



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters.®**

OF EAST CENTRAL OHIO

Parent/Guardian SB Orientation

Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio

Serving youth in Carroll and Tuscarawas Counties

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About BBBS

Big Brothers Big Sisters has changing the lives of children by matching them with volunteers in fun and rewarding relationships since 1904.

When children and teens have the influence of a caring adult, they are more likely to avoid risky behaviors and to focus on academics. Today's youth face a variety of challenges, and being matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister can help them navigate these challenges and reach their full potential.

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.

OUR Outcomes

We partner with parents/guardians, volunteers and others in the community to help children with:

- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success

What is School Based Mentoring?

Bigs and Littles can meet at your child's **school** or other **site** typically on the same day & at the same time each week. Our site based programs start in October and run through April/May each school year.

Your child's school has provided a space for your child and Mentor to meet. Your child's Mentor will spend 45 minutes once a week supporting your child in a variety of ways. During these weekly meetings, they might work on homework, eat lunch together, play board games, participate in an arts & crafts project, or simply hang out together.

These supervised meetings usually take place during your child's school day or after school. Your child and their Mentor are supplied with grade-appropriate activities. In addition, students are always encouraged to bring their homework and/or classwork to the weekly sessions.

Who are our Volunteers?

Site Based volunteers are mainly High School students from the school district but can also be:

- Men and women who work and live in your community
- College students from nearby schools

Volunteers all have different personalities, careers, and interests but they all have time to make a difference in their community. They are not paid – all of their time is volunteered.

Criteria for Mentors

- Ability to commit to a match for 18 months
- At least 18 years of age, or a Freshman for high school
- Willing to meet a face-to-face with Little once a week during the school year
- Must be willing to make at least a 2-year commitment
- Complete required training
- Must Submit a background check (if over 18)
- Maintain regular contact with BBBS Staff for Match support

Criteria for Littles

- Child is grades K-8 (matches do not begin after grade 8)
- Live in Carroll or Tuscarawas counties
- Willing to meet a face-to-face with Volunteer once a week during the school year
- Child and Parent/Guardian must be willing to make a 2-year commitment.
- Must complete required training
- Child and parent/guardian must be able and willing to maintain regular match support contact with the match support coordinator
- Child cannot require physical restraint for behavioral issues
- Child cannot require assistance with restrooming
- Child cannot be violent
- Child cannot be uncomfortable spending time away from the parent/guardian
- There may be no unresolved cases concerning custody or the child

Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to reject a Little for any reason that the association, in its sole judgment, determines will or may affect either the best interests of a Little or Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio. Furthermore, Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to withhold the reason(s) for such refusal. If your child is rejected our agency will attempt to connect you and your child with resources that are more beneficial.

How do Children come into the program?

Most children in our community-based programs come to us through their parent or guardian. Most children in our school-based programs come to us through a teacher or counselor. We also reach out to involve children through churches, youth service agencies, and other referrals. All children and their parents must want to be in our program.

Enrollment Steps

In the site based program, a teacher or school personnel may refer you and your child to the program. Or you may enroll your child. A parent/Guardian must complete an application and consent to their child participating in the program. Once an application is received program staff will interview your child at the school. In late September/ early October you will receive a notification on who your child will be matched with and you are able to accept or reject. Your child will receive safety training prior to being matched. The match will begin in October and continue through April/May, in hopes to continue next school year.

Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to reject a Little for any reason that the association, in its sole judgment, determines will or may affect either the best interests of the Little Brother/ Little Sister or Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio. Furthermore, Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to withhold the reason(s) for such refusal. Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio will attempt to connect you and your child with resources that are more beneficial.

**BBBS Support - How BBBS Works with You,
Your Child & the Big**

Our primary goal is to give each child an opportunity to establish a meaningful, trusting relationship that will ultimately help enhance your child's academic success. At our weekly sessions we deliver a curriculum that helps matches focus on these topics. As participants in the School-based Mentoring program, your child and his/her mentor will be asked to make a commitment and to set goals.

Confidentiality Policy/Management of Confidential Information

Purpose:

The Board of Trustees of Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio has determined that in order for children, parents/guardians, and volunteers to be open and honest in their relationships with the agency and in order for the agency to protect the confidentiality of extensive personal information about these persons and their families, it is necessary to adopt this policy governing the management of confidential information. The agency respects the confidentiality of child and volunteer records and shares information only among agency professional staff and as otherwise described in this policy.

Information and Documents Considered Confidential:

Confidential information includes all private and personal information used to accept or reject clients, to accept or reject volunteers, and to supervise matches, such as school records, medical records and information received from interviews and phone contacts. Confidentiality also applies to video, filming, pictures, and use of a client's or volunteer's name or photograph in agency publications, unless specifically waived.

Access to Confidential Information:

No one internally or externally will be given access to view confidential agency records without the express consent of the Board of Trustees of Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio, except that Big Brothers Big Sisters of America representatives are given access for purposes of program evaluation and the following persons are permitted access to child and volunteer records in order to fulfill their job functions for the agency: Anyone given access to files, must first review and sign the agency confidentiality policy.

Exceptions to limited access are as follows:

- Information may be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid subpoena without the individual's or the agency's consent.
- Information may be provided to the agency's legal counsel in connection with potential litigation involving the agency.
- Agency personnel must report suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities as required by state law.
- Agency personnel who receive information indicating a client or volunteer may be dangerous to himself/herself or others must take necessary steps to protect the appropriate party(ies), including a medical referral or report to local law enforcement authorities.

The Board of Trustees may grant access to child or volunteer files only upon authorization by formal motion approved by the board. The motion must state who is authorized to review records, the specific purpose for the review and the limited period of time during which access shall be granted.

Release of Confidential Information:

All client and volunteer files are property of the agency, not of clients, parents/guardians, volunteers, or agency personnel. Volunteers, rejected applicants, clients, parent(s), etc. are not given direct access to confidential information in their files in order to maintain the integrity of the agency's reference sources, program staff, and collateral contacts.

Identifying information will not be made public, except names and photographs of clients and volunteers may be used in agency publications unless the client or volunteer withholds permission to use that information. Information in source documents, clients' files and volunteers' files is shared with individuals or outside organizations only under the following conditions:

- A **release form** signed by a volunteer or client's parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting release of certain information in that person's files is presented to the program staff member, authorizing the agency to release specific information. The signature on the form must be original and genuine.
- All requests for release of information must be approved by the Vice President of Programs or his/her designee.
- Records are not duplicated, volunteer or client files are not reproduced and sent. Information that is specifically requested is summarized in writing and forwarded to the requesting person.
- A copy of the release and the written summary is placed in the appropriate file.

Requests for Confidential Information from Other Sources:

When a program staff member wishes to obtain information from another organization or individual in order to perform intake, matching, or supervision of a match, he/she will use the standard release of information form that has been signed by the client, parent(s)/guardian(s), or volunteer. A copy of the signed release shall be filed in the client's or volunteer's file with a copy of the letter requesting the information.