



Mentoring Tips from Bigs



When it comes to mentoring, the best advice often comes from other Bigs. Based on their own experiences, Bigs share some insights and words of wisdom below.

“Keep trying to find different ways of connecting with your Little. They may not necessarily respond to one method of communication, but that doesn’t mean they don’t want to share with you. Plus, as you’re matched longer, they grow up and get older, so their interests and preferences may change. You have to grow with them.”
Big Sister – Matched for 3 years

“My Little has been a fantastic mentor to me. In the time I’ve hung out with him, I’ve learned a lot about how to engage children, teach them, learn from them, and grow with them. Many times, there’s a disconnect between what we say and what someone understands. Being with my Little has helped me bridge that gap by

communicating in an effective and supportive way. This experience has been wonderful for me and I would highly recommend it to anyone who is looking to develop not only a child, but themselves.” *Big Brother – Matched for 4 months*

“After almost a year as a Big, I’ve really enjoyed the opportunities to be a positive influence for my Little – offering advice and encouragement with problems that he faces, working on projects together and exploring / learning about all the things that are available in Austin. His family has been very welcoming as well, which is an added bonus. Last but certainly not least, the support from the BBBS staff has been awesome. The whole experience has been very positive all around and I look forward to another year with my Little.” *Big Brother – Matched for 11 months*

“I would just say be patient and try not to expect anything from your Little. They are their own person, and it’s no use having preconceived notions of what your relationship with them should look like. Let them open up in their own time and just be encouraging, supportive and respectful. All of us could use a little more encouragement, support and respect, right?!” *Big Sister – Matched for 4 years*

“One thing that comes to mind is to always pay attention to what your Little actually likes to do-- not what they say they like to do because they know you like it and want to please you. I was super excited to read the Harry Potter series with my Little. I got so into it that it took me until half way into the second book to realize she didn’t like it. Had I paid more attention, I would have known she was just doing it to please me. I lucked out because two years later she got really into it on her own and now we can still talk about it and read it together.” *Big Sister – Matched for 4 years*

“Being a Big has definitely been a rewarding experience for me. It is so much fun seeing my Little’s reaction to something she has never done before and to share that excitement with her! My Little recently hit the teenage years, so it’s sometimes frustrating figuring out what she really enjoys doing and what to do on an outing. When I was a teen I just wanted to hang out with my friends (I had no interest in getting to know someone older than me who I had just met!). If you’re faced with this also, remember, it’s all about quality. Your Little appreciates anything and everything you do for them, even if it doesn’t seem like a big deal. You’re making a huge impact on their lives and you will be someone they remember for a lifetime! :)” *Big Sister – Matched for 1 year*

"After my Little and I went kayaking one weekend, I wasn't sure how much she enjoyed it. I felt a little disappointed until I remembered an earlier conversation with my brother. He said he had stopped going places with his daughter because he thought she didn't have as much fun with him as she did with our sister. But I knew from talking to my niece how much she wants to do things with him and just be with him! So even when my Little isn't elated about something we've done, I try to remember that she's probably still happy just to have spent time together."

"One experience – After going out biking one day, my Little asked me to look at her letters and tell her if she had written them all well. I looked and thought they were well written except the "U." It took me a few seconds to realize it wasn't how she had written, but what she had written, that she wanted me to see – "I love U." *Big Sister – Matched for 4 months*

