

# Welcome, Family!

## Our Vision

All youth achieve their full potential.

## Our Mission

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

## Match Support Specialist Contact Information

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

## Notes

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# Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills

425 Kansas City Street

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## Staff Directory

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## about OUR NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The agency aims to obey all laws concerning non-discrimination.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills does not discriminate.



# about SAFETY

**The safety of your child is our number one priority - no exceptions.**

**What WE do to keep your child safe:**

- We conduct multi-level background checks at state and national levels for all of our Bigs as well as reference checks, home visits, and a thorough interview with our trained Match Support Specialists.
- Provide child safety training to our Bigs
- Professionally support the match with consistent match support contacts. Match support contacts will be done as needed, but not less than the following times during the match:
  - Every two weeks for the first month
  - Monthly for the first year
  - Quarterly thereafter

**How YOU can further promote your child's safety:**

- Participate in planning and approve activities. If you are not comfortable with an activity the Big suggests, you are encouraged to disapprove. Talk to your Match Support Specialist when you have questions.
- Communicate safety concerns related to your child's Big, school, or in the community with your Match Support Specialist.

**BIG Responsibilities**

When your child spends time with their Big, they will be expected to:

- Never leave your child unattended or with someone else
- Never use physical discipline or yell at your child
- Plan to utilize separate changing spaces if their activity requires changing of attire (for example: swimming)
- Never ask your child to keep a secret
- Ask your permission to buy your child a gift if they wish to do so
- Never engage in tickling, wrestling, backrubs, or asking your child to sit on their lap
- Make sure everyone in the vehicle is wearing a seatbelt
- Never drop off your child where no approved adults are present or at a location you did not agree to
- Never misuse social media, show your child inappropriate videos, pornography or sexual material. This is grounds for immediate termination of the match.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. They are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of any child.**

**Patterns of behavior to discuss with your Match Support Specialist:**

- Your child's Big wants to spend more and more time with your child
- Your child's Big often invites other children or adults to join them
- Activities always take place in private settings
- Your child's Big takes excessive amounts of pictures or videos of your child
- Your child's Big becomes involved with your family in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.



## about OUR PROGRAMS

### **Community Program**

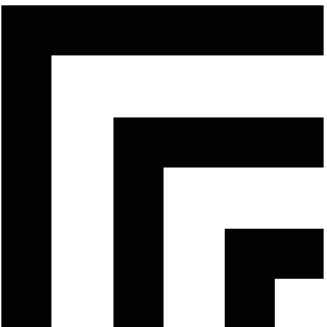
The Traditional Program involves Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Big Couples (married), and Big Families. This program is designed to match children between 5 and 17 years old, with an adult who can serve as a positive role model, giving a child a chance to see their unlimited potential and providing the opportunity to develop into a more responsible, successful, well-rounded individual.

### **Campus Kids**

Campus Kids is a staff supervised group mentoring program specifically for children waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister. It meets once a week at the SD School of Mines & Technology campus and is led by college student volunteer mentors.

### **Bigs in Blue**

Bigs in Blue is a one-to-one mentoring program that connects youth with police in communities throughout our nation, building strong, trusting, lasting relationships. These relationships can help children develop into confident adults and help build stronger bonds between law enforcement and the families they serve.





## about the ENROLLMENT PROCESS



**Complete an application.**



**Interview with a Match Support Specialist for you and your child.**



**Get matched!**

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

It is critical for you to understand that communication with your Match Support Specialist is a serious component of the match relationship development. Lack of response is grounds for match suspension and termination.

Our matches are not made on a first-come, first-served basis. Our goal is to match each child with the best possible mentor for them. There may be a waiting period but we will work with you to help keep your child engaged while they wait.

## 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 just beginning here at Big Brothers Big Sisters. However, research shows that when we are educated on the match closure process and actively plan for the match closure, it can be a positive process that allows for reflection and personal growth for everyone involved.

At the time of the match closure, your Match Support Specialist will discuss with you, your child, and their Big, about the best plan for closing the match. We will also discuss ways to keep you and your child engaged in the program. This may include being matched again or other opportunities that we have.

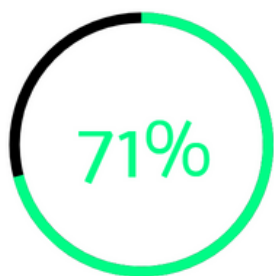


# about MATCH ACTIVITIES & GOALS

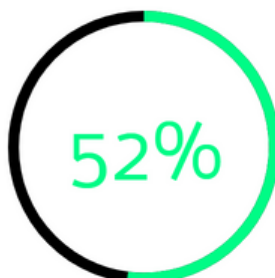
**Being in a match is about both having fun and achieving positive outcomes!**

**Your Match Support Specialist will work with you, your child, and their Big to identify goals for the match which will likely fall into one or more of these areas:**

- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success
- Improved self-esteem
- Higher aspirations
- Greater self-esteem and confidence
- Better relationships



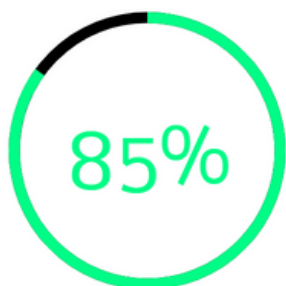
of our Littles who did not believe college was an option now hope to attend and believe they can graduate.



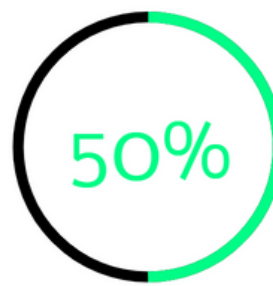
of our Littles decreased the number of days they were absent from school.



of our Littles feel more socially accepted by their peers.



of our Littles who did not believe they would finish high school now believe they can and will.



of our Littles decreased their inclined attitudes toward risky behaviors.



## about YOUR ROLE

### **Be an active partner.**

Working together, parents, guardians, or caregivers, volunteers and Big Brothers Big Sister staff members plan activities and opportunities that can have a powerful and positive impact on your child.

### **Talk with your Match Support Specialist monthly.**

We will contact you monthly to get your point of view about the match, observations, and questions. This monthly contact is required as it allows us to provide support and over ideas if challenges arise. This is done to ensure the safety of your child. If consistent contact does not occur, we will suspend or terminate the match.

### **Participate in scheduled assessments and surveys.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters uses information from assessments and surveys to make recommendations for the match, identify resources you may need, and to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of the program.

### **Call us!**

If you need help locating resources, are moving, have a joy to share, have safety concerns or need to talk about the match, call your Match Support Specialist.

### **Respect boundaries.**

We educate Bigs, families and Littles about the importance of focusing on what the match is and what it isn't. For example, we ask all parents to remember that the Big is a volunteer and should not be asked to perform any services for the family, buy clothes or supplies, be asked to take siblings on outings, bring the child home to an empty house, and so on. Please have good boundaries when you are contacting them or expressing any challenges your child may be experiencing.

### **Follow all policies, procedures, and ground rules.**

Without exception, it is critical to safety and healthy relationship development that you adhere to our rules, just as our Bigs are expected to.

### **Support your child's mentoring relationship.**

The time your child spends with his or her Big can be an invaluable experience. Sticking to scheduled times, getting to know the Big, talking with your child about the experience and promoting the activities and events offered by the agency are great ways to be a partner and support your child's match.



**Our professional staff work with volunteers from our community to ensure these commitments can be met by providing coaching, training, and activities to help them develop in their roles as Bigs. Based on years of extensive research that reinforces the benefit to your child, Big Brothers Big Sisters requires our volunteers to be capable of the following commitments:**

- Commit to a minimum of one year as a Big.
- Commit to spending consistent, significant time with their Little each month (approximately 4 hours).
- 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 Match Support Specialists, including returning all calls and emails. Failure to maintain contact may result in match closure.
- 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 behaviors.
- Is not authoritarian.
- Decides activities with their Little.
- Is consistent and dependable.
- Has realistic expectations about their Little.
- Is patient.
- Focuses on having fun and building their relationship.
- 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.
- Is your ally.

## THANK YOU!

We are happy to have you a part of our Big Brothers Big Sisters family! We will be here for you every step of the way. We appreciate you and we stand WITH YOU! Thank you for joining us!







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