



Snap the Gap Mentor Guidelines

Mentoring Requirements

Background Check

All mentors must pass a background check and safety regulations. We ask that the mentor cover the cost of their background check estimated at \$25-\$30 or less. The process for this will be site specific and sent via email confirmation.

Mentor Training

All mentors must complete this introductory webinar and review the other quick start resources we have provided via the Snap The Gap website and at the end of this presentation. In order to be a successful mentor, we ask that mentors read over these resources carefully.

Kick-Off Event Participation

All mentors must also attend their site's kick off event. At this event, mentors will meet their mentee for the first time. Each date and time vary by site. We will go over the kick-off event specifics in the next slide.

Weekly Mentoring

Over the course of the program, mentors will be required to meet weekly with the mentee to complete weekly objectives and to provide face-to-face mentorship. Must complete 10-20 hours of mentoring over the course of 6 weeks. *Note: The mentoring relationship will conclude with your assigned site's showcase session. No additional mentoring or contact with participants outside of assigned sessions will be supported through this program.*

Feedback

Additionally, to support program development, mentors will complete a short feedback survey after each mentoring session and provide additional feedback when possible. Suggestions and communication are valued and appreciated!

Meeting Your Mentee - Kick Off Event

The site coordinator should introduce you to your mentee at the Kick-Off Event. Here are some steps to start off your conversation with your mentee.

- Talk about what you both like to do and the things you have in common.
- Take turns answering questions about your interests and hobbies. Discuss favorite music, movies, sports, books, school subjects, food, heroes, heroines, etc.
- Discuss basic expectations that you have about the relationship. Ask the mentee to do the same.

Session Breakdown

Warm Up

First, the team will be providing mentors with short prompts or warm ups to begin conversation and activity. For the kick off session the first prompt will be guided, however for following sessions you will want to reference the mentor e-newsletter for prompts and discussion topics.

Hands-On Activity

After introducing the session prompt, we ask mentors to move into the hands-on activity with the provided STEM inventor kit or engage with other STEM related articles and events of your choosing. We hope that the mentors can connect these STEM topics to your mentee's daily life.

Personalized Mentoring

And finally, throughout the mentoring we ask that the mentors get to know their mentee and their personal STEM interests to talk through more personalized advice and experiences.

Goal Setting - Showcase Event

After you and your mentee have gotten to know each other, you should discuss developing goals for the program and the showcase event. At the showcase event, the girls will each be presenting the projects that they have worked on with their mentors. Therefore, goals can be projects, building inventions, understanding the design process, etc. A goal should be:

- **Realistic** - if it is too difficult, it will lead to frustration
- **Challenging** - if it is too easy, there is little incentive to achieve it

- **Specific** - you need to know what you want to achieve
- **Measurable** - you need to know when you have accomplished it
- **Timely** - it should have a deadline, so you won't put it off - think about the showcase!

Steps in Goal Setting

Have the mentee identify some positive things she would like to accomplish. Help your mentee select one or two realistic goals to work on. You want your mentee to set her sights high but also be assured of some success.

1. Brainstorm ways to reach the goal. Brainstorming is a process that involves thinking of as many ideas as you can for reaching a goal, even if some may seem silly or unrealistic. You and your mentee should write down all of your ideas. Later, you can help her select the best ones.
2. Identify small steps for reaching the goal. Most goals require more than one step to complete. Recognize the mentee's attainment of each small step to reach her goal.
3. Identify obstacles that might prevent the completion of the goal. This will need to become part of the action plan for accomplishing the goal.
4. Decide on a deadline for accomplishment and reevaluation of the goal. This is an important step. If the process drags on too long, your mentee may get discouraged and quit. A deadline gives him/her something to work toward - e.g. consider showcase events. An opportunity for reevaluation gives you a chance to check her progress. Encouragement from you may be all that is needed to keep your mentee on course.

Core Guiding Principles

Through the Snap the Gap program, the girls will gain valuable skills such as critical thinking, confidence, leadership, and communication, as well as experience the joy of being an innovator.

Snap the Gap mentors should guide the girls towards these principles throughout their time with their mentee.

Mentor Roles

As a mentor, there are 3 areas of focus for your interaction with your mentee. You should be a teacher, a positive role model, and a challenger.

- **Positive Role Model:** Demonstrate exemplary behavior and offering values that will increase chances for success and happiness.
- **Teacher/Trainer:** Provide learning opportunities and offer your experience as a guide. This includes taking full advantage of the inventor kit and other opportunities. Encourage themes such as creativity, invention, problem-solving, exploration, and confidence. Providing encouragement to the mentee as she embarks on new experiences.

- **Challenger:** Encourage a growth mindset towards the mentee to maximize her potential. A growth mindset establishes that one can improve their ability, seeing failure as a learning opportunity rather than an obstacle. This allows for learners to focus on a journey of continual improvement and growth.

General Guidelines

The following are some basic guidelines:

1. **Be reliable.** Be punctual and dependable - communicate about issues such as tardiness or rescheduling. Try not to cancel on scheduled dates. Trust is crucial in your relationship and nothing undermines trust faster than missing appointments.
2. **Be consistent.** Short, regular contacts of time and attention towards the mentee can often accomplish more than long, inefficient sessions.
3. **Ask questions.** Everyone involved in the project is part of a team. We can help each other and help our mentee by asking questions that promote critical thinking and making connections with the activity.
4. **Praise your mentee.** Take every opportunity to give positive and encouraging feedback to your mentee that awards their growth mindset. Avoid using language such as "You are so smart." instead use language that awards how they pushed themselves to reach a conclusion such as "Wow, you worked so hard, I am proud of you!".
5. **Use your imagination.** Simple ideas are often the most fun and educational.
6. **Respect cultural differences.** Your mentee and her family may embrace different traditions and values than you. Be open-minded and understanding.
7. **Set limits.** Establish norms of proper conduct without being harsh. Feel free to reject unreasonable demands by your mentee. Discuss with her the basis of your differences.
8. **Meet program requirements.** Fill out all program forms in a timely manner. If you need assistance or advice in difficult situations, ask your site coordinator.

About Young Adolescents

General Characteristics

- The primary challenges of adolescence:
 - The development of personal identity and establishment of independence and autonomy in the context of the sociocultural environment.

Physical Characteristics

- Girls' growth begins and peaks earlier than boys'
- Reproductive system begins to develop

Socio/Emotional Characteristics

- Self:
 - Preoccupation with rapid body change
 - Self-absorption, self-consciousness
 - Diminished self-esteem
- Family
 - Redefining relationship with family; moving toward more independence while still looking to family for guidance and values
 - Few major conflicts over parental control
- Peers
 - Increasing importance
 - Seeking to become part of group to hide insecurities from rapid changes
 - Comparing own normality and acceptance with same-sex peers
 - Moving toward more intimate sharing of feelings
- Sexuality
 - Defining self in terms of maleness and femaleness
 - Learning how to relate to opposite sex

Cognitive Characteristics

- Beginning to move from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking
- (“formal operations”—what might be true if...)
- Cannot always perceive long-range implications of current decision
- Expanded interests; intense, short-term enthusiasm

Influences on Youth

To understand and empathize to what is going on with some mentees, mentors should have some idea of the environment (both neighborhood and family) in which their mentees live, typical behaviors of that age group, and pressures that they face. The following are key factors influencing the behavior of today's youth.

- Poverty
- Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol
- Injuries
- Violence
- Suicide
- AIDS/STDs
- Sexuality/Teen Pregnancy
- Peer Pressure
- Technology
- Cyber-Bullying

Program Policies

Site Coordinator

Each site will have a site coordinator. The site coordinator is responsible for the care of the mentees (i.e., mandated reporters) and the site. If you have any questions at the time of your sessions, please contact and connect with your site coordinator.

Confidentiality

As a mentor, you may learn private and personal information about your mentee and her family. It is important to keep such information private and not discuss it outside of the program. However, if there is a matter that you are concerned about with your mentee, please contact the site coordinator.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency or a sign that an adolescent needs outside help:

- Always contact the site coordinator.
- If it relates to your mentee, call the parent or guardian and/or call emergency medical personnel (if appropriate)

Parental Permission

Families have signed consent forms to allow their children to participate in the program.

Useful Websites

Mentoring Best Practices, Resource, and Research

Adolescent Development:

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.83>

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership:

www.mentoring.org

National Mentoring Resource Center:

<https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>

Mentor Everywhere:

<https://mentoreverywhere.com/resources/>

TED - How To Be A Good Mentor playlist:

https://www.ted.com/playlists/400/how_to_be_a_good_mentor

Million Women Mentor Resources:

<https://www.millionwomenmentors.com/resource-view>

Book: Teach to Work

Alper, P. (2017) *Teach to Work: How a Mentor, a Mentee, and a Project Can Close the Skills Gap in America*. New York, NY: Bibliomotion, Inc.

Book: The Elements of Mentoring:

Johnson, W.B., Ridley, C.R. (2018) *The Elements of Mentoring*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Source: Big Brothers Big Sisters Handbook for Mentors