High School Teen Mentoring Handbook

Alberta

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Introduction

This *High School Teen Mentoring Handbook* was developed as a result of a four-year pilot program of Alberta Advanced Education, in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area, and supported by Alberta Education. During this pilot, high school students met one-to-one with younger students, one hour a week for the school term. The goal of these sessions was for high school mentors and their mentees to work together to identify strengths and interests, increase career awareness, and begin identifying post-secondary options.

There are two additional resources to support this Handbook that provide ideas and activities for career exploration:

- the High School Teen Mentoring Activity Book
- the High School Teen Mentoring Bin Resources.

These resources are available free on the Alberta Mentoring Partnership website.

> "... High school students really aren't that scary."
> MENTOR

The resources support mentoring opportunities, including:

- Career and Technology Studies (CTS) mentoring courses in Alberta high schools
- extra-curricular mentoring through Alberta schools
- school mentoring partnerships
- mentoring opportunities through community organizations

With a focus on career exploration, this handbook provides you with valuable information on how to be a mentor, including:

- building a positive relationship with your mentee
- surprises and myths about mentoring
- developing communication and listening skills
- protecting the safety of your mentee

SECTION 1

Welcome

Congratulations

If you're reading this, it's because you've chosen to become a **high school mentor**. You're now part of a growing group of high school students who are making a lasting impact in the lives of other students.

You're about to start a journey that will not only make a difference for another person in need of a friend, an ally and role model, but also shape your life in many positive ways.

This Mentoring Handbook is designed specifically for high school mentors like you. It provides information that will help you throughout your involvement as a mentor. With ongoing training and support from your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison, and some great resources—including this one from Alberta Advanced Education—you should have the tools you need to become a successful mentor.

Thank you for your commitment to building stronger communities and providing friendship, support and role-modelling for younger students. Spending time with another young person may seem simple, but research tells us that health interactions with supportive and caring adults (and teen mentors are young adults!) boost the brain development, mental health, and well-being of children.

> *"I would love to see this program continue and flourish. It is a win/win situation for all involved."*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Before You Get Started

This handbook offers information and strategies for building mentoring relationships that focus on exploring pathways to post-secondary education.

Exploring these pathways together enhances the healthy development of both children (the mentees) and youth (the mentors)

The Goals of This Mentoring Approach

For Mentors

- Mentors develop their leadership, communication and interpersonal skills
- Mentors have meaningful opportunities to contribute to their community
- Mentors have an increased understanding of the career and educational planning process
- Mentors know how to access credible information about post-secondary studies

For Mentees

- Mentees gain an increased awareness of their personal strengths and abilities
- Mentees learn to connect their strengths and interests to potential career pathways and post-secondary education
- Mentees gain an awareness of future post-secondary education options and an increased sense of hope
- Mentees learn how to begin planning for post-secondary education

For Both Mentors and Mentees

- Mentors' and mentees' self-confidence is enhanced
- Mentors and mentees establish a positive, long-term relationship with one another
- Mentors and mentees have opportunities to explore career options
- Mentors and mentees have the information needed to begin making informed choices about planning for post-secondary studies
- Mentors and mentees are aware of how to get help in planning for post-secondary

Background

High School Teen Mentoring takes place in many formats throughout the province. The focus of your training and mentoring sessions will vary depending on the type of mentoring opportunity and if you are participating in:

- a Career and Technology Studies (CTS) mentoring course in Alberta schools
- an extra-curricular mentoring opportunity through Alberta schools
- a school partnership for mentoring
- mentoring opportunities through a community organization

Information in this handbook is especially designed to support school-based mentoring opportunities in which mentor-mentee matches meet for a certain period of time, usually once per week over the school year, to engage in relationship-building activities focused on career exploration.

Research About Mentoring

Research tells us that mentoring works and establishing a positive long-term relationship with a caring teen increases the mentored child's confidence, positive sense of self, and sense of hope.

In addition, children who are mentored are:

- twice as likely to have high levels of school bonding
- twice as likely to have high academic achievement
- more than twice as likely to participate in extracurricular school activities
- almost fifty percent less likely to experience behaviour problems in school
- more than 30 per cent less likely to experience bullying
- more than 60 per more likely to develop more positive attitudes towards school

Source*: The Impact of Mentoring on Canada's Youth*: preliminary results from a *Longitudinal Analysis of the Effects of Adult Mentoring on Children's Wellbeing: An Examination of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Community Match Program*, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, London, Ontario,

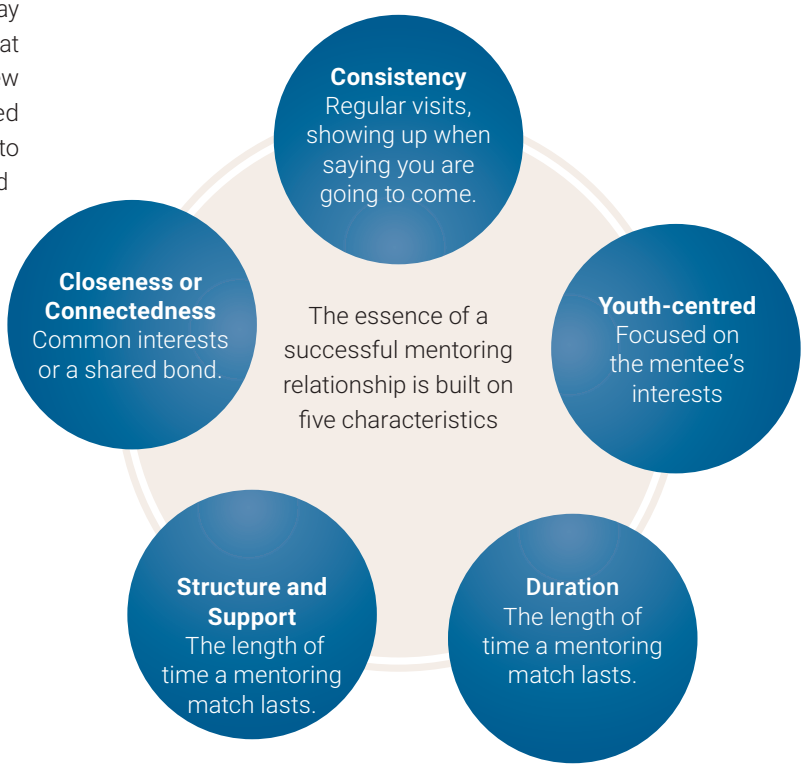
The Origins of a Mentor

We acquired the word, mentor, from the literature of ancient Greece. In Homer's epic, The Odyssey, Odysseus was away from home fighting and journeying for 20 years. During that time, Telemachus, the son he left as a babe in arms, grew up under the supervision of Mentor, an old and trusted friend. When the goddess, Athena, decided it was time to complete the education of young Telemachus, she visited him disguised as Mentor and they set out together to learn about his father.

Youth mentoring by definition is the presence of a relationship between a caring older, more experienced individual and a younger person resulting in the provision of support, friendship and constructive role modeling over time.

> *I learned how to motivate kids."*
> MENTOR

Characteristics of a Successful Mentoring Relationship



Benefits for High School Mentors

High School Teen Mentoring is a two-for-one initiative. That is, one match between a mentor and a mentee promotes the healthy development of both the younger school-aged student and the high school student. Over the years, research evidence has demonstrated many potential benefits to adolescents who participate in ongoing programs to help others.

The goal of this mentoring handbook is to support high school students like you to become mentors and experience many benefits from this experience. Your mentoring teacher and/or teacher liaison will seek a partnership with another student group (an elementary school, club or community group) to identify younger students in need of mentors. Your mentoring teacher/ teacher liaison will assist to create matches, and support you through your mentoring journey.

This mentoring experience will build skills in working with children, create awareness about learning strategies, and give you a better understanding of career pathways and after high school education and training possibilities.

Objectives of the Mentoring Sessions

As a high school mentor, you have two main objectives to focus on with your mentee during your mentoring sessions:

Build a positive relationship with your mentee, and create opportunities for building resiliency and a positive sense of self.

Foster a love of learning (reading, writing, math, sciences, etc.) in your mentee.

If this mentoring experience is centred on career exploration, you have an additional objective to focus on:

Explore educational planning, post-secondary possibilities, and career pathways with your mentee.

This Mentoring Handbook and the Mentoring Activity Book will provide you with many ideas and resources to achieve these objectives.

For this to succeed, it is necessary for both mentor and mentee to form a relationship based on mutual caring and trust. The support you provide for your mentee aims to increase their confidence, resulting in improved success in school. There is a section of the handbook which includes enhancing mentees' positive sense of self. People tend to feel good about themselves when they are successful. Organize activities so that your mentee can be successful and then help them reflect on and celebrate their successes.

Mentoring Session Expectations

The mentoring session will not always look the same. Some teachers will send assignments with the child every time; some will send things occasionally. It is important to have a balance of class assignments and activities that you and your mentee have decided are important. If you think you are being asked to do too much homework support, be sure to discuss it with the teacher liaison and/or your mentoring course teacher liaison and/or your mentoring course teacher.

Thank you for choosing to be a mentor. Enjoy your experience and have fun!

What to Expect

Your First Day

On your first day, you will likely already know the school and name of your mentee. You may already have information about your mentee's strengths and areas in which your assistance is required.

The following process will depend on your program but if you are mentoring at a different location from your school (another school) then your mentoring teacher and/or teacher liaison will

- meet you at the school on the first day
- give you a volunteer's name tag
- show you the sign-in binder where you write in the days and times of your visits
- show you around the school so you know where you can hang your coat and where you will be able to find the basics that you will need (your mentee may also show you around in further detail)
- provide you with a calendar of the school's events for the term or year
- take you to your student's classroom
- introduce you to the teacher when the schedule permits
- introduce you to your mentee
- review what is expected during the mentoring sessions
- discuss the Friendship Agreement.

The Friendship Agreement outlines what will happen during your visits. You, your mentoring teacher/teacher liaison and your mentee will all sign your names on the Friendship Agreement and talk briefly about what you might like to do on your first day.

Once everyone seems comfortable, your caseworker will leave you with your mentee to get started on establishing your relationship.

When your visit is over, you should

- walk your mentee back to the classroom
- remind your mentee that you will be back the following week on the same day at the same time (or provide the next day and time)
- sign out at your designated location

If you have any questions after your first visit, be sure to talk to your teacher liaison and/or mentoring course teacher.

See sample Friendship Agreement page 47.

Throughout the Year

Generally mentoring starts in early October and ends the second week of June. Each mentee visit lasts about an hour. Again this is dependent on your course and the structure of your particular mentoring opportunity. If you have to end a session early due to your own schedule or something happening at the school, inform everyone of this change, the week previous if possible.

If you are taking a mentoring course you will have an opportunity to work through some great resources for career and educational planning. These resources will help you build the knowledge and understanding you will need to assist your mentee with the lesson plans from the activity book and also any school work support they may need.

You may also receive a log book and homework that your mentee needs to work on during the session from your mentee's teacher. This log book and homework will go back and forth between the teacher and you. This will allow both of you to write to each other providing homework completion notes, positive achievements and about happenings previous to or during the mentoring session. For example, your mentee might be having a rough day due to some personal issue or school incident, so their teacher gives you a heads up in the log book. Your mentee may have been grumpy during the mentoring session and so you just talked and did a positive activity from the Activity Book versus the planned group activity or homework sent. You would write a note back to the teacher explaining what happened and why the homework wasn't completed, plus what activities were completed.

Every school has a calendar outlining the regular holidays in the year as well as any designated school days off. You are not required to make up days missed because of holidays or student absences. There may be times when the school has a special visitor or presentation during your scheduled time. In these circumstances, the week before, check with the mentoring liaison to see if your mentee will be participating in the group activity. In some cases the mentoring liaison might suggest you join your mentee for the special event. Please realize that schools have events that come up very quickly and that participating is important to the children.

Program Evaluation

There is an evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of any program, formally or informally. Your mentoring course teacher and/or teacher liaison will provide the details of the evaluation component for the program you are involved in.

Mid-term and End-of-term Follow-up

Your mentoring teacher and/or teacher liaison will do a mid-term follow-up with you and with your mentee to determine how things are going. They will also do a final evaluation with you individually or with your high school class/group of mentors.

This will include:

- thanking you for your participation
- discussing the mentorship experience and seeing how things went
- discussing the option of returning next term or the following year
- discussing how you can get a "Foundations in Mentoring Certificate"

Many schools prefer to keep the same mentor-mentee match continuing for as long as possible in order to foster the relationships that have been built. So, you may have the option of returning as a mentor for the same student at the same school the next term or the next school year.

Healthy Awareness in Schools

Your Mentoring Team

Throughout this mentoring experience the mentoring teachers and teacher liaisons are responsible for supervising your match and helping you make it work. At all times, you are part of a team—you are not alone in your relationship with your mentee. A teacher is present during all meeting sessions and will always be available to assist with any questions or concerns. The teachers want and need to know how your match is doing. Thus, they expect you to connect regularly. If you see any signs in your mentee that make you concerned, please connect with your mentoring teacher and teacher liaison immediately. It is important that the teachers are informed and are able to assist you as well as your mentee.

"The Mentors really enjoyed the program – they rescheduled other activities to ensure that they could go to the elementary school as it was so much fun to be with their mentee."

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

You should never feel like you are alone. You are part of a team.

SECTION 2

Being a Mentor

Being a high school mentor will probably be different than any experience you've ever had. It will be both rewarding and challenging—rewarding because of the personal fulfillment you'll get out of helping a younger student and challenging because you may have to think and act differently than you're used to.

Who are High School Mentors?

High school mentors are high school students involved in mentor training through a school course or as a volunteer. What do high school mentors do? As a mentor, you simply become the best friend you can to your mentee. So, what does this relationship look like? Let's take a look at how you should approach your role as a high school mentor.

Your Role as a Mentor

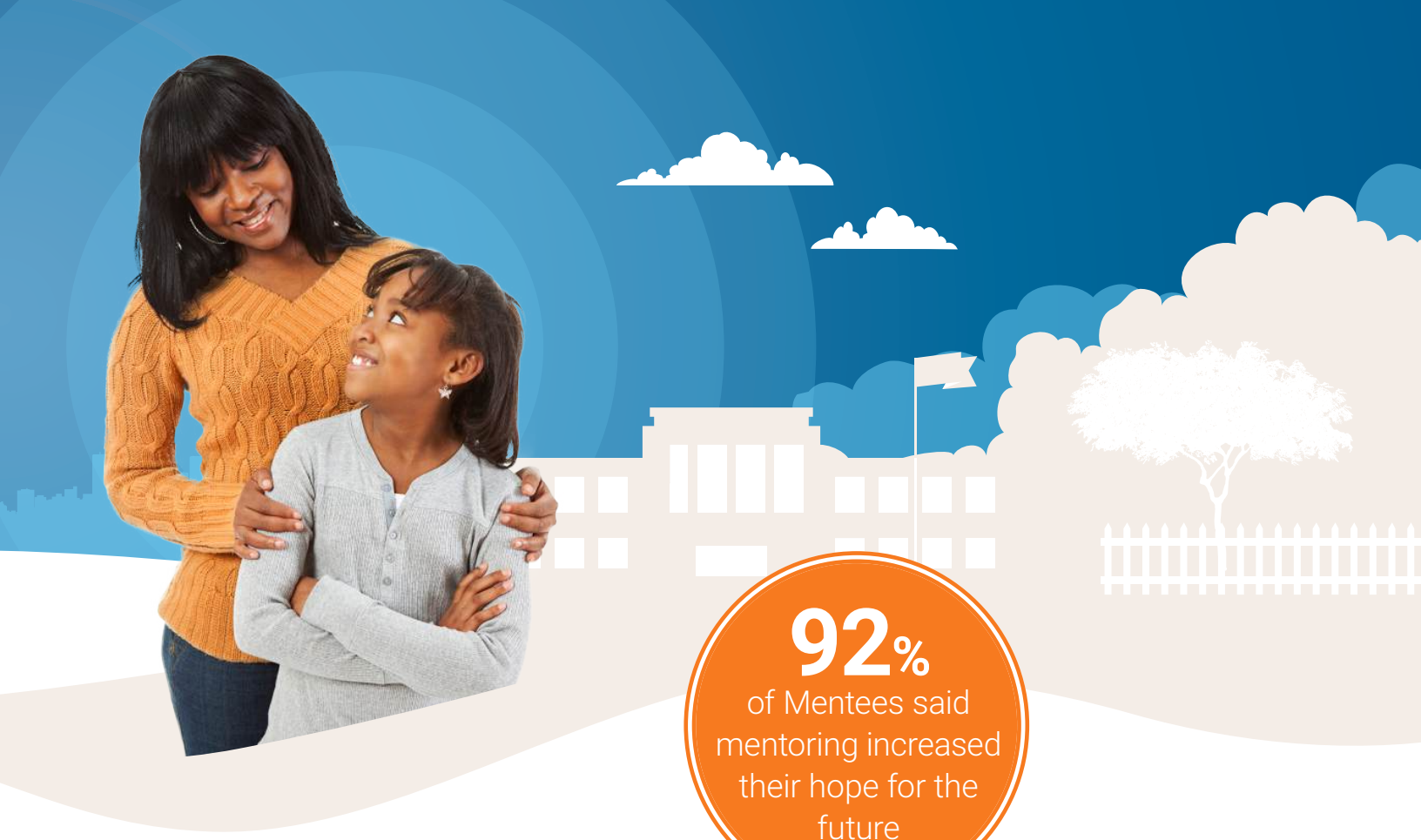
Your role as a high school mentor includes being a:

- **good listener** who will be there when needed
- **fun person** who gets to know the mentee and finds activities you can enjoy together
- **friend** who can be trusted
- **coach** who supports learning and helps build skills and confidence
- **guide** who helps with setting and working towards goals
- **motivator** who encourages learning, exploring and positive thinking
- **role model** who is a positive example and offers hope for the future.

What is NOT Your Role as a Mentor

It is also important to recognize what your role should not be. As a high school mentor, your role is NOT to be:

- **an authority figure** who acts like a mom, dad, or teacher
- **a therapist or counsellor** who tries to analyze everything said or done
- **a cure-all** who tries to provide solutions to every problem
- **missionary** who promotes personal religious beliefs or values
- **advisor** who tells their mentee what to think and how to act.



92% of Mentees said mentoring increased their hope for the future

You might be asking yourself, "Okay. I get that being a friend to my mentee is a little different than being a friend to my high school peers, but how can I be a mentor to somebody without giving advice or helping them solve their problems?" Easy—by supporting them to explore their own solutions and make their own decisions you become their coach, encourager and mentor.

This means your overall goal is to develop a relationship with your mentee to help them

- build awareness of their potential for being a healthy, happy and productive person
- learn how to succeed on their own by making decisions and following through on those decisions

Take another look at the list of roles we said a high school mentor should not play. If you're always analyzing things, offering solutions and giving advice to mentees—telling them what to do or think—it will be tough for them to develop the ability to make independent decisions and move themselves to action; in essence succeed on their own. Try to keep coaching in mind when you're with your mentee.

This means asking or discussing with your mentee the following type of coaching questions:

- Do you understand or remember what was/is planned for today's session?
- What supplies do we need today to do the activity?
- What do you need to know to do this activity?
- What did you like or learn in the activity, not like?
- What made you feel good about today's session?
- How can we make our sessions or activities better?
- Who can we ask for help?
- What would make you…feel better?…learn more? …have more fun?
- What do you want to do in the next session?

> *"Self confidence, social skills, self-esteem and work habits were improved and enhanced through mentor interaction. A quiet, thoughtful presence does much to teach social skills, etc."*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

Contact With Your Mentee

You are allowed to have contact with your mentee **only** in the child's school during school hours throughout the school year. If you are living in a smaller community where outside contact is unavoidable, then just remember that you are both participating in a formal school program and you need to maintain where your mentoring relationship needs to stay. There is to be no exchange of addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses. This is the agreement that most programs have made with schools and parents with regards to the program model. Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in a mentor's termination. The best response to a mentee who asks for any of this kind of information is to tell them that you are just an in-school mentor and you can only see them at school.

Cancelling or Missing a Visit

If you know in advance that you are going to be away (i.e. because of holidays, tournaments, etc.), let your mentee know which visits you will be missing. If you have to cancel or miss a visit, it is important for you to contact your high school mentoring teacher and liaison teacher to inform them of your absence. The children really look forward to your visit and when mentors do not show up, especially without prior notice or explanation, they are often very disappointed. Also, notify your mentee's teacher, through the log book or in-person, of your away dates so that they can remind the student that you won't be there during those sessions.

> *"The return of many of last year's high school mentors to mentor again this fall also speaks to the benefit they feel they have not only gained but given."*
>
> MENTOR

Consistency and Reliability

Two important elements of being a mentor are **consistency and reliability**.

We ask that you be consistent with your (weekly) visits. Understandably, things will come up in your life, and you may have to miss some of your visits. But, by being consistent with your regular visits with your mentee, you can help alleviate disappointment.

Reliability is a very important characteristic we ask of our mentors. In order to develop a meaningful and trusting relationship with your student, plus set an example for them, it is extremely important that you be reliable. Being reliable means your mentee can depend on you.

Gift Gifting

The biggest gift you give to your mentee is your time and attention. Most schools and mentoring agencies recommend that mentors not give gifts. It is a matter of fairness, not only for the children who are being mentored but also for those children in the school without mentors.

In some situations it may be appropriate for mentors to give a gift of a book or some other educational activity item such as an activity book, journal or word game, (typically not spending more than ten dollars) to their mentee at Christmas or at the end of the term or school year. Check with your mentoring teacher or teacher advisor to see what practice is in place.

If you feel it is important to mark other holidays or birthdays, consider incorporating this as an activity during your visit. For example, you could make a card for each other or you and your mentee could make a craft to give to each other.

Getting to Know and Understand Your Mentee

Building Resiliency

Providing a child with a meaningful and caring relationship based on mutual respect offers that child support and encouragement. You are an important part of a team—which includes family, school staff and community members—that will help that child work towards their dreams. As a positive role model, you have the ability to influence your mentee, and help them discover their strengths and talents.

Mentoring is a strength-based approach built on the belief that all children—regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances—have strengths, capabilities and resources and the ability to recover from adversity. This approach focuses on opportunities, hope and solutions, and builds resiliency.

Mentoring and Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability of individuals to cope successfully with stress-related situations, overcome adversity, or adapt positively to change. Resiliency is often compared to a rubber band that has the capacity to stretch to almost breaking point, but still spring back into shape.

Other words to describe resiliency include:

- adaptable
- flexible
- optimistic
- hardy

THE FACTOR LIST

The Factor List shows many aspects that should ideally be present in order for a child to have a healthy development and attain well-being.

Individual Factors

- assertiveness (i.e., ability to confidently and clearly let other people know what you need)
- ability to solve problems
- self-efficacy (i.e., belief in your own ability to succeed and overcome challenges)
- ability to live with uncertainty
- self-awareness
- a positive outlook
- empathy for others
- having goals and aspirations
- ability to maintain a balance between independence and dependence on others
- appropriate use of or abstinence from substances like alcohol and drugs
- a sense of humour
- a sense of duty (to others or self, depending on the culture)

Other Factors

- the presence of a positive mentor and role models
- meaningful relationships with others at school and home
- peer group acceptance
- safety and security
- access to a healthy environment
- security and a feeling of safety in one's community

> "I have a new found respect and appreciation for what teachers have to go through."
>
> MENTOR

Four Ways to Build Resiliency

Take a strength-based approach to building resiliency by:

Believing that positive changes can happen when authentic relationships are formed. Your mentee needs to know that you care and that you will be there for them unconditionally (consistently and reliability).

Believing that all students have the potential to achieve their goals and dreams. See your mentee at full potential and let them know that you believe in them!

Helping your mentee identify and focus on their strengths. Everyone needs to feel good about themselves. Help your mentee build their confidence by focusing on what they can do, not what they can't do.

Using positive language. Be aware of the language you and your mentee use. The language we use influences our reality, so frame things positively and help your mentee do the same.

What is Resilience About?

- Resilience is about having a positive yet realistic attitude.
- Resilience is about taking action in the face of a challenge.
- Resilience is about not giving up.
- Resilience is about taking action to make the future better.
- Resilience is about seeking help when needed.

Building a Positive Relationship

Below are some suggestions for developing a positive relationship.

- Spend some time visiting and just getting to know your mentee.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere for your mentee by using some of the icebreakers in your activity book. Activities designed to promote the sharing of information and ideas, or identifying similar likes and dislikes can be fun ways to get to know each other better.
- Talk about strengths and resiliency with your mentee. Point out real-life examples and look for other examples in stories you read together.
- Work together to set realistic goals and expectations.
- Create opportunities for your mentee to have some control over the choice of activities you do together.
- Help your mentee feel positive about school and learning.
- Encourage your mentee to solve problems and make decisions.
- Listen.
- Laugh with them, a lot.
- Be caring and supportive. But most of all, be a friend and have fun together.

Giving positive feedback

Encouraging words are important but simply telling a child "Terrific" or "Good job" is not always helpful. This kind of personal praise does not give children the information they need to know what they are doing right and how they can build on their success. Also, some children may be mistrustful of this kind of praise, or not feel they deserve it.

Express appreciation or gratitude

An alternative to praising children is to express appreciation or gratitude for a specific action or way of behaving. For example, "Thanks for putting away all the art supplies earlier when I had to talk to Ms Rollin. That gave us more time to spend on this game." or "Hey, that was fun to read the story with you. I enjoy it when we read together."

To summarize, say:	
What your mentee did (put away the art supplies).	Why it was helpful (it gave us more time to play the game).

Say what you see

Another easy and natural way to provide authentic feedback is to simply say what you see. For example, noting: "You finished the whole page" or even just "You did it" tells your mentee that you noticed.

In some cases, a more detailed description may make sense. For example, if your mentee draws a picture you might share something you noticed about the picture such as "This mountain is huge!" "Wow, I can tell you really like blue." This shows you are interested in what your mentee is doing, and you appreciate their effort, and you are not judging their work.

If there is a clear opportunity for improvement, you could make that part of the description but be sure limit your suggestions to one or two things that are directly related to the goals of the project. For example, "All the people in the drawing are detailed but there is not enough detail in the buildings to know what they are supposed to be."

Describe what is working well

When your mentee is doing an activity that requires using a new skill, there is an opportunity to provide thoughtful and descriptive feedback that will help them see what they are doing right, and maybe even give them information they can use to improve. For example, if they are working on an illustration, saying "Great job" doesn't really give them much information. But if you take the time to make the feedback more descriptive by saying, "You put lots of interesting details in this drawing. All those details really help show how many possibilities there are for working with animals." This kind of feedback lets the child know that details are important and they will be more likely to keep adding details on other projects.

Talk less, ask more

Even better than descriptions are questions. Instead of telling a child what part of their drawing impressed you, consider asking them what they like best about it. Asking questions like, "What was the hardest (or the most fun) part to draw?" or "How did you choose your colours?" will help them reflect on their effort and experience, and begin to take more ownership for their own learning.

Giving positive and constructive feedback to your mentee is an important part of relationship building and the learning process. In order to improve at something children need to know what they're doing well and how they can improve.

First of all, it is important to let your mentee know that you are happy to work with them and that you value the time you spend together.

Get involved with what your mentee is doing. Ask questions. Talk to them about what they are thinking as they solve a certain problem.

Providing helpful, detailed, encouraging feedback and appreciation requires paying attention to what your mentee is doing, and listening to what they are saying. The job of feedback is to meet the students where they are and give them what they need to take their next steps.

Make note of the work's strengths and then give one or two suggestions for how to make it even better.

Knowing Your Developmental Assets

Now that you have gained an understanding of resilience and the qualities that are needed to overcome life's challenges, you will now look at the building blocks of healthy development known as Developmental Assets. The Developmental Assets are 40 positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices children and youth make that help them become caring, responsible and resilient adults.

Most people, including youth, do not live a stress-free world so asset building and resiliency will help you better deal with everyday problems. Here are a few principles that will help guide you in your efforts:[1]

- **Everyone can build assets.** Even if your mentee has many obstacles to overcome, they are still capable of building assets. Building assets isn't just about great families or schools or neighborhoods.
- **All young people need assets.** While it is crucial to pay special attention to youth who have many obstacles to overcome - nearly all young people need more assets than they have.
- **Relationships are key.** Building and maintaining a good relationship with your mentee is very important. Strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to asset building.
- **Asset building is an ongoing process.** Building assets starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.
- **Consistent messages are important.** It is important for families, schools, communities, the media, and others to give all young people consistent and similar messages about what is important and what is expected of them.
- **Intentional repetition is important.** Being reliable and consistent with your relationship and the longer the mentor/mentee match is in place the better; as assets need to be continually reinforced across the years and in all areas of a young person's life.

The Power of Assets—Studies of more than 2.2 million young people in the United States consistently showed that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to positively succeed in life. Assets have power for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or ethnicity to be true and confident in themselves.

Overall, some of the factors that influence healthy development are:

- positive family dynamics
- support from community adults
- caring and supportive school environment
- peer influence
- values development
- social skills

A child may be adversely influenced by one or all of these factors, but it takes only one to create a harmful effect.

The 40 Developmental Assets

The following chart has a list of the 40 common Developmental Assets identified by the Search Institute. These are building blocks for healthy development. Work through the checklist for yourself and see which assets you have present in your life and what could be done to help you develop more.[2]

Once you are familiar with the Developmental Assets, you will begin to value the qualities in yourself and your mentee. You will be able to contribute to your mentee's positive development by engaging in various activities that build assets and build a foundation in your commitment to your mentee which is consistent in promoting resiliency.

Being a part of a team that gives youth direction is a rewarding and satisfying experience. Not only will it help your mentee develop the skills that they need to possibly overcome some difficult challenges, but you will have also enriched your own learning experience.

1 www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets

2 Adapted from, 1997, 2007 by Search Institute, www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists. All rights reserved. This chart may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial use only.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

- ☐ **Support** – Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- ☐ **Positive Family Communication** – Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
- ☐ **Other Adult Relationships** – Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
- ☐ **Caring Neighborhood** – Child experiences caring neighbors.
- ☐ **Caring School Climate** – Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.
- ☐ **Parent Involvement in Schooling** – Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

Family Empowerment

- ☐ **Community Values Youth** – Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
- ☐ **Children as Resources** – Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
- ☐ **Service to Others** – Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
- ☐ **Safety** – Child feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

- ☐ **Family Boundaries** – Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- ☐ **School Boundaries** – School provides clear rules and consequences.
- ☐ **Neighborhood Boundaries** – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.
- ☐ **Adult Role Models** – Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
- ☐ **Positive Peer Influence** – Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
- ☐ **High Expectations** – Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do their best at school and in other activities.

Constructive Use of Time

- ☐ **Creative Activities** – Child participates in music, art, drama, or other creative arts activity two or more times per week.
- ☐ **Community Recreation Programs** – Child participates two or more times per week in co-curricular school activities or structured community social, cultural or recreational programs.
- ☐ **Faith-based Community** – Child attends religious services or faith-based program one or more times per week.
- ☐ **Time at Home** – Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with family members, and doing constructive things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

- ☐ **Achievement Motivation** – Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
- ☐ **Learning Engagement** – Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
- ☐ **Homework** – Child usually hands in homework on time.
- ☐ **Bonding to School** – Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
- ☐ **Reading for Pleasure** – Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

Positive Values

- ☐ **Caring** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
- ☐ **Equality and Social Justice** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
- ☐ **Integrity** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
- ☐ **Honesty** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
- ☐ **Responsibility** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
- ☐ **Healthy Lifestyle** – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

Social Competencies

- ☐ **Planning and Decision Making** – Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
- ☐ **Interpersonal Competence** – Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- ☐ **Cultural Competence** – Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
- ☐ **Resistance Skills** – Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
- ☐ **Peaceful Conflict Resolution** – Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

- ☐ **Personal Power** – Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
- ☐ **Self-Esteem** – Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.
- ☐ **Sense of Purpose** – Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
- ☐ **Positive View of Personal Future** – Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Being a Career Coach

Your Role as a Career Coach

As outlined in your *High School Teen Mentoring Activity Book*, coaching and supporting your mentee with regards to short and long term goals is part of the mentoring process. Your role isn't necessarily to make any hard or fast decisions about education and career pathways, but rather it is to help your mentee aspire to a promising future by exchanging ideas and exploring possibilities. This is not only beneficial to your mentee but to you as well because you become more informed about potential educational and career opportunities for yourself.

In the Mentoring activity book there are many fun and engaging games, worksheets and ideas to help you structure your time with your mentee. Following the sections in order will allow you and your mentee to unfold the self-discovery process in a logical manner.

There are six sections and 47 activities in the *Mentoring Activity Book* and each section and activity has a specific purpose. Many of the activities are designed to take you through a process of self awareness and career exploration. Each section represents a step on a journey of discovery.

Getting to Know Each Other

The first section is about getting to know each other and sharing self-exploration. This will lead to the discovery of each other's interests, allowing you and your mentee to brainstorm ideas and dream about the possibilities for your future. Together you will talk about how working hard now and doing well in school will lead to opportunities and success later in life.

Learning Styles

Section two focuses on how you and your mentee can gather information about learning strengths and preferences. Do they prefer hands-on learning (tactile), or are they visual or auditory learners? Even though we generally use all three learning styles, it is often one style that suits us best. These activities will help your mentee understand which of the learning styles is best for them. You have the opportunity in this publication to complete a learning styles inventory of yourself in Section 6 Understanding Learning.

Who Am I?

Section three has many activities that concentrate on recognizing and developing your mentee's strengths, skills, and talents. You will work with your mentee on recognizing these assets while investigating career pathways. Being successful in the workplace and in school is not just about being smart, but being able to interact with your colleagues and schoolmates on a mature level. Learning how to turn negative thoughts into positive actions is an important part of life. These activities are an important part of your mentee's development.

> *This program gave Melanie some much needed one-on-one support and friendship. She loved this program and always looked forward to attending. It helped her with her peers and social skills. Her spirit was lifted and there was a notice in her confidence."*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

What Occupations are out there?

Section four focuses on generating a connection to the world of work and how your mentee's strengths, skills and talents translate to a career pathway. Many of these activities help mentees discover the skills necessary for a particular job or occupation. How do you get a good idea? By getting lots of ideas. You and your mentee should both discover some occupations of interest and they should begin to understand the world of work.

What is right for me?

Section five focuses on how to try and further investigate skills and work environments that may suit your mentee. You and your mentee will discover possible pathways that might be best to pursue with respect to their individual personality and interests. These activities are a good way to examine a number of workplace environments by learning particulars of specific jobs.

My Summary Sheet

For example,

- My favorite subjects – Activities: 3.4, 5.2
- My Values – Activity: 3.11
- My Interests – Activities: 3.3, 3.4, 3.8
- My Favorite Jobs – Activities: 1.5, 3.4, Section 4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5
- My Skills – Activities: 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.14, 4.10
- My Favorite Work Setting – Activity: 5.4
- Places I would like to live/work – Activities: 3.13, 4.1

As a mentor and career coach you are opening up many possibilities for your mentee and your own future. The career opportunities out there are limited only by your imagination. Continue to pursue the exploration process. How can you apply what you have learned to any career path that you choose to follow? The answers are simple. *You* have chosen to be a part of this dynamic experience for a reason and you should now realize that you have opened up your *own* future to *infinite* possibilities.

Surprises and Myths

As your mentoring teacher/teacher liaison helps prepare your group for the high school mentor experience, there hopefully will be other students in your group who were mentors last year or have previous mentoring experience. You should ask them about the ins and outs of mentoring. We have provided a summary of what former high school mentors have said about their experiences, both the pleasant surprises and the myths.

SURPRISE 1

Mentees are just kids!

It's true that most mentees are involved in mentoring because school staff believed they would benefit from having another caring person in their life. This does not mean you should make assumptions about their family life, success in school or other factors. Almost all high school mentors have discovered their mentees have many strengths and positive qualities. Learning and encouraging these positive qualities is a large part of what makes mentoring fun for high school mentors!

SURPRISE 2

You and your mentee may develop a strong bond.

With a little work, you'll probably find that you and your mentee have interests in common such as sports, video games, favourite TV shows, music or career interests. In many cases, these common interests will make the friendship flourish and will help make the career planning more fun and more meaningful.

SURPRISE 3

The bonds you develop are not just with your mentee

Your mentoring teacher and your fellow high school mentors will be regularly discussing your experiences to plan for upcoming sessions with your mentees. These discussions are a great venue for sharing ideas, but also for getting to know each other. Many previous mentors have found the bonds they develop with their fellow high school mentors are one of the best things about the course and mentoring program.

SURPRISE 4

You may learn a lot about yourself

Ultimately, you and the other mentors are there to help each other be good mentors to your mentees. There's a good chance that each of you will find that being a mentor has opened the door to new experiences or interests for you. You may be surprised at how well you can relate to children, how caring you are or what a great role model you can be. Perhaps it may help you determine what you would like to do for an occupation or career path.

> *Our students so look forward to the days their mentors come!"*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Sound like a great program so far? Will it be a great experience for you? Yes to both. But, you have to have realistic expectations. Don't be surprised when you see that the realities of working with your mentee are not always ideal. Here are some of the myths that former high school mentors have asked us to share with you.

MYTH 1

It will always be easy

MYTH 2

I will be able to see day-to-day changes in my mentee.

Your job is not to change your mentee but to accept them as they are and help them develop a more positive sense of self. Although your mentee will most likely experience some changes as a result of your mentoring relationship, these changes probably won't be very dramatic. Look for subtle differences such as an increase in confidence and willingness to try new things or improved ability to finish a task, ask for help or contribute ideas. Be confident that you will have a positive effect on your mentee by just consistently being there for them.

MYTH 3

It's okay for me to adopt a "Do what I say, not what I do" philosophy

With hard work, you can reasonably expect your mentee to be somewhat more confident, competent and caring at the end of the school term or year than at the beginning of your sessions. These changes probably won't be very dramatic. For example, changing from being a C student to an A student or from an introvert to a self-assured live wire is not likely. Any transformations will probably be more subtle—maybe even impossible for you to notice any major changes over the mentoring sessions. But know you have had an effect on this child in a positive way by just consistently being there.

MYTH 4

I can quit any time without any real damage being done to my mentee

Being a high school mentor is not for everyone. It's a big commitment and responsibility. You're signing on to be a trusting caring friend. If you quit the program in the middle of the school term or year, you risk disappointing or even crushing a child who may have few people they can count on. So if something comes up where you may not be able to fulfill your commitment, speak with your mentoring teacher and/or teacher liaison to discuss your options.

"My Mentor helped me with my school work and it's been improving because of her. I want to be a mentor when I am older!"

MENTEE

Typical Characteristics of Children and Adolescents

The following pages detail some characteristics that will help you understand what your mentee might be like according to age. As you review these items, keep in mind that they are generalizations. While they provide a description of children in general at each developmental stage, you may encounter something slightly different with your mentee. This does not mean that there is something wrong. It just means that, in some ways, your mentee may not be like the average child (see resiliency).

	Ages 5 to 7	Ages 8 to 10	Ages 11 to 13
General Characteristics	▪ Eager to learn ▪ Easily fatigued ▪ Have short periods of interest ▪ Learn best when active while learning ▪ Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive	▪ Interested in people; aware of differences; willing to give more to others but expect more ▪ Busy, active, enthusiastic; may try too much; interested in money and its value ▪ Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, have capacity for self-evaluation ▪ Capable of prolonged interest ▪ May make plans on own ▪ Decisive, dependable, reasonable, have strong sense of right and wrong ▪ Spend much time in talk and discussion; often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval	▪ Test limits; have “know-it-all” attitude ▪ Test limits; have “know-it-all” attitude ▪ Vulnerable, emotionally insecure; have fear of rejection; mood swings ▪ Identify with admired adult ▪ Self-image especially affected by physical appearance
Physical Characteristics	▪ Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun and involve the use of energy ▪ Need rest periods ▪ Reading books together or doing simple art projects are good quiet activities ▪ Large muscles are well developed; activities involving small muscles are difficult ▪ May tend to be accident-prone	▪ Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun and involve the use of energy ▪ Bone growth not complete yet ▪ Early maturers may be upset with their size; a listening ear and your explanations may help ▪ May tend to be accident-prone	▪ Small muscle coordination is good ▪ Interest in art, crafts, models and music is common ▪ Bone growth is not yet complete ▪ Early maturers may be upset with their size; a listening ear and explanations will help. ▪ Very concerned with appearances and self-conscious about growth ▪ Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy

	Ages 5 to 7	Ages 8 to 10	Ages 11 to 13
Social Characteristics	▪ Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules ▪ Can be very competitive; may cheat at games ▪ Very imaginative; involved in fantasy play ▪ Self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first; less cooperative as get older, very boastful ▪ Learn best through active participation	▪ Can be very competitive ▪ Choosy about their friends ▪ Acceptance by friends important ▪ Team games popular ▪ Worshiping heroes, TV stars and sports figures is common	▪ Acceptance by friends important ▪ Cliques develop outside of school ▪ Team games popular ▪ Romantic crushes common ▪ Friends set general rule of behaviour ▪ Feel a need to conform (dressing and behaving alike in order to belong) ▪ Very concerned about what others say and think about them ▪ Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?") ▪ Interested in earning own money
Emotional Characteristics	▪ Alert to feelings of others, but unaware of how their own actions affect others ▪ Very sensitive to praise/ recognition and criticism/critique; feelings easily hurt ▪ Inconsistent in levels of maturity; often less mature at home than with outsiders	▪ Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings hurt easily ▪ Because friends are so important; conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules can arise	▪ Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings hurt easily ▪ Because friends are so important; conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules can arise ▪ Caught between being a child and being an adult; often critical ▪ Loud behaviours hide lack of self-confidence ▪ Look at the world more objectively, but look at adults more subjectively
Mental Characteristics	▪ Very eager to learn ▪ Like to talk ▪ Own ideas of fairness become a big issue ▪ Have difficulty making decisions	▪ Fairness still a big issue ▪ Eager to answer questions ▪ Very curious; are collectors of everything (but for only short time) ▪ Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support ▪ Wide discrepancies in reading ability	▪ Tend to be perfectionists (if they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty) ▪ Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support ▪ Attention span can be lengthy
Developmental Tasks	▪ Identification of gender differences ▪ Early moral development ▪ Concrete operations (begin to experience predictability of events) ▪ Group play	▪ Social cooperation ▪ Self-evaluation ▪ Skill learning ▪ Team (cooperative) play	▪ Social cooperation ▪ Self-evaluation ▪ Skill learning ▪ Team (cooperative) play

Mentoring Relationship Life Cycles

Just like most relationships, a relationship with a mentee has a life cycle with three distinct phases: beginning, middle and end. The following information offers guidance on what you can do at each stage.

FROM HELLO TO GOODBYE

1 BEGINNING

The orientation and training process is an opportunity to:

- Learn how mentoring will work
- Learn about working with children
- Get to know your fellow High School mentors
- Learn about the particular child you will be matched with

2 MIDDLE

During your mentoring sessions:

- Find out about each other
- Get an idea of your mentee's needs and establish some overall goals of the relationship
- Demonstrate your commitment to the relationship by being consistent and predictable.
- Create opportunities for your mentee to make choices and have more control of the type of activities you do together
- Monitor and assess the progress of the relationship

3 END

At the end of the year (or term): Wrap things up with your mentee in a thoughtful and sensitive manner.

- Celebrate the fun and growth that you and your fellow high school mentors have experienced throughout the year

Tips for making the most of the training and orientation session:

- Ask questions.
- Think about what you are learning in the context of other relationships in your life. You may find that lessons learned in one relationship will help you build or repair another one.
- Keep a strength-based focus. Mentees have a wide range of interests, strengths and needs. Teachers, counsellors and families request mentors for students who they feel could use additional support. Your job is to help the mentee identify and explore their strengths and interests.

Tips for building a strong relationship with your mentee

- In the first meeting, the mentoring teacher or teacher liaison will go through a friendship agreement with you and your mentee. This agreement will talk about the goals of your match and what strategies you will use to achieve them.
- Take the lead more in the first few sessions together, asking more questions and planning the activities.
- Share appropriate information about yourself.
- Listen carefully to the details of your mentee's life, so you can refer to these in later conversations.
- During your first few sessions, be prepared to do more games and activities than to have in-depth conversations; these activities are building the basis for later conversations.
- Think about what you and your mentee want from this relationship. What is important to you? What is important to your mentee? Think about the goals of this mentoring opportunity. How are the activities and discussions working toward these goals?
- Share successes and challenges with your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison and fellow high school mentors.
- Be on time and do not miss sessions.
- Be patient. Building trust can take a while!
- Arrive knowing what activities have been planned for the session (see Mentoring Activity Book) and always ask what activities your mentee would like to do next session.
- Expect some testing of limits through behaviour. This is your mentee's way of determining if you will be consistent and committed even when their behaviour may be disappointing or difficult.
- Learn non-directive ways to suggest constructive behaviour; for example, ask, "How about if…?" instead of, "You should… You need to…"
- When talking with your mentee about post-secondary schooling or career pathways, be sure to share your thoughts about your own plans for the future.
- End each session on a positive note by finding something your mentee has done well, learned or enjoyed. Let them know when you will be visiting again and plan what activities you will be doing next session.
- Continue to share successes and challenges with your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison and fellow high school mentors.
- Be prepared for highs and lows. It's possible that you'll feel closer to your mentee on some weeks versus others.
- Do some focused thinking about how the relationship is meeting both your and your mentee's needs. You might ask yourself these questions:
- How well do I understand what my mentee wants and needs from me?
- Have I set aside my own agenda to listened to my mentee's concerns?
- How effective is my verbal and non-verbal communication with my mentee?
- What is working best in our relationship? What is not working as well?
- What things about our interactions could change to make things better?
- Point out milestones that have been achieved and let your mentee know how excited you are about this (for example, in the areas of reading, plans for the future, etc.).
- Acknowledge the growth that you noticed in the relationships among you and your fellow high school mentors.

Tips for wrapping up the mentoring relationship.

- Prepare mentees early for the end-of-year closure in low-key ways to be sure they are not surprised.
- Be prepared to respond to feelings of anxiety, sadness, or even anger about the end of the relationship.
- Discuss with mentees what was accomplished over the course of the year. Talk about where they see themselves going in terms of post-secondary schooling or career paths.
- Do the final evaluations and compare original answers to what you know now. (See the Activity Book for examples of how to do this.)
- Plan for a special activity during your last visit. You might want to consult with the other mentors and decide as a group on something small that every mentor can make and present to their mentee.
- Let your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison know whether you plan to continue being a mentor next year and, if so, whether or not you would be interested in mentoring the same child again.
- Have a party just for you and your fellow high school mentors to acknowledge your efforts and celebrate your successes.

SECTION 3

Building Mentoring Skills

Strong mentoring relationships do not happen by chance. They take work and commitment. The most successful high school mentors are those who plan and prepare carefully for the relationship and incorporate strategies that have proven successful. This section describes skills that you can build to be the most effective mentor you can be.

When asked about their mentors, students mention the following traits and behaviours as being important to them.

Appearance

Mentees report noticing their mentor 's appearance, including their choice of clothes. Taking care with your appearance is a tangible way to show your mentee that your time together is important. This is part of being a good role model.

Humour

The famous child psychiatrist William Glasser said that humour is a form of caring. Having fun and laughing with your mentee makes for a more positive relationship.

Courtesy

Good manners are important for both you and your mentee. You can teach by example, and help your mentee feel important at the same time.

Respect

Any time you encourage your mentee to share their ideas with you, without criticizing or putting them down, you are showing respect.

Genuineness

Let your mentee get to know you. Share positive stories from your own life and you will seem more real to them, and not just another authority figure.

Not long ago, a research organization studied the relationships between mentors and mentees in Big Brothers Big Sisters' mentoring programs. Basically, they discovered that the most successful relationships were those in which mentors took an intentional approach to being a friend, setting goals and having fun with their mentee.

Be a friend

- **Remember your primary role.** You are there to be a friend. Don't try to act like a parent or an authority figure.
- **It's important to let your mentee know that you have been thinking about them.** You can show this in low-keys ways such as smiling, offering high fives and fist bumps, and telling them you are happy to have this opportunity to share time with them.
- **Show empathy.** When your mentee is going through difficult times, try and put yourself in their shoes and consider things from their perspective.
- See your mentee as an individual. Identify what is special and unique about your mentee and acknowledge it.
- **Make frequent "deposits."** Think of building a relationship like building an "emotional bank account" for your mentee. Every time you do or say something positive—like following through or providing encouragement—it's like making a deposit that your mentee can later draw on for strength at a later date.
- **Remember details.** Find out about and remember the experiences your mentee shares with you, as well as their preferences and interests. This will help you have more meaningful conversations and make informed choices about activities.

Have realistic goals and expectations

- **Focus on overall development.** Your primary concern is to provide as much support and encouragement as possible to help build your mentee's positive sense of self and ability to meet their goals. Throughout the relationship, emphasize friendship over performance.
- **Don't become too involved.** Be aware of your mentee's problems, but encourage them to assume responsibility for doing something about it (build capacity to make decisions and act). Keep in mind that some of your mentee's problems are beyond your control. In these situations, be the best friend you can by listening without judgment.
- **Don't take on too much.** If you think that a situation has gotten out of your control seek help and talk to your mentoring teacher.
- **Don't expect perfection in yourself or in your mentee.** Human error is inevitable. What matters most is that your mentee knows you really care. Do your best to handle mistakes in a responsible and constructive way. But don't get discouraged if it seems like your mentee is uninterested in you or the mentoring activities. Things can change from day-to-day and it is your job to just keep showing up and responding to your mentee with warmth and encouragement.

Have fun together

- **Enjoy yourself.** The goal should be that both of you are having fun.
- **Think ahead.** Start with fun. Focusing on "fun" games and activities early in the relationship will pave the way to being able to work on more "serious" activities later.

Give your mentee voice and choice in planning activities

- **Be "mentee-centred."** Let your mentee know that it's important to you that they enjoy doing the activities. Then, listen carefully to what is said.
- **Brainstorm together.** Select the learning activities together and then brainstorm games and physical activities you would like to do when you get together. Give a range of choices for possible activities.
- **Don't get frustrated.** Mentees may be reluctant to suggest activities because they don't want to be rude or they find it difficult to make decisions. Keep giving them choices each visit but be positive if they prefer to have you decide on the choice of activity.

Be positive

- **Give frequent encouragement.** Remind mentees of previous successes when something seems difficult. Tell them "you can do it." Also, discuss that when learning new things, it usually is hard the first time you do anything but that makes it challenging and worthwhile to learn. Always be encouraging, even when talking about potentially challenging tasks or topics.
- **Acknowledge accomplishments.** In day-to-day activities, note when your mentee tries and succeeds
- **Stay in the present.** Avoid bringing up past mistakes and always consider each mentoring a new opportunity to begin again.
- **Don't generalize negative behaviour.** Avoid phrases like "you always" or "you never."
- **Don't get discouraged.** Your job is to accept your mentee as they are, not to change them. Be careful not to set unrealistic expectations that cannot be met.

Let your mentee have much of the control over what the two of you talk about—and how you talk about it

- **Explain confidentiality.** Be direct in letting mentees know that they can talk with you without fear of judgment or exposure.
- **Don't push.** Children vary in their styles of communicating and how much they are comfortable telling another person, so try to be sensitive and responsive to their cues.
- **Be flexible.** Do it their way once and your way next to demonstrate your openness to doing things in different ways and to respect their approach to problem-solving. Or ask coaching questions like, "How can we…?" "What are some other ways to…?" Then, decide on a way together.
- **Think ahead.** Remember that the activities you do together become a source for future conversations and reflection.

Listen

- **Allow your mentee to share and express their feelings.** Just listening gives children a chance to talk freely and be themselves without worrying about being criticized.
- **Share.** While discussing any particular topic, share your personal experiences with that topic.
- **Use active listening.** Active listening not only confirms to mentees that they have been heard, but also acknowledges their feelings. For example, show your understanding by describing what you hear them saying and then identifying the related feeling they seem to be expressing. "You're stuck on this question and seem to be getting frustrated."

> *"I didn't know I could make such a difference by doing such a simple thing."*
>
> MENTOR

Respect the trust your mentee places in you

- **Be responsible.** If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to make the next mentoring session, let your mentee and your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison know at the end of your session. If that isn't possible, be sure to leave a phone message or email (whatever was the agreement with the school) letting your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison know and asking them to relay the information to your mentee.
- **Do not give advice.** Focus on helping your mentee identify solutions for his or herself. Use the coaching questions such as: "How can you react differently?" "What needs to be done?" "Who can help you?" "Why is this important to you?"
- **Express concerns thoughtfully.** If you feel you have to convey concern, do so in a way that also conveys reassurance and acceptance. Say why something is or is not appropriate and give an appropriate behaviour of a statement or phrase that is appropriate. For example, "Checking out what everyone else is doing in the library is interfering with our progress today. We set a goal to finish this part of the project and it will be disappointing not to get there when we are so close. Let's work steady for the next ten minutes to finish up."
- **Respect boundaries.** If you sense that a question you've asked is a sensitive or "touchy" subject, back off.
- **Respect religious, political and cultural differences.** It is inappropriate to encourage your mentee to adopt any religious belief or to question their cultural practice.
- **Don't give medication.** If your mentee needs medicine, talk to your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison. Never give your mentee any type of medication.

Focus on the mentee rather than the mentee's family

- **Keep your primary focus on the mentee.** Do not ask questions or press for details about the mentee's family. Respect their privacy. Talk to your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison if you have any questions or concerns.
- **Be respectful about the family.** You may learn things about your mentee's family beliefs or behaviours that are different from what you know or that you don't agree with. It is important to remain non-judgemental and focus on building a positive relationship with the child, no matter what you think their family circumstance is.

Keep building your relationship with your mentee.

- **Don't expect positive feedback from your mentee.** You will gain many things from this experience; however, it is unrealistic to expect positive expressions of feelings and gratitude from your mentee.
- **Be consistent.** If a child has experienced many disappointments, consistency can be the most important quality you can offer.
- **Model appropriate behaviour.** Be conscious of your own behaviour and what kind of self-image you are projecting, both verbally and non-verbally.
- **Don't talk about your personal problems.** There may be times when it is appropriate to share personal stories with your mentee, as a way of letting them know that they are not alone in feeling a certain emotion or experiencing the world a certain way. Any shared stories should offer hope and your stories should never overshadow or upstage the experience of the mentee., talk to your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison. Never give your mentee any type of medication.

> *"The high school students are building such positive relationships with our students. I know [our] kids will benefit as they learn together and strengthen their skills."*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Active Listening and Other Communication Skills

You probably noticed that one of the mentoring tips was good listening. This is so important that it's worth discussing further. In order for you to be successful as a high school mentor, you have to be a good communicator. You'll have to learn and effectively incorporate a number of interpersonal communication skills.

The most important of these skills is being a good active listener. Active listening is not just keeping quiet while the mentee speaks; it requires much more than that. To convey that you care and are paying attention—and to understand and appreciate what the mentee is saying—you will need to respond in ways that help conversations go smoothly. The guidelines below provide you with some of the knowledge and skills that will help.

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me, and you start giving me advice, you have not done what I have asked.

When I ask you to listen to me, and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me, and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

So please, just listen and hear me. And if you want to talk, wait a few minutes for your turn and I promise I'll listen to you.

ANONYMOUS

Conversation Builders

When you are talking with your mentee, there are many ways you can respond that will help build the conversation, making it go more easily and smoothly. These responses can be questions, statements or just brief sounds of acknowledgement. But they are all great strategies to practise.

- **Making the minimal verbal response.** (Provide verbal cues.) "Hm-mm." "Yes." "I see." "Uh huh."
- **Paraphrasing.** Mentee: "I had a bad day today." High school mentor: "It sounds like things didn't go well for you today."
- **Probing.** "Tell me more." "Let's talk about that." "Could you give me an example?" "I'm wondering about…"
- **Reflecting.** (Communicate your understanding of your mentee's perspectives.) "You're feeling uncomfortable about seeing him." "You really don't like being treated like a child." "It sounds as if you're really angry with your mother." "I remember how difficult Grade 4 can be."
- **Clarifying.** "I'm having trouble understanding what you're saying. Is it that…?" "I'm confused about…" "Could you go over that again, please?" "Sounds to me like you're saying…"
- **Summarizing.** (Recap where you left off last time, go over what you've done throughout the current session or sum up a few things that the mentee has just said.)
- **Informing.** (Share objective and factual information such as your high school's football record or what grades you will need to attend college or university.)
- **Reinforcing.** (Highlight any successes.) "Congratulations for doing well on your math test!" "Wow! You learned how to ride a bike? That's awesome!"
- **Self-disclosing.** "I fell down and chipped my front tooth when I was eight." "I used to fight with my sister a lot, too." "One of my biggest fears is talking in front of a lot of people." "I am hoping to go to University and become a teacher."

Keep these things in mind when you incorporate these conversation builders:

- Use the same vocabulary level that your mentee uses. Speak slowly enough that each word can be understood.
- Use concise rather than rambling statements or questions. Time your responses to facilitate, not block, communication—for example, don't interrupt.
- Minimize using closed questions to which the answer can be a simple "yes" or "no"; examples are those that begin with "is," "are," "do" and "did."
- Maximize using open questions. These are questions that encourage longer answers; examples are those that begin with "how," "what," "could" and "would."
- Minimize using "why" questions. These tend to put mentees on the defensive causing the mentees to think they've done something wrong.

> *"I now understand how different students are motivated by different things."*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Conversation Blockers

Conversation blockers are obstacles to good conversation or good interpersonal interaction. It's best to think of them as "high-risk" responses, rather than absolute killers of communication. In most cases, the occasional use of a conversation blocker will not completely destroy a relationship with a mentee. However, they are more likely to increase (at least temporarily) the emotional distance between the two of you. Using them repeatedly can cause permanent damage to a relationship, so they should certainly be used with caution. Below are a number of examples:

- **Ordering.** "You must…" "You have to…" "You will…"
- **Advising.** "What you should do is…" "Why don't you…?" "Let me suggest…" "It would be best for you…" "If I were you, I'd…"
- **Moralizing.** (Similar to ordering and advising, but with an extra element of "duty") "You should…," "You ought to…" "It is your responsibility…" "The right thing to do is…"
- **Condescending.** (Talking down to the mentee, such as using baby talk) "Awww, is wittle Bobby having a bad day today?" "You're too young. You wouldn't understand."
- **Diverting.** (Switching a conversation from the mentee's concerns to your own topic) "Let's not talk about it now." "Forget it." "Think you've got it bad?! Let me tell you what happened to me." "That reminds me…" "We can discuss it later."
- **Sarcasm.** "Why don't you burn down the place?" "Did you get up on the wrong side of the bed?" "When did they make you boss?"
- **Criticizing.** "You're not thinking straight." "You're acting like a little baby." "Your hair is too long." "That was dumb." "You've got nobody else to blame for the mess you're in."
- **Threatening.** "You had better…" "If you don't, then…" "If you do this I promise I'll…" "Oh yeah? Try it and see what happens."
- **Analyzing.** (Analyzing why the mentee does or says something) "What you need is…" "You're just trying to get attention…" "You don't really mean that." "Your problem is…"
- **Debating.** (Trying to convince the mentee using facts or logic) "Do you realize…" "Here is why you're wrong…" "Look at the facts. You broke a school rule. If you hadn't done, that you wouldn't be in this trouble."

Non-Verbal Communication

You've probably heard the saying "actions speak louder than words." Things that are communicated without words often send a stronger message than the words themselves. For example, if you were to say to your mentee, "This is really important to me" (and then roll your eyes at the same time), is what you just said believable?

Here are some tips on how to use non-verbal cues and body language to better support the conversations you have with your mentee.

Smile

There have been a number of scientific studies on the positive effects of smiling, not only for the person smiling but for also the people who are being smiled at! Smiling not only relaxes your body, but it can lower your heart rate and blood pressure. And smiling can be contagious; when your mentee sees you smile they are more likely to smile themselves and feel more relaxed.

Eye contact

Looking someone in the eye typically communicates sincerity and interest. Eye contact should be natural; avoid staring or squinting and be sure to look away from time to time in a relaxed, comfortable manner. Also, try to position yourself so that the two of you are at the same eye level. Some individuals may be less comfortable with eye contact and there are some cultures where eye contact is interpreted differently so be sensitive to what makes your mentee most comfortable.

Open posture

When listening to your mentee adopt an open posture, with your arms by your side (and not crossed across your body). Sit up straight. An open posture is a sign that you are open to your mentee and to what they have to say.

Gestures

Simple gestures like head nods, thumbs up, and hands up in excitement to show that you're paying attention. Other physical gestures like tilting your head slightly sideways and leaning in to listen can be helpful, too.

Lean Forward

During conversations with the mentee, face them squarely and, as often as possible, lean slightly forward.

Sounds

Use of vocal responses (or non-words such as "mmm" or "uh uh") show your mentee that you are actively listening to what they are saying. These low-key kind of responses can encourage mentees to continue talking.

Sit still

In order to show your mentee that you are engaged in listening or talking with them, limit your movements to gestures and expressions. Walking and pacing while they are doing an activity is not only distracting for the mentee, but takes away from the closeness and connection you need to have for effectively communicating. This includes not glancing at your phone or device when you should be paying attention to your mentee and the task at hand.

Match Management

Your mentee will probably show you all sorts of behaviour—from being a "model child" to being out of control. Kids seldom act the same way all the time. It's as if they are always trying out new behaviours. Your job is to keep up with these changing behaviours and understand the difference between misbehaviour and expression of natural childishness and exuberance. But if you do find yourself confronted with a misbehaving child, you should be prepared to handle it in a productive way. Bearing in mind that there are no hard and fast rules as to how and when to apply different child guidance techniques, here's a simple two-step process to help you.

Step 1: Look at the context or situation.

Be a good detective. Take a close look at the situation and try to determine if something obvious (or not so obvious) might explain your mentee's behaviour.

When	Where	What	Who
It is very common for mentees to be more excitable or restless during transition times—at the beginning and end of the sessions.	New locations tend to cause excessive loudness, shyness, etc.	Lots of commotion made by nearby mentees and by other high school mentors can make it difficult for your mentee to focus.	Some children are simply more rambunctious than others by nature.

Prevention Tips

- Begin each session by discussing the day's plans. Set time limits. Say that your mentee may jump, be loud or run for two minutes. Then, the two of you have to move on.
- Discuss behaviour expectations before changing activities, location, etc.
- When not participating in group activities, move to a place reasonably far away from the others.
- Do not spend too much time on any one activity (15 to 20 minutes maximum). Variety is the key.

Step 2: Practise child guidance rather than discipline.

Your goal here is to guide your mentee into better behaviours rather than to "correct" or "punish" misbehaviours.

- **Focus on "do's" instead of "don't's."** If mentees are doing something they should not be doing, state what they should be doing instead.
- **Catch your mentee behaving well.** Pay attention to and praise positive behaviours. At the end of the day, say what you liked about the way they behaved.
- **Ignore attention-seeking misbehaviour.** Whenever possible, wait and pay more attention when your mentee quiets down or ceases the behaviour. Say you will talk, interact or play again when your mentee is not behaving in that particular way.
- **Use positive, clear language whenever possible.** Say explicitly what you would like your mentee to do and explain why you're making this request.
- **Disengage from power struggles immediately.** If your mentee's behaviour is escalating rather than calming down the more you intervene, say that you need to take a break and remove yourself— physically if necessary—from the situation. Remember that it takes two to be in a power struggle—you should be the one to remove yourself from it.

Mentoring Challenges

Many mentors find it helpful to discuss in advance some of the possible challenges they might face during a match with a mentee. For the most part, challenges are relatively minor and can be resolved with some flexibility and creativity. The following are some situations and questions that other mentors have brought to our attention.

What do I do if my mentee does not want to do the activities?

At the beginning of the relationship some mentees may feel they are missing out on other activities that might be happening at the same time as their mentoring session. By giving them a choice of interesting activities, and providing lots of positive reinforcement, you can help build their motivation and experience the mentoring session as a positive part of the school day.

To start, you could go for a power walk around the school and talk for about five minutes. Ask about their week or the time since you last met. You might want to compromise, working on one or two activities and then playing a game or doing some physical activity.

The session should be a **20-20-20** structure: 20 minutes of career activity, 20 minutes of literacy or academics and 20 minutes of play. Depending on time, you may only be able to complete either a career activity or a literacy exercise, and use the remaining time to play a game (board or physical).

Some mentors **use a calendar** to write out activities they will be doing each day so their mentee knows what to expect. Get your mentee involved in the planning to allow them to have some control over the sessions, this is a good way to engage them in decision making. If all else fails, remind your student of the Friendship Agreement that you both signed with your teachers.

It may be that your mentee is not in the mood, may be having a bad day or not feeling well to work on an activity that day. We all have our moods where we do not want to do things, and that's okay. This likely will not happen very often. Try your best to incorporate some other types of learning activities.

> *"I was reluctant to do mentoring at first, but very glad I did..."*
>
> MENTOR

What do I do if my mentee is having an off-day?

Everyone is entitled to having an off-day, including children. We don't know what may have happened at home, during recess or in the classroom. You may notice your mentee is quieter than usual or somewhat distracted. If your student is feeling this way, this may be one of those days that you keep your reading to a minimum and enjoy another activity instead. You may want to find a joke book and read it together, or tell each other your favourite kid's jokes or go around the school for a power walk and talk. You could also ask what is wrong and talk to your mentee a bit about how to improve moods. Ask your mentee, "Would you like to go back to class?" Do not take it personally if the answer is "yes", as sometimes children feel better in the familiarity of the classroom where they can choose to participate or not. If using a log book make sure to make a note to the teacher.

What if my mentee misbehaves?

It is rare that a child will misbehave during a mentoring session but it does happen sometimes. If mentees misbehave during a visit, consider the following:

- give a warning
- end the particular activity
- try something new
- return your mentee to the classroom if all else fails

Using physical discipline with your mentee is never okay. If you are not able to de-escalate the situation, ensure that you ask school staff for assistance immediately. In the case of any behaviour beyond what you can manage, discuss the situation with your mentor teacher or teacher liaison to develop a plan for next steps.

Remember that most children do some amount of testing to see what is appropriate with you and what they can get away with. In this situation be firm but friendly as most testing will fade when they clearly understand their limits. Maintaining clear boundaries and an appropriate length of time for activities will go a long way toward preventing difficult situations.

My mentee is easily distracted during our visits.

Most children are easily distracted or they have a tendency to want to jump from one thing to another. This is normal. The key to handling this situation is to ensure that you are able to change activities at least a couple of times during your visit. Most children have a very hard time sitting and reading a book for an entire hour. They need variety. You may also want to avoid high traffic areas in the school or have students sit where facing away from hallway traffic or activity.

What do I do if my mentee is away or absent frequently

If your mentee is often absent when you come to visit:

- Talk to the mentoring teacher or teacher liaison about the possibility of the setting up a system where you call the school office before your scheduled session to make sure your mentee is in attendance that day.
- Mention absences to your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison so that the issue can be addressed. The solution may be as easy as changing the day of your visit if this is a possibility.
- Some schools will have other students selected so you always have a student to work with if your assigned mentee is absent on the day of your visit.

> *"I would love to be a mentor again next year!"*
>
> MENTOR

I need more ideas on what to do with my mentee.

Start by referring to the activities section of the *Activity Handbook* to engage your student in activities related to education and career pathways.

- Try to choose activities together and look for those that are more physical (build a model, move around the room) or plan a group activity based on one of the group exercises.
- Some activities require dressing up and pretending to be a reporter.
- Other activities on the computer may draw the interest of your mentee.
- Use your Learning Clicks CD to build an Avatar and profile for your mentee. (Extra Learning Clicks CDs may be in the resource bin.)
- Watch some of the youth reflection videos on the Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) website (alis.alberta.ca/youthreflections).
- Also included in the resource bin are literacy-based activities, website addresses for other resources and lots of ideas of fun things to do together.
- Another valuable resource is your mentoring teacher and/or teacher liaison who has excellent ideas and solutions and also hears from other mentors what works well in other matches.
- Your student's teacher may be someone you would like to approach and ask if there is anything you can help your mentee with.
- Speaking of other mentors, we would like to encourage you to approach your fellow mentors and ask them what they find is helpful to do with their mentee.

Solutions to Challenges

The four main points in tackling challenges that you face in your match are as follows:

Be flexible	Set limits and boundaries	Ask for assistance	Have fun
Be willing to change activities and realizing your mentee may be having a bad day.	Remember it is okay to say, "No." Feel free to set limits by giving your student a choice, yet you control the parameters of the choices you offer.	If in doubt in any situation, do not hesitate to speak with school personnel or mentoring teacher/teacher liaison.	We want your student's experience with you to be enjoyable and fun. Your visit is something we want them to look forward to.

SECTION 4

Nurturing Your Mentee's Positive Sense of Self

Building Self-Esteem

A positive sense of self is the feeling of self-worth—that we can handle our self and the environment with competence. It is the feeling that "I am somebody and I matter."

A positive sense of self is enhanced by:	As a mentor, you could:
▪ being in touch with yourself and your personal history ▪ being part of a family and community	▪ share your interests, hobbies, future plans and life goals ▪ teach the value of family background and that one can move beyond this background if needed
▪ recognizing your own strengths, uniqueness and challenges	▪ explore and identify you and your mentee's strengths, talents, hobbies, career goals and interests
▪ having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to control one's own life	▪ model problem-solving and encourage mentee to set their own goals and work towards them
▪ having positive role models	▪ be a positive role model

Characteristics of Individuals with Positive Sense of Self

Individuals with a positive sense of self tend to:

- take a more active and assertive approach to meeting the demands of home, school and the community
- have greater confidence that they will succeed
- be well-liked by their peers
- participate in more independent activities
- defend themselves well against bullying behaviour
- possess greater confidence in their ability to deal with events
- have less anxiety and are less likely to be negatively influenced by the opinion and judgements of others

The impact of mentorship on youth resiliency outcomes was rated **very high** by most individuals who were mentored as youth.

A Positive Sense of Self is Important

Do the children you work with like themselves? Do they think others like them? Do they feel good about being them?

The answers to these questions are important. A child's sense of self has a strong influence on the child's educational success, behaviour and overall development.

Helping Children Develop a Positive Sense of Self

As mentors and role-models, there is much that we can do to ensure that the children we work with develop confidence and respect for themselves.

We can say encouraging things such as

Let's do it together

What do you think?

Thank you

We can reinforce children's positive efforts, whether in learning or in attitudes toward others. When we do this, we will be contributing to the development of their positive sense of self.

My father knew all my faults, but to hear him talk (and in my presence, at that) you would think I had few equals. He showed in a hundred ways that he approved of me. When I disappointed him, he never showed anger, but instead assured me that he knew I would do better next time, that I could do great things. Everyone should have one person somewhere in his life like my father.

William Jefferies

Mentors' Top 10 Ways to Build Mentees' Positive Sense of Self

1. Find out what is important to mentees, including some of their favourite things.
2. Be positive and encouraging. Point out things done well and provide helpful feedback.
3. Create opportunities to succeed.
4. Create opportunities for your mentee to make choices (e.g., choose the activity or book you will read together).
5. Be a good role model to your mentee; they are always watching you!
6. Remember your mentee is a unique individual and should not be compared to other mentees.
7. Let your mentee know when she or he has taught you something new. Say thank you.
8. Be realistic with your expectations of your mentee. Help them set reasonable goals.
9. Allow mentees the freedom to make mistakes but also encourage them not to be defeated by these mistakes.
10. Smile when you arrive and leave to show you are happy to spend time with your mentee.

Enhancing Positive Sense of Self

Encouraging the Deed

Verbal

- I like the way you…
- You're good at…
- You sure know how to…
- Boy, look at all those…
- I like the way you handled that!
- It looks as if you worked very hard on…
- That's quite a good job. I can see that you…

Non-Verbal

- Smile
- Wink
- Pat on the back or arm
- Nod
- High five
- Fist bump

Appreciation Recognition

- Thanks for…
- I really appreciate…
- It was kind of you to…
- That helped a lot last session yesterday when you…
- I noticed how you…
- I thought it was super when you helped me with…
- Great, you did…without me even telling you.

Encouraging Further Effort

- That's a big job…
- Gee! That's a bit of a challenge but I know you can do it.
- It sure looks like you did hard work.
- What a job!
- You've made a good start.
- Wow, you're improving.
- I see you're getting ready to…
- You're all set!
- Great! Now you're ready to tackle…That's a good beginning!
- Keep it up. You're on the right track!

Self-Evaluation

- You must be pleased with…
- That must give you a good feeling!
- I see you're very pleased with…
- You are pretty proud of…
- What were some of the things you felt good about today?
- Sounds like you have some ideas on how to improve in…
- I bet that gives you a neat feeling…
- Sounds like you're excited…
- Sounds like you have learned…

Adapted from: Stay in School/l'Ecole Avant Tout, Government of Canada Initiative, 1996.

SECTION 5

Child Safety

Child abuse includes the **physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or neglect** of a child by a parent, guardian or other caregiver that may result in a physical injury or emotional and psychological harm to the child.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate use of force on a child's body that may result in an injury. Physical abuse can be connected to punishment or confused with a method of discipline.

Signs that a child may have experienced physical abuse include the following:

- unexplained bruises, welts, cuts or abrasions
- unexplained small circular burns (cigarette burns)
- unwillingness to tell you how an injury occurred
- unwillingness to have you talk to his or her teacher about an injury

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a deliberate and persistent attack on a child's sense of self. It may involve threats and intimidation, shaming and name-calling, isolation, and withdrawal of affection.

Children who have experienced emotional abuse are often overly fearful of making mistakes, wary of new situations, and may have difficulty trusting others.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any sexual exploitation of a child, whether or not it is consented to. It includes behaviour of a sexual nature towards a child by another child or adult. Sexual abuse is often difficult to identify because children are often abused by a parent, relative or trusted adult-figure who has threatened the child "not to tell" and to "keep the secret."

Signs that a child may have experienced sexual abuse include the following:

- has detailed knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate for the child's age
- exhibits sexually precocious behaviour, or, creates artwork involving sexually explicit body parts or sexually abusive details

What to Do if a Child Discloses

If a child tells you about abuse:

- **Listen openly.** Remain calm and avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to shut down or stop talking.
- **Do not press for information or details.** Listen carefully and do not interrupt the child. Respect what they tell you but do not ask questions or prompt. At this point it is important to focus on the child's own words and recollections.
- **Let them know they've done the right thing.** Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this.
- **Say you believe them.** A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them.
- **Explain what you'll do next.** Explain to the child you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help.
- **Don't try to talk to the child's family or any person the child identified as being involved in the abuse.** This is a serious issue that needs to be handled by Children and Families Services or the police.
- **Report the disclosure immediately.** The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** You have a responsibility to share this information with the adults at the school and you also have an obligation to NOT share it with anyone else, including other mentors.

Reporting a Disclosure

You do not have to prove that abuse has taken place as long as you have reasonable grounds for the suspicions and are reporting your observations based on your work with the child.

As an in-school mentor, you should report any suspicions or disclosures directly to the teacher liaison at your mentee's school.

DO NOT LEAVE THE SCHOOL WITHOUT SPEAKING WITH A RESPONSIBLE ADULT AT YOUR MENTEE'S SCHOOL.

As an in-school mentor, you are required to connect with your mentoring teacher or teacher liaison immediately after speaking with the staff at your mentee's school.

There will always be a teacher liaison present in the school during your sessions. The school will deal with the abuse disclosure. After making your verbal report to the school authorities, you may want to jot down some notes: the date and place of your conversation with the child is important, and details on what the child has reported using the actual words the child used.

Each disclosure is dealt with on an individual basis. Depending on the circumstances, Children and Families Services and/or the police will be involved. The investigation and follow-up will be confidential and school staff will not be able to share any further information with you.

Creating a Safe Environment

There are **sensible ways for mentors to continue to show warmth to children while taking precautions to create a safe environment**. The following guidelines will help you protect yourself as a mentor:

- Touch children ONLY on safe places on their bodies: the back, the head and the shoulders are acceptable. Avoid private places; they are not acceptable: the buttocks, breasts, thighs or groin.
- If a child is experiencing pain or feeling ill, take them to the school office. If an examination is necessary, it can be conducted by school staff.
- If a child is sad and needs to be comforted, show affection by placing your arm around a shoulder and give a gentle squeeze. It is inappropriate to hold or cuddle the child—leave this to the family.
- When meeting with your student, ensure you are in a designated or approved area of the school, in view of others.
- Sexually-explicit conversations are not appropriate. If children ask any questions about sexuality, let them know that this is not a question for you, but rather a question for their parent or guardian. You should let the teacher liaison at the school know these questions came up, and also discuss this with your mentoring teacher.

Always respect the boundaries of the mentee you are matched with

Your mentee's boundaries must always be respected and a mentor is never to go beyond the "comfort zone" of the mentee. Be alert to your mentee's messages about their own personal space and the extent to which they are comfortable, if at all, with physical closeness. For some children, even the briefest and least intrusive physical contact is not comfortable. Accept them the way they are and adjust your own behaviour accordingly.

It is important that as a visitor in the school, you demonstrate behaviour that is respectful and considered. Consider how your behaviour looks to other adults and children who observe you. What may have been perfectly innocent and well intentioned on your part may look completely different to someone else. Err on the side of caution and avoid being drawn into a potentially compromising situation that could be misinterpreted.

No secrets ever!

Children should not have any conversations or actions with mentors that they cannot share with their parents, guardians and teachers.

SECTION 6

Supporting Learning

Learning Styles and Preferences

Every person learns differently and no person has a single learning style. Learning styles typically refer to how a student tends to use their senses—including seeing, hearing and moving—to learn.

Learning preferences is a broader term and considers the wide range of conditions that affect learning, from the physical environment (e.g., a quiet or noisy room), to interactions with others (e.g., working alone or with a group) to specific kinds of materials, processes and activities.

Rather than trying to label your mentee (or yourself) as a single kind of learner, try and find out as much as possible about how you both learn, and then use this information to help structure activities and provide supports.

Learning styles and preferences change over time in response to ongoing experiences. One style or preference is not better than another. The way in which we learn can vary across tasks and situations. For example, a student might like to work on their own in math but prefer group work in social studies. The same student might learn best with hands-on experiences in science but in language arts they do better when they can discuss their ideas with a partner. Individuals also differ in the strengths of their preferences. Some learners can shift easily between different ways of learning, while others might be less flexible.

When working on unfamiliar and/or challenging tasks, students will be more confident and motivated if they are able to work in their areas of strength. At the same time, students need experiences that stretch them beyond their preferences and help them develop a wider repertoire of learning skills.

Your job as a mentor is match how you *do* an activity with:

- your mentee's personal learning preferences
- the type of activity (e.g., discussion, game, reflection)
- the resources you have (e.g., access to related books, pictures, games and other materials plus time and space available)
- the situation (such as whether you're working one-on-one or in a small groups)

Make Activities Meaningful

Mentees will be most engaged in activities when they feel the activities are relevant to their life and are worthwhile doing. When introducing new activities discuss the activity's purpose with your mentee and help them understand how it applies to their current experience and/or has value for the future.

Tips and Strategies for Supporting Learning

Structure activities to engage and sustain your mentee's attention

- Get to know your mentee so you can choose activities that match their personal interests.
- As much as possible, plan activities ahead of time and have all needed materials ready to go so you can spend the majority of your mentoring session interacting with your mentee and working on the joint activity.
- Look for ways to build choice into activities so your mentee can have input into such things as what you do, how long you do it, and in what you order you do it.
- Build stretch breaks (or wiggle time) into your activity. Every ten to fifteen minutes take a short one- to three-minute break with your mentee and move.

Give clear and concise directions.

- Before starting a task, help your mentee clear working space and have only needed materials in view.
- Review the overall directions so your mentee understands the end goal.
- Use language that is familiar to introduce new concepts.
- If print directions are available, consider taking turns reading the directions aloud and then display them in the work space so you can both use them as a reference throughout the activity.
- Check for understanding by asking the mentee to repeat the directions in their own words.
- Break longer tasks into shorter, easy-to-manage steps.
- Model what to do by "thinking aloud" and talking through the process.

Create multiple opportunities for participation

- Help mentees connect new learning and activities with previous knowledge and experiences.
- Explore different ways to get a task done (e.g., can you make a list, draw a picture, act it out?)
- Give your mentee time to respond. When you ask them a question or invite them to do a task, quietly wait for them to respond (maybe even counting silently up to 30) before prompting them again or telling them the answer. Some people need more time than others to think about they are going to do; make sure you give your mentee as much "wait time" as they need.
- If a mentee is reluctant to complete a task on their own, offer to:
  - model the task ("I'll do it, you watch, then you do it.")
  - share the task ("I'll do this question, you do the next question.")

Language Development

Talking with your mentee, reciting rhymes and poems, telling stories, jokes and riddles, and playing word games to help build language and contribute to reading skills.

To understand the books they read, children need to build their vocabulary and talk about and explore new ideas. When reading a book with your mentee, build in natural opportunities to talk about the meaning of unfamiliar words, and new ideas. Experiencing quality children's literature helps mentees learn about the world and their place in it.

Making Reading Fun

Mentoring sessions are an opportunity for your mentees to experience reading as a positive experience, no matter what their current reading ability is.

Reading books together is a wonderful way to model that reading is fun. One effective strategy for building a mentee's reading confidence and fluency is through paired reading.

Paired reading

To begin. Let the mentee hold the book so that both partners can see the words. The mentor partner places a finger under the first word of the text and mentee and mentor begin reading aloud together. Try to read as a duet, not ahead or behind one another. The mentor sweeps their finger smoothly beneath the words to guide the duet (or a paper marker could be used.)

Solo reading. Decide on a signal (e.g., tapping on the table) for the mentee to indicate they would like to try reading alone. When the mentee signals, the mentor allows the mentee to read alone but continues to follow the print. Quiet encouragement like 'uh-huh' and head nods tells the mentee that the mentor is actively reading along.

Helping with mistakes. If the mentee makes a mistake, point to the word, say it, repeat the work with the mentee and then continue reading together. If the mentee struggles with a word, wait at least five seconds to give them an opportunity to try it on their own. After this wait time, point to the word, say it, and then put a finger back on the text. Repeat the word together and continue to read as a duo until the mentee signals to read along again.

Talk about it. As you read the book together, take breaks to discuss interesting words, new information, and illustrations.

Reading Aloud to Your Mentee

Most of us enjoy having someone read to us and children are no exception, even those in Grade 6. When opportunities present themselves, read with expression in your voice and ask open-ended questions at the end. When you read to your mentee, you provide access to books and content that may be beyond their reading ability but feature concepts they can still understand and enjoy.

SECTION 7

Resources

General Handbook Information

Refinement and development of existing content was in collaboration with Big Brother Big Sister of Edmonton and Area and Alberta Education. Original manual was received from Big Brother Big Sister of North Texas with permission to use the content.

albertamentors.ca

enspire.com/apps/pan/movie.html

Resiliency

www.resiliencyinitiatives.ca

www.wested.org/cs/we/view/u/339

The Resilience Research Centre (RCC), www.resilienceresearch.org "What is Resilience?"

Ceridian Corporation. (2002, 2006), *Bouncing Back: Staying resilient through the challenges of Life, 12, 26-28, 37-38.*

Garringer, M., & Jucovy, L. (2007), *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors*. The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & The National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Zimmerman, R., *Creating an Organizational Culture of Resiliency: Why and How*. Presentation. Resiliency Initiatives and Alberta Mentoring Partnership, 2009

Developmental Assets

Damon, W. (1997), The youth charter: How communities can work together to raise standards for all our children. New York: Free Press.

Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. C. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. Science, 277, 918–924.

Peter L. Benson, Peter C. Scales, Stephen F. Hamilton, and Arturo Sesma Jr. with Kathryn L. Hong and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Positive Youth Development So Far: *Core Hypotheses and Their Implications for Policy and Practice*. Insights & Evidence: *Promoting healthy children, youth and communities*. Search Institute, November, 2006, Volume 3, No. 1

www.search-institute.org/system/files/InsightsEvidence-11-06.pdf

Career Coaching

Learning Clicks
http://learningclicks.alberta.ca/

This is Your Life – For Jr./Sr. High aged students
https://alis.alberta.ca/media/2095/yourlifestudent-english.pdf

Imagine Your Life – For students aged Grade 4 -6
https://alis.alberta.ca/media/3009/imagineyourlife-student.pdf

Time to Choose – For students Grade 10 -12
https://alis.alberta.ca/media/2998/timetochoose.pdf

Money 101 - For students Grade 10 -12
https://alis.alberta.ca/media/697139/money-101.pdf

SAMPLE

Friendship Agreement for School-based Mentoring

Volunteer Mentor:

- I have participated in the Mentor Training and understand my responsibilities as a mentor.
- I agree that I will carry out the duties required, to the best of my ability.
- I will make every effort to ensure the emotional and physical well-being of my mentee.
- If I have concerns about the safety and well-being of my mentee I will discuss these concerns immediately with the Mentoring Liaison.
- I will respect the privacy of my mentee and their family, and of other students at my mentee's school.

Mentee:

- I have participated in the Mentee training and understand my rights and responsibilities.
- I will remember my mentee is not allowed to hurt me or make me feel embarrassed or sad. (And I will talk with my teacher or another adult if I am uncomfortable with my mentor.)

Together:

- We agree that we will work hard to meet once a week for an hour.
- We agree that mentoring is about having one-to-one time together (and having fun!)
- We understand that we will set a goal to work towards for the year.
- We will treat each other with respect and kindness and will work on building a safe friendship.
- We understand there are to be no secrets between mentees and mentors.
- We will follow all safety rules and guidelines of _____ (name of school)
- We understand that confidentiality and privacy laws forbid us from using any images, photos or recordings of each other or of our mentoring activities, without the proper release forms. This means no photos or images can appear on web-based sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.) that may be viewed by others.

Mentor signature

Mentee signature

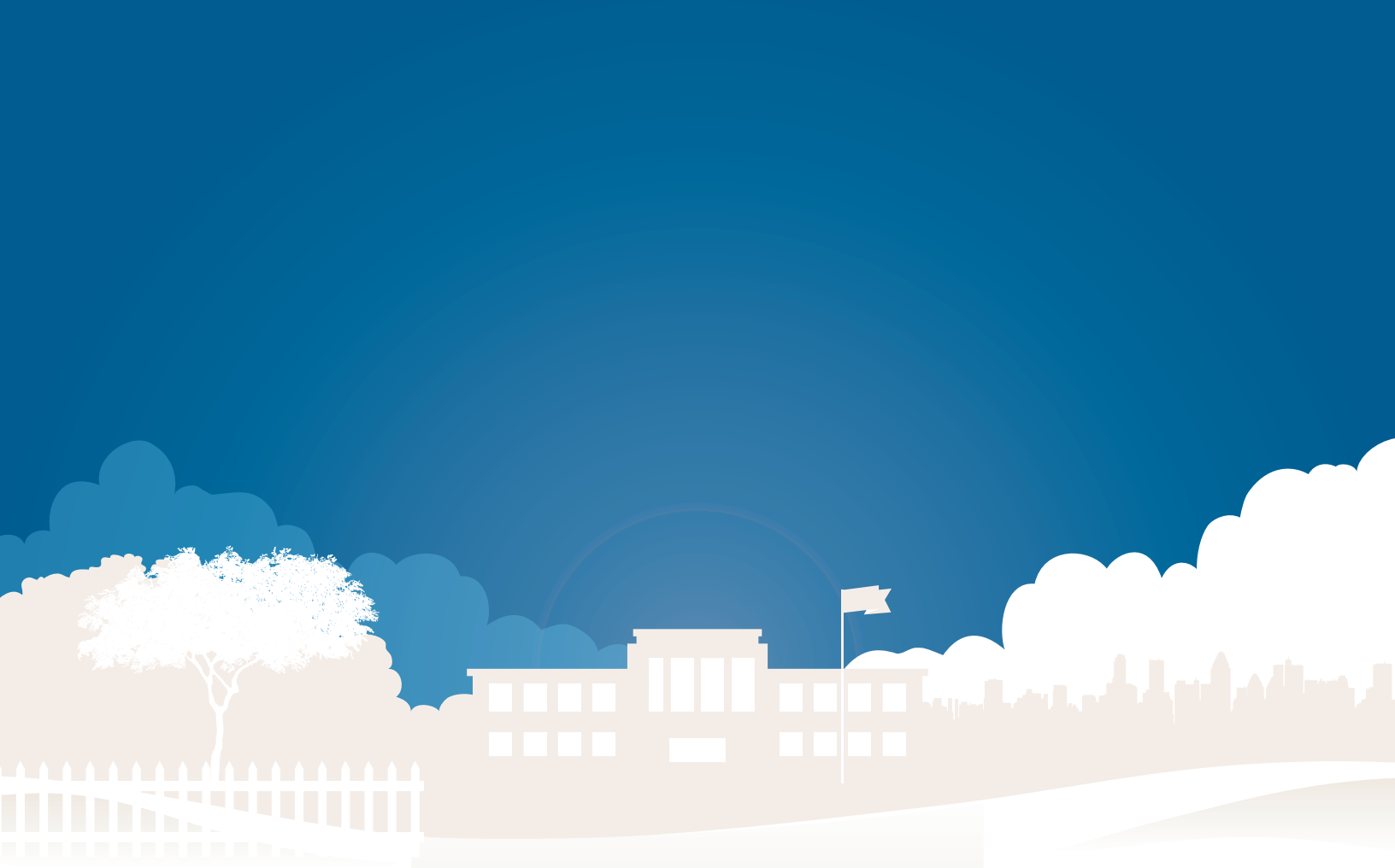
Mentoring liaison signature

Date

NOTES

I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.
Chinese proverb

This is a wonderful program. The kids that are chosen are always excited and willing to participate."
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER



This High School Teen Mentoring Handbook will provide you with valuable information on how to be a mentor, including:

- building a great mentoring relationship
- surprises and myths about mentoring
- developing your conversation and listening skills
- supporting your mentee's learning
- protecting your mentee