

Making Positive Connections



Building positive relationships with mentoring programs

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the presence of a caring individual who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role-modelling over time. Mentoring is about building relationships.

Benefits of Mentoring Programs in Schools

- Strong mentorship programs will help Alberta's children and youth develop the confidence, self-esteem and skills they need to be successful in school and in life.
- Mentoring is widely recognized as contributing to strong and healthy communities.
- Mentoring helps forge stronger links for students in career and employment programs, so young Albertans are able to take full advantage of the working and learning opportunities available in the province.
- Research supports that school-based mentoring impacts positive outcomes for children and youth including:
 - increased high school completion rates
 - improved attitudes about staying in school
 - enhanced academic motivation and achievement
 - improved social skills and behaviour
 - improved resiliency
 - strengthened peer, school and family relationships
 - reduced risk of involvement with drugs
 - increased sense of belonging in the school community.

"I am so impressed with the way my son now sees others with an appreciation for different circumstances. A sense of responsibility about giving back to his community is a direct result of being a mentor."

-PARENT

School Based Mentoring

School-based mentoring can take many forms. Some people may be familiar with formal mentoring programs facilitated by mentoring agencies such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs and local FCSSAA offices.

Many Alberta schools have some form of informal mentoring activities happening such as cross-age groupings, student leadership or community service activities, volunteer reading partners, Study Buddy programs and through coaching in athletics and the arts. Many schools are also engaged in strength-based programs such as Circle of Courage, Tribes and Development Assets. The shared outcome of all of these activities is to support student success in Alberta's safe and caring schools and can certainly provide a foundation for more formal mentoring programs.

Benefits for Schools and Students

- Mentoring promotes healthy and positive relationships between mentees and mentors which in turn builds community capacity.
- Mentoring activities promote literacy skills, self-esteem, confidence and social appropriateness.
- Mentoring supports strength-based practices that build resiliency.

"I look forward to when my mentor comes and I never want to miss that day."

-ELEMENTARY STUDENT MENTEE





“
I really liked the high school kids and I can hardly wait to get to high school.”
- ELEMENTARY STUDENT MENTEE

High School Teen Mentoring

The Foundation of Teen Mentoring

Individual or groups of students are matched with students in elementary, middle or junior high schools. The mentees and teen mentors meet in a supervised setting for one hour a week engaging in reading, homework and game-related activities.

A variety of models can be developed to meet the needs of an individual school – the options are endless.

- Programs can include student volunteers or be part of a course, class, team or club commitment.
- Mentoring sessions can take place at the elementary and junior high schools or the mentees could be transported to the high school.
- Programs can run for a semester or a full school year.
- Junior high students can also be matched as mentors with elementary students.

How Can We Start Mentoring In our School?

- Identify mentoring champions in your school community.
- Involve stakeholders such as Parent Councils, administrators, counsellors, classroom teachers, support staff and student groups.
- Elementary schools could consider partnering with local high schools o create teen mentoring opportunities.



“
This is a win-win situation. Our high school students benefit from developing team-building and organizational skills, they experience other learning environments and appreciate their own situations with a more positive outlook”
-HIGH SCHOOL TEEN MENTORING TEACHER-COORDINATOR

Benefits for Junior/Senior School Mentors

- Improved mental health, self-esteem, social responsibility, problem solving strategies and communication skills. In many situations students develop cultural sensitivity.
- Completion of volunteer hours for scholarships.
- Post-secondary education and career planning information and resources.
- Involvement in the community with recognition to themselves and others that teens can make a difference.
- A heightened sense of belonging & connectedness in their school community.
- **Alberta Education CTS Mentoring courses are available and high school students can earn CTS credits.** 

“
Our students come away feeling they really do have something to offer - that they can make a difference. Mentoring offers an opportunity for them to be responsible role-models and develop positive citizenship.”
-HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- Explore existing partnerships and programs in your community such as: Community Volunteer Centre, Friendship Centre, Seniors Centre, Aboriginal Elders, Ethno-Cultural Society Leaders, Chamber of Commerce, Local Businesses, Service Clubs, Sport Associations/Teams and Mentoring Organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4-H Club, Family and Community Support Services of Alberta (FCSSAA) and the Boys and Girls Club.
- Visit albertamentors.ca for resources and references such as the Teen Mentoring Toolkit and Framework for Building Mentoring Relationships in Schools.

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP) is a network of community mentoring agencies, government and youth working together to raise the profile of mentoring in Alberta. We exist to help schools and mentoring agencies meet the needs of the children and youth they serve.

