.*  |
| Yes | No | I give permission to use my student's grades and attendance records for general evaluation purposes.*  |
| Yes | No | I give permission to share my student's grades and attendance information with his/her mentor.   |
| Yes | No | I agree to allow my student to participate in surveys conducted by the TeamMates Mentoring Program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>• Clifton Youth Strengths Explorer program</li> <li>• Developmental Assets Profile</li> </ul> |

*\* Confidentiality of student records is strictly maintained. The information is for evaluating program impact and only overall group data is reported. For more information on student surveys contact the **TeamMates Safety & Ethics Hotline at 1-888-788-7727.***

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions please contact:

Please return this form to: