

Ever wanted to make the world a better place? Here is your Mentoring 101

What is a mentor?

A mentor is a caring adult who provides support, advice, and friendship to a young person. More importantly, a mentor is a confidant who volunteers to spend time with a child and act as a positive role model in their life.

Why is mentoring important?

Sometimes kids simply don't have access to a well-rounded social network. The presence of a mentor is a big help.

Children with a positive adult influence in their lives are:

- more likely to achieve high academic performance;
- more likely to participate in extracurricular school activities;
- less likely to have behaviour problems in school;
- less likely to be bullied or victimized.

By creating a relationship based on trust and open communication, mentors help kids foster a sense of belonging, build self-confidence, and learn new skills and passions.

With many children and youth on waiting lists, mentors are urgently needed in urban and rural communities all across Alberta.

What volunteer opportunities exist?

Mentoring takes many forms, including:

- One-on-one mentoring
- Group mentoring
- In-school mentoring
- After-school care
- Team or couples mentoring
- Between generations mentoring
- Youth in care mentoring
- Group recreational activities
- Career mentoring
- Workplace programs
- e-Mentoring

While time commitments vary, it is consistency – not frequency – that is most important.

Who can become a mentor?

Mentors come from all walks of life: men and women of all ages with a variety of careers, life experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

It doesn't take any special skills or talents to mentor, simply a commitment to be a caring adult to a young person for at least one year. If you find yourself reading this, you already have what it takes: an interest in making a difference in the life of a child.

Commitments are flexible to fit your schedule, whether you prefer once a week, once a month, or anything in between.

What's in it for me as a mentor?

Being a mentor adds value to your life as well as to the young person you are supporting:

- Improve work/life balance as you contribute to a cause that is important to you;
- Develop your communications, leadership, time management, and people skills;
- Network with like-minded peers and share mentoring experiences; and
- Feel good about giving back and making a meaningful contribution to the life of a child.

What can I expect as a new mentor?

Once you step forward and express an interest in mentoring:

1. Your local mentoring agency will walk you through the application and interview process.
2. Once approved, you will receive training specific to the type of mentoring you are interested in pursuing.
3. You will be matched with a young person or put into a group activity with similar interests.
4. Trained staff will provide ongoing support to assist with any issues that may arise.

How will I be matched with a child?

Success in a mentoring relationship is undeniably influenced by the individuals who are matched with each other. Making a successful match requires thought and a variety of considerations. Trained, experienced staff will work with you to help ensure a successful match.

In the rare instance that an initial match does not work out, another match can be found to ensure it is a positive experience for all.

Got more questions?
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