



# Community-Based Volunteer Mentor Orientation & Training Guide



#### **Table of Contents**

Our Mission and Our Programs 3	
BBBS Mentoring – Why BBBS vs. Other Mentoring Agencies?4	ļ
The Team – Who is Involved5	
Enrollment – How to Get Involved6	5
Match Meeting – What to Expect7	,
Your Role in the Active Match 8	) •
Match Support Contacts – How we support the match9	)
Ground Rules & Expectations10	0
Stages of Relationship Development1	1
Match Closure/Being Re-Matched12	2
BBBSWCO Policies:	3
<ul><li>Dismissal</li><li>Overnight Visitations</li><li>Non-discrimination</li></ul>	
Ensuring Child Safety - Big Training:14-21	1
<ol> <li>Children: Ages &amp; Stages</li> <li>Signs &amp; Symptoms of Abuse</li> <li>Frequently Asked Questions</li> <li>Orientation and Training Guide Acknowledgement (kept in file)</li> </ol>	



#### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of West Central Ohio**

#### Our Mission:

# Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth

At Big Brothers Big Sisters of West Central Ohio, we provide 2 primary types of community-based mentoring programs:

General Community-Based Mentoring	Site-Based Plus Community-Based
	Mentoring
Meet in the general community	Meet at designated location (approved by BBBS staff)
Meet on a consistent basis	Meet on a consistent basis
Matches schedule time together based on coordinating	Matches schedule time together
schedules of the Little, Parent/Guardian and Big	<ul> <li>Based on the youth's schedule and/or</li> </ul>
	operating hours of site being used (school,
	library, etc.)
Use community resources for outings (restaurants,	Use site resources or resources brought to the assigned
museums, recreational areas)	location by the youth or mentor (e.g. board games,
	homework, etc.)
Participate in Community-Based events	Participate in Community-Based events
Find activities that support the youth's goals	Find activities that support the youth's goals
Communicate with Match Support Specialist on a	Communicate with Match Support Specialist on a
regular basis	regular basis

# Your Enrollment Specialist will discuss these options with you.



#### BBBS Mentoring – Why BBBS vs. Other Agencies?

We know there are many opportunities to connect with others in our local area. While we believe all mentoring programs can be worth considering, there are some things that set Big Brothers Big Sisters apart from other agencies. As a volunteer mentor, you should know the quality of the program you are joining.

Big Brothers Big Sisters prides itself on the in-depth approach it takes to provide the safest, most appropriate matches possible. When enrolling in our program, you can be assured that our Littles and parents/guardians have completed the following:

- · Thorough, intensive interview
- Proof of identification
- Follow-up regarding behavioral, emotional, and/or cognitive supports needed
- Assessment, including consideration of Match preferences
- Approval by staff before being determined "Ready to be Matched"
- Pre-Match training highlighting child safety, relationship development, and ground rules and expectations

#### **Goal Development**

Littles are assisted in creating goals based on his/her unique ideas and interests.

#### **Ongoing Match Support**

A Match Support Specialist provides continuous communication and support throughout the duration of the Match.

Our #1 priority is the safety of our Littles!
Our #2 priority is the safety of our Littles!



#### The Team – Who is involved in the Match

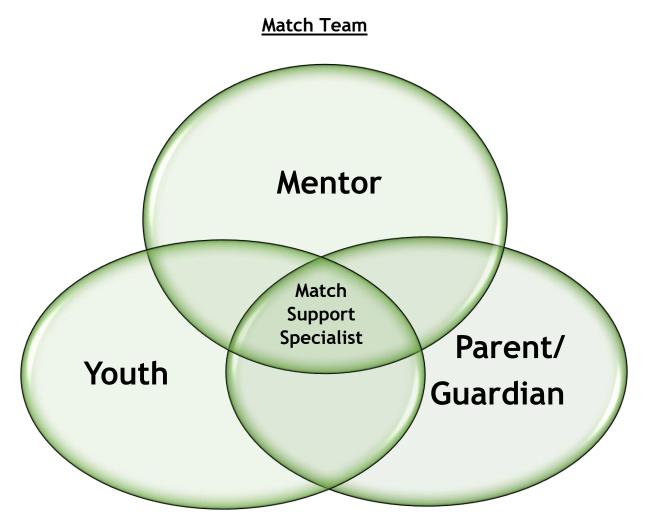
We believe it truly "takes a village" to bring out the best in our local youth. We embrace this by creating a support system within a Match in order to provide clear, consistent communication — as well as a guide for problem solving.

The overall team consists of the following:

- Parent/Guardian
- Child being enrolled ("Little")
- Volunteer mentor ("Big")
- Enrollment Specialist (ES)— completes the intake process (interviews, background checks on Bigs, etc.)
- Match Support Specialist (MSS)

   assigned to each active Match; provides support and training; makes regular
  contact to gauge the growth and needs of the Match

Your Match Support Specialist will remain in contact with all members of the Match's team (Parent/Guardian, Little, and Big) in order to ensure the Match is meeting regularly and/or having consistent contact, communicating needs and ideas to one another, and providing a safe environment for the Little when spending time with his/her Big.





#### Enrollment – How to get involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters

#### **Interview & Pre-Match Training**

The very first step in becoming a volunteer mentor is to submit a Community-Based Volunteer Application. This can be done by filling out the application in our office, mailing an application, or applying through our website. Once we receive an application, our Enrollment Specialist will contact you to schedule an interview.

We try to make enrollment as straightforward and easy as possible. We understand life can get busy, so we do our best to be flexible when scheduling appointments. Volunteer interviews typically take about 90 minutes to complete. This is when our Enrollment Specialist gets to know you, your strengths as a role model, your preferences, and areas of experience regarding child development. During this time, your background checks and required reference checks will also be completed. If there are any follow up questions that need answered, your Enrollment Specialist will contact you for clarification. These pieces help identify your best possible match.

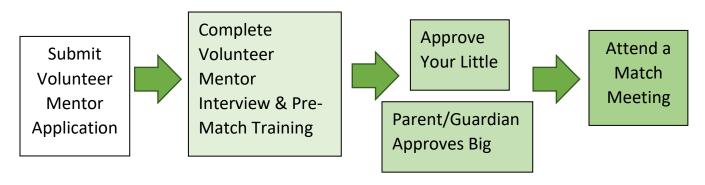
#### Assessment

Once you have completed your interview, and background checks and references are done, your Enrollment Specialist will write an assessment identifying important pieces about his/her personality and interest, as well as the type of Big who might be best suited for your child's needs. Once a potential Big is chosen, your Enrollment Specialist will contact both you and the mentor to make sure everyone feels it would be a correct fit.

#### **Match Meeting**

The last step is scheduling and attending a Match Meeting! This is the first time you get to meet your Little and your Little's parent/guardian. During this time, you and your Little's parent/guardian will exchange the necessary contact information and be able to discuss any remaining questions and/or concerns. The Enrollment Specialist will also have you and your Little create goals together (how to create a strong relationship and other goals based on your Little's interests), as well as discuss an introductory survey that helps introduce deeper conversation (i.e. how your Little feels on a day-to-day basis, how he/she performs in school, relationships with peers, etc).

This will also be the first attempt to schedule an outing for you and your Little. This will allow your assigned Match Support Specialist to follow up on the Match once it is activated and begin to track meetings and provide support as needed to the entire Match (you, your child, the Big).



#### Initial Match Meeting – What to Expect

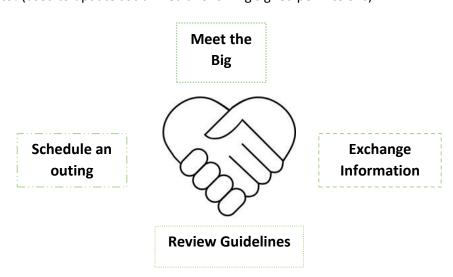
Time for a Match Meeting! Wait... What is that? What do we do?

A Match Meeting is completed once you, your potential Little's parent/guardian, and the Little express interest in being paired together based on information given by the Enrollment Specialist. This means all parties want to begin a working relationship with one another. Once everyone agrees to move forward, a Match meeting is scheduled.

As trained BBBS employees, we know scheduling your Match Meeting can cause you to feel both excited and nervous. That is understandable! We acknowledge how much anticipation there is around this first meeting for Little and his/her family as well. One step at a time! Let's have a short meet-n-greet first! This is the perfect time to acknowledge our first-introduction jitters and ask any questions you might have to your Little's parent/guardian in person.

#### Here is a quick look at what you can expect during the Match Meeting itself:

- Introduction of all parties in attendance (Little, Parent/Guardian, Big, etc.)
- Filling out contact cards to be exchanged (phone numbers, alternate contacts, Little's address, etc.)
- Goal setting and survey completions (Big and Little will spend time together creating goals, discussing survey
  questions, and getting to know each other)
- Discuss goals and strategies with Enrollment Specialist
- Review of Match Agreement Guidelines and expectations
- Setting a date for a tentative 1<sup>st</sup> outing with the Little and Big
- New Match photo! (used to update social media following signed permissions)



#### An important note about your Match Meeting:

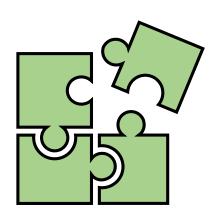
As a volunteer mentor in our program, your input matters! Once a Match Meeting is completed, you still have the right to voice concerns about your Little, the family dynamic, the supports needed, or even ask to be re-matched with a different Little. We want all parties to be confident in the Match. If you have questions, or concerns, we *always* want to hear them!



#### Your Role in the Active Match

As part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters team, you are a valuable piece to the puzzle! As a volunteer mentor in our program, your cooperation and input is KEY to the success of the Match! During the process of building a relationship with your Little and gaining a better understanding of his/her personality and interests, your consistency and influence will make a lasting impact in his/her life. By working alongside your child's Big and Match Support Specialist, you are helping to empower your child and ignite the potential within them!

#### You complete the team!



#### Tips to helping your match be successful:

- 1. Encourage your Little to give feedback about the activities he/she wants to do.
- 2. Be an active listener and wait to give advice. Be open to his/her feelings and experiences.
- 3. Spend time talking with your Little's parent/guardian get to know him/her personally.
- 4. Communicate with your Match Support Specialist at requested times (typically via call, text, or email).
- 5. Contact your Match Support Specialist any time you have a question or concern.

# Just as much as BBBS Staff is here to support you... You can be there to support Little!



#### Match Support Contacts – How We Support the Match

Once a Match is created, an assigned Match Support Specialist maintains communication with participants throughout the entire **lifetime** of the active Match.

## This means you, your Little, and his/her family are never without agency support!

Your MSS will reach out to the parent/guardian, the Little, and the Big regularly. These important "check-ins" are **documented** and used to gauge Match quality, relationship development, and potential training needs. The main goal we have for our Littles (outside of safety) is that he/she learns how to develop a strong, healthy relationship with a Big.

Your MSS will also be following up on the progress your Little is making on the goals he/she created during the Match Meeting (see Match Meeting). Your MSS will determine whether a goal is still appropriate, if a goal has been accomplished, and/or if a new goal may be needed. These goals give direction to the Match to ensure continuous development for the Little across all areas (socially, emotionally, independence, etc.).

Some examples of goals may include:

- Building a strong relationship
- Making an athletic team
- Improving grades
- Studying/practicing for a driver's test
- Deciding where to attend college/university
- Interest exploration
  - Cultural awareness
  - Theater
  - Future careers

Your MSS is trained to support you and your Little - no matter his/her age. We use Match Support Contacts to guide Matches in their appropriate, safe development.



#### **Ground Rules & Expectations**

Everyone benefits when there is clear communication. With this in mind, BBBS provides a list of ground rules for all parties involved to help everyone be on the same page. Below is a list of ground rules, or expectations, for a Parent/Guardian, a Little, and a Big to follow.

#### Expectations for Parent/Guardian:

- Understand that relationships take time to grow
- Be flexible when scheduling with your Child's Big and communicate changes as soon as possible
- Encourage your child to participate in Match activities and to respond to his/her Big
- Remind your child that time with his/her Big should be one-on-one (do not ask for others to attend)
- Provide signed permission for your child to attend BBBS-sponsored events
- Show interest in the Match by discussing activities with your child and his/her Big
- Communicate challenges with your child to his/her Big and MSS (do not discuss these in front of your child)
- Do not keep your child from his/her Big as a form of punishment (Bigs are here to support you as well)
- Understand that your child's Big has a set of rules as well (for your child's safety)
- Maintain regular contact with your MSS by responding to texts, calls, emails, letters, etc.
- Notify your MSS if any of your personal information changes
- Help your child complete and return surveys in a timely manner
- Absolutely no overnights within the first year and only with BBBS permission after one year

#### **Expectations for Littles:**

- Be respectful of your Big
- Communicate needs and preferences to your Big in a kind way
- Respond to your Big if contacted via text, call, etc.
- Do not ask for others to join when spending time with your Big
- Bigs are mentors do not expect anyone to buy you gifts, be transportation, or give you money
- Talk to your parent/guardian and MSS about any problems or interests with your Big
- Complete and return surveys sent by MSS
- Talk to your parent/guardian about activities you do with your Big
- Tell your parent/guardian if you and your Big are making plans include days and times discussed

#### **Expectations for Bigs:**

- Be understanding if plans need to be changed or cancelled
- Continue to reach out to schedule time with your Little
- Maintain consistent contact/communication with your Little (even if you are not able to meet for an extended period)
- Confirm information when changes occur (drop off locations, times, days, etc.)
- Communicate regularly with your MSS
- Relay any challenges you come across to your MSS (personal schedule, communicating with parents/guardians, finding interesting activities)
- Attend BBBS-sponsored events
- Absolutely no overnights within the first year and only with BBBS permission after one year

#### **Stages of Relationship Development**

As with any relationship, your relationship with your Little will take time to grow. It will also take time for you to get to know your child's parent/guardian. It is important to understand the different "stages" people can experience when developing a healthy, trusting relationship. It is also important to note that every relationship is different – some grow quickly and some take more time.

#### **Common stages for relationship development:**

#### Honeymoon Stage

- Grace period for parent/guardians trusting an unfamiliar adult with his/her child
- Figuring each other out interests, likes, dislikes
- Wanting to make a good first impression good behaviors
- May be resistant to trying new things
- Shorter visits

#### **Growth Stage**

- Important turning point
- Littles may present testing behaviors
- Littles observing responses by Bigs to find out if he/she is trustworthy
- Communication, consistency, and reliability by adults is critical
- Parent/guardian and Big have become more familiar
- Praise accomplishments of Little and the family
- Address challenging behaviors be supportive of the need to keep trying

#### **Maturity Stage**

- Feeling of comfort parties are familiar with each other
- Littles and Bigs have a better understanding of one another
- Increased maturity of Little as relationship matures
- Communications occur easily scheduling methods are understood
- Match meetings may be less structured continue to work towards goals
- Little may reach out to his/her Big in times of crisis

Your Little may struggle to express his/her appreciation of you. Littles will bond at different speeds. Ask your MSS for feedback if needed!



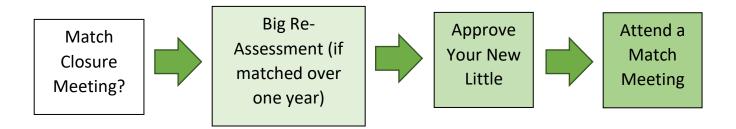
#### Match Closure/Re-Matching with a Different Little

Match closures can be necessary for a variety of reasons – many times a happy, yet bittersweet transition. Your MSS is trained in handling this process and will guide you through each step. Below is a list of a few reasons, Matches may need to close:

- Someone in the Match is moving
- Parent/Guardian no longer feels the Big is a good match for his/her child
- Big feels the Little is no longer interested in the Match
- Time constraints
- Safety concern

Big Brothers Big Sisters acknowledges that life can throw us curveballs. It can suddenly become challenging to find time for activities outside of our personal and professional requirements. Your MSS will assist as much as possible to provide accommodations in times of need. Whether it is a sports season keeping a Little busy, or a Big's new job transition making it difficult to have extra time, there are often ways to get through unforeseen issues. In times when it is necessary, however, your MSS can help you and your Little navigate the closure of a Match – and hopefully, the introduction of a new one! Actively participating in the Match Closure process can be an important step in your Little understanding the full cycle of relationships, relationship growth and development, and how to find closure when relationships end. This practice can be useful in providing reflection and personal growth for Littles.

The re-match process is like the initial Match Meeting process you completed previously.



The goal is always to have a "successful" match closure. This means there was discussion of the need to close the Match prior to it officially ending. We always hope all parties are understanding and parting ways on good terms. If so, there is always the option for continued communication and interactions; however, it is important to note that these will *no longer be monitored by BBBS staff*.

Unfortunately, there are times when a Match Closure Meeting is not possible. If your match is closed due to any safety concerns, an in-person meeting may not be requested. Your MSS might, instead, request a personal meeting to discuss closure and next steps. If Community-Based mentoring is no longer desired, your MSS will discuss the options of re-applying at a later date.



#### **BBBS** Policies

#### Policy on overnight visits

Overnight visits may occur only with the prior approval of Big Brothers Big Sisters in accordance with the terms of this policy. This policy applies to community-based matches only. An overnight visit is never allowed in a school-based match. (See Standard 9.5 for more details)

#### Non-Discrimination Policies (BBBS National)

We affirm that every person [regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation, marital or veteran status] has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

#### **Mandated Reporters**

Big Brothers Big Sisters staff members are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child. Our staff and volunteers are trained to respond if a child tells them about abuse. A report may be filed with authorities.

If you have any further questions, or would like more information on violence prevent, please reach out to for additional resources. We can provide a personalized link and password to the online BBBS Parent Training upon request.

If at any time you suspect your Little is being harmed, please contact BBBS for support!

#### **Ensuring Child Safety – Big Training**

#### 1. Ages & Stages of Child Development

#### 5-7 YEAR OLDS

#### **General Characteristics**

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they are active while learning.
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive.

#### **Physical Characteristics**

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks. They like to do things that are fun and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles are difficult (i.e., working on models with small pieces).
- May tend to be accident prone.

#### **Social Characteristics**

- Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
- Can be very competitive. May cheat at games.
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing.
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative than at five, and boastful.
- Learn best through active participation.

#### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are alert to feelings of others, but are unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regress when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.

#### **Mental Characteristics**

- Are very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

#### **Developmental Tasks**

- Sex role identification.
- Early moral development.



#### Volunteer Mentor Orientation & Training Guide

#### 8-10 YEAR OLDS

#### **General Characteristics**

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expects more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adult although still dependent on adult approval.

#### **Physical Characteristics**

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.

#### **Social Characteristics**

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends.
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sport figures is common.

#### **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 friend's
  rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

#### **Mental Characteristics**

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious and are collectors of everything. However, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in ready ability.

#### **Developmental Traits**

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



#### Volunteer Mentor Orientation & Training Guide

#### **11-13 YEAR OLDS**

#### **General Characteristics**

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

#### **Physical Characteristics**

- Small-muscle coordination is good and interests in arts, crafts, models and music are popular
- 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.
- Teams games become popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex 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 !?")
- 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.



#### Volunteer Mentor Orientation & Training Guide

#### **14-16 YEAR OLDS**

#### **General Characteristics**

- Testing limits, "know-it-all" attitude
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admire 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 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 ("If you loved me, you would let me go to the party.")
- Going to extremes; emotional instability
- 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 hurt easily.
- 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.

#### **Ensuring Child Safety – Big Training**

#### 2. Recognizing the Signs & Symptoms of Abuse

TYPE and DEFINITION	SYMPTOMS
<ul> <li>EMOTIONAL ABUSE:</li> <li>Constant belittling, shaming, and humiliating a child, name-calling and making negative comparisons to others.</li> <li>Telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake."</li> <li>Frequent yelling, threatening, or ignoring/ rejecting a child as punishment, giving him or her the silent treatment.</li> <li>Often very limited physical contact with the child-no hugs, kisses, or other signs of affection.</li> <li>May expose the child to violence or the abuse of others.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.</li> <li>Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).</li> <li>Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.</li> <li>Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumbsucking, tantrums).</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>NEGLECT:</li> <li>A pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision.</li> <li>Not always easy to spot.</li> <li>Sometimes, a parent might become physically or mentally unable to care for a child, such as with a serious injury, untreated depression or anxiety. Other times, alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgement and the ability to keep a child safe.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Clothes are ill-fitting, or inappropriate for the weather.</li> <li>Hygiene is consistently bad (un-bathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).</li> <li>Untreated illness and physical injuries.</li> <li>Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.</li> <li>Is frequently late or missing from school.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>PHYSICAL ABUSE:</li> <li>Bodily harm or injury to the child.</li> <li>It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always.</li> <li>It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welt, or cuts.</li> <li>Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen.</li> <li>Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.</li> <li>Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.</li> <li>Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>SEXUAL ABUSE:</li> <li>Bodily contact between an adult and a child involving genitals, breasts, buttocks.</li> <li>Any contact - from touch to stroking to penetration - is abuse.</li> <li>Additionally, exposure to situations and/or materials that are 'adult' in nature is abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Trouble walking or sitting.</li> <li>Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior.</li> <li>Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.</li> <li>Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.</li> <li>An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14.</li> <li>Runs away from home.</li> </ul>

#### **Ensuring Child Safety – Big Training**

#### 1. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the typical ages of Littles in the program?

A: BBBS typically begins enrollment around age 7 for Littles. This age is when most children are able to independently communicate, make appropriate choices, and follow directions from adults other than his/her parent. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. Littles are considered "aged out" of the program on his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is when they officially become an "adult." We always encourage graduated Littles to enroll as Bigs themselves!

Q: Is the Match Agreement a contract?

A: No! The Match Agreement is an acknowledgement signed by the Parent/Guardian, the Little, the Big, and BBBS staff which restates the ground rules. It states that all parties would like to enter a Match relationship and agree to the guidelines of the program.

Q: What if I agree to the Match Meeting and then change my mind?

A: We understand! Staff makes Matches based on what we understand to be interests, hobbies, and personality types. Even after a Match Meeting is completed, you have the right to end a Match. We strongly recommend staying in a Match for a minimum of six months to provide time for the relationship to develop. However, we understand there can be reasons for requesting to end a Match sooner.

Q: I have a concern about an activity my Little is telling me about. What do I do?

A: Contact your Match Support Specialist right away! Your MSS is trained in handling difficult communications, child safety issues, and documenting interactions. If there is ever a concern, we want to know! It may be a communication issue, but if it is more serious, let us help!

Q: My Little and I have big plans! We want to go on an overnight. Can my Little go?

A: BBBS has strict guidelines regarding overnight visitations of a Community-Based Match. Contact your MSS to see what documentation is needed. Information prior to the overnight, as well as parent/guardian signed permission, will be required before approval is given. There is also necessary follow-up within a week of the overnight. These rules are in place to ensure child safety and must be followed.



### Find a location near you!

#### **Allen County**

207 W. Elm St. Lima, OH 45801 419-222-8500

#### **Hardin County**

801 W. Lima St. - B Kenton, OH 43326 419-675-1850

#### **Putnam County**

1800 N. Perry St., 109 Ottawa, OH 45875 419-523-4016

www.bbbswco.org
Email: bbbswco@gmail.com
Find us on Facebook and
Instagram!

#### **Ensuring Child Safety – Parent Training**

#### 2. Orientation & Training Guide Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge the I have received the Big Brothers Big Sisters of West Central Ohio's Community-Based Volunteer Mentor Orientation & Training Guide. I attest that a staff member has discussed an overview of its contents with me. I acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of BBBSWCO staff and can look back to this guide for information.

I also acknowledge that, upon request, I can training as assigned by a BBBSWCO staff me	
Volunteer Mentor	Date
BBBSWCO Staff	