



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters.®**

OF EAST CENTRAL OHIO

# Parent and Guardian Community Based Orientation

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Central Ohio**

**Serving youth in Tuscarawas, Carroll, & Harrison Counties**

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## **About Big Brothers Big Sisters**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has been changing the lives of children since 1904. We are excited about your interest in enrolling your child as a Little.**

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

### **We Need You to be an Active Partner**

Working together, parents/caregivers, volunteers, and BBBS staff members plan activities and opportunities that can have a powerful and positive impact on your child.

### **Who are our Big Brothers and Big Sisters?**

- Men and women who work and live in your community
- College students from nearby schools
- Retirees, military men and women, members of congregations or civic organizations, and people from other agencies and organizations

Volunteers have unique personalities, careers, and interests, but they all volunteer their time to help children.

### **How do we select Volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters?**

Each volunteer must complete a screening process that includes:

- Submit enrollment forms
- An orientation and training process that focuses on child safety, relationship skills, and healthy child development
- Criminal history and driving record checks
- A minimum of three references
- An in-person interview
- Questions about their home environment and family dynamic
- A professional decision about whether they are an appropriate volunteer
- A professional recommendation of which Little they can have a beneficial relationship with

### **Criteria for Mentors**

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

### **Criteria for Littles**

- Child is 5-15 years of age
- Live in Carroll, Tuscarawas, or Harrison counties
- Willing to meet a face-to-face with Volunteer for at least 4 hours a month
- Child and parents/Guardian must be willing to make an 18-month commitment
- Child and parent/guardian 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.

### **When Do Matches Spend Time Together?**

- Matches meet two times or an equivalent to 4 hours a month
- Bigs, Littles, and parents/guardians choose when and how long matches will meet depending on their schedules and comfort level
- Matches choose activities together based on their interests
- Consistent match outings are required for a successful match relationship

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

**BBBS works hard to support the relationship between Bigs and Littles. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone.** Bigs and Littles communicate with their Match Support Coordinator from their BBBS agency.

It is important for us to speak with all parties every month for the first year of the match. This allows us to provide support, relationship building suggestions, and solutions to possible problems. After the first year, we will continue to contact all parties but on a quarterly schedule. Remember that the Match Support Coordinator's role is to support the match. Consistent, open communication is key.

**Your Match Support Coordinator is an important link between you, your child, the volunteer, and the BBBS agency.**

The Match Support Coordinator can also:

- Find information and resources that matches and families may be interested in
- Connect your family with community resources
- Work with your child's school to help maintain regular school attendance, academic success, and appropriate behavior while in school
- Keep you updated on activities offered by the agency

- Coordinate communication with your child and the volunteer Big
- Help find solutions to conflicts
- Collect surveys from all parties to ensure satisfaction with the match and agency

## **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.