

Making the decision to become a Big Brother or Big Sister is a big step, one that should not be complicated by myths about being a mentor. Understanding reality versus myth about being a Big is a first step in establishing a positive mentoring relationship.

## Common Myths

**MYTH:** I'm not qualified to be a Big because I don't have any experience with kids.

**REALITY:** Lots of volunteers come in with little experience working with kids, but we have trained staff to support them.

**MYTH:** I'm not qualified to be a Big because I don't have any mentoring experience.

**REALITY:** You don't have to have mentoring experience to be a great Big. Our Littles benefit from having someone in their lives who will show up and have fun with them!

**MYTH:** I'm not fun or outgoing enough to be a Big.

**REALITY:** We have Bigs of all different personality types who make awesome mentors, and we have all kinds of children who need different types of people in their lives. If you care about kids, you can be a great Big, no matter what your personality or temperament are like.

**MYTH:** I need to have my whole life together before I can volunteer.

**REALITY:** We have Bigs of all different backgrounds, in all different stages of life, who benefit their Littles. Part of the experience of being matched is about making discoveries and learning about things together. Your Little learns and grows as you do.

**MYTH:** I will be matched immediately.

**REALITY:** Lots of different factors go into matching and there's no timeline for how long it can take to get matched.

**MYTH:** If my Little and I don't click, they can easily get matched with another Big.

**REALITY:** Many of our kids wait months and sometimes years to be matched, and it's not always easy for us to find someone new. You were selected to be a Big for this particular child for a reason and we think you can do it!

**MYTH:** Being a Big isn't that much of a time commitment.

**REALITY:** Between going to pick your Little up, hanging out for a few hours, dropping them back off, planning the outings and communicating about it—being a Big can certainly fit into a busy schedule, but it is a commitment and it may take more time than you think.

**MYTH:** My Little and I will connect right away.

**REALITY:** It takes time for a relationship to develop—especially for a child who has lost someone before or who is more shy. Remember to be patient! Plus, the purpose of this relationship isn't necessarily to "click" or "connect"—it's to be a supportive, consistent, positive role model for a child.

**MYTH:** I won't have any training or support.

**REALITY:** All matches are assigned a BBBS Match Support Specialist for support, and each Big goes through a brief training process.

**MYTH:** To become a Big, I need to be perfect in my interview, and in general.

**REALITY:** We encourage you to be honest, open and yourself! This helps us make a match that will be a good fit for you. Mentoring isn't about being perfect or having all the 'right' answers, it's about forming a positive, supportive relationship with a child and sharing meaningful experiences and time together.

**MYTH:** There are lots of requirements for Littles to enroll in the program. All BBBS Littles have a lot of needs.

**REALITY:** The only requirements for a child to participate in our program are: to be in the accepted age range (6-16), live in our service area (Hays, Williamson and Travis Counties), and have a desire to be in the program.

**MYTH:** Parents force their kids to be in the program.

**REALITY:** We ask each Little privately if they want to have a Big and we respect their decision.

**BBBS' Bigs make a huge impact on the lives of children.** Though most of them will say they receive as much from their Littles as they give, their commitment to helping kids have a better chance in life is vital. Whether going on a hike, enjoying a slice of pizza or simply sitting in a café and listening – every minute they give to their Little offers that child a constant, caring moment that can make a life-changing impact. Bigs truly do change a child's life for the better, forever.