

Welcome to **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills**

Volunteer Orientation Guide

**Our vision is that all children
achieve success in life.**

Our mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

We partner with parents/guardians, volunteers and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each child in our program achieving:

- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success

This is what we do, why we do it, and why it matters:

2013 percentage of youth maintaining or improving in our key areas:

	Community Programs	Site-Based Programs
Socio-Emotional Competence	97.9%	96.6%
Educational Success	94.5%	95.2%
Avoidance of Risky Behaviors	88.8%	83.4%

About Our Bigs

Based on years of extensive research, Big Brothers Big Sisters requires our volunteers to be capable of the following commitments. Our professional staff work with volunteers to ensure these commitments can be met by providing coaching, training and activities to help you develop in your role as a Big.

- ❑ Commit to a minimum of 12 months as a Big
- ❑ Commit to spending consistent, significant time with their Little each month
- ❑ Follow all agency policies, procedures and ground rules. Because child safety is a top priority, we consider violations of policies, procedures, and ground rules to be grounds for match suspension or termination.
- ❑ Maintain regular communication with the Match Support Specialist, including returning all calls and emails. Failure to maintain contact may result in closure of the match.
- ❑ Participate in required surveys and assessments related to the match relationship and youth outcomes.
- ❑ Complete assigned training.

Research tells us that Littles achieve greater results when their Big...

- ❑ Emphasizes friendship over changing the behavior.
- ❑ Is not authoritarian.
- ❑ Decides activities together with their Little.
- ❑ Is consistent & dependable.
- ❑ Has realistic expectations about their Little.
- ❑ Is patient.
- ❑ Focuses on having fun.
- ❑ Sets boundaries and limits.
- ❑ Acknowledges that positive impact on the child comes after the relationship is built.
- ❑ Puts their Little's safety and well-being first.
- ❑ Helps form goals.

And we know what a Big is not:

ATM
Childcare provider
Provider of professional services
Tutor (although sometimes school-related activities are part of your time together).

We will work with you to ensure healthy boundaries are established and respected by everyone.

About the Enrollment Process



Enrollment Steps

1. Inquire about being a Big.
2. Orientation to Big Brothers Big Sisters programs.
3. Complete the application.
4. Provide information about work or volunteering with other youth-serving organizations and other related information as requested.
5. Provide personal references.
6. Background checks, including criminal history and DMV record checks as well as public domain searches.
7. Interview with BBBS.
8. Participate in Pre-Match Training.

Big Brothers Big Sisters retains the right to accept or deny participants, or close a match at any time. Should we notify you that you are not accepted as a volunteer Big, you may appeal by: **Contacting the Executive Director at 343-1488.**

Potential Littles, along with their families, are also screened to ensure that our mentoring programs are the best fit for the Littles needs. The process for youth and families is similar to that of our volunteers and looks like this:



Leading the enrollment and matching processes are professionals whose job it is to make the best possible match. When a match is made, the Match Support Specialist oversees the relationship by providing coaching, ensuring safety, assisting in goal-oriented activities, referring services, and helping

you and your Little and his/her family with needs. It is therefore critical for all match parties to treat contact with the Match Support Specialist as a serious component of match development. Lack of response to Match Support contacts is grounds for match suspension or termination, which can have a detrimental impact on the Little.

Later in the process, you'll receive training and instruction on our policies, procedures and guidelines – all of which are designed to help you have the most positive impact possible on a Little.

Match Activities



Being a Big is about both having fun with your Little and achieving positive outcomes. Your Match Support Specialist will work with you, your Little and your Little's parent/guardian to identify goals for the match, which will likely fall into one or more of these categories:

- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational Success
- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships

These categories represent the most common youth outcomes found as a result of effective mentoring. In general, youth-specific match goals are established to produce one or more of the youth outcomes. The activities you select should support those goals, which can produce the desired outcomes.

About Expectations

If you are approved and ready-to-be-matched, the following is the structured, professional process for your match:

1. Match Introduction Meeting:
 - The volunteer, child, parent and Match Support Specialist meet in-person and the meeting is conducted by the MSS in order to properly introduce all match parties.
 - Go over responsibilities of each party and child safety ground rules.
 - Match agreements signed.
 - Set first outing date/time/activity.
2. Communication with your Match Support Specialist (phone, e-mail, and in-person):
 - Contact required within first two weeks of match.
 - During first year – every 30 days.
 - After one year – every 90 days.
3. Post-Match training:
 - Given as needed.
 - Bigs have 3 months (from time of intake) to complete scenario training.
4. Match activities and events:
 - Are planned, at a minimum, quarterly for match engagement.
 - Are youth-centered activities to enhance the connection to the agency, match relationships and youth outcomes.
5. Youth Development Plan participation:
 - Is developed during enrollment and carried throughout the match as a guiding light for what all parties hope the match will achieve and how the Little will grow.
 - The plan will contain goals for the Little and describe what everyone pledges to do to reach the desired outcomes.
 - The plan will be reviewed annually and will be adjusted as needed.
6. Annual survey completion:
 - Your Match Support Specialist will assess your match annually in order to be in compliance with BBBS of the Black Hills policies and procedures.
 - Survey completion consists of the Youth Outcome Survey, Strength of Relationship survey and consistent match support contacts.
 - Additional paperwork will need to be updated as well, such as: auto insurance forms, copy of current driver's license and a background check (if not up-to-date).

About Safety

The safety of children is our number one priority – no exceptions. Our staff carefully screens each volunteer Big, board member, staff and others who work directly with the children in our programs. As a volunteer Big, it will be your role to make sure your relationship is healthy and that you are making good judgments about your Little's safety on outings. Here's how you can further promote safety:

- Follow all agency policies, procedures and ground rules at all times – no exceptions.
- Spending too much time with your Little too early in the match can set an unhealthy precedent for the relationship. Discuss plans and expected time with your Match Support Specialist.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for all activities. Be aware that some parents may not be comfortable with your suggestions. We expect you to comply with their decisions. Talk to your Match Support Specialist if you have questions.
- Always stay with your Little; do not leave them alone or with someone else.
- Do not use alcohol or other drugs before or during activities.
- Do not use physical discipline or yell at your Little.
- Do not take others, including your family or friends or the Little's siblings or friends, on any match outings unless otherwise approved by your Match Support Specialist.
- If an activity involves changing clothes (for example, swimming), there must be separate changing and showering places. If you go on an approved overnight, you and your Little must sleep in separate beds.
- Never ask your Little to keep a secret.
- Gift giving is discouraged, although you might want to buy an occasional gift for your Little. Seek parental advice about this first.
- Do not engage in tickling, wrestling, giving backrubs, or ask your Little to sit on your lap.
- Seatbelts should always be worn.
- Bigs should never drop off their Little at a home where no approved adults are present or at a location other than where the parent specified.
- Misusing social media, showing age-inappropriate videos, pornography or sexual material is not acceptable and is grounds for match termination.

About Match Closure

We know from research on mentoring that when relationship closure is unplanned, abrupt, premature, or handled without care and communication, Littles can be harmed. In addition, mentors may also be left feeling guilty, sad, or lacking closure.

It may seem odd or even pessimistic to discuss this stage when you are contemplating or entering a mentoring relationship. However, research shows that when mentors, parents and children (in partnership with their Match Support Specialist) are trained in how to handle match closure well and actively plan for the end of their match, it can be a positive process that allows for reflection and personal growth for both the mentor and the Little.

At the time of closure, Big Brothers Big Sisters will discuss with you, your Little, and your Little's parent about the best plan for closing your match relationship with the organization. When a match is closed, Big Brothers Big Sisters officially no longer provides professional support or guidance to the previously matched parties. At that point, the match is no longer considered an "active" match, or part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. This means that Big Brothers Big Sisters is no longer responsible for or involved in the relationship.

By this time, you and your Little have most likely invested a lot into each other and the relationship. During the closure process, it is important that you communicate to your Little your appreciation of him or her and your hope and expectation that he or she will be successful and happy.

When your match closes, talk to your Match Support Specialist about ways in which you can stay involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters. This may include being matched again with another Little, but there are many other ways in which you can support the agency. You and your Match Support Specialist should talk about the best options for you.

About Our Families

Average Age of Littles:
9.8 years of age

Age range:
5-15

Race/Ethnicity:
White 59%
Native American 30%
Multi-racial, Black or Hispanic 11%

Gender:
68 % male
32% female

Number of Littles currently
on waiting list:
63

Type of Primary caregivers of our Littles:
Single parent/guardian 77%
Two-parent /guardians 22%
Out-of-home care 1%

Common languages spoken in homes
of our Littles:
English

Socioeconomic status (SES) of our families:
Low income

Current number of matches:
149

Average length of match:
22 months

Goal for number of new matches
this year: **245**

About Our Non-Discrimination Policies:

Children are not excluded on the basis of race, religion, national origin, color, and gender, marital status of parent, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or disability.

Volunteer Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Board Members, and Agency Staff as Volunteer Bigs are not excluded on the basis of race, religion, national origin, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or disability.

About **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills**

Agency Name: Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills

Agency Address: 425 Kansas City Street, Rapid City, SD 57701

Main phone number: (605) 343-1488

Website: www.bigmentors.com

Match support specialist name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Child Safety Concerns

First contact name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Second contact name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Local child services: _____

