



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel, a mentoring organization for children, is committed to providing caring adult relationships for children to promote their healthy development and enhance their self-esteem. Children in our programs are often living under very stressful circumstances and need a consistent adult role model and friend.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel has offered 40 years of service to the community of Peel Region. Big Brothers opened its doors in 1967 and Big Sisters of Peel in 1982. As a merged agency, beginning in June 2001, we are a member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and our service is offered in accordance with BBBSC National Standards of Service Delivery.

Our vision is simple. Every child who needs a mentor has a mentor.

By spending just few hours each week with a child you will provide much needed stability, friendship, guidance and fun. We have six core mentoring programs designed to meet the needs of both our children and volunteers.

One-to-One Friendship
Couples for Kids
Big and Little Buddy
In-School Mentoring
Group Mentoring

BIG BUNCH
Conversation Club
Go Girls! *Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds*
Game On!

Each year, our agency serves over 1350 children in Peel. Children and youth in our programs demonstrate increased confidence, improved social skills, improved relationships with family and peers and hope for the future.

Our volunteers enable vulnerable children in our community to play, explore, and dream. In return, you will have the experience of a lifetime. By sharing your knowledge and experiences with a child you will learn, laugh and meet great people at our events and activities.

CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAMS

- Girls and boys, between the ages of 6 and 17, who will benefit from the special attention, friendship and support of an adult mentor.
- Children who are interested in participating in our programs and whose parents/guardians are supportive of their child's participation
- In the In-School Mentoring program, children in elementary school are referred through the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. The In-School Mentoring Program is currently in 80 schools in Peel.
- The results of mentoring for children are increased self-esteem, improved relationships with peers and family and improved attitude towards school. In the words of one of our children, "Having a mentor is like changing a kid's life....having a mentor has made my life go from dull to bright."

OUR PROGRAMS

One-to-One Friendship

This program matches a child 6 – 17 years of age (Little Sister/Little Brother) with a caring adult (Big Sister/Big Brother) over the age of 18. Matches are encouraged to plan fun and low cost activities 2 – 4 times per month for 1 year. Monthly agency sponsored recreational activities are provided. Unique opportunities to mentor a child together as a couple or as a female volunteer matched with a young boy are also available in our Couples for Kids Program and Big & Little Buddy Program.

Group Mentoring

Five volunteers mentor ten children one weeknight from September to June in local schools throughout the Region. Groups participate in fun and skill-based activities. Outing costs are covered by the agency. Activities include floor hockey and sports, community tours, swimming and more.

Big Bunch

A program designed for children on the waiting list. Activities are planned by the agency and volunteers sign up to bring children to at least one outing per month.

In-School Mentoring

Offered in partnership with the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board this program matches elementary girls and boys with a caring adult mentor. Matches meet for one hour during school hours and on school property to share in fun activities.

Teen Mentoring

This school-based program matches elementary students with caring youth mentors – ages 15 and up from a nearby secondary school. Matches meet at the same time each week in a supervised group setting.

Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

A school-based mentoring program for girls in grades 7 – 8. The program curriculum promotes active living, healthy eating and positive self esteem. Female mentors ages 18 – 25 years are trained to lead the fun and interactive sessions over 7 weeks.

Conversation Club

Provides new Canadian youth (13 – 18) with opportunities to integrate into Canadian society, to practice English conversation skills and receive homework help from youth mentors (16 – 24). Offered in partnership with the Centre for Education and Training and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Game On!

A school-based mentoring program for boys ages 11-14. The program provides young men with the information and support to make informed choices about healthy living through physical activities, healthy eating and facilitated discussion. Male mentors are trained to lead interactive sessions over 7 weeks.



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS

- ❑ INQUIRE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING BY PHONE OR E-MAIL
- ❑ REVIEW ORIENTATION INFORMATION SENT BY MAIL/E-MAIL **OR** ATTEND OPTIONAL ORIENTATION SESSION
- ❑ COMPLETE APPLICATION FORM
 - **Talk to your references and let them know we will be calling**
 - If employer reference is less than 2 years, please add a second character reference
 - Please prioritize programs if you mark more than one interest (designate the program you are MOST interested)
 - Make sure consent forms are signed
- ❑ SUBMIT POLICE CHECKS TO Peel Regional Police Headquarters – 7750 Hurontario Street, Brampton
 - Agency will mail to you a blank police check form at a later date in the application process
 - Group, BIG BUNCH or In-School Mentoring programs: Police check needed on volunteer applicant only
 - One-to-one Program: Police checks needed on all household members over the age of 18. *Blank Police Check forms for your household members will be given to you following your volunteer interview.*
 - If you live outside Brampton or Mississauga, there will be a different form and process for the Police check. Please contact us.
 - In Mississauga and Brampton, Police checks are submitted by volunteer and returned by mail to volunteer. **Please forward original Police Checks immediately to agency.**
 - **Please inform the agency when police check(s) are submitted as your application will be moved forward**
- ❑ CASEWORKER ASSIGNED to arrange interview when police check(s) submitted and references complete
- ❑ IN-PERSON INTERVIEW by Program Caseworker
- ❑ CHILD SAFETY & PROGRAM TRAINING
- ❑ YOU ARE READY TO BEGIN VOLUNTEERING!!



NEXT STEPS:

1. SUBMIT APPLICATION FORM
2. POLICE CHECK(S) will be mailed to you to submit to the Police Headquarters

WORKING TOGETHER – YOUR ROLE/OUR ROLE

One of the most important roles as a mentor is to take the lead in establishing and building the friendship. By having fun together, talking, listening, guiding and encouraging your Little, you will build and strengthen your friendship.

Mentors in all our programs keep others informed about what you are doing. In most of our programs, you will communicate directly with the families involved and with our casework staff.

Your Caseworker will be in touch with you regularly to check in and to hear about all the fun you are having with your Little. Your caseworker will keep in touch with you through phone calls and in-person visits, in accordance with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada National Standards of Service Delivery. We will be there to support and encourage you throughout your volunteer experience.

The safety of children is of paramount importance to all of us at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel. All volunteers, children and families participate in child safety training prior to becoming involved in our programs. In this training, we discuss general safety rules and guidelines as well as our responsibilities in the event of a disclosure of abuse.

MENTORING WORKS

A number of studies have looked at mentoring relationships to better understand why matches are successful. One particularly important question is: What can mentors themselves do to ensure that a relationship is more likely to succeed? The findings across studies are fairly consistent about effective mentors.

The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the development of trust between two strangers of different ages. Volunteers typically come to mentoring programs because they want to help children and youth. Without establishing trust, however, mentors can never truly support the children with whom they interact. Learning to trust, especially for youth who have been let down before, requires time; youth cannot be expected to trust their mentor simply because the staff has matched them together. Establishing communication and developing a relationship can often be a difficult process. Mentors who follow a gradual path in building trust find that the types of support they can offer and that will be accepted broaden considerably once trust has been established.

The most critical factor in determining whether matches develop into satisfying and effective relationships is the approach of the mentor. Mentors who focus first on building trust and becoming a friend to their youth tend to be more effective than those who immediately try to change or reform the mentee.

Effective mentors are more likely to engage in the following practices:

- **They make a commitment to being consistent and dependable**, to maintaining a steady presence in the mentee's life. They recognize that the relationship may be fairly one-sided and take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive. They acknowledge that youth often test adults to determine whether they will actually stick around; successful mentors regularly initiated contact and ensured that meetings were scheduled, rather than waiting to hear from the youth. Other research found that successful mentors exhibit an attitude of caring.
- **They involve the youth in deciding how the pair will spend time together.** Although youth are often somewhat uncommunicative, successful mentors take the time to learn about the youth's interests and provide them with options for how to spend their time, rather than planning everything without input from the youth. It is important to remember that, similar to adults, children's moods and energy levels differ each day. Therefore, it is helpful to be flexible about the plans you may have made.
- **They pay attention to kids' need for "fun."** Not only is having fun a key part of building a relationship, but it provides youth with valuable opportunities that are often not available otherwise. Children can learn a lot when doing fun activities.
- **They respect the mentee's viewpoint.** Effective mentors are open and flexible; they listen to what the child has to say and pay attention to what the child thinks is important.
- **They get to know their mentee's families, but do not become too involved with them.** Successful mentors have found it helpful to meet and interact with their mentee's parents. At the same time, mentors have to guard against involvement with the family to an extent that could be detrimental to their relationship with the youth.
- **They focus on the mentee's strengths**, ensuring that the youth experiences success and a sense of self mastery. It is better to build from a strength rather than a weakness.
- **Finally, successful mentors seek and use available resources such as the support and guidance of staff.** These mentors recognize that it can be helpful to talk with staff, especially when they are struggling with issues arising from the match. It is normal for most mentors to experience some frustration, especially in the early stages of the relationship. Help and advice from program staff can benefit mentors (and consequently mentees) tremendously.

Adults who become effective mentors often see themselves as **"friends"** rather than teachers or parents and define their role as supporting the youth in a variety of ways.

- A mentor is caring, steady, patient, realistic, resourceful, respectful and resilient.
- Building trust and establishing a friendship are the key goals.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel! If you have any questions, please contact our Intake Coordinator at 905-457-7288 ext 265