Making the GRADE

A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement into Mentoring Programs and Relationships

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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Making the Grade

A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement Into Mentoring Programs and Relationships

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Authors:
Amy Cannata, Michael Garringer,
Patti MacRae,
Dennis Wakeland, NWREL

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Mentoring Resource Center
c/o EMT Associates
771 Oak Avenue Parkway, Suite 2
Folsom CA 95630

EMT Toll-free number: 877-579-4788
E-mail: edmentoring@emt.org
Web: www.edmentoring.org

Mentoring Resource Center:
Joël Phillips, Officer-in-Charge
Judy Taylor, Project Director
Eve McDermott, Director

Authors:
Amy Cannata, Michael Garringer, Patti MacRae,
and Dennis Wakeland

Editor:
Michael Garringer

Technical Editor:
Eugenia Cooper Potter

Desktop Publishing:
Dennis Wakeland

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PREFACE

Making the Grade: A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement Into Mentoring Programs and Relationships is intended to help the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) mentoring grantees meet the goal of improving academic performance in youth participating in their mentoring programs. The content of this publication is designed to meet the specific needs of OSDFS-funded mentoring programs. Given the wide variety of methods that OSDFS mentoring grantees are employing in an effort to nurture academic outcomes in their mentoring relationships, this publication focuses on two areas that are widely applicable and beneficial to the grantees: 1) program design, planning, and implementation; and 2) mentor training and skill development.

Making the Grade is written with program coordinators and other staff in mind. It is designed to help them structure services to encourage academic development. It also provides staff with useful training content that can give mentors the skills and understanding needed to help facilitate student learning and academic performance.

We assume that for the vast majority of OSDFS mentoring programs, adult volunteers will fill the mentor role. For the programs that are doing peer and cross-age mentoring, we weave in specific information that will be relevant to them where applicable.

Making the Grade draws from existing research and best practices in youth mentoring, specifically school-based mentoring. It also looks at relevant research and program practices in the areas of tutoring, service learning, after-school programming, and youth development. It can help mentoring program staff build the solid mentoring relationships that lead to improved academic outcomes, while also serving as facilitators of other learning opportunities for participating youth.

INTRODUCTION

As youth mentoring has grown in the United States, it has been used to achieve an increasingly complex set of youth outcomes and program objectives. From halting gang violence to preparing youth for college, from getting girls interested in science and math careers to helping foster-care youth make the transition to independent living, formal mentoring relationships have been used to change lives in countless ways. Part of the beauty of mentoring is its flexibility and adaptability across program structures and desired youth outcomes.

School-based mentoring has enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years. This is partly due to some intensive efforts on the part of national mentoring providers such as Big Brothers Big Sisters to increase their connections to schools and to broaden their scope beyond the traditional community-based model. There has also been increased interest in the concepts of school-community partnerships and using in-school volunteers as a supplement to the traditional school day.

The United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, has invested considerable time, money, and resources in its Mentoring Programs initiative and the school-based mentoring grantees it has funded at the local level. This initiative is the first large, federally funded, school-based mentoring effort. As such, it is important that individual grantees work to develop high-quality mentoring programs that are capable of achieving the many goals of the initiative, including improved academic performance and attendance in mentored youth.

The purpose of this guidebook is to teach OSDFS mentoring grantees how to achieve these academically themed goals. To accomplish this, programs will need a thorough understanding of what constitutes a quality mentoring program and how to foster the types of mentoring relationships that find success. Programs should also explore how they fit in with the other services and educational supports provided by the school and community.

Making the Grade is about school-based mentoring, not creating a tutoring program, morphing into an after-school service, or turning your volunteers into quasi-teachers. It is about making connections to the educational resources at your disposal, getting your mentors ready for the road that lies ahead, and being intentional about addressing the academic performance of the youth in your mentoring program.

The Context of NCLB and GPRA Indicators

As with all programming that comes from the U.S. Department of Education, the Mentoring Programs initiative aligns with the goals and principles of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), with the objective of creating greater accountability, flexibility, and performance in the nation's schools. The NCLB Act's broad goal is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

OSDFS-funded grantees should view the improvement of academic performance as a primary outcome of their efforts. Your particular program may be trying to minimize the effects of poverty, curb drug use, or reduce juvenile delinquency, all worthy goals. But programs should also incorporate academic achievement into their core mission.

This shared goal is reinforced through the Government Performance and Reporting Act (GPRA). As you may remember from your grant application, the OSDFS Mentoring Programs grants have specific GPRA indicators. The GPRA indicators are the baseline goals the Office of Management and Budget looks at in determining the efficacy of all federal programs. For this initiative the specific GPRA indicators are:

> The percentage of student/mentor matches that are sustained for a period of twelve months will increase by: 0% by 2005; 25% by 2006; 50% by 2007;
>
> The percent of mentored students who demonstrate improvement in core academic subjects as measured by grade point average after 12 months will increase: 5% by 2005; 15% by 2006; 30% by 2007; and
>
> The percentage of mentored students who have unexcused absences from school will decrease 10% by 2005; 30% by 2006; 40% by 2007.
>
> (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004.)

OSDFS mentoring grantees should collect data toward progress in these areas.

The context of NCLB and the GPRA indicators gives your program guidance in its mission. It points you toward what will be considered a successful program. *Making the Grade* will provide you with research and practical advice that can help you meet these goals.

How This Book Is Organized

When looking at how U.S. Department of Education mentoring programs can foster academic improvement, two areas of focus become clear: the design and implementation of the program itself, and the preparation, training, and post-match activities of the volunteers and youth.

Section I examines how your program can properly focus on academic progress. It starts with a look at what we know, and may not know, about the relationship between youth mentoring and academic outcomes. It explores research into the types of mentoring relationships that work best, and how a school-based program can create them. It also examines how many aspects of your programming, from initial recruitment through final evaluation, are affected by these academic outcomes. It also offers strategies for connecting your mentoring efforts to other educational supports, such as tutoring, after-school programs, and community-learning environments. In short, it looks at the role your program structure plays in helping youth academically.

Section II addresses academic mentoring at the relationship level, offering content that you can incorporate into your mentor trainings and orientations so that mentors have the skills necessary to help the youth with studying, tutoring, homework completion, and test taking, all within a mentoring relationship context. It also offers handouts that mentors will find useful, and suggestions on activities that they can do to improve the youth's performance in school and their attitudes about learning.

The Appendix offers sample forms, supplemental information, and references to other resources that can help your program, and your youth, meet academic goals.

Who This Book Is for

This book will be most useful to program coordinators, school liaisons, and other individuals who have the authority to plan and

implement the mentoring program. While these individuals may not have authority to make policy changes, restructure school programming, or sign memorandums of understanding (MOUs), these positions are typically the ones in school-based mentoring programs that are responsible for coordinating the mentoring program and building connections to other school services.

Much variety exists in how OSDFS-funded mentoring programs are designed, staffed, and run. Some are embedded within the school; others are simply built upon referrals between the school and a community- or faith-based program. Some use peer mentors, while others bring adults onto campus. Urban and rural, large and small, and aimed at a myriad of youth populations, every program has different resources at its disposal and different staffing patterns. The advice in this book is designed to let you work within your specific context to craft solutions that fit your circumstances.

Regardless of who uses this book at your program, it's important to remember that no *one* person can make a program successful. Incorporating academic and educational resources and strategies into your mentoring program is all about collaboration, cooperation, and working with other school administrators, school staff, and community leaders to come up with innovative solutions and new learning opportunities for kids. So remember that the planning and action you undertake in pursuit of these academic goals is inherently going to be a team effort.

SECTION I:
PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT

What the Research Tells Us

When designing, structuring, or revising services, mentoring programs should always make decisions that are grounded in research and available best practices. This is not only good common sense, it is increasingly important within the context of NCLB, which places a premium on scientifically based research as a basis for the services schools provide.

There are two core aspects to mentoring research:

> **What**—the outcomes that youth (and to a lesser extent volunteers, parents, and program staff) receive from participating in the program.
>
> **How**—the structure, systems, and activities of the program and the volunteers that lead to the "what."

Starting with the "what," there are several key findings about the impact that youth mentoring can have on academic performance. Note that these impacts stretch across grades, relationships, attendance, and classroom behavior:

- In the landmark Big Brothers Big Sisters Impact Study, some groups of mentored youth were shown to have modest improvement in grades compared to a non-mentored control group (Tierney and Grossman, 1995).

- Another study found that mentoring had a positive effect on participating youth who entered the program with lower grades (Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Waris, and Wise, 2005).

- Other research studies indicated that grades for mentored youth were either affected sporadically (Blakely, Menon, and Jones,

1995) or not at all (Aseltine, Dupre, and Lamlein, 2000). More truly experimental research is needed to understand the direct correlation between mentoring program participation and grade improvement.

- A 2001 study of three school-based monitoring efforts in Florida found that mentored youth were promoted at a higher rate than non-mentored students (Grisé, Watters, Baker, and Ferguson, 2004).

- Research indicates that mentoring has a positive impact on grades and other academic indicators by improving the relationship between the youth and the parent and by boosting the youths' perception of their own academic abilities (Rhodes, and Grossman, 2000).

- Several mentoring studies concluded that mentoring had a positive impact on the number of unexcused absences (Tierney et al., 1995; Aseltine, 2000).

- In addition to affecting grades and attendance, mentoring also helps boost student attitudes about school (LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, and Taylor, 1996; Portwood and Ayres, 2005). It also can have a positive impact on youths' sense of connectedness to school (Portwood and Ayres), which research shows leads to other positive outcomes, including increased academic performance (Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, and Saylor, 1999).

- The impact of mentoring can also be felt in the classroom, not just on tests and attendance sheets. Teachers in one study indicated that mentored youth were less likely to engage in disruptive behavior and more likely to be engaged in what was going on in the classroom (Blakely et al., 1995). Another study showed mentoring positively impacted disciplinary incidents and supervisions (Grisé et al., 2004).

A Note About Peer Mentoring

For the purposes of this publication, we are making a distinction between peer mentoring and the many other common peer helper/leader/tutor programs that can be found in K–12 education. We are also assuming that there will be a meaningful gap in age between the mentor and the mentee. With these in mind, we borrow the following definition from prominent mentoring researcher Michael Karcher:

> *Peer mentoring refers to a sustained (long term), usually formalized (i.e., program-based), developmental relationship. . . . The peer's goal is to help guide the younger mentee's development in domains such as interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and conventional connectedness and attitudes.* (Karcher, 2005a)

A growing body of evidence indicates that youth mentoring programs can have a positive impact on a wide range of education and school-related behaviors and outcomes, including the grades and attendance issues that OSDFS Mentoring grants focus on. This is good news! Mentored kids have an opportunity to do better in school, feel better about school, and work more effectively with their parents and teachers around schoolwork because of the

mentors your program provides. Of course, this is only half the story. None of these outcomes speak to *how* the programs achieved this. Much like this book, the "how" research can be divided into the program level and relationship level.

Program Practices

In their journal article "Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs for Youth: A Meta-Analytic Review," researcher David DuBois and colleagues make a strong case that mentoring program structure and processes lead to improved outcomes. His meta-analysis, which essentially looked at the available scientific studies on youth mentoring programs as a whole, showed that the programs that followed the recommended "best practices," such as those found in guiding documents like the *Elements of Effective Practices*, were the ones that built meaningful youth-mentor relationships and that showed the most impact on participating youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper, 2002).

It should come as no surprise that quality programs produce quality results. This is true whether your outcomes are related to reducing teen pregnancies, preparing youth for careers, keeping kids off drugs, or boosting academic performance. The research clearly shows that following established best practices for running your program will enable you to meet these academic-related goals.

Research on Peer Mentoring

There is some evidence that peer mentors can have a very positive influence on younger youth. It also seems that peer mentors themselves gain benefits from the experience. Among the more prominent research findings:

- **Peer mentoring can show a positive effect on connectedness to school, teachers, and parents (Karcher, 2005b; Karcher, Davis, and Powell, 2002; Westerman, 2002).**
- **One of Karcher's studies found evidence of positive effects on academic achievement (Karcher et al., 2002).**
- **Another study, this one of a combined peer mentoring/tutoring effort, found improvements in test scores, grade point averages, and course pass rates. The mentoring component also improved social integration, as shown in improved attendance and attitudes and decreased disciplinary referrals (Powell, 1997).**
- **Another study addressing peer mentoring for violence prevention showed a positive effect on classroom behaviors (Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, and Christoffel, 1999).**
- **As with adult-to-youth mentoring, an increased connection to parents may be something that leads to academic outcomes. In one peer mentoring study, reading achievement for mentees was influenced by increases in connectedness to parents that was attributable to peer mentors (Karcher et al., 2002).**
- **These programs also seem to benefit the youth serving as mentors. One evaluation found that peer mentors had improved academic achievement and attitudes toward school (Powell, 1997).**

Relationship Factors

One might assume that mentoring programs can also achieve these goals by having their mentors focus prominently on educational and school-related activities: tutoring, test preparation, homework

completion, remedial instruction, etc. While those activities are all beneficial to students, research indicates that mentoring programs seem to make their magic happen in a different way.

First and foremost, the mentor is a friend. The mentor's role is to provide constant, caring support of the young person across all areas of his or her life. While the journey of each individual mentoring match is unique, each mentoring relationship is built on trust, understanding, respect, and compassion, regardless of where that journey leads. It is not surprising, then, that the mentoring research points toward the success of relationships that put the connection and bond between mentor and mentee at the heart of the match activities.

Prescriptive vs. Developmental Solution

Jacyne knows if she fails her next math test—and she probably will—she'll flunk math. And if she does, she's determined to drop out of school.

Prescriptive solution: Jacyne's mentor is working with her to review for the test, has contacted the school tutoring program for additional help, and has arranged with the math teacher to get copies of supplemental homework assignments.

Developmental solution: Jacyne's mentor is helping Jacyne build goals for the future that she's excited about and that will show her the value of what she's learning in school. And she's helping Jacyne develop study skills and and self-discipline that will help her with all her schoolwork, not just math.

Programs should remember that prescriptive mentoring helps in the short term—and certainly has its purpose—but developmental mentoring will help Jacyne develop the self-confidence and self-reliance she'll need over the long haul. It will also help form the strong bond that makes mentoring work.

Prominent mentoring researcher Jean Rhodes describes the impact of a mentor as coming from three things:

- Enhancing social skills and emotional well-being
- Improving cognitive skills through dialogue and listening
- Serving as a role model and advocate

(Rhodes, 2002, p. 35)

Clearly, these roles are not defined by specific activities. They are defined by the relationship itself and the communication that develops between mentor and mentee. So the broad perspective is that the relationship is the starting point from which other outcomes emerge.

Prescriptive and Developmental Relationships

The need to ground mentoring in the relationship itself is prominently discussed in several other pieces of research, including the aforementioned BBBS Impact Study, most notably in *Building Relationships with Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. The research explored in that study divides mentoring relation-

ships into two categories: prescriptive and developmental.

Prescriptive mentoring relationships (sometimes called instructional relationships) are ones in which the needs of the youth are identified early on and made the focal point of match goals and activities. Mentors are, in a way, tasked with "fixing problems" that the youth has. This is not necessarily intentional on the part of the program. Sometimes the volunteer brings this mindset to the table out of the goodness of her heart and a desire to help. Other times the program fosters this approach in an effort to reach certain programming benchmarks. In an academic context, a program might build prescriptive relationships around youth issues such as reading comprehension, discipline and behavioral problems, skipping school, poor test-taking skills, and a whole host of other things that the mentor would address through her activities with the youth.

Developmental mentoring relationships are focused around the bond between mentor and youth, rather than around "fixing" the youth or solving problems. It's not that the relationship does not have goals or meaningful activities. It's just that the activities are always grounded in creating a friendship. Thus, an hour talking and connecting is just as, if not more, beneficial than an hour spent finishing homework. The context of the relationship is the total emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development of the young person, and specific issues are just part of the whole.

Research is pretty clear in showing youth mentoring to be most effective when structured around a developmental relationship, rather than a purely prescriptive, or instructional one. The BBBS study found

Prescriptive vs. Developmental Peer Mentoring Relationships

One might assume that peer mentors would be unable to form close developmental relationships with younger youth. But clearly through sibling, extended family, and other relationships, this is not the case. Kids have an amazing capacity to care for others with empathy and determination. It may take extra attention and supervision on the part of the program, but peer mentoring can unlock mentoring's magic through a combination of relationship-building activities and activities built around mentee needs, just like adult mentors.

In his research, Michael Karcher has found some evidence that suggests "consistent, empathetic relationships with adolescent mentors can influence changes in self-esteem, social skills, and connectedness" (Karcher, 2005a).

Peer mentors will not bring the deep life experience to the relationship that adult mentors do. But they do wield tremendous influence over their younger peers. Instead of using this influence to make their mentees do things in a prescriptive way, peer mentors should instead model positive behavior, provide general guidance, and offer appropriate solutions based on the needs of their mentee. In other words, be a developmental support.

Karcher continues:

> Based on this perspective, cross-age peer mentoring, although predominantly implemented in school settings, should not focus solely on academic remediation of academic skill development, but include broader developmental aims such as instilling positive attitudes toward school. Similarly, [it] should not be limited to a focus on treating identified problems, but rather should provide a relational context in which youth might discuss their problems more informally (Karcher, 2005a).

So make sure that you give your peer matches a chance to grow, in addition to giving them a chance to get the homework done and the math test studied for. That relationship time just might be the key to unlocking those academic outcomes.

that prescriptive relationships often left youth and volunteers frustrated while failing to produce the supportive relationship the youth needed (Morrow and Styles, 1995). The youth who showed the best outcomes from the program were those who *felt closest to their mentors*, who had formed a solid bond. The relationships that had spent more time on "fixing" rather than on becoming close did not show as much improvement. These relationships tended to hurt youth self-esteem and prevented the youth from feeling supported. It seems that "mentors who are attuned with their mentees are likely to be in a better position to handle discussions around vulnerable topics without undermining the youngsters' sense of self-confidence" (Rhodes, 2005).

So, what do these research findings mean for OSDFS-funded mentoring programs?

Implications for Your OSDFS Mentoring Program

First and foremost, your program needs to follow the recommended best practices that the research shows lead to solid program outcomes. This means grounding your program in the structure recommended in publications such as the National Mentoring Partnership's *Elements of Effective Practice* and the National Mentoring Center's *Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring*. Much research specifically highlights the need for proper mentor screening, training, and support; the establishment of high expectations around the frequency and consistency of contact between the mentor and youth; and the close monitoring of matches as they progress (DuBois et al., 2002; Sipe, 1996). Later in this section we discuss all aspects of your program operations that are affected by this research.

At the relationship level, these research findings indicate that OSDFS-funded mentoring programs should promote a good balance between relationship-building activities and more direct educational support activities, such as tutoring, homework completion, and studying for tests. While programs should consider direct educational activities valuable, and encourage the match to engage in them as needed, they should not constitute the bulk of what the matches do together, nor should they undermine the building of close relationships. There still needs to be plenty of room for conversation, friendship, and unconditional support. As Jean Rhodes cautions in her book *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*, "school-based mentors' tendency to focus on academics often comes at the expense of the kinds of social activities that help build close bonds" (Rhodes, 2002). So keep in mind that the best way to meet those academic outcomes is through building solid mentoring relationships first, and then supplementing them with appropriate academic activities on a child-by-child basis.

Be sure that your mentors are clear on this as well. They are not teachers, and it is not their role to educate youth through instructional means. It's their job to be mentors. As a recent essay on mentoring adolescents put it:

> If the process through which mentors influence their [mentees] is one of imparting knowledge, the ability of the mentor to facilitate the [mentee's] performance is dependent on a) mentor's knowledge, and b) the skill with which to teach it. In contrast, if the process through which mentors influence their [mentees] is providing support, the determining factor is the experience of the person mentored (Darling, 2005).

In other words, your program will have a hard time achieving academic improvement in your youth if you force mentors into instructional roles in which they may not have the skills to succeed. Encourage your mentors to build that relationship first and to engage in other activities in a way that enhances the relationship, and doesn't subvert it.

This is not always easily done in a school-based mentoring environment. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and even parents may have strong opinions about what your program should be achieving and how. They may view your program as a "fixing" service that can tackle youth problem areas. Individuals may not understand why your matches are so often engaged in friendship-building conversation and activities, seemingly at the expense of direct academic supports such as tutoring or homework completion.

Part of your staff's job in implementing the program is to make sure that the other stakeholders understand what your program is hoping to achieve and how you are going about doing it. They need to understand the importance of developmental mentoring relationships and why your matches do not always focus on direct academic support activities. They need to understand that your mentors are not instructors; they are not even really tutors. There is more information on creating this shared vision later in this section.

In order to keep your matches developmentally focused, and away from the pitfalls that trouble more instructional ones, it is important to position your program as an advocate for, and facilitator of, other educational and learning opportunities. In other words, your program and your volunteers serve as a connecting point to a whole host of other school services and community-based learning environments. By connecting your program, either formally or informally, to other educational services, such as tutoring, after-school programs, or school clubs, you essentially free up your

mentors to be what they should be: mentors. Your volunteers should work with their youth on a variety of educational projects, and the last half of *Making the Grade* explores many ways to do that. But those activities should always be framed within the context of a supportive, non-judgmental, and caring relationship.

Thus, the magic of mentoring works somewhat indirectly. Improvements in the youth's academics may not come directly from the tutoring, studying, and test preparation activities your matches do together, although that may help some youth. Rather, it will likely come from providing the youth with broad support, increasing their self-esteem and feelings of confidence, improving their relationships with peers, parents, and teachers, and changing their attitudes about school and learning. It is these things that the research shows to be most important. So always remember that it is your job to build mentoring relationships that support the youth in all aspects of their life and personal development, not just the academic areas.

How Academic Goals Affect Program Services

As mentioned in the previous section, research clearly shows that your mentoring program should be grounded in best practices. This means that you have set up quality recruitment, screening, training, supervision, and evaluation services within your program. It also means that your staff is well trained and well supervised, and that everyone is clear on the policies, procedures, and guiding principles of your program.

Within this context, there are many aspects of your program operations that are affected by the academic goals of your OSDFS funding: youth intake, volunteer recruitment, pre-match orientation and training, making the match, providing and encouraging appropriate mentoring activities, supervision and support, program evaluation, and staff roles and responsibilities.

Keep in mind . . .

that your program has an approved structure inherently. That's how you won the grant in the first place! This section is not about compelling you to redesign your efforts. Rather, it is encouraging you to keep the quality of your mentoring relationships in mind as your program progresses. You simply need to remember that matches need to bond, first and foremost. You may want to take the time to review your matches' established goals and corresponding activities. There may be opportunities to make small adjustments in what you and your matches are doing developmentally.

Youth Intake

By now, your program should have established the criteria that youth must meet to participate in your program. While it is true that any young person can benefit from having a mentor, your program was created to provide services to a specific group of youth in your community or school system. With regard to academic issues, take the time to examine the school-related factors that go into accepting youth into your program. You should be collecting information from teachers, parents, counselors, and other interested parties when youth sign up for your program. Relevant information you may want to collect includes grade and testing data, disciplinary and behavioral information, attitudes about school and learning, and any educational/career interests the youth may have. You may also be able to collect information around academic areas of need (including broad things like reading comprehension, ELL, test-taking skills, and effective study habits, and specific things like fractions or geography). In short, you have to *know* your kids if you are to serve them well.

The information you collect can be invaluable in matching youth with an appropriate mentor. It can also help the mentor engage the youth in developmental activities that are tailored to meet specific academic needs. This information can also be helpful in determining when a child needs referral to other, more direct, academic

A Note About Mentoring and Tutoring

Many people in education have a hard time distinguishing between mentoring and tutoring. While mentoring programs and tutoring programs share many similarities, it is important that your program's staff, school personnel, parents, and even youth understand that there are many differences between the two. They are not the same.

Generally speaking, tutoring programs are very focused on improving performance in a specific academic area. While volunteer tutors are encouraged to put their relationship with the child at the heart of what they do, the nature of their relationships is often much more prescriptive than in mentoring relationships. Tutors are there to do a task with the youth. Thus, tutoring programs provide different levels of screening, training, monitoring, and support to volunteers. The activities they promote have a much tighter focus and a much more defined outcome.

This is not to discredit or negate the power of tutoring. Research shows tutoring programs to be amazing resources for young people who need help in specific academic areas (Moss, Swartz, Obeidallah, Stewart, and Greene, 2001). The principles of tutoring are grounded in trust, respect, and caring, just as they are in mentoring.

We simply bring up the difference here in an effort to clear up misunderstandings people may have about the similarities and differences between the two. The chart beginning on page A–2 of the Appendix can help clarify the similarities and differences at the program level. The handout on page 73 explains this for mentors at the relationship level.

Remember that your focus is on creating a mentoring program. You can be sure that there will be plenty of times when some of your mentors will engage in tutoring and other direct learning activities with their mentees. But that does not mean you are running a tutoring program. The focus of your program and your matches still needs to be on building developmental relationships that support youth across the board. In fact, you may find that creating a formal partnership with an existing tutoring program may be an effective way to provide your youth with the best of both worlds. Making these connections to other educational services is explored further later in this chapter.

help, such as tutoring or remedial instruction.

Your program should also discuss why this information is being collected with the youth. One of the problems that more "prescriptive" mentoring relationships can have is that the youth wind up feeling like they are failing or that they are "broken." Obviously, this can be very difficult for kids. Take time to let mentees know that you are asking them about school-related things because it's just a part of who they are and that their mentor is going to be their friend, not another teacher or parent figure. Setting this context of support early on can make it much easier to get youth buy-in, which is critical if mentors are ever to be acknowledged by the youth as trusted and valued parts of their lives.

Volunteer Recruitment

Depending on the academic information you collect from youth entering the program, you may wish to refine your volunteer recruitment strategies to find appropriate mentors. If your youth intake forms show that you have 20 kids who are interested in becoming lawyers, obviously that will drive who you recruit and how. If you have a number of kids who express an interest in a science career or who are having trouble in, say, math, then you might consider making a special effort to target individuals from those backgrounds.

Regardless of how targeted you get with recruitment around academic

themes, the most important thing to do is to recruit volunteers who are ready and able to fill that developmental role. If your recruitment pitch is focused around getting adults to help solve the problems of struggling kids, you run the risk of getting volunteers who will strive for prescriptive activities. They will be focused on "fixing" rather than befriending.

So, while recruiting individuals from specific fields or who have particular skills may be helpful in broadening youths' horizons and providing academic support in specific ways, it's most important to recruit individuals who can remain supportive, committed, and consistent in the mentoring support they provide, whatever activities are engaged in.

Pre-Match Orientation and Training

Once again, the theme of developmental relationships factors prominently in the training you provide volunteers prior to their being matched with youth. Programs need to ensure that their orientations and trainings properly prepare mentors for their developmental role. You may choose to also provide them with specific tips and strategies for studying together, preparing for tests, teaching effective study habits, and other educational tasks. We've included information that can help you do this in Section II. Matches will be engaging in these activities from time to time, and mentors will need the skills to do them effectively. But it is your job to make sure that mentors understand the place these activities have within the developmental context. *In addition to providing volunteers with particular skills, trainings are also a good time to spot "red flags" in volunteers who may be slipping into a prescriptive mindset.*

It will also be important to train your mentors on how to work with the youth's parents or guardians. As mentioned in the section on research, youth mentoring seems to help youth academically by, in part, improving the relationship they have with their parents. Thus, it is critical that mentors are able to communicate effectively and cooperate with parents around academic issues. Specific training areas can include creating realistic expectations with parents, respectful communication, and coordinating mentoring activities with parental homework help.

Your program should also provide initial orientation and training for parents and mentees. Parents play a crucial role in the magic of

mentoring, and their participation is important in achieving academic outcomes. At the very least, you will need their consent for the child's participation, signed release forms for grades and other data, and their permission for certain special events or activities. Providing a welcoming orientation session can help allay parents' fears about the mentors' role, clarify the expectations about the help their child will get through the program, and begin establishing a relationship of trust. You can also provide specific training, such as tips on homework help, that will allow parents to work more effectively with mentors on academic goals.

Youth buy-in is also important. In some ways, your mentees are running the show when it comes to their mentoring relationship; it is based on their needs, their hopes and dreams. They will need certain skills and mindsets to work effectively with their new adult friend. Programs should clarify the relationship between the mentor and school and schoolwork. They should explain that their mentor is there to help them grow as a person and to provide them with support, not to "fix" them or make them feel bad. Trust builds slowly between a mentor and mentee, especially around a touchy topic like school, but a good mentee orientation session can get things started in the right direction.

Making the Match

Most programs include criteria such as common interests and hobbies in making matches. Academic considerations also need to be factored into the equation. The types of volunteers you recruit and the needs expressed by youth entering your program may drive the importance of academic matching criteria. If you have a dozen girls who are interested in science careers, and you've recruited female graduate students in chemistry from the local university, the connections are obvious. Your program will need to decide how targeted it wants your matching strategy to be, and at what level something like similar academic interests, or compatibility between a volunteer's career and the career interests of a youth, would outweigh other factors like personality, availability of meeting times, or shared cultural background. Considering academic connections between your volunteers and youth is just part of sound matching practice.

Providing and Encouraging Appropriate Mentoring Activities

There is a wide variety among OSDFS mentoring grantees as to the locations where matches will meet and in the actual activities in which they will be engaged. Some programs are purely site-based, where matches meet on the school grounds (in cafeterias, after-school program spaces, and even dedicated "mentoring rooms"). A number of grantees also allow activities that take place out in the community. Regardless of where they meet and what they do, your program should encourage activities that build strong relationships and bonds in a developmental context. This does not mean that educational and academic activities are not important or that they should be avoided. It just means that these activities should be grounded in the needs and goals of the youth (not the teacher/ parent/mentor) and that they should help the relationship grow and progress.

Within this developmental framework, there are an unlimited number of activities that can change a young person's attitudes about school, increase their self-perception of academic competence, and motivate them to learn. The following table offers a good starting point in thinking about the academic and educational activities, both at the school site and in the community, that you can facilitate through your program and encourage matches to engage in.

Site-based programs will also need to make sure that there is a way for participating youth to remain connected to the program and their mentors during the summer months. Remember, the third GPRA indicator, in addition to those two academic ones, is that matches must last a minimum of 12 months. This means that your program must create ways to keep matches in contact during the off-school months. The following strategies (courtesy of Dr. Susan G. Weinberger) may help your mentors achieve this:

- Address and stamp five envelopes and ask the mentee to write to the mentor (a letter or a drawing or a poem)
- Give your mentees little notebooks to record their summer activities to relate to their mentor when they see each other again.
- Schedule a basketball or softball game among mentors and mentees.

Activities We Can Do at School or During the School Day

- Reading together
- Studying for a test
- Completing homework
- Joining (or finding more about) a school club, sport, activity, etc.
- Curriculum-specific activities or learning exercises related to what's being taught in the classroom (see Section II for a list of Web sites that provide specific learning activities)
- Reviewing previous tests and homework
- Discussing managing time effectively
- Doing research on the Internet
- Doing research in the school library
- Talking about what happened during the school day
- Talking about disappointments at school
- Discussing being accountable for your own actions, responsibilities
- Creating a notebook to organize school-work
- Creating academic goals (both short and long term)
- Learning effective study habits
- Discussing strategies for taking tests
- Talking about the best (and the worst) parts of school
- Work on spelling—and how to use a dictionary

Activities We Can Do in the Community

- Visit museum, aquarium, planetarium, art gallery, natural history museum, national park, cemetery, zoo, etc.
- Tour the public library
- Visit a job site
- Do a job shadow
- Interview someone who has an interesting job
- Research career qualifications
- Visit a high school, attend HS events
- Visit local universities
- Take a class together—learning a new skill together can be fun and exciting
- Take a nature hike
- Visit a farm
- Take historical tour of city
- Go to cultural event (concert, play, symphony, rodeo)
- Go to an ethnic-themed event (pow-wow, MLK celebration)
- Watch an educational special or movie with an educational theme
- Talk with senior citizens about their life story and historical events
- Participate in a summer reading program
- Go grocery shopping together; plan a menu for a meal, make a budget for it, compare prices
- Explore public transportation together

See page 70 for a handout version of this chart that can be used in mentor trainings.

- Encourage matches to take an approved field trip to a local college to visit the campus, learn about courses, residence, and financial aid.
- If youth are in summer school, invite the mentors to visit them there for their mentoring.
- During the summer, many schools have club activities and practices for fall football, band, and orchestra. Find out when the school is open and if you can visit with your mentee then.
- The local Boys & Girls Clubs, community centers, and YMCAs have all kinds of activities during the summer. Find out if you can use their facilities for your mentoring. They may even help with transportation for mentees.

Supervision and Support

Proper supervision of matches is critical to their success. Checking in early and often with mentors, youth, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders is a great way to spot red flags and keep matches headed in a positive direction.

When checking in with youth, you should mostly ask them questions about how the relationship is going. Asking too many probing questions about progress toward academic goals might discourage or intimidate the mentee. Ask them if they are having fun with their mentor, if the mentor is giving them the support and encouragement they need, and if there are any issues that need addressing. Chances are, by asking their opinions about the relationship, you'll get a good idea as to how they are doing in working with their mentor to pursue goals, academic and otherwise.

Checking in with mentors provides a better opportunity to assess progress related to academic goals. Mentors can also provide qualitative information on the youth's attitudes, behaviors, and scholastic confidence. Mentors should also be able to identify new areas of need in their mentee that could trigger a referral to other services, such as tutoring. Checking in with mentors also allows you to prevent matches from slipping into "prescriptive" territory. It allows you to keep the mentor focused on the right developmental strategies that will lead to better grades and attendance.

Parents are also a crucial part of the supervision and support process. You should monitor their feelings about the progress the

youth is making, areas of concern, and their thoughts on how the relationship with the mentor is unfolding. Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel should also have a voice in the supervision of the match. They can provide direct feedback on the progress of the youth and can offer opinions and learning strategies that you can use to help guide the mentor.

A Note About Meeting Space

Some OSDFS mentoring grantees are designed so that matches meet in group areas, either in an after-school program space, the cafeteria, or in a room dedicated to the mentoring program. Mentors and mentees need a place where they can meet and work together without disruptions. If your program has a group meeting space, you may want to familiarize your staff with some basic concepts of classroom management. This does not mean that you have to become as proficient in managing a room as a veteran teacher. But you will need to know how to handle situations where youth are being disruptive or are keeping other matches from having productive time together. The Appendix has a listing of some online resources that can help you keep your shared space a relaxing and positive one.

Match support is more than just monitoring how things are progressing. It's about providing further help and celebrating successes as well. Your program should offer ongoing training that can help mentors engage in learning and educational activities more effectively. You may find that mentors need extra guidance in talking about bullying issues. Or that several of your mentors are struggling in helping the youth with homework and could really use the assistance of a dedicated tutor or tips from a teacher. You may decide to offer training to parents on how to more effectively help their kids with homework. Providing ongoing and responsive training gives everyone involved the skills to help the youth succeed academically.

And by all means, celebrate the success of your kids! If mentees achieve certain benchmarks or goals, have a party or announce their accomplishments in the program newsletter. Or, if the youth would prefer something more private, a simple card or a small gift can help a youth feel positive about learning and school. Once again, the accomplishment isn't the primary goal of the match, the closeness of the mentor-mentee bond is. But that doesn't mean you can't reward and encourage your kids as they begin to turn things around. So have some fun! The best youth development springs from enthusiastic and positive energy.

Program Evaluation

Showing progress toward the GPRA indicators and other academic outcomes requires collecting appropriate data. Your program should make sure that it has permission from parents and from school/district administrators to collect grades, test scores, attendance data, disciplinary referrals, and other information that help your program show its results.

In addition to the quantitative data listed above, you should also collect qualitative information that can help you keep matches headed in the right direction. Some of this information can be collected during regularly scheduled "check-ins" with mentors, mentees, parents, teachers, and others. Programs should also consider giving formal satisfaction surveys to these groups at least once a year. This is especially important for your youth participants. You need to make sure that they are happy with how the match is progressing and that they are valuing the presence of the mentor in their lives. This will not happen overnight, obviously, but you need a mechanism to spot potential problems related to youth satisfaction before ithey damage the mentoring relationship. Without youth satisfaction, mentoring does not work.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The pursuit of academic goals will also have an impact on the roles, responsibilities, and communication of your program staff. While connecting your program and your matches to other educational services is discussed later in this section, it is worth noting here that you will need to manage the connections you make to other learning opportunities. This involves coordinating your mentoring services with other school services, such as the library, the after-school program, dedicated tutoring, school clubs, and athletic events. This is especially important for site-based programs where the mentors are on campus.

You will also need to manage the participation in community-based activities by your matches. Your staff will need to make sure that permission slips are signed when needed, that any agreements made with institutions like museums and libraries, and with other youth service providers are honored, and that community-based learning activities are safe and developmentally appropriate.

All this "management" equals staff time and energy. Remember, your program's role is to be a facilitator of and connection to additional learning opportunities. Make sure that your staff has a clear understanding of how that facilitation is managed and that staff members are assigned to the specific tasks that make coordination of services work. This is especially important for your "match coordinators." They need to be assigned a reasonable number of matches to monitor (no more than 30 or 40). Adequate staffing is a critical piece of designing a quality mentoring program.

Program Practices From a Peer Mentoring Perspective

Much of the academic-related advice in this "program services" section is applicable to both peer and adult mentor programs. But there are some obvious ways where they will differ.

Mentor/Mentee Recruitment

The most obvious difference for peer programs is where they are drawing mentors from. Instead of drawing from the general community, peer programs can find mentors in school and social clubs, honor societies, student government, and the general student body. In fact, there is some evidence that those honor roll kids might not make the best mentors. High-achieving high school youth tend to be involved in a lot of activities that take up their time and energy, which can greatly reduce their ability to be consistent in their mentoring.

Most high schools also have some form of required service learning or community service for students in order to graduate. This may be an excellent source of mentors (and may include a formal class and accompanying teacher who can help guide their participation). But be wary of using peer mentors who are "just fulfilling a requirement" as they may not tend to the relationship as needed.

Mentor Training

This is a major difference between adult and peer mentors. Peer mentors will likely need less training on broad concepts like learning theory, and more training on practical relationship strategies. They will need more intensive training on roles and boundaries, identifying and handling crisis situations, respecting program rules, deadlines, and their mentoring responsibilities.

And peer mentors will probably need extra training in assuming a developmental role. They may be tempted to use their influence over their mentees to essentially coerce them into desired behavior. Karcher (2000a) recommends that peer mentors receive extra instruction on the importance of relationship development and supportive friendship over task completion.

Matching

Peer programs may want to consider starting with a few group activities or games that will allow mentees to get to know the mentors and vice versa. They can then indicate who they would like to work with and program staff can work with the group to make the best set of "natural" pairs.

If the program is drawing mentors and mentees from multiple schools, it may be useful to make matches based on a shared middle school (or a potentially shared high school). This will be especially important if middle to high school transition is one of the areas your program is addressing.

Providing Appropriate Activities

Since most peer programs are likely to be site-based, programs will need to make sure that matches have a variety of activities to engage in and quiet spaces where developmentally focused conversations can take place. This may necessitate making lots of connections to other school services, departments, and areas (see later in this section for tips on making those connections). The activities need to be a good blend of hands-on academic tasks and less structured time. Says Karcher:

> Simply using activities that allow mentors and mentees to ask each other questions in an attempt to better understand one another, their unique experiences, and their respective goals and interests may help facilitate perspective taking and serve to strengthen the mentor-mentee bond. . . . From a developmental point of view, most fruitful may be efforts that engage children in developmentally appropriate ways, such as through activities that emphasize engaging in physical activity, sharing opinions or learning information, and using those perspectives "learned" or shared to work cooperatively . . . with the mentor on a joint activity (Karcher, 2005a, p. 278).

In other words, don't force them to do homework 90 percent of the time.

Supervision and Support

This is a major area of concern for peer programs. Peer matches will require intensive supervision. The good news is that since many of these programs are site-based, staff will be in closer proximity to the matches, making supervision somewhat easier. Supervision will need to make sure that the match is going smoothly and that there are opportunities for further training or problem solving for matches that have "red flags."

Programs must minimize opportunities for matches to engage in questionable behavior. As mentioned earlier, the peer influence, especially that of older peers, is very strong. You'll need to make sure that your peer mentors are staying on task and out of trouble. "In the absence of supervision, guidance, and consequences for unconventional or anti-authority behavior, peer programs run the risk of instilling the exact beliefs and promoting the kinds of behaviors they are intended to prevent" (Karcher, 2005a).

So don't assume that all your mentors are little angels. Monitor them with the same eye on safety and suitability that you would use for adult volunteers.

Also, since peer mentors may be less skilled at handling crisis situations, make sure your matches know how to spot troubling behavior or situations, when and how to contact appropriate staff, and other important safety information.

Evaluation

Many peer programs also want to track the effect the mentoring is having on the mentors, not just the mentees. This means that you have doubled the amount of student data you need to collect! Remember to staff this data collection accordingly.

Building an Academic Support Network

As a facilitator of additional learning opportunities and expanded educational horizons for youth, your program will need to develop strong connections with other school and community resources. These connections can be formal, requiring the development of a memorandum of understanding and written agreements, or they can be informal collaborations and resource sharing with other services. Regardless of the connections your program makes, what you are essentially doing is building an academic support network for the youth in your program. You are creating a set of opportunities that can maximize the value of having a mentor.

Research shows that creating this connection to the school is essential. A positive relationship with, and connection to, school itself can result in a number of positive outcomes for youth, including increased academic achievement, while reducing a number of negative behaviors, such as fighting, bullying, truancy, and vandalism (Simons-Morton et al., 1999). Thus, in addition to running a safe program and creating developmentally appropriate relationships, creating a network that can support the youth's learning and connection to the school is one of the most important roles your program will play.

Getting Started

The process of building an academic support network starts internally. As mentioned earlier in this section, your staff needs to have a clear understanding of your program's mission, vision, and values. They need to be in agreement as to the value of developmental relationships, be knowledgeable around roles and responsibilities, and have a shared understanding of program policies and procedures. All your staff members serve as ambassadors for your program, and if your program is going to fit in and work effectively with other school and community resources, everyone in your program needs to be on the same page.

Review your original application and revisit what your program originally set out to do. Chances are, you have new staff and have revamped some of your roles and responsibilities. In addition to revisiting these operational details, be sure to clarify your program's

mission, why it exists. This is the message and the purpose that you will carry into the partnerships you make with other youth services.

Making Connections

There are many individuals and institutions that you should consider bringing into your academic support network. As we've established throughout this book, your mentoring relationships need to be focused on the relationship, not on a set of instructive activities. This means that your mentors will need help directing the mentee to other academic services and environments that can help achieve those academic outcomes.

The chart starting on page 31 lists many of the people that you can bring into the fold and what they can provide your program in terms of communication and access to resources. While each OSDFS grantee will have unique circumstances, all programs should consider making connections to these individuals when applicable.

In addition to the individuals mentioned in the chart, there are a number of resources, both school- and community-based, that you may want to add to your academic support network. (See the Academic Resources table, page 33.) The specific person you need to interact with for access to these resources will depend on the staffing of the school or community organization.

Putting It All Together

The last aspect of building an academic support network for your mentees is to coordinate all of this activity and manage these partnerships. The following tips can help your staff manage their partnerships and program collaborations:

- **Get buy-in from the top**. This is critical for school and community partnerships. Getting the direct support and permission of principals and school administrators is the key to accessing school resources. The same can be said of your arrangements with community organizations. Make sure that the representative you are dealing with has the authority to grant your program the access it is seeking.

- **Only partner with quality youth services**. Throughout this book we've highlighted the research that demonstrates the con-

nection between a quality mentoring program and quality mentoring outcomes. You know that your mentoring program must follow recommended research and best practices if it is to succeed. Hold your program partners to the same high standard. Before you create a formal partnership with, say, an off-site tutoring service, look into how they run their services, their mission and values, and the outcomes they've been able to achieve. Research what makes a good tutoring program and see how they measure up. Talk to participating youth and their parents. Take the time to make sure that you are only including services that are as well-run as your mentoring program in your academic support network.

- **Get agreements in writing**. Many mentoring programs fail when program partners fail to live up to important agreements. This can affect access to supplementary services or vital resources, and hinder the collection of important evaluation data. Whether it's a testing service supplying grade data, the school allowing after-hours access to the library, or the natural history museum offering free passes to your matches, try to get all agreements in writing, preferably in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (see sidebar and sample MOU on page A–5 of the Appendix for tips on developing an MOU).

- **Map your academic support network**. Keeping track of all the resources your program is connecting to in an effort to help youth meet academic goals can become very complicated. It may be helpful to create a visual representation of all the pieces of your academic support network. Creating an "asset map" like the one on page 34 can help clarify staff roles and responsibilities, the information that gets communicated between your program and others, and exactly what resources you and your mentors have at their disposal that can assist youth academically.

What To Ask From Schools in an MOU

Resources

- Access to teachers, counselors, etc., for designated mentoring center staff.
- Access to teachers, counselors, etc., for mentors.
- Access to the school library, computer lab, gymnasium, classrooms, audio/video room, etc.

  Note: You also need to find out when mentors and mentees can meet: After school? During lunch breaks? During study hall? This may not be spelled out in an MOU, but it shouldn't be overlooked.
- Textbooks, lesson plans, worksheets, access to photocopiers, etc.
- Access to mentee's teacher or protocol for communication.

Referrals

- The school can provide names of students who meet the requirements for who your program can serve. This can include background information, scholastic information, and contact information, including names of parents/guardians. The school can also provide an on-site meeting place where the potential mentees will be introduced to mentoring staff.

Outreach Assistance

- The school can provide places to post information about the mentoring program, include flyers in information sent to parents, mention program at PTA meetings, board meetings, etc.

Reporting Information

- Reporting information needed by the mentoring program to track mentee progress at school will be provided. There may be restrictions on what can be given to mentors.

Other

- Look over your requirements and expectations to see what else you might need from the school (and vice versa).

- **Create an advisory council**. An advisory council can be an effective way to facilitate cooperation and collaboration among program stakeholders. At a bare minimum, this group should consist of the program coordinator, the school liaison (if different), the principal or other administrators, and representatives from key community partners. You may also choose to have volunteers, youth, and parents serve on the advisory council.

- **Check in frequently**. This is best done through an advisory council, but other program staff should feel free to keep in touch with school and community partners. This not only keeps you informed about particular youth, it also ensures that program partnerships are running smoothly and that expectations are being met.

- **Remember what this cooperation is all about: the kids**. The reality is that creating this type of collaboration and coordination of services is challenging. But your program, and the other services you connect to, exists to serve kids. That is the one thing you can all agree on. You are building programmatic relationships that serve a purpose, just the way your mentors are. Through mutually beneficial partnerships, your mentoring program hopes to model the type of broad, relationship-driven growth you encourage in your matches at an organizational level. Working in conjunction with other school and community services will allow your matches to thrive and lead your youth to improved academic success.

This section has covered a lot of ground and has likely given you plenty to think about in terms of program structure, program focus, and program partnerships. OSDFS mentoring grantees should keep in mind that they have a dedicated training and technical assistance provider, the Mentoring Resource Center (MRC), available to help them build strong, evidence-based programs. The MRC (1-877-579-4788; www.edmentoring.org) can help with developing policies and procedures, forging new program collaborations, developing training content around developmental relationships, coordinating mentoring with other services, and any other areas of program operations that your staff has questions about. Improved academic performance in your youth will come from the improved performance of your mentoring program. Remember a concept that gets to the heart of mentoring: it's OK to ask for help along the way.

Academic Connections

Who They Are	What They Provide
School Personnel	
Principals and other administrators	If you are going be making arrangements and agreements with other school personnel and facilities, it is critical to get buy-in from the top. Nothing can happen effectively in school environments without the permission and understanding of school officials. They hold the key to getting effective cooperation from others. They can also be a powerful advocate for your program in the community, attracting volunteers and helping establish partnerships with other youth service organizations.
Teachers	Teachers can be a valuable source of information about the youth initially and throughout the match: • If your program gets youth referrals directly from teachers, make sure that you collect the information necessary to make good matches and give mentors the background they need to work with the youth. • Teachers can also provide information about what is being taught in the classroom, allowing mentors to prepare for specific curriculum-related issues the youth might have. • Teachers can use their expertise to provide specific tips and guidance to mentors around academic issues and the best ways particular students learn. • Teachers should also have a voice in your program evaluation, most likely in a survey about the impact they have seen on mentored youth. • Since they may have opportunities to interact with parents already, teachers can be wonderful advocates of your program and can share information with parents on the impact the mentor is having. However it works best for your program, keep teachers involved and informed about what your program is providing.
Counselors	Much like teachers, counselors can also be a valuable connection to what happens during the school day: • They may be able to provide feedback on youth's relations with peers and faculty and help the mentor better understand the personality and social development of their mentee. • Counselors can also be a source of information about issues that youth are having with particular teachers. • Counselors might be able to help refer students to the program. • As with teachers, counselors can also be great advocates of the program and communicators of match progress to parents and gaurdians. The focus of a school counselor allows them to be very helpful to your mentors in learning about all the things that affect a kid's ability to find success academically.
Librarians	The library just might be the most valuable place on campus for a mentor and mentee to have developmental time that can affect academics. If possible, make arrangements to provide your matches with access to the school library. You may be able to arrange special off-hour meeting times or even special library programming for your matches. A love of libraries is a key to life-long learning, and your program should foster this through mentoring.
Coaches	Many youth find their connection to school through athletics. For some, their coach is their first mentor, often in an informal sense. Coaches can provide access to equipment and athletic areas on campus. They can also be a valued source of information about the youth for the mentor. If you have youth in your program who participate in sports, make sure you tell their coaches about your program and the mentor their athletes have been paired with.

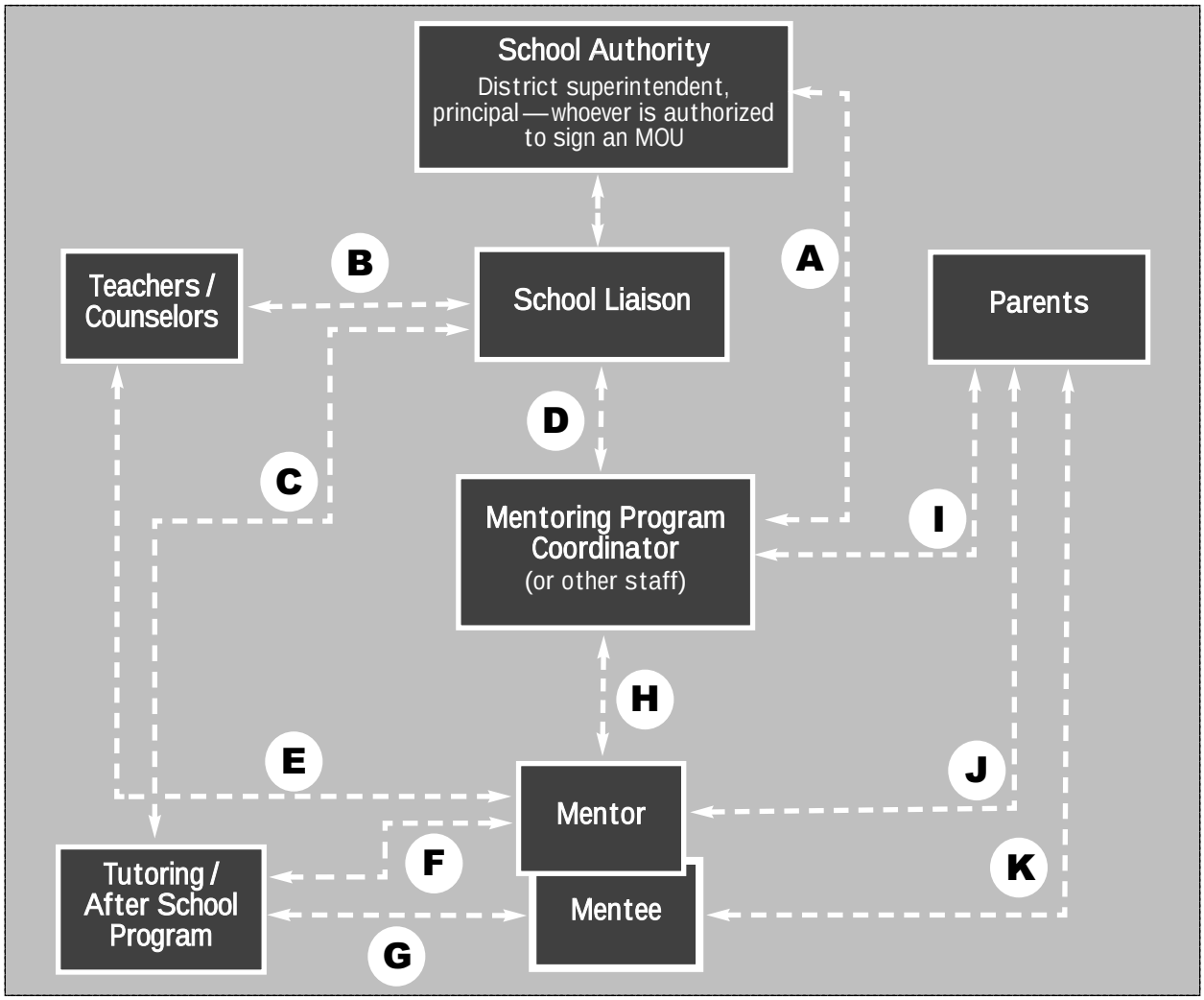
Who They Are	What They Provide
School Personnel	
Tutoring and after-school program staff	One of the more obvious connections your program can make is with an existing tutoring or after-school program: • These services often have activities and connections that relate directly to the school day and what is being taught in the classroom. • They have volunteers who are trained in specific learning strategies. They focus on the activities that your mentors should do somewhat sparingly. • They provide another source of feedback on how the youth is progressing and any issues that may have come up during the school day. • They are likely to have more frequent contact with the youth, as many tutoring programs offer services to youth every day of the week. • They can provide space to meet and access to learning tools, books, games, and recreational activities. • Tutoring and after-school staff can also serve as another voice of support and guidance to parents of participating youth. If possible, partnering with an existing tutoring program can really enhance the services you provide. It allows for specific, focused academic assistance and instruction when needed, while freeing up your mentors to fill their developmental role more effectively. After-school and summer school programs can also be vital in bridging the gap in programming during the summer months.
Other Program Stakeholders	
Parents and guardians	As we've reiterated throughout, parents need to play a role in the mentoring relationship. Your program and your mentors will need to have positive relations and open communication with parents if youth are to improve academically. Parents can provide: • Permission for program participation (and attendance at special field trips or events) and access to grade and attendance data as part of program evaluation. • Feedback on the progress of the match. • Support for mentors. • Vital assistance on homework help, time management, and creating a home environment conducive to learning and studying. Be sure that you are clear with parents about the level of homework help mentors will be providing. Many may view the mentor as someone who takes those kinds of tasks off their plates. Make sure that there is a clear understanding about the role of the mentor. Over time, be sure to check in to ensure that the parent approves of the match activities and the progress being made. A satisfied parent means a participating youth. As mentioned earlier in this section, you may want to provide parents with initial and ongoing training that can help them provide better academic help to their kids at home. This is an area that teachers or after-school/tutoring staff can help you with if needed.
Representatives from community partnerships	If your program has formal partnership agreements with community organizations or other non-school youth services, make sure that there is clarity around roles and responsibilities. If your partners are providing access to resources, make sure there is coordination between your mentoring services and what they will be providing. Relationships with these individuals often spring from agreements made with many of the community resources mentioned on the following chart.

Academic Resources

What:	What they provide:
Classrooms, study halls, and other meeting spaces	If your program is strictly site-based, your matches obviously need a place to meet. Find out what areas they can access and how.
Textbooks, curriculum, and other learning materials	Often, these can be provided by the librarian, an after-school program, or a tutoring program. Your mentors may need these to help mentees with particular areas of study.
Computer labs	The importance of computers and the Internet to a child's education should not be underestimated. Some of the youth in your program may only have access to computers during school time, and mentors can be wonderful facilitators of online learning.
Art studios, science labs, and shop areas	These are often the domains of the respective teachers. They can provide a fun and creative learning space for match activities. As with all school resources, make sure you have permission from the top to access these resources and that adequate supervision is available.
School clubs	Most schools have student groups dedicated to a wide range of academic and cultural interests. Science, math, drama, foreign language, and other clubs, along with things like the student newspaper, can be invaluable in connecting youth to the school and learning. Encourage your mentors to learn about these clubs and facilitate youth participation whenever possible.
Museums, planetariums, and science centers	Most communities have these and chances are that many of your mentees will have interests in what they can find within. See if you can make arrangements for special visits, discounts, or even special learning opportunities.
Public libraries	If your matches meet off campus, you can still foster a love of libraries for youth in your program. Find out if the local public library offers special summer reading programs or other activities that your matches could participate in. Public libraries are also great places for mentors and mentees to do research and study together. Explore ways your public library can connect to what your program and the school are doing.
Local businesses	In addition to being a source of mentors, local businesses can also provide career exploration opportunities. They can set up job shadows, offer employees for discussions about what it's like to work in a particular field, and provide resources (computers, equipment, space) that facilitate student learning.
Local cultural groups	Every community has cultural groups that offer a variety of learning and enrichment opportunities. These can be a good source of group activities for mentors and mentees.

Mapping Your Resource Connections

Sketch out what your paths to resources (human and otherwise) look like. Below is what one such sketch might look like—and what each path might accomplish. (Your sketch doesn't have to be fancy—a drawing on a piece of typing paper will do. And use a pencil because things will change.) The important thing is that everyone should know not just *whom* to contact for *what*, but *how* as well, and for *what* (for example, your mentor might know that she has approval to use the library, but who there does she contact when the time comes to use the library? Can the mentor contact the mentee's teacher? When? How? If by phone, what's the number? If by e-mail, what's the e-mail address?)



A Who's the "head honcho" who can sign MOUs and give you permission to use school resources (human and material)? Does your MOU cover everything you'll need? Will you need to go through this person for additional requests or through the liaison?

B Will contacts with teachers go through the liaison? Will information (about grades, conduct, skipping classes, etc.) concerning your mentee go first to the liaison before going to you?

C Will the liaison arrange for school tutoring services for your mentees? What's the procedure?

D You'll need a liaison—Counselor? Vice principal?—as the single point of contact to arrange things on site. (This is probably the person who'll get reporting data for your GPRA reports.)

E Can the the mentor contact the teacher directly? How? When? For what? You'll need to know.

F Mentors may be able to work with the school's tutoring program directly. If so, how? Does the mentoring program director have to set this up first?

G Will mentees have access? Through whom? How?

H How will you communicate with the mentor on academics? This may not have been covered during mentor orientation or training.

I You'll need to inform parents about the new tutoring aspect of the program. Have handouts, letters, meetings, signed permission slips, etc.

J What contact will the mentor have with parents? How will they communicate? Will contact go through the mentoring program first?

K Youth may need to work with parents to get paperwork signed, to get help with academic issues, and to discuss how the relationship is going.

SECTION II.
MENTOR TRAINING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

In Section I, OSDFS-funded mentoring programs gained a deeper understanding of the research on academic mentoring and how to implement program practices that promote academic success. Section II explores one of the most important factors for supporting academic achievement and overall match success: mentor training. This section approaches mentor training from a developmental perspective, focusing on the mentor as an advocate and learning facilitator. The first half of this section focuses on training topics and techniques specifically aimed at building strong relationships, including understanding the mentor's role and approach, getting the match off to a good start, building trust, the parent-mentor relationship, connecting to school staff, exploring various developmental and academic characteristics of mentees, setting goals, and ideas for match activities. The second half of Section II focuses on ways mentors can facilitate learning through activities such as homework help, academic skill building, and real-world exploration. The training topics that follow can be used as part of initial mentor training, or as topics for ongoing, post-match mentor training. Each section is accompanied by a variety of training handouts and activities.

1. Importance of Training

> Good training equips volunteers with the information and strategies they need to maximize their chances of developing mutually satisfying relationships with youth.
>
> — Cynthia L. Sipe, 1996

OSDFS-funded mentoring programs recruit mentors who come from all walks of life, who have various educational backgrounds, who grew up in a variety of family structures, and who bring their own unique skill sets. Mentees who are served by OSDFS programs share this diversity of experience and require their programs and mentors to have an array of strategies that can help them achieve their dreams. Without specific training and skill development, mentoring relationships cannot be built and participants are set up for failure. When our mentors fail, our programs also fail. The research in the fields of mentoring and tutoring clearly states that in order to have a successful match and to reach desired results, mentors and tutors must receive initial and ongoing training (Dubois et al., 2002; Sipe, 1996; Moss et al., 2001). High-quality, content-specific training will not only help OSDFS programs achieve their academic goals, but also lead to higher quality matches, better match longevity, and mentor retention (Herrera, Sipe, and McClanahan, 2000). If programs provide quality training they are one step closer to meeting the GPRA goals of increased grade-point average, improved attendance, and matches that are sustained for 12 months.

When the topic of mentor training is first approached, the question that arises is: who will deliver it? Some OSDFS-funded mentoring programs are providing training in-house and others are hiring trainers to deliver their sessions. While there is no one perfect model, it makes sense to build capacity within your own organization to provide in-house training of mentors. Developing your own trainers and training can be both practical and cost-effective. Having a curriculum and people to deliver it means that you can provide basic and advanced training on your own schedule. It allows programs to be more flexible when mentors request training on a specific topic. Delivering and observing training is also part of the screening process that allows program staff to get to know the mentors' personalities. Observations by program staff during mentor

training can be used to screen inappropriate, or prescriptive, mentors out of the program. Some programs say that they don't provide in-house training because they don't have the expertise or the right person for the job, but no one knows your program and mentoring approach better than your own staff. Almost anyone can build the skill set to become a mentor trainer; it just takes a little practice. Once you get the hang of it, training can be fun and rewarding. The Mentoring Resource Center Web site (www.edmentoring.org) provides links to a variety of resources that can help you create training agendas and build your staff's training skills.

2. The Mentor's Role in Supporting Academic Success

As described in Section I, OSDFS mentors will fill a fairly traditional one-on-one mentor role. In this section we explore ways that the traditional mentor relationship can influence the academic GPRA indicators of grade improvement and decreased unexcused absences. Mentors will gain a better understanding of how academics are influenced by mentoring relationships, why building strong developmental relationships is important, how to get the match off to a good start, and who should be involved over time.

What a Mentor Is

- Advisor
- Advocate
- Coach
- Confidant
- Companion
- Counselor
- Friend
- Good listener
- Guide
- Motivator
- Positive role model
- Teacher

Developmental vs. Prescriptive Relationships

To the casual observer it might seem that focusing on academic weaknesses, assignments, and homework is the best way to improve academics for mentees. But academic success is the result of several other factors working together. "Developmentally, mentoring can promote social bonding and a sense of belonging that will, in turn, help youth to develop stronger connectedness to self, others, and society" (Karcher, 2005a). "In the context of the school environment, such a sense of connectedness can benefit children both academically and socially" (Portwood and Ayers, 2005, p. 338).

Key Findings Related to Mentoring and Academic Success

As mentioned earlier, mentoring affects a youth's academic performance through:

- Improving relationships between the youth and the parents
- Boosting youth's perception of his own academic abilities
- Reducing unexcused absences
- Improving attitudes about school
- Increasing a sense of connectedness to school (Portwood and Ayers, 2005)
- Decreasing disruptive behavior in class
- Increasing engagement in the classroom

Without strong relationships programs will not see desired results; thus, the mentor's main role in supporting academic success is building a supportive friendship with the mentee. In their study of relationship development in Big Brothers Big Sisters programs, Morrow and Styles (1995) found that ". . . once their [matches'] relationships were crystallized, nearly three-quarters of developmental volunteers were successful in involving youth in conversations or activities that targeted such key areas of youth development as academics performance and classroom behavior." These were the matches that proved most successful.

> Focus on establishing a bond, a feeling of attachment, a sense of equality, and the mutual enjoyment of shared time together.
>
> — Linda Jucovy, 2001

Developmental mentoring focuses first and foremost on the needs and feelings of the youth, in contrast to what the mentor program or parent might think needs to be "fixed." A developmental mentor heavily involves the youth in decisionmaking about match activities, allows the youth to take time to disclose the private details of her life without prying, and does not make judgments about her, her family, or her circumstances. Taking a developmental approach to mentoring does not mean that mentors will never work on homework or help with school projects, but they should always make sure the activity they are embarking on is youth driven and positive.

> Mentoring may be more like the slow accumulation of pebbles that sets off an avalanche than the baseball bat that propels a ball from the stadium.
>
> — Nancy Darling, 2005

Sometimes mentors will find that it is a challenge to stay on the developmental track, especially when parents, teachers, and school staff are pressuring them to see results in the mentee. Mentors should be encouraged to continue to engage in relationship-building activities during their match time, and to address more academ-

ically focused activities as the relationship itself dictates, not because of outside pressures. It is the responsibility of program staff to educate school personnel and parents about the role of the mentor and to support the developmental focus of each match. If mentors encounter resistance or pressure they should contact their match coordinator for support.

The following handouts can be used to teach mentors how to have a developmentally focused relationship.

Developmental vs. Prescriptive Mentoring Relationships

- **Developmental Relationships.** "Volunteers intentionally incorporated youth into decision-making about the relationship, allowing them to help choose activities and have a voice in determining whether and when the adult would provide advice and guidance."

- **Prescriptive/Instrumental Relationships.** "Volunteers approached decision-making in a manner that became more prescriptive as the relationship developed, meaning that activities, topics of conversation and frequency of disclosure were 'prescribed' by the adult, generally without the youth's input."

(Morrow and Styles, 1995)

As part of their role in building long-lasting developmental friendships, mentors will be facilitators and advocates for academic success by:

1. Helping connect their mentees with appropriate academic support services such as tutoring programs, homework clubs, libraries, and computer labs.

2. Getting to know their mentees' various strengths by reaching out to parents and school staff.

3. Building their own skills to assist with academics, and most important, being able to recognize where they can help and when to ask for expert assistance.

4. Spending time doing *fun* social activities. The youth will be more enthusiastic about the relationship if they're having fun as well.

Developmental vs. Prescriptive Role Plays

Use the following scenarios for small-group discussions or role plays around building developmental relationships.

Scenario 1

You have been matched with your mentee for about two months now. During your first few meetings you spent a lot time talking and getting to know each other, you attended a mentor-mentee potluck, and spent some time at the art museum. You found out last week, from the match coordinator, that your mentee is struggling with fractions. What do you do?

Scenario 2

You have been matched with your mentee for about six months now. Lately your mentee seems distracted when you meet with her. Last week she told you that she was thinking about going to a high school party where there would be alcohol. You have a feeling that something strange is going on with her. What do you do?

Scenario 3

It is your first month as a lunchtime mentor at an elementary school. Right in the middle of a Scrabble game, a teacher approaches you and your mentee and asks you why you are not working on the spelling homework that is due at the end of the week. What do you do?

Scenario 4

Your mentee is in seventh grade, is very bright, and has expressed an interest in becoming a doctor. Her mom told you that she has a hard time turning homework in on time and studying for tests. You realize that she will need to set up good study habits and get good grades in order to succeed in college and medical school down the road. She has asked you to help her learn more about a career as a doctor. What do you do?

Getting To Know Youth Before Offering Solutions

Mary is a student who has been assessed by the school she attends as a "slow learner." Her D average grades communicate this apparent truth. Mary's academic potential has been assessed by her teachers and counselors and all agree that she should be held back for a year. Her mother doesn't feel that these assessments provide a correct measurement of her daughter's current condition or potential. Before finalizing the decision to keep her daughter from moving to the next grade level, her mother asks the school to consider her daughter for the school's mentoring program by providing her a mentor for a semester. The school agrees to do so and a mentor—Sharon—is identified. Everyone at the school has informed Sharon that Mary is a slow learner and that she should focus on helping Mary improve her grades in school. Sharon, not knowing much about Mary, focuses her mentoring on tutoring Mary during and after school. After a few weeks of mentoring/tutoring, Sharon finds that Mary is a bright student. What she has been told by the school and what she is finding out about Mary and her intelligence level is inconsistent. However, during these few weeks Mary's grades and classroom performance have not improved. After a couple of months more, Sharon is convinced that Mary is not a slow learner; however, she finds herself puzzled by the fact that Mary continues to underperform in the classroom.

Sharon decides that what she has been doing (tutoring) hasn't translated into Mary's doing better in school. Believing that Mary has great academic potential, Sharon decides to "go back to the drawing board" to determine a new or different strategy and approach to mentoring Mary. During this process, Sharon determines that she needs to know more about Mary. After a visit to Mary's home for the first time, Sharon finds out that Mary lives in a two-bedroom, 800 square foot apartment with her mother and nine other family members. Upon this revelation, Sharon decides that Mary's academic challenge may be a result of a socially challenging circumstance and not an academic one. Sharon then decides to identify community resources to support Mary's academic growth based on Mary's social reality. Sharon identifies a library within Mary's community that has a study hall program for the area's youth. After making Mary and her mother aware of this resource, Sharon facilitates Mary's use of the study hall. A couple of months later Mary's grades begin to improve dramatically.

It can be very disconcerting for volunteers to see their mentees going through difficulties. It is easy for them to become overwhelmed by the youth's hardships and many, in fact, will think they can fix it all. However, if mentors do not stop to really understand the youth and the realities they face first, they will probably provide inadequate answers.

Our ideas are the substance of our behavior. Mentors must remember that they are first required to believe in their mentee's potential in spite of the different reports they may receive by other authorities in the youth's life. The mentor's beliefs will create what the mentor sees and hence how the mentor behaves.

Mentors must be willing to go back to the drawing board rather than find fault with the mentee when what the mentor is doing isn't providing the sought after results. It is important for mentors to understand that what may have worked for them as they were growing up may not work for their mentee. When a mentor's approach doesn't bear fruit, it may not mean that something is wrong with the mentee; it may mean that another strategy may be required.

Mentors must also remember that the challenges that the youth they mentor face don't come in nice, neat boxes. That is to say, that a mentee who faces academic challenges may be very smart; therefore, tutoring (an academic-focused approach) may not help the academic challenge. The mentor may be required to help address a social, physical, or emotional void to get at the academic issue.

When Sharon realized and acted on a new paradigm, she was able to find a new answer to the old question of Mary's bad grades. Mary's academic challenge was a result not of her academic capacity, but of her social limitations. With this knowledge and with help in this area, Mary's academic life was changed significantly in a relatively short time.

Adapted with permission from: *Designing and Customizing Mentor Training*, by Elsy Arevalo with DeVone Boggan and Lynne West (Folsom, CA: Center for Applied Research Solutions, 2004).

Getting the Match Off to a Good Start

Everyone knows that first impressions are important to any new relationship. The first few meetings between you and your mentee will set the tone for the rest of the relationship. You'll want to consider the principles of developmental relationships from the beginning. Some key practices for getting the match off to the right start are included below.

During the first match meeting:

- Get to know your mentee by talking about shared interests based on your interest profiles.
- Create agreements for your relationship, including when you will meet, where, how often, how to contact each other, what to do if someone cannot make the meeting, etc.
- Talk with your mentee about your role in the mentoring relationship.
- Have the mentee tell you what she expects of you and her hopes for the relationship.
- Introduce yourself to the mentee's parent(s)/guardian(s) and teacher if possible.
- Participate in special activities prepared by the program.

Early in the match:

- Begin learning about the youth's interests for match meetings and start brainstorming ideas for activities and projects.
- Be prepared to take the initiative to contact your mentee if she does not call you.
- Be flexible and creative if your mentee is unsure of what activities she wants to do.
- Participate in activities and utilize resources provided by the program.
- Have fun and emphasize the relationship over specific goals.
- Establish your own match traditions.

The Mentor's Role

1. **Be a friend. Not a parent, authority figure, or teacher.** Mentors are friends and learning facilitators who help their mentee be successful in school by connecting them to academic resources and support. Mentors might take their mentee to a science center, library, or movie as a way to support academic learning.

2. **Have realistic goals and expectations.** Mentors focus on being a friend without placing specific goals and expectations on their mentee. When goals and expectations are set, they are set by the mentee, not the mentor.

3. **Have fun.** Having fun and getting to know the mentee is the primary goal of any mentoring relationship. Playing games and going on outings can also be fun ways to improve academic skills. For example, try games like Boggle or Scrabble to work on spelling.

4. **Allow the mentee to have a voice and choice in deciding on activities.** Ask your mentee what she would like to do during your match meetings. This ensures that she will be interested and engaged in the activity. You never know, she may want you to help her with a special research project for school or ask to visit your place of work.

5. **Be positive.** Offer encouragement and assistance. When times are tough for your mentee, be positive about his future. Celebrate academic and life successes. Offer concrete assistance when there are academic disappointments. For example, you could offer to help your mentee study for the next test or show him how to use the Internet for research.

6. **Let the mentee control the direction of conversations.** Don't push your mentee to tell you everything at once; everyone can be shy at first in a new relationship. Allow your mentee some time to get to know you. Always be sensitive and respectful when she tells you something. Above all keep her secrets confidential (unless she plans to hurt herself or someone else).

7. **Listen.** Sometimes your mentee will need to vent about school, home, friends, etc. By listening to your mentee, you will learn a lot about him. When you listen, your mentee can see that you are a friend, not an authority figure.

8. **Respect the trust your mentee places in you.** Don't judge your mentee, provide unwanted advice, or act like a parent when he tells you about personal matters. Your mentee will already be getting a lot of advice from authority figures; your job is to be a consistent, non-judgmental friend. Reassure your mentee that you will be there for him.

9. **Remember that the relationship is with the mentee, not the youth's parent.** The focus of the match is on your mentee's needs, not those of the family or parent. In order to avoid future misunderstandings, discuss your role as a friend. Be clear with your mentee's parent that you are not a tutor, homework machine, tattletale, or disciplinarian. Do not judge the mentee's family.

10. **Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship.** Take the initiative to get in contact with your mentee, even if it is her turn to call you. Keep in mind that sometimes mentees are shy about calling their mentors. Just because they do not call, or return messages, does not mean they don't care about their mentor.

Adapted with permission from: *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors*, by Linda Jucovy (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, National Mentoring Center, 2001).

Building Trust

Building trust is a key element in forming developmental matches and thus a successful relationship. Many youth who participate in OSDFS mentoring programs will have already dealt with adults who have betrayed their trust. Many of them have had adults examine their lives under a microscope. The mentor's role is to build trust, adhere to their word, and serve as a positive adult role-model. The following handout can be used to train mentors on building trust.

Building Trust in Mentoring Relationships

- Take a developmental approach to your relationship.
- Maintain your mentee's and his family's confidentiality (except when the child is in danger of hurting himself or someone else, or you must reveal the information based on your program's policy).
- Be consistent, always show up for scheduled meetings, make promised phone calls, and notify your mentee if there is a change in plans.
- Listen intently.
- Don't ask too much too soon; allow your mentee to disclose personal information when she is ready.
- Don't judge your mentee.
- Stick around when your mentee begins to "test" your commitment.
- Communicate honestly with your mentee (within the guidelines of your program).
- Ask your mentee's opinion.
- Show your mentee you trust him by giving him responsibility for a project.

Building trust takes time and effort and can be a very fragile thing. Once trust is broken, it is almost impossible to mend the rift that will happen in the relationship, and most times, the match will end.

Things to keep in mind:

- Never promise a mentee that you will keep everything she tells you confidential. Qualify it by stating, "I can keep this confidential unless it is something that involves your health, safety, or the safety of someone else."
- If something comes up that you are unsure how to handle, it is OK to say, "Hmm, great questions. I want to be able to give you a really complete answer, so let me think about it and call you back tomorrow." This is a good opportunity to call the program staff and get additional feedback on how to handle a situation.
- Never accuse your mentee of something unless you have 100 percent proof of wrong-doing. If you accuse and are incorrect, your relationship is probably over.
- If you suspect drug or alcohol use, suicidal behavior, or other situations you feel are detrimental to your mentee, contact your program IMMEDIATELY. Let the match supervisor contact the parent and make decisions on how things should be handled. You are NOT alone.

Adapted with permission from: *Designing and Customizing Mentor Training*, by Elsy Arevalo with DeVone Boggan and Lynne West (Folsom, CA: Center for Applied Research Solutions, 2004).

Trust Walk

Objectives:

This exercise is used to help mentors discuss and understand the concept of trust and the role that trust has in the mentoring relationship.

Materials:

One blindfold for every two mentors. Make sure the blindfolds are made with thick, dark material, so that vision is completely blocked.

Instructions:

1. Tell the mentors that you are going to lead them through an exercise called the "trust walk," and it is about developing trust. Point out that trust is extremely important in relationships, and that many believe that how we trust people also influences how we function in the world. If you can't or don't trust people, you are afraid of everyone and everything, and you won't be able to risk, or to function properly in the world.

2. Ask mentors to pair up with someone they don't know very well. Have them choose one person to be blindfolded first. Make sure that when blindfolded, the person can't see at all.

3. Ask the other person (you can call her the leader) to lead her partner around the room/school/playground, etc. Also ask the leader to lead the blindfolded person in a safe manner. "Don't let him run into anything, and let him know if he is going to go up or down steps, encounter rough turf, etc., before he gets there." Remind the leader that she will have her turn at being blindfolded and led by her partner.

4. Tell the pair that they have approximately five minutes, and let them begin the trust walk.

5. After five minutes have the mentors change roles and repeat the trust walk for five minutes.

6. When time is up, bring them all back to the classroom or circle and ask them to relate this experience. Questions may include:

   - How safe did you feel?
   - When, if ever, did you feel unsafe?
   - Did your partner do anything to make you feel unsafe?
   - What does this have to do with relationships?
   - How do you think you would function in the world if you couldn't trust anyone?
   - What would be an example of a person betraying a trust in a relationship?
   - Why do we need to be able to count on people?
   - What do babies need to count on from their parents?
   - How do you build trust in a relationship?
   - Did the way your partner treated you when you were blindfolded affect the way you treated him when the roles were switched, if you were led first?
   - Did knowing you would be blindfolded affect the way you led your partner, if you led first?
   - What do you think this exercise has to do with mentoring?
   - How long do you think it will take to build up trust with your mentee?
   - How will you try to build up trust with your mentee?
   - Any other comments about this exercise?

Adapted with permission from: *Preparing Mentees for Success: A Program Manager's Guide*, by Dustianne North and Jerry Sherk (Folsom, CA: EMT Group, 2003).

The Parent-Mentor Relationship

A parent is a . . .

- Positive influence
- Teacher
- Guide
- Stabilizing influence
- Protector
- Ultimate authority
- Role model

Parents, or other primary caregivers, are the most important adults in the lives of school-age children. Their role in helping children succeed in education and in life cannot be overestimated. As we have noted before, research on mentoring programs indicates that having a successful mentoring experience is likely to improve parent-child relationships, which in turn will help parents more effectively help their child to succeed academically.

The mentor's relationship with the mentee's parents or guardian can be a crucial factor in determining the success of a match, so getting off on the right foot with them can make the mentoring relationship go more smoothly. The program should have started this process by providing basic information to parents about the mentoring program and obtaining permission forms and participation contracts.

Parents should also play a part in the matching process. Many programs require the parent to meet with the mentor and give formal approval of the match. Once the match is made, staff and new mentors should meet with the parent and mentee to go over basic expectations and program ground rules. This should help clarify roles and responsibilities and make the parent feel more at ease about the relationship.

Although many matches are supported by a positive and helpful relationship with parents or guardians, it is not uncommon for some problems to arise during the course of the match. The following handout offers tips for making the parent-mentor relationship work.

Since the primary goal of the program is to improve academic outcomes for mentees, it's important for mentors to communicate with parents about academics and school-based activities. Mentors are likely to experience a wide range of parent interest and involvement. Some parents may see the mentor primarily as a tutor or homework helper, and mentors and program staff may need to reinforce the fact that these are secondary rather than primary roles. Other parents may actively seek ways to do more homework support themselves. They may ask mentors for specific advice on homework, research, curricula, or other matters best left to teachers. Still others may be relatively uninvolved in their child's education or may be negative about their child's ability to succeed academically. For these parents, mentors may find opportunities to encourage greater participation, both at home and by attending school functions. Tips for communicating with parents about academics are on page 52.

Your First Meeting With Parents or Guardians

- Keep your meeting brief and to the point.
- Be friendly and respectful.
- Introduce yourself and talk a little about your interests and background.
- Exchange contact information.
- Go over basic program information, ground rules established by your program, goals and objectives, and the parent agreement or contract.
- Remind the parent that your role is one of friend, not parent or teacher.
- Talk about some of the kinds of activities you hope to do with your mentee.
- Ask the parent(s) if there are any particular issues, concerns, or goals that the parent has. If you are not sure about how to answer her questions, tell her you will find out and get back to her.
- Set up the initial schedule for meeting with your mentee and talk about guidelines for these meetings (being on time, calling in advance if an appointment must be missed, not including others on the visit).

The Family Relationship: Do's and Don'ts for Mentors

- DO remember that your job is to be a friend to the mentee, not her parents, siblings, or other family members.
- DO keep the parent/guardian informed about upcoming activities, special meetings, and schedule changes.
- DO support the parent by following his stated rules and being respectful of his opinions and beliefs.
- DO let your mentee know that you will keep information she shares with you in confidence unless it affects her health or welfare.
- DO share positive achievements of your mentee with parents.
- DO keep your program staff informed if difficult situations arise with parents.
- DON'T get overly involved with the mentee's family. Your primary relationship is with the mentee.
- DON'T try to become the family social worker, baby sitter, counselor, or savior. If the family is struggling, notify your program staff and ask them to arrange for assistance.
- DON'T get involved in taking sides between mentee and parent or other family members. If family conflicts occur, offer an empathetic, non-judgmental ear for your mentee and help the mentee develop problem-solving skills.
- DON'T talk with the parent about problems or concerns while the child is present. Try to set up boundaries with the parent so that these conversations can occur in private.

Tips for Mentors To Communicate With Parents About Academics

- Make sure that parents understand your primary role as friend and helper, rather than tutor. Have your program staff work with parents to clarify this role if it becomes a problem.
- Help parents find out about resources available at the school for tutoring and other academic support. A simple phone call to parents that gives them the right contact information may be sufficient, although dropping a word to the appropriate school contact may help pave the way.
- Remind mentees to tell their parents about upcoming school events, science fairs, parent nights, and other school functions, or check in with parents yourself before a major event to see if they are planning to attend.
- If parents want advice on how they can encourage good study habits and help with homework, find ways to give them practical tools. You might let them know if you discover a great educational resource that you think they can use, or suggest that they check in with teachers if they have specific questions or concerns about their child's progress.
- Keep parents informed about projects you and your mentee are working on that are academically related and how parents can help. If there is a big project due at school that requires more time working at home or buying supplies, be sure to let the parents know that the student could use some assistance.
- If parents have barriers to participation in school activities, events, or homework help, such as limited English language skills, lack of transportation, or physical disabilities that limit mobility, be sure that the school and your program staff are aware of these. You may need to advocate for special services to help these families stay involved.
- Praise the mentee to parents when their child accomplishes an academic success. Parents of children who have had difficulty in school may rarely hear about their achievements. Make sure the mentee hears your praise, also!

Making Connections to School Staff

In their roles as advocates for mentees and facilitators of academic success, your program's mentors may need to communicate with teachers, counselors, coaches, and other school staff.

How direct this communication is depends on the structure of your program and the roles and responsibilities of your staff. If your program's matches meet off site, your mentors may not have much opportunity to talk directly to school personnel. Communication between the mentor and school staff might need to pass through a school liaison, program coordinator, or match supervisor.

If mentors meet with youth on campus during the school day, or as part of an after-school program environment, there may be plenty of opportunities for mentors to talk with others who are working with the youth. Getting feedback from teachers and others as to what's happening in the classroom and on the overall impact the match is having on the student can be very beneficial to mentors as they fill their developmental role.

Communication between mentors and school staff should be governed by your program's relevant policies and MOUs with the school, particularly those that have to do with confidentiality and the areas of the campus to which mentors have access. Your mentors should also have a good understanding of what types of feedback they can expect from teachers and others, and how they should be working with these other individuals to address particular youth needs.

The following handout offers examples of the topics mentors can discuss with school staff, either directly or through a program liaison.

Making Connections to the School and School Day

When communicating with school staff, mentors might consider addressing the following topics:

- Subjects that are being taught in the classroom that week/month.
- Difficulties the mentee is having with specific content being covered.
- Special academic or long-term projects with which the mentor might be able to assist.
- Strategies for teaching study habits and test-taking skills.
- Strategies for helping the youth learn specific content (fractions or photosynthesis, for example).
- Ways to connect the mentee to other available school services, such as tutoring or special clubs.
- Difficulties the mentee may be having with other school staff.
- The progress of the mentee in addressing classroom behavior issues.
- The mentee's learning style or learning disabilities (be careful with confidentiality here; permission from the parent should precede this).
- Issues with the mentee's home and family life that are affecting school performance.
- Peer interactions (e.g., new peer group, trouble with peer group, gang involvement).
- The mentee's attitude about school.
- The mentee's attitude about the mentoring relationship itself.
- Upcoming events or activities that the mentor could attend with the mentee and/or the mentee's family (sporting events, field trips, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, choir or drama productions, etc.)
- Assistance the mentor can provide for basic mentee needs such as clothing, meals, transportation. (Mentors should not consider themselves responsible for such items, but should pass this information on to the mentoring program staff so that they can find assistance for the youth.)
- Anything else that would assist the match with reaching their goals.

3. The Basics of Learning Styles

It will be useful for your mentors to have a basic understanding of youth learning styles and some background on the typical challenges and approaches for working with middle school–aged mentees. Mentors are likely to encounter a variety of learning styles and cognitive abilities in the youth with whom they get matched. They'll need to know how to work best with, say, an auditory learner or a learner who learns best with hands-on activities.

This information isn't designed to turn the mentor into an expert on how kids learn. Rather, it is simply information that the mentor may be able to use in addressing certain challenges and in designing appropriate activities with the mentee. Once again, the focus should be on the nurturing, developmental relationship. But learning more about the different ways youth go about learning can clearly help when working with them on academic goals.

This is one area where teachers, counselors, and other school staff can provide good background information to your mentors, and may even be able to help develop this training content. This may also be a useful subject for ongoing training, addressing specific mentor needs and fears as they engage in academic-related activities during the course of the match.

The following table includes basic information about the learning process and the variety of ways youth learn. Some mentors will already know the basics of this, but it will serve as a reminder to all volunteers (and staff) that, "Oh, yeah, different kids learn differently" and the mentoring relationship should be adjusted accordingly.

Modes of Learning and the Typical Learning Process

While there are competing theories on how people, and especially children, learn and retain new information, it is generally accepted that most youth go through a process similar to the one outlined below. This doesn't mean that you have to do each of these for every learning-related activity you do. Rather, it just offers suggestions for approaching educational activities from a variety of directions.

1. **Cognitive learning** refers to the way learners, in this case your new mentees, initially acquire and organize new information. Usually, as the age of learners increases, their ability to process more complex information increases (at least until adulthood, when individuals reach their full cognitive potential). In mentoring terms, this means that if you are engaged in an activity like doing research or studying heavily for a test, information should be age-appropriate (not too complex) and presented clearly in a logical progression.

   Strategies to help mentees with cognitive learning:

   - Limit how much information is transferred in each meeting. Mentees do have limits to the amount of information they can process at one time.
   - Build upon knowledge that mentees already have. Connecting new information to prior knowledge helps them follow the logic of, and retain, new information.
   - When defining new words, concepts, and principles, give a couple of examples. Most of us don't understand everything we hear the first time it is presented and examples help.
   - Explain the "real-life" importance and relevance of the information you are providing. Mentees may be more motivated to retain the information you give them if they feel they have an investment in its future use. This is a big part of creating youth-focused, developmental goals.
   - Use relevant, interesting audio and visual aids. Learning tools such as checklists and reminder cards can also help cognitive learning.

2. **Experiential learning** refers to giving mentees a chance to do something with the knowledge they just acquired. This type of learning "makes it real" for youth, so to speak. This highlights the importance of engaging in a variety of activities related to learning. Just focusing on textbooks and tests will not provide the youth with alternative ways of thinking about education or opportunities to connect personally to what's being taught.

   Strategies to help mentees experiment with new information:

   - Create an opportunity for mentees to practice the new knowledge and skills one step at a time. This can be done during your one-to-one meeting times or as part of the program's group activities.
   - Make sure the experiences you create are safe for the mentees and will not embarrass them in any way.
   - Leave time to debrief the experiences through discussion or Q&A time so that all of your mentee's questions are answered.

3. **Social learning** refers to creating the opportunity for mentees to learn with others. Through group discussions and activities, mentees will have the opportunity to share ideas, develop confidence, become contributing members of a group, and support their peers.

   Strategies that make use of social activities:

   - Work with your match supervisor or program coordinator to create opportunities for the mentees to interact with each other in the learning process, either through small-group activities at the school site or through group learning activities in the community.

- Make sure that other mentors are in agreement as to the focus and structure of the group activity. Coordination among the adults will make it easier for the youth to have a productive group experience.

- Give the mentees the opportunity to debrief after every group learning activity.

4. **Environmental learning** refers to the fact that learning does not take place in a vacuum. The culture, community, and personal history of the mentees influence their learning.

   Strategies that accommodate environmental learning factors:

   - Content can be customized and tailored to the unique environmental characteristics of your mentees. Your youth are coming from different backgrounds, different home environments, different day-to-day challenges. These varying environments and circumstances may include cultural transitions, foster care, gender issues, homelessness, and language barriers, to name just a few.

   - In some cases noncontent-related factors must be addressed before learning can take place (for example, the old axiom that "hungry students don't learn.") It is important to address the basic needs of the mentees if they are to fully participate.

Modes of Learning

There are three major, commonly-accepted modes of learning: **kinesthetic**, **visual**, and **auditory**. A basic knowledge of these learning styles will help you understand the importance of creating variety in your mentoring activities and may help you reach mentees who are having a hard time with educational concepts.

The ***kinesthetic learning style*** suggests that a particular learner learns best through activity —touching, creating, or doing. A ***visual learning style*** suggests that the learner comprehends information better through visual representations such as diagrams, pictures, or videos of the concepts. An ***auditory learning style*** suggests that some learners do best by listening to orally presented information. Your mentee's teachers and other school staff can provide insight into the methods that may work best with your particular mentee.

Adapted with permission from: *Training New Mentees: A Manual for Preparing Youth in Mentoring Programs*, by Judy Strother Taylor (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, National Mentoring Center, 2003).

4. Developmental Stages of Youth

In addition to knowing learning styles, mentors should understand their mentee's developmental stages: what mentors should expect intellectually, morally, physically, emotionally, and socially. Brain development and growth are especially active during early adolescence, so the mentees in our programs will be going through a lot of changes during their time with their mentors. By learning about the different developmental stages of youth, mentors will be better equipped to make sense of the attitudes and behaviors of their mentees.

Mentees will all be at various stages in the developmental process depending on their physical age, life circumstances, and histories. Keep in mind that even though a mentee might be 12 years old emotionally, he might be functioning at an eight-year-old level. Mentors will also want to consider the personalities, interests, and unique qualities of their mentees as they work together on a weekly basis. The following handout discusses the characteristics of young adolescents.

Remember: We are not asking the mentor to become a child psychologist; this information simply provides background information to help understand what's going on with the mentee.

Characteristics of Young Adolescents

Youth between the ages of 10 to 15 are characterized by their diversity as they move through the pubertal growth cycle at varying times and rates. Yet as a group they reflect the important developmental characteristics that have major implications for parents, educators, and others who care for them and seek to promote their healthy growth and positive development.

Following are what research suggests are notable characteristics of young adolescents in the physical, cognitive, moral, psychological, and social-emotional dimensions of development. Although most young adolescents in the United States will exhibit these characteristics to some degree, the relative importance of each characteristic can vary widely depending on the young adolescent. Gender, race, ethnicity and other cultural influences, family and economic situations, learning and physical disabilities, a young adolescent's temperament, and qualities of his or her community or neighborhood are just some of the factors that, working together, give these developmental dimensions and characteristics their personal and social meaning.

These characteristics also are presented in sequential fashion, but of course, they are not experienced in that way. Rather, all the dimensions are intertwined, each affecting and being affected by the others. For example, how young adolescents develop physically has ramifications for how they think of themselves psychologically and for how they interact socially with others. Because of many interconnections, the categories to which these developmental characteristics are assigned—psychological development rather than social-emotional, or cognitive rather than moral—are sometimes relatively arbitrary.

Young adolescents have a greater influence on their own developmental paths than they did in middle childhood. Most if not all of the characteristics highlighted here are the result of a give and take between the young adolescent and his or her ecology. These recurring interactions produce an infinite variety of developmental nuances that combine to reflect each young adolescent's unique personhood. So each of the characteristics listed here should be understood as a reasonable generalization for most young adolescents, but one that is more or less valid for particular young adolescents in particular situations.

In the area of *physical development*, young adolescents

- Experience rapid, irregular physical growth.
- Undergo bodily changes that may cause awkward, uncoordinated movements.
- Have varying maturity rates, with girls tending to begin puberty one and one-half to two years earlier than boys, and young adolescents in some cultural groups, such as African Americans, tending to begin puberty earlier than those in other groups.
- Experience restlessness and fatigue due to hormonal changes.
- Need daily physical activity because of increased energy, and if not actively engaged in regular physical activity, often lack fitness, with poor levels of endurance, strength, and flexibility.
- Need to release energy, often resulting in sudden, apparently meaningless outbursts of activity.
- Have preference for junk food but need good nutrition.
- May be prone to risky dieting practices, especially among European American youth, in order to lose or gain weight.
- Continue to develop sexual awareness that increases with the onset of menstruation, the growth spurt, and the appearance of secondary sex characteristics.
- Are concerned with bodily changes that accompany sexual maturation and changes resulting in an increase in nose size, protruding ears, long arms, and awkward posture, concerns magnified because of comparison with peers.

- Have an increased need for comprehensive, medically accurate education about sexuality and health issues that respond to these increased concerns.

- Are physically vulnerable because they may adopt poor health habits or engage in experimentation with alcohol and other drugs and high-risk sexual behaviors.

In the area of *cognitive-intellectual development*, young adolescents

- Display a wide range of individual intellectual development.

- Increasingly are able to think abstractly, not only concretely; both concrete and abstract thinking styles may be in evidence in the same young adolescent, depending on the issue or situation.

- Commonly face decisions that require more sophisticated cognitive and social-emotional skills.

- Are intensely curious and have a wide range of intellectual pursuits, although few are—or need to be—sustained.

- Prefer active over passive learning experiences; depending on their cultural backgrounds, some young adolescents, such as Native American youth, may be quite engaged in learning through observation but not show this engagement through active participation.

- Prefer interaction with peers during learning activities.

- May show disinterest in conventional academic subjects but are intellectually curious about the world and themselves.

- Respond positively to opportunities to connect what they are learning to participation in real-life situations, such as community-service projects.

- Develop an increasingly more accurate understanding of their current personal abilities, but may prematurely close doors to future exploration in particular interest areas due to feeling inadequate in comparison to peers.

- Are developing a capacity to understand higher levels of humor, some of which may be misunderstood by adults to be overly sarcastic or even aggressive.

- Are inquisitive about adults and are keen observers of them; depending on their cultural upbringing, some young adolescents also may often challenge adults' authority.

In the area of *moral development*, young adolescents

- Are in transition from moral reasoning that focuses on "what's in it for me" to that which considers the feelings and rights of others; self-centered moral reasoning may be in evidence at the same time as other- or principle-oriented reasoning, depending on the situation the young adolescent is in; in addition, cultural differences in the socialization of moral development, especially among young adolescents whose families are recent immigrants, may contribute to special moral conflicts or dilemmas for those young people attempting to navigate multiple cultures.

- Increasingly are capable of assessing moral matters in shades of grey as opposed to viewing them in black and white terms more characteristic of younger children; however, this increased potential for more complex moral reasoning may often not be evident in practice.

- Are generally idealistic, desiring to make the world a better place and to make a meaningful contribution to a cause or issue larger than themselves.

- Often show compassion for those who are downtrodden or suffering and have special concern for animals and the environmental problems that our world faces.

- Are capable of and value direct experience in participatory democracy.

- Owing to their lack of experience are often impatient with the pace of change, underestimating the difficulties in making desired social changes.

- Are likely to believe in and espouse values such as honesty, responsibility, and cultural acceptance, while at the same time learning that they and the people they admire also can be morally inconsistent, and can lie or cheat, avoid responsibility, and be intolerant.
- At times are quick to see flaws in others but slow to acknowledge their own faults.
- Are often interested in exploring spiritual matters, even as they may become distant from formal religious organizations; for many youth, however, especially African Americans, connection to religious organizations may continue to be a vital part of early adolescence.
- Are moving from acceptance of adult moral judgments to developing their own personal values; nevertheless, they tend to embrace major values consonant with those of their parents and other valued adults.
- Rely on parents and significant adults for advice, especially when facing major decisions.
- Greatly need and are influenced by trustworthy adult role models who will listen to them and affirm their moral consciousness and actions.
- Are increasingly aware of, concerned, and vocal about inconsistencies between values exhibited by adults and the conditions they see in society.

In the area of *psychological development*, young adolescents

- Are often preoccupied with self.
- Who have been socialized in European American culture seek to become increasingly independent, searching for adult identity and acceptance, but they continue to need support and boundary-setting from adults; young adolescents from other cultural backgrounds, such as Hispanic or Asian American youth, may be as or more focused on their social obligations and roles in the family and other groups than they are on independence.
- May experience a significant increase in their awareness of, and the importance they give to, their ethnic identity.
- Experience levels of self-esteem that may fluctuate up and down, but in general are adequate and increase over time; in contrast, levels of belief in self-competence in academic subjects, sports, and creative activities often decline significantly from the levels of middle childhood.
- Believe that personal problems, feelings, and experiences are unique to themselves.
- Tend to be self-conscious and highly sensitive to personal criticism.
- Desire recognition for their positive efforts and achievements. Exhibit intense concern about physical growth and maturity as profound physical changes occur.
- Increasingly behave in ways associated with their sex as traditional sex role identification strengthens for most young adolescents; some young adolescents may question their sexual identities.
- Are curious about sex, and have sexual feelings; they need to know that these are normal.
- Are psychologically vulnerable, because at no other stage in development are they more likely to encounter and be aware of so many differences between themselves and others.
- Are also psychologically resilient; across diversities in race/ethnicity, residence, or socioeconomic status, young adolescents tend to be optimistic and have a generally positive view of their personal future.

In the area of *social-emotional development*, young adolescents

- Have a strong need for approval and may be easily discouraged.
- Are increasingly concerned about peer acceptance.

- Often overreact to ridicule, embarrassment, and rejection.
- Are dependent on the beliefs and values of parents and other valued adults, but seek to make more of their own decisions.
- Like fads, especially those shunned by adults.
- Have a strong need to belong to a group, with approval of peers becoming as important as adult approval, and on some matters even more important.
- Also need moderate amounts of time alone, in order to regroup and reflect on daily experiences.
- In their search for group membership, may experience significant embarrassment, ridicule, or rejection from those in other cliques from which they are excluded.
- Can gravitate toward affiliation with disruptive peers or membership in gangs in order to feel part of a group and to protect their physical safety.
- Experiment with new slang and behaviors as they search for a social position within their group, often discarding these "new identities" at a later date.
- Experience mood swings often with peaks of intensity and unpredictability.
- May exhibit immature behavior because their social skills and ability to regulate emotions frequently lag behind their cognitive and physical maturity; among some young adolescents, however, particularly those whose cultural backgrounds value such capacities, their social and emotional skills may be more advanced than their cognitive and physical maturity suggest.
- Must adjust to the social acceptance of early maturing girls and boys, especially if they themselves are maturing at a slower rate.
- If physically maturing earlier than peers, must deal with increased pressure around others' expectations of them, especially about engaging in high-risk behaviors.
- Often begin to experience feelings of sexual/romantic attraction to others, with some having significant sexual/romantic relationships, and a sizeable minority experiencing sexual behaviors.
- Often experience sexual harassment, bullying, and physical confrontations more than they did in elementary school or will in high school.
- Are often intimidated and frightened by their first middle-level school experience because of the large numbers of students and teachers, the size of the building, and what may be for many their first day-to-day experiences with significant proportions of students who are culturally different from them.
- Are socially vulnerable, because, as they develop their beliefs, attitudes, and values, the emphasis media place on such things as money, fame, power, and beauty (and the majority culture perspectives which most often define those issues) may negatively influence their ideals, or encourage them to compromise their beliefs.

This special section on the characteristics of young adolescents was prepared by Dr. Peter C. Scales, Senior Fellow, Office of the President, Search Institute. Dr. Scales' recent research has focused on identifying and promoting "developmental assets," those conditions that are linked to young people's success in school and in life. Unfortunately, young people say they experience fewer of these assets as they get older. Middle-level educators are in a unique position to help build many developmental assets such as feeling empowered and playing useful roles, building social competence, and developing a commitment to learning.

Used with permission of National Middle School Association: *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents* (Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association, 2003).

5. Setting Goals

The mentor needs to learn how to set goals with his or her youth around academics. These goals can be both short term (What are we going to accomplish this session?) and long term (Where is the overall academic improvement for the youth headed?). It's also important to know how academic goals tie into other goals, such as career exploration and extracurricular activities.

Goals are essential in determining where the youth is, where she wants to be, and how to get there. Having set goals also helps evaluate how much progress is being made along the way.

Goals can be broken down into short, medium, and long range. This gives the mentee something to work toward immediately (with immediate satisfaction in achieving them), goals that take a little more effort but whose realization is still within the mentee's grasp, and those long-range goals that help the mentee see a desirable future, one worth working toward.

An easy way to help the mentee visualize goals and what's needed to reach them is by drawing a map, similar to the one on page 67. This activity serves as a nice ice-breaker early in matches. With the map the mentee can see how one thing links to another, and how some things are going to be important all along the way—like math.

Mapping out goals like this also suggests activities, like field trips to natural science museums, learning computer skills, or job shadowing a particular profession.

The essential thing is to let the mentee set the goals and picture her success so she can begin to feel excited about the journey—especially if there will be some fun activities associated with it.

The map also makes it easier to identify short-, medium-, and long-range goals. These—even long-term ones—should be attainable dur-

The Purpose of Goal Setting

- Goals help youth develop self-confidence.
- Goals help develop motivation and sense of purpose.
- Goals help youth develop a sense of accomplishment.
- Goals help develop self-control.
- Goals help youth see connections to academics.
- Goals help develop self-reliance and self-management.
- Goals help youth gain awareness of options.
- Goals help develop a positive attitude.

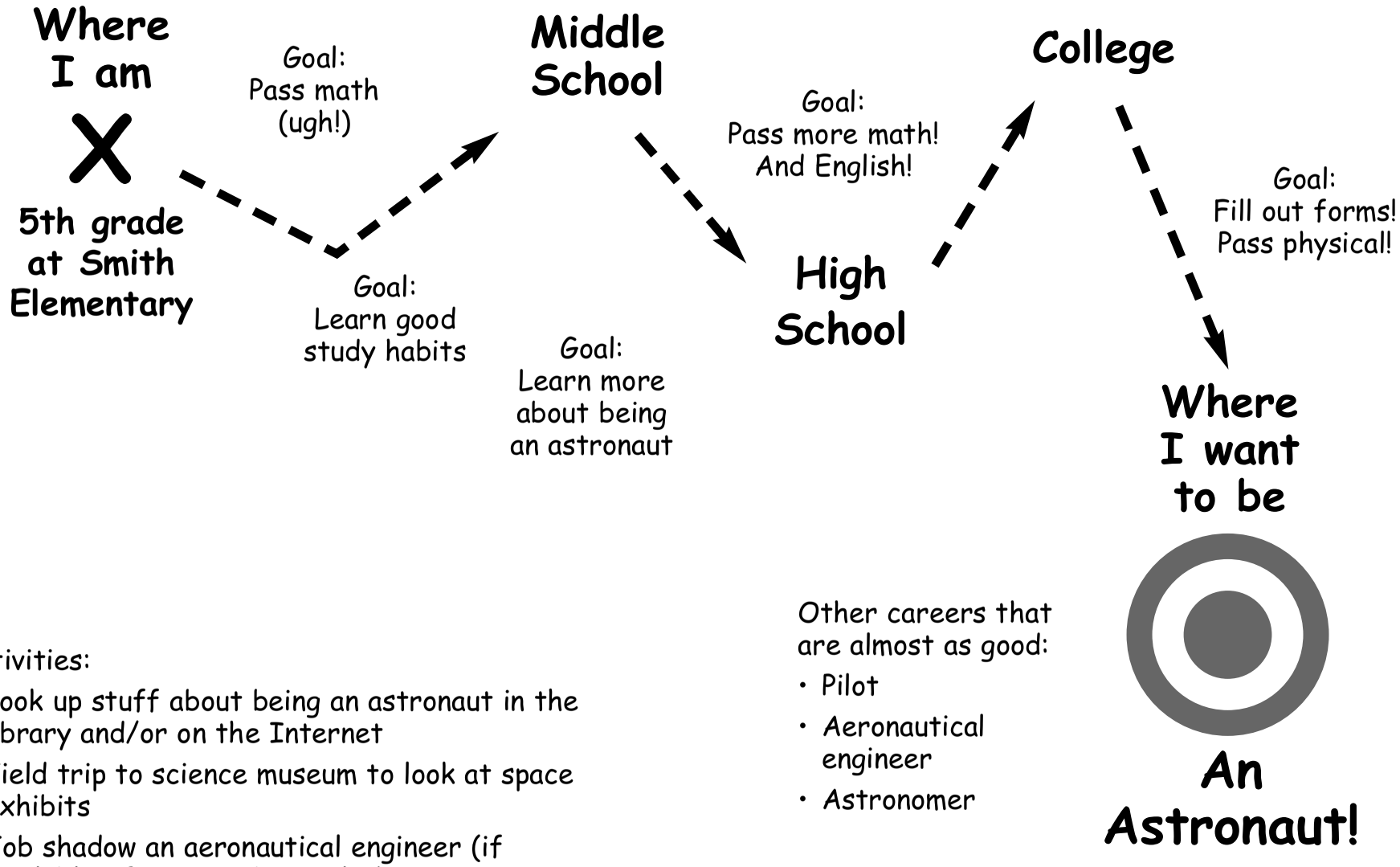
ing the duration of the mentoring relationship. (Becoming an astronaut is a long, long-range goal.) A short-term goal could be getting the week's math homework done and turned in on time. A medium-range goal might be to establish a schedule and place for doing homework every day. A long-range goal could be to make a C or better in math on the next grade report. (Note: Goals are not set in concrete. Let the mentee refine them while learning more about what he or she wants to achieve.) The mentor's job is to help the mentee see possibilities and set achievable, useful goals.

Once goals are set, mentor and mentee need to write down the goal, decide what resources or assistance will be needed to reach the goal, and set a date for reaching it. Each goal can be kept on a note card or a more elaborate system that you can design together. It might help to keep a calendar on hand when goal setting so the youth can visualize how much time to allot to each goal.)

More tips for setting goals . . .

- All goals have merit. If the mentee wants to become an auto mechanic, explore together what it takes to be a mechanic. Set up interviews with mechanics. Go to the library with the mentee to research wages, training, job opportunities. Again, during the goal-setting process the mentee should see connections between goal and school (mechanics have to be able to read technical manuals, communicate clearly, use computers, estimate costs, work with precision equipment).
- Never criticize or belittle the mentee's goal. If the goal is unobtainable or unworthy, let the mentee make that discovery and talk about it.
- Help the mentee understand that whatever the end point, all goals can have valuable learning steps along the way.
- Help the mentee see options and alternatives. Getting to be an astronaut may not be practical, but what about a commercial pilot? If the job market for auto mechanics is weak, what similar careers are out there (aircraft engine mechanic, precision-tool operator)?

Goal Map



Other careers that are almost as good:

- Pilot
- Aeronautical engineer
- Astronomer

Activities:

- Look up stuff about being an astronaut in the library and/or on the Internet
- Field trip to science museum to look at space exhibits
- Job shadow an aeronautical engineer (if available; if not, maybe a pilot)

Top 10 List
(Why Goals Are Worth Having)

1. **They help you be who you want to be**. You can have all the dreams in the world, but if you don't act on them, how will you get where you want to go? When you know how to set a goal and go for it, you chart a path of action that takes you step by step toward the future you want.

> "The larger the goal, the greater my feeling of triumph."
> — Jessica, 15

2. **They stretch your comfort zone**. Goals involve a few risks (the healthy kind). In pursuit of a goal, you may find yourself talking to new people, trying out for a team, performing on stage, making a speech, or doing something else that draws people's attention. Pushing yourself past your normal comfort zone is a great way to grow.

> "I know having goals makes my parents proud of me. They see how hard I work to reach my goals and how responsible I am. As a result, they trust me more."
> —Eric, 15

3. **They boost your confidence**. When you set a goal and reach it, you prove to yourself and others that you've got what it takes to get things done. Goals not only make you stronger—they help you feel good about yourself, too.

4. **They give your life purpose**. Goals show you—and the world—what you value. They also give you a sense of direction. When you're going after your goals, you're less likely to spend your days feeling bored or wasting your time.

5. **They help you rely on yourself**. You don't have to let other people decide your life for you. You can take charge of your life by setting goals and making a plan to reach them. Once you get into the goal-setting habit, you'll notice that you feel a lot more independent. (And the people around you will notice your new independence, too!)

6. **They encourage you to trust your decisions**. You're at a point in your life where you're making more decisions at home and at school. Sometimes, it's really easy to go along with the crowd or be swayed by what other people want you to do. But when you keep your goals in mind, your choices will become clearer. You'll learn to trust your decisions, because they're right for *you*.

> "There's no greater feeling than setting a goal and accomplishing it. When you do, you've got something that will last the rest of your life."
> — Pettus, 18

7. **They help you turn the impossible into the possible**. Goal setting breaks down seemingly out-of-reach dreams into small, manageable, and practical steps. You can turn "someday" dreams into real-life accomplishments.

8. **They prove that you can make a difference**. Are your goals about changing your own life? Are they about changing the lives of others and improving the world? Whether you want to make a difference in your own life or someone else's, goal setting helps you achieve what you set out to do—one step at a time.

9. **They improve your outlook on life**. Goals help you move forward—a positive direction to be going. (Much better than sitting still or getting nowhere at all.) This momentum is a real energizer. You'll feel more positive, guaranteed.

10. **They lead to feelings of satisfaction**. Studies have shown that people who set and reach goals perform at higher levels, are more satisfied with themselves, and achieve more. In fact, if you look at the goal setters you know or admire (friends, family members, teachers, business owners, community leaders, athletes, celebrities), you'll probably see people who are proud of their success and eager to keep aiming for more in life.

Excerpted from *What Do You Really Want? How to Set a Goal and Go for It! A Guide for Teens* by Beverly K. Bachel, © 2001. Used with permission of Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 1-866-703-7322; http://www.freespirit.com. All rights reserved.

6. Activities for Mentors and Mentees To Do Together

At some level, a mentoring relationship boils down to the activities the mentor and mentee do together and how those activities are presented, framed, and structured. As we've mentioned throughout this guide, the activities the match does together should be built around the youth's goals and areas of need, and done in such a way that they result in positive growth in the relationship. They should not override the creation of a strong bond between the mentor and the youth.

It is equally clear that in their role as facilitators of learning and educational opportunity, mentors will be engaging in a wide variety of activities that can affect classroom performance, school attitudes, study skills and homework completion, and the youth's motivation to learn. The following handout lists general activities that mentors can do with youth that might be useful in generating academic interest and achievement. Many of these activities can also be considered for groups of mentors and youth to do together.

Other activity ideas are scattered throughout this section of the book, including projects related to classroom content and specific areas of study. A list of Web sites that offer content-specific resources is on page 99.

Activities We Can Do Together at School or During the School Day

- Read a book
- Study for a test
- Complete homework
- Join (or find more about) a school club, sport, activity, etc.
- Review previous tests and homework
- Discuss managing time effectively
- Do research on the Internet
- Do research in the school library
- Talk about what happened during the school day
- Talk about disappointments at school
- Talk about successes in school
- Discuss being accountable for your own actions, responsibilities
- Create a notebook to organize school-work
- Create academic goals (both short and long term)
- Learn effective study habits
- Discuss strategies for taking tests
- Talk about the best (and the worst) parts of school
- Work on spelling—and how to use a dictionary

Activities We Can Do Together in the Community

- Visit museum, aquarium, planetarium, art gallery, natural museum, national park, cemetery, zoo, etc.
- Tour the public library
- Visit a job site
- Do a job shadow
- Interview someone who has an interesting job
- Research career qualifications
- Visit a high school, attend high school events
- Visit local universities
- Take a class together—learning a new skill together can be fun and exciting
- Take a nature hike
- Visit a farm
- Take a historical tour of the city
- Go to cultural event (concert, play, symphony, rodeo)
- Go to an ethnic-themed event (pow-wow, MLK celebration)
- Watch an educational special or movie with an educational theme
- Talk with senior citizens about their life story and historical events
- Participate in a summer reading program
- Go grocery shopping together. Plan a menu for a meal, make a budget for it, compare prices
- Explore public transportation together

7. Tutoring in the Mentoring Context

As stressed earlier in this book, the primary role of a mentor is to provide constant, caring support across all areas of the young person's life. As the relationship with the mentee develops, taking on the temporary role of tutor may be a natural extension of the mentor's role, just as a parent may act as a tutor, or a teacher may have some of the qualities of a mentor. Knowing when tutoring help is needed and useful, how much time to spend on tutoring and homework help, and when to turn to professionals for more assistance can all help the mentor preserve the positive mentoring relationship while improving the mentee's academic outcomes.

This section discusses activities that mentors can undertake with their mentee to help achieve academic success, including:

- Providing homework help
- Encouraging positive study habits
- Helping the mentee do research
- Helping the mentee prepare for tests

Before delving into each of these topics, let's learn a little bit more about the roles of mentors and tutors.

The following table compares what mentors and tutors do. Reading the table and the comments shows that both mentor and tutor endeavor to win the mentee/tutee's trust. Both focus on the needs of their charge. Both work at building self-confidence. Both help with problem solving, although the mentor tends to focus on subjective, personal, and social issues such as self-esteem or relationships, while the tutor is more objective, focusing on academic subjects.

Clearly, there is much overlap. A tutor who is helping a discouraged student successfully cope with a challenging subject is giving that student encouragement and self-confidence, normally a mentor's role; and a mentor can offer homework help, study tips, and insight into the need for studying unpopular subjects, and can help an at-risk student gain confidence. (For additional information, see "A Note About Mentoring and Tutoring" on page 16.)

One strategy that can help a mentor with the tutoring role is to express early in the relationship the desire to help the youth with his grades. The mentor should ask the youth how interested he is in receiving that kind of help. Some mentees may be more ready to work with their mentors on schoolwork than others. The important thing is not to force the youth into an excessive regimen of academic activities.

Similarities and Differences Between Mentoring and Tutoring Relationships

MENTORS	TUTORS	
A mentor is a trusted and faithful friend, who listens, supports, and guides a young person on a consistent basis over a specified period of time.	A tutor is a trusted peer or adult who offers one-on-one support for the purpose of improving student achievement and attitude toward school.	A mentor focuses on various aspects of the mentee's life, including personal issues, family life, peer relations, and education issues. A tutor primarily focuses on student achievement and may delve into other areas of the tutee's life as they arise.
A mentor focuses first and foremost on the needs of the mentee with input from program staff, parents, teachers, and counselors.	A tutor focuses first and foremost on the needs of the tutee, with input from program staff, parents, teachers, and counselors.	Mentoring programs often focus on several areas of "risk" for mentees, while tutoring focuses mainly on improving academics.
A mentor focuses on building a friendship as basis for meetings.	A tutor focuses on improving academic achievement or a life skill as basis for meetings.	The mentee/tutee is at the center of the relationship.
A mentor can engage in a wide range of activities with his or her mentee, including: ■ Exploring personal values ■ Developing youth assets ■ Setting short- and long-term goals ■ Helping the mentee make positive choices ■ Helping with college preparation and planning ■ Participating in sports and recreation ■ Providing homework assistance ■ Arranging for job shadowing opportunities and more.	A tutor can engage in a variety of educational activities with the tutee, including: ■ Developing reading and math skills ■ Getting organized ■ Brainstorming ideas for assignments ■ Assisting with homework ■ Studying for tests and more.	Although the activities may look different, sometimes tutors fill a mentoring role and sometimes mentors fill a tutoring role. The key differences are that tutors focus mainly on one aspect of the youth's life—academics—while mentors focus on relationships first and foremost.
A mentor meets with the mentee on a regular basis, over a specified period of time in a variety of locations.	A tutor schedules sessions on a regular basis, over a specified period of time at school.	A regular schedule is important to both mentoring and tutoring, as is adhering to (often mutually agreed to) rules.

MENTORS	TUTORS	
Mentors come from all walks of life; they can be older peers or supportive adults.	Tutoring is undertaken by a broad array of community members, from the very old to the tutee's peers.	Screening, time requirements, and the intensity of the mentor-mentee relationship often reduce the number of volunteers willing to commit to a mentoring program.
A mentor generally has to make a 12-month commitment to the mentee.	A tutor generally makes an informal school-year commitment to the tutee.	Mentors commit to a lengthier match (including summer months) and often sign formal contracts to this effect; they also formally agree to more stipulations and policies than tutors.
Communication often delves deeply into the mentee's personal life, is based on the trust that forms between the match, and adheres to a strict code of confidentiality.	Communication centers on academic success (but can delve into the realm of the tutee's personal life).	Both mentors and tutors need good communication skills such as being good listeners and being able to explain complex concepts and ideas clearly.
Mentors are encouraged, when appropriate, to get to know the mentee's parent(s) and to get prior permission for match activites.	Tutors are encouraged to get to know the family through activities such as family literacy nights.	Mentors often interact with parents directly on a regular basis, whereas tutors may only interact with parents occasionally at special events (if at all).

Mentors as Tutors: How Can You Help?

Mentors who have developed a positive relationship with their mentee have many opportunities to promote learning and academic success. As you begin to take on the role of tutor with your mentee, review the following list of ways in which you can be most helpful:

- Be patient.
- Offer encouragement and praise.
- Correct mistakes in a positive manner, not with a critical tone.
- Avoid comparing your mentee with someone else.
- Identify and celebrate progress—no matter how small.
- Share your mentee's progress with the teacher and parents.
- Talk about attending school every day.
- Talk to your mentee about finding a place in the home, an uninterrupted time in the evening in which to do homework.
- Encourage the use of the library.
- Encourage your mentee to read.
- If appropriate, share your mentee's goals with his or her teacher.
- Show teachers that you support their goals.
- Keep track of your mentee's progress in school. Periodically talk to the teacher to see how your mentee is doing—and ask if there is some way that you can support your mentee's improvement in school.
- First and foremost, remain your mentee's advocate.

Adapted with permission from: *Elements of Effective Mentoring: A Mentor Training Manual for the In-School Volunteer Mentor* (Wilmington, DE: Creative Mentoring, 2001).

Homework Help

Homework is an inevitable part of the educational process, and helping mentees with homework can be a large part of the academic assistance mentors can provide. Homework elicits a wide range of emotions, from anxiety, to grudging acceptance, to genuine enjoyment. Most of us still remember that pit-in-the-stomach feeling over an assignment not completed or a project left to the last minute, as well as that elated feeling when it all came together.

Ideally, homework reflects what happens in the classroom and offers opportunities for students to practice new skills. However, the overall goal of homework is to teach students to work independently, plan effectively, get organized, and think on their own. The mentor's primary role will be to help the mentee in this endeavor, offering support that encourages the growth of these basic study skills.

Approaches

Some mentoring programs are structured to include regular homework sessions in an established environment, while others give considerable latitude about how, where, and when to incorporate this assistance into mentoring visits. In both cases, helping with homework on a regular basis should ideally not begin until mentor and mentee have gotten to know one another and have had a chance to share some relationship-building activities. This is especially important with mentees who are struggling academically, since homework may be a particular sore spot that they would prefer to avoid discussing.

A mentor is not expected to understand the content of homework lessons or know all the answers, and should be completely honest about his or her limitations when working with the mentee. The mentor's job is to help the mentee develop the tools and skills needed to complete homework independently.

The "Helping the Mentee With Homework" handout on the following page lists ways the mentor can get started in developing positive interactions around homework help.

Helping the Mentee With Homework

Getting Started

- **Build a trusting relationship.** Make it clear that you are interested in your mentee's schoolwork and are ready and willing to help her with homework. Find some part of the schoolwork that she has an interest in and focus on that at first. Let your mentee teach you something you didn't know, or show you a piece of work she is proud of. Share your own experiences with homework and studying, and acknowledge her feelings about having to do homework.

- **Establish a routine.** Once you have built some trust, develop some agreements about how and when you will work on homework and other studies. Establish a regular time to work on homework together and pick a comfortable spot that is conducive to concentrating and learning. This should be a shared decision, although you may have to rule out certain choices, such as in front of the television set.

- **Make each session enjoyable.** Even if homework isn't exciting, it doesn't have to be unpleasant. If possible, have snacks available and spend time debriefing before jumping into an assignment. It's OK to go off task now and then, or to use a piece of homework to start a conversation that interests the mentee. And when you are done, be sure to use concrete praise that reinforces accomplishments. If possible build in time for a fun activity to do after you are done studying.

- **Check in with the youth throughout the session.** This ensures that you are aware of when your mentee may be getting frustrated or just needs a break.

Helping the Mentee Work Independently

- **Organizing and prioritizing work.** Many students struggle with organizational issues, and the more you can help your mentee get and stay organized, the better.

- **Understanding the assignments.** Read the assignment together and find out if your mentee understands what is expected. Ask questions about parts that are not clear, and help her break down the assignment into manageable pieces.

- **Identifying the knowledge the student already has.** Sometimes students get overwhelmed by what they don't know when faced with a homework project, especially one with multiple tasks such as a research paper. You can help your mentee sort out what she already knows and what she still needs to find out through a process of direct questioning about the topic at hand. You can then make a list of what information is still needed to complete the assignment.

- **Helping students access resources.** You can provide support to help access outside resources that your mentee will need to complete assignments, such as the public library or science museum. Helping your mentee learn how to use the school library or other school-based resources for research is also valuable.

- **Identifying potential stumbling blocks and how to overcome them.** Many things can get in the way of studying and completing homework, from a lost assignment to a school play or soccer game that cuts into study time. Lack of adequate materials and supplies for a project or a distracting study area at home can also hinder progress. Make it a regular part of your study sessions together to have the mentee think of any impending issues that might affect her studies, and problem-solve these potential stumbling blocks together.

- **Promoting the idea of lifelong learning.** Mentors help change youth attitudes about school and learning in general. You can model the benefits of an education and the value of ongoing learning throughout life.

Of course, at some point mentors will also be involved in helping students understand specific academic content areas. Using the resources already provided by the school is often the best starting point, and helping students really read these materials will go a long way toward understanding. Again, if the mentor doesn't understand a subject area, it's a great time to learn answers together while modeling good research and study habits. The section on "Addressing Specific Academic Areas" offers suggestions and resources for working with mentees on specific academic subject areas. The next few pages contain handouts for helping mentees organize and complete their homework.

Encouraging Positive Study Habits

Working with a mentee on homework and other academic activities on a weekly basis can certainly help the youth be successful. But what about the other four days of the week? Most schools require some kind of daily studying after school beginning as early as first or second grade, even if it's just regular reading. Mentors can help their mentees develop positive study habits that will last them throughout their K–12 experience. The following handout on encouraging positive study habits offers suggestions and activities the mentor can do to help the mentee get started.

Encouraging Positive Study Habits

A Place to Study. Talk with your mentee about where he studies and how it works for him. Most students spend at least some time studying at their home, so focus on helping your mentee make the home study space as comfortable and productive as possible. Start by asking a few questions:

- Do you have a regular spot for studying at home? If so, what is it like?
- Is your study area well-lighted and fairly free from distractions?
- Is the space comfortable and somewhere you like to be?
- Is the space always available to you, or only at certain times?
- What do you need to make the space more homework-friendly?

This conversation could lead to activities you can do together to develop the student's space, such as making a list of needed supplies (for example, a study lamp), making a simple hanging bookcase shelf for the area, or creating a "do not disturb—studying in progress" sign for a bedroom door.

If your mentee feels that there is no place to study at home, you may want to check with the parents to see if they can help develop a regular spot, even if it's just a corner of the kitchen where he can spread out his materials. Most parents will be glad to get some support with this topic and might be grateful for some pointers.

If the home environment really does not have a good spot for regular study, consider other options, such as the local library, the home of a nearby relative, such as a grandparent, or an after-school homework club at school or a community center.

If most studying is to be done away from home, help the student put together a traveling pack of materials, books, and supplies so that they are available no matter where the student is working.

Finding a Time to Study. Have the mentee develop a regular time to do homework and a regular amount of time to study. A consistent routine for study time can help keep a student on track. Doing homework early in the evening is more likely to ensure success because it reduces the possibility of "crisis" (an assignment that is more difficult than perceived and needs more time, or a sudden need to run to the store for posterboard). Also, students who get their homework done early can reward themselves by watching a favorite TV show or going outside to play.

Mentors should also encourage mentees to set aside a regular amount of time for homework. Scheduling at least half an hour to an hour an evening is a good start.

Having needed materials and supplies. Students often have trouble completing an assignment because they lack supplies to do the work. You can help overcome this barrier by helping them gather what they need and keep them organized. The Homework Survival Kit Activity on page 81 (or a modified version) is one you can do together. Remember, mentors are discouraged from purchasing gifts, including supplies for school, for their mentees, so if your mentee needs help buying supplies contact your program staff for assistance.

Using time wisely. Help your mentee break down homework into manageable chunks and decide what pieces need the most time, which need to be done first, and so on. The student may find it helpful to develop a weekly chart to keep track of when each assignment is due, with estimates of how much time is needed to complete each one. Notes about special materials needed could also be recorded. Let your mentee develop a system that works for him, but encourage him to make a system that is written down and followed. "I can remember it in my head" probably isn't going to work, especially as assignments get more complicated.

Using time wisely also means thinking ahead. As students get older, they are more likely to be assigned longer-term projects with multiple parts. Mentors can help students structure these larger projects by discussing all the steps needed to complete them on time and helping them write down the steps, such as:

1. Selecting a topic
2. Doing the research by looking up books and other materials on the topic and taking notes
3. Figuring out what questions to discuss
4. Drafting an outline
5. Writing a rough draft
6. Creating any visual products, such as a poster or graph
7. Revising and completing the final report

Reviewing work. Students should get into the habit of reviewing all of their written work before turning it in. You can model this practice when you meet with your mentee by reviewing assignments together. For example, try having your mentee read his report aloud to you—he will be able to hear the mistakes easier than if he just reads it to himself.

Getting the assignment turned in. A completed assignment is useless unless it gets to the teacher's desk on time and in one piece. As obvious as that may sound, it is not atypical for a student to forget to turn in an assignment or lose it on the way to school. If your mentee has difficulty keeping track of assignments, help figure out a way to be on top of this. Some helpful hints include:

- Keep a folder just for completed assignments.
- Put all completed work into the folder as soon as it's done, rather than waiting until morning.
- Make sure the teacher sees the work being turned in. Don't just leave it on her desk and hope she sees it. This can avoid later problems if your mentee believes the assignment was submitted but the teacher has no record of it.
- If an assignment doesn't make it in on time, be sure your mentee follows up with the teacher to see if it can be turned in late.

Offering praise and recognition. Your opinions matter to your mentee! Be sure he hears loud and clear that you are proud of his efforts and successes. Be sure your mentee's parents and teachers also hear from you, not just when you need help, but when you are excited by a success.

Homework Survival Kit

Checklist of Materials and Supplies

Put a check mark by any of the supplies you think you need to do your homework. Add items not on the list on the lines provided. How many of each is needed?

- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Writing paper
- ☐ Note cards
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Pencil sharpener
- ☐ Erasers
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Stapler
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Paper clips
- ☐ Folders
- ☐ Report covers
- ☐ 3-ring binder
- ☐ Rubber bands
- ☐ Simple calculator
- ☐ Ruler
- ☐ Compass
- ☐ Protractor
- ☐ Dictionary
- ☐ Thesaurus
- ☐ Atlas
- ☐ Calendar
- ☐ Notebook

Other Supplies

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Making Your Personal Homework Survival Kit

Have the student get a large shoebox, sturdy zip-lock bag, or other roomy container. The choice may depend on whether she wants to have the supplies with her in a backpack or at her home. It should be big enough to hold most of her supplies.

Work together to decorate the box or container, personalizing it to make it her own. Use stickers, puff paints, colored tape, markers, paper—whatever you have on hand.

Treasure Hunt

Once you have your checklist completed and have made a container, you can start putting the Homework Kit together.

Spend the next few days having the student find the supplies on the list. Mentors can offer suggestions for where to get some of the items for free (e.g., their school) or inexpensively (the Dollar Store).

When you get back together, go through the list and the supplies gathered. What supplies does the student already have? What is still needed? Make a plan for getting these additional items.

Adapted with permission from: *Connect! Learning Activities to Strengthen Assets*, by Sage Platt, Jill Pappas, Ellen Serfustini, and Kathleen Riggs (Cedar City, UT: Cedar Express Printing & Graphics, 1999).

Helping Students Get Organized

Whatever the specifics of your setting, you will soon realize that many students struggle with organizational issues. Perhaps they are not sure what the assignment is, or maybe they have forgotten a key text or handout. For your homework help to be successful, the student needs to:

- Know what the homework is
- Have the necessary materials at hand
- Understand the assignment(s)
- Organize the work
- Develop the motivation to begin

> "I'm really bad at organizing. When I have a big project, she [homework helper] helps me map it out on a day-by-day basis. She takes the entire assignment and breaks it into small pieces and puts it on a calendar so it's manageable, and I still get in some free time."
>
> — Christopher, eighth grade

You can help him get these elements in place. One helpful tool is a homework planner in which the students can keep track of assignments, due dates, and required materials. Many children receive a homework planner or notebook from their schools, or are required to get one. Find out if your student has one. If so, take a few moments to discuss its relevance and how to use a planner effectively.

If your student does not have one, help her create a system to keep track of papers and assignments. You might suggest a folder for all homework-related papers, a separate small notebook for writing down assignments, or even a specific place in an existing notebook (denoted by colorful sticky notes) where the student can write down everything that is due.

Whatever system you and your student agree upon, consistency is key. If the child is still not following through, take some time to find out why. Perhaps the system is too cumbersome or developmentally inappropriate. Be flexible in creating a system that suits the unique needs of the student.

Adapted with permission from: "Now I Get It!" Homework Help Strategies for Volunteers, by Charissa Sgouros and Nicky Martin (*The Tutor*, Spring 2005, pp. 1–11. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education).

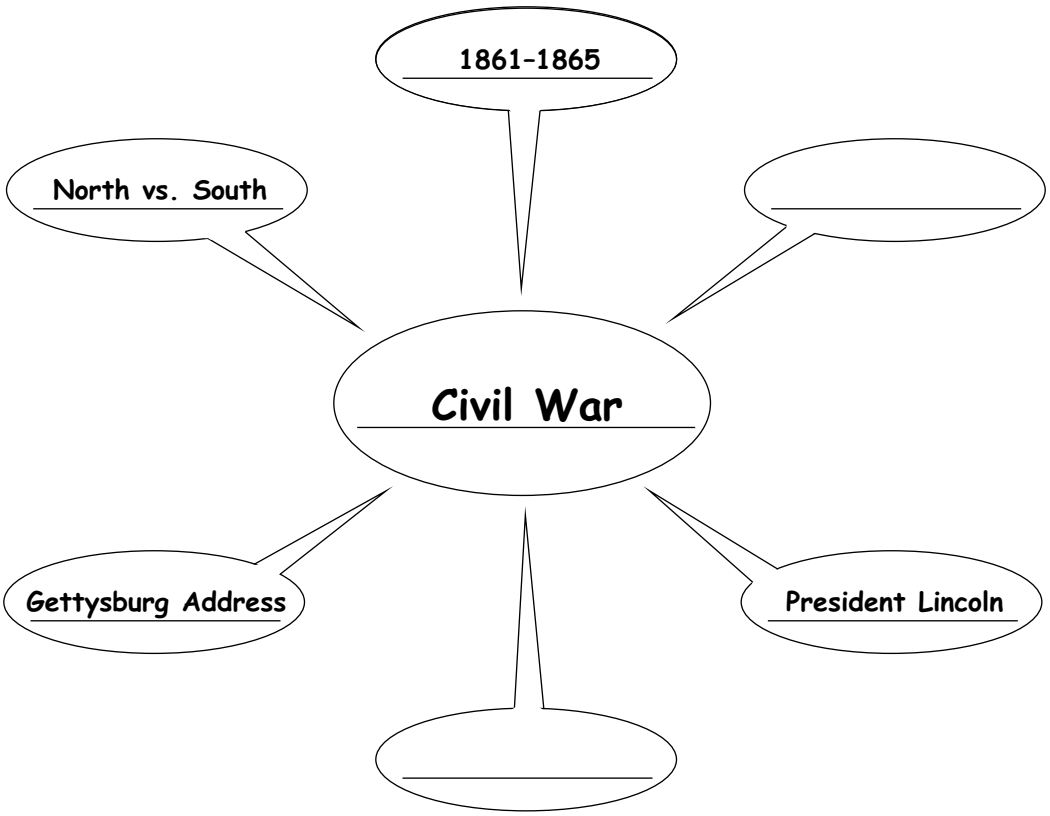
It's Okay If You're Not an Expert

No one is an expert on everything. It's okay for children to know that you don't have all the answers. A lack of expertise can provide an ideal opportunity for you to model ways to access unknown information. When you are stuck, the two of you might reread a text, check a reference or trade book, or search the Internet. These are all important strategies for students to learn. If the student is unsure how to figure something out, you might say, Hmm, I'm not sure myself. Let's find out together!

As a homework helper, it's less your job to teach or re-teach than it is to activate the knowledge the child already has. Do this through direct questioning. For example, if your mentee needs to write an essay on the Civil War, you might ask: "When was the last time you talked about the Civil War in class? What did you talk about? What did you think?" Using an organizer (see example below) can help your student access and organize what she knows about the subject. As your mentee begins to respond, probe for deeper understanding. Note what your mentee knows and thinks and consider how it can help her complete the assignment.

Showing the entire process is helpful. Support the student in developing the ability to:

- Organize and prioritize the work
- Articulate the task and what he doesn't understand about it
- Identify what he already knows
- Seek the information he needs
- Complete the task in a timely fashion



Helping the Mentee Do Research

One of the most helpful academic activities a mentor can engage in is the exploration of libraries. Exploring libraries, both school and public, accomplishes two things: 1) it teaches the youth about the wide world of information and resources that are available to her, and 2) it can help her find information she needs to complete certain homework assignments or to prepare for tests. Libraries are a real gateway to a lifetime of learning.

The Internet is also another tremendous resource for doing research for specific school projects. In addition to helping the youth find relevant information, a mentor can also teach her about online safety and how to determine the veracity of online information.

The following handout offers the mentor suggestions for how to best use libraries and the Internet with a mentee.

Library and Internet Tips

- If the youth has a homework assignment that lends itself to library research, use it as an opportunity to teach and use library and research skills. This includes searching for books in the card catalog system, learning how to search CD-ROMs and information databases, and how to access maps, periodicals, archives, and other library resources in addition to the standard circulating collections.

- Take advantage of any "getting to know the library" courses or tours that the school or public library offers. Librarians will have insight into services and special collections that you may not be aware of.

- Using the library, and doing online research in particular, is a great opportunity to teach critical-thinking skills. As you find information related to homework assignments or areas of interest, take advantage of moments where you can teach youth to evaluate information for accuracy and applicability to their project.

- Doing research together also allows mentors to demonstrate specific research techniques, such as:

  – Using the bibliography from one resource as a launching point to other relevant resources

  – Structuring search terms to get the best results from databases

  – Choosing the appropriate searching tool to meet their needs (when is it best to use the Internet, the book collection, encyclopedias, etc.)

  (Keep in mind that your school and public librarians should have helpful tips and techniques to help you in teaching this kind of information.)

- Doing research together also creates a perfect opportunity to teach note-taking skills, such as how to summarize information in the student's own words on note cards for later use. (This can also be a great opportunity to explain plagiarism and the importance of not stealing words and ideas!)

- If doing Internet searches from the school computer lab or library, make sure that you and your mentee know and follow the guidelines of the school's "Acceptable Use Policy." Most schools or districts have these and they are commonly signed by parents/guardians and students. They commonly spell out the access (and restrictions) students have to the Internet from school computers, what is and is not accepted use in the school, the student's responsibilities for avoiding inappropriate material, and the consequences of violating the policy.

- In addition to taking advantage of any library tours, see if the school or public library has a technology specialist who can introduce your mentee to the Internet. This person should also be able to provide many tips about how to be safe online.

- Work with the mentee's parents or guardians on using these resources, too. They may not be comfortable using the Internet or libraries themselves. Encourage parents and guardians to make going to the library and searching the Internet together a frequent family-time activity, not just a mentoring activity.

- Remember that doing research together does not need to be driven by classroom content. Part of your role as a facilitator of learning is to help the youth understand that research can be a lot of fun when the subject is something that he or she is interested in. So be sure to use libraries and the Internet to explore the youth's hobbies, foreign coutries of interest, favorite music and movies, sports heroes, and careers of interested. Help the youth see that the library isn't about homework, it's about connecting and having access to all the information in the world.

Helping the Mentee Prepare for Tests

Although it's rare to find a person who actually enjoys taking tests, it is possible to overcome test fears by learning some simple techniques aimed at improving testing skills and outcomes. Youth who have traditionally had trouble with tests may need extra help in this area. Here are some ways the mentor can help the mentee without knowing much about the subject area being tested. Remember that the kinds of tests, their level of complexity, and their relative importance in the student's overall academic experience can vary greatly, depending on grade level, district expectations, and individual teacher style. (The mentor may want to check in with the teacher on the general topic of tests before beginning to work with the mentee on academics.)

Test preparation and test-taking strategies. Preparing for and taking tests can feel more manageable if the mentee learns how to approach them. The following handouts offer general tips for preparing for tests and specific strategies for test taking that will help youth understand about different kinds of tests, how tests are organized, and how to manage time during a test. These handouts give pointers that should help the mentee overcome fears and improve test scores. A favorite technique to augment these tips is to help the mentee devise a mock-up test, one that includes probable questions. The process of making up a mock exam is a good way to review the material as well as test recall.

Preparing for Tests

Guide your students through the following process:

- Go over the big picture. What is the content? What will be covered and what won't?
- Organize the materials you need to prepare, such as lists of spelling or vocabulary words, notes taken in class, or relevant textbooks.
- Review key concepts. Ask the student to articulate these concepts to you. In general, the better a student can explain the content to someone else, the more thoroughly she knows it.
- Practice specifics, such as vocabulary, spelling words, or mathematical formulas. A practice quiz format or flash cards can be helpful for this type of review.
- Review trouble spots. If the student fared poorly on the last exam and has a copy, review it together and determine what was most challenging. If she still has questions, help her find the answers in her notes or the appropriate text.
- Practice reading directions and understanding what they are asking for. Again, old tests and quizzes can provide useful examples.
- Emphasize the importance of a good night's sleep and a healthful breakfast prior to the test.

Adapted with permission from: "Now I Get It!" Homework Help Strategies for Volunteers, by Charissa Sgouros and Nicky Martin (*The Tutor*, Spring 2005, pp. 1–11. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education).

Tips To Help Students Improve Their Performance on Tests

- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- Be on time and prepared for the test.
- Scan the entire test before starting. This allows you to obtain a general overview of the content and types of questions being asked.
- Know how many points each question is worth.
- Read and follow the directions carefully. Notice key words in the directions (for example, less, sometimes, best, all, every, most, seldom, rarely).
- Do the easier problems first; this builds confidence.
- Mark difficult questions and return to them at a later time.
- Never leave anything blank. Most teachers give partial credit.
- Look for clues in the test. Is a question referred to later on in the test? Sometimes questions act as aids in reminding students of an answer.
- Review all questions and answers.
- Do not change an answer without a good reason. Trust your gut instinct.
- Save your returned tests as study tools for semester tests. Some of the same types of questions may appear on the final exam.

Specific Test-Taking Techniques

The following provides guidelines for taking specific types of tests.

Matching Tests

- Glance through both lists to get an overview of the subject matter.
- Answer easy and obvious items first.
- Do not choose the first answer that seems right; instead, see if another choice is better.

Short-Answer Tests

- Use credit distribution as a clue for answering questions accurately. For example, if the question is worth five points, then make sure you list at least five items in the answer.
- Plan what you will say before you start composing the answer.
- Use the amount of space provided. The amount of space is a clue for how long the answer should be.

Fill-in-the-Blank Tests

- Look for key words in the sentence and then use them as context clues.
- Determine what type of information is required. Is it a date, name, place, vocabulary term?
- Use the grammatical structure of the sentence as a cue as to whether the word is a noun, verb, or qualifier.

Multiple Choice Tests

- Read and consider all of the choices.
- Use logic and common sense. If a choice is unfamiliar, chances are that it is the wrong answer.
- Study the choices that are familiar. Try to express each of the choices in your own words. Then analyze how and why they are different.
- Make educated guesses.

Essay Tests

- Read the directions first. Teachers often give hints in the directions. Also, directions assist in essay organization and content.
- Watch for multiple-part questions such as the one that follows:

  Regarding U.S. sanctions against Iraq, discuss the causes, immediate effects, and the long-range political implications.
- Make your notes as you read the directions and the questions; these will help you organize your response effectively.
- Organize your answer in simple outline form to help you cover all aspects thoroughly.
- Build your response around a strong thesis statement.

Adapted with permission from: *Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development*, by Cassie Findley and Rosemary Townsend (Waco, TX: Baylor University, Health Education and Wellness, 2000).

8. Addressing Specific Academic Areas

As mentors and mentees become comfortable in their relationships, mentees may begin to ask for help in certain academic subject areas. This section provides background information on academic subject areas so mentors can be aware of the type of assistance their mentees will seek. This section is a companion piece to the previous section on tutoring in the mentoring context; it delves deeper into subject-matter content like:

- Motivating reluctant learners
- Improving nonfiction reading and comprehension
- Addressing reading and math
- Finding and using content-specific curriculum and resources

As always, mentors are not expected to be subject-matter experts, but the goal is to provide them with a broad base of knowledge so that they can support academics in a general way. Teachers, tutors, and other academic support specialists should always be called upon if a mentee needs indepth help in a particular subject area.

Motivating Reluctant Learners

> Choice and control are key issues with adolescent learners.
>
> — *The Tutor*, Winter 2000

Mentors who use a developmental approach to the relationship are taking the first step toward motivating reluctant learners. How many of us resist doing something just because we are being nagged to get it done? This is especially true for young people, which is why taking a developmental approach to academic assistance is so important. The following handout has tips for motivating reluctant learners.

Tips for Motivating Reluctant Learners

- Be positive about your mentee's school, and let him know you think his education is important.
- Learning activities should be based on the mentee's interests. Ask about her school preferences, activities with friends and family, passions, and preoccupations.
- Allow your mentee to have a voice in determining what, where, when, and how the learning takes place.
- Encourage your mentee to relate his work to his own experience, or to that of others he knows. Sharing your own reactions and experience can sometimes establish a lively conversation.
- Think of ways you can model your own love of the topic. For example, share your favorite book with your mentee, or talk with her about your passion for bird watching.
- Think of ways to incorporate aspects of your mentee's culture into his school projects or homework. For example, if he must do a formal research report, encourage him to research something related to his cultual background.
- When your mentee gets stuck or discouraged, take time to review some of her past successful projects for motivation.
- If you recognize specific skill development—good thinking, creativity, general improvements—praise your mentee. Just remember that adolescents probably won't welcome inappropriate, excessive, or false praise.
- Encourage your mentee to examine his own work, critique strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement.

Adapted with permission from: Motivating Reluctant Adolescent Readers: Strategies for National Service Tutors, by LEARNS (*The Tutor*, Winter 2000, pp. 1–5. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education).

Improving Nonfiction Reading and Comprehension

Many of the youth in OSDFS programs will struggle with reading nonfiction books, namely textbooks. Since this is a common area of student need, this section provides mentors with background information on learning from nonfiction texts and provides tips for helping their mentees improve nonfiction reading and comprehension.

Because nonfiction texts and textbooks have different features, many children struggle with reading comprehension when they reach upper elementary and middle school. Students need to know that, unlike fiction, nonfiction texts do not have to be read from beginning to end; indeed, students can benefit from previewing the text, including the first and last chapters, before reading. In addition, nonfiction texts have a unique structure, with specific features such as a table of contents, glossary, index, illustrations, graphs, diagrams, maps, photographs, captions, sidebars, bold or italicized words and phrases, headings, and subheadings—all of which, when used properly, can greatly enhance comprehension of the material. The following handouts provide tips for helping the mentee learn from nonfiction texts.

Tips for Helping Your Mentee Learn From Nonfiction Texts

Guide your mentee through the following process to better understand nonfiction texts. When he or she has trouble, model the steps yourself.

- Read the title of the chapter and predict what it might be about.
- Read all the headings in the assigned reading to preview upcoming information.
- Go back to the beginning of the chapter and examine any graphics and their captions.
- Before reading, ask the mentee to summarize what he already knows and predict what he will learn based on the headings and graphics. (This step achieves two things: It activates the student's prior knowledge and creates a mental outline for organizing the information to be learned.)
- If the assignment requires answering questions after reading, preview the questions.
- Begin reading together. As new features arise (e.g., bold or italicized words, sidebars, etc.), pause and ask the student if he understands their function in the text; if not, explain. As you read, revisit the features you previewed in steps 1–3. Though the student might tell you that he has already read them, explain that revisiting these features enhances comprehension.
- Identify new or technical vocabulary and clarify using the context, dictionary, or other appropriate reference material.
- Encourage the student to take notes or highlight text (if appropriate) as he reads.

Adapted with permission from: "Now I Get It!" Homework Help Strategies for Volunteers, by Charissa Sgouros and Nicky Martin (*The Tutor*, Spring 2005, pp. 1–11. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education).

How To Get the Most Out of Middle School Textbooks

Middle school teachers often rely on textbooks to teach English, history, science, and mathematics lessons. However, these reading assignments are usually ineffective for seventh- and eighth-graders because students have never been taught how to read a textbook. This article describes various tactics a teenager should employ when reading and studying a textbook lesson.

First, before a middle schooler dives into her textbook reading, she should skim through the chapter. Tell your child to look at the headings and boldface words to see what the reading will be discussing. Encourage her to look up the definitions of bold words in the textbook glossary. This ensures she knows all of the important vocabulary words and will help her understand the subject matter. Additionally, remind her to pay close attention to photographs, illustrations, charts, and sidebars. Even though these are not part of the main text, they do contain important information. Remind her to read the captions to pictures as well. The more she reads, the more likely she will retain the main subjects of the chapter.

Now your student is ready to actually read his reading assignment. Encourage him to take notes while reading in the textbook. Textbooks are bursting with information and it can be hard to remember it all. Show him how to organize his notes by chapter section. Additionally, it is a good idea to write the page number next to notes for easy reference. This way, if your child is confused about any of his notes he can find the page where the information came from for clarification.

After your child has read her textbook assignment, ask her questions about what she read. This will help her see if she comprehended and retained the information included in the text. If your child does not remember the important information, encourage her to reread the actual textbook and look through her notes. Many middle school textbooks will also have mini quizzes at the end of chapters. If your child completes these sample tests she will know which sections she needs to reread.

Some textbooks also have Web sites and other suggested books or articles. If your child is having an extremely rough time comprehending and understanding the subject he reads about, these supplemental resources could be what he needs to understand his class material. Help your middle school student find these resources on the computer or library. Working together will keep your child calm and is an excellent bonding time for parents and children. By encouraging your kid to start extra research while he is in the seventh and eighth grades, you will be aiding in a positive habit that will be of great use in high school and college.

Pre-reading, note taking, and post-reading activities will help your grade seven and eight children succeed in all of their classes. However, if your child struggles with reading, she will have a lot of problems in each of these classes until she receives reading help. If your child still has comprehension problems after implementing the suggestions outlined above, it may be an indication that she has greater reading troubles. Parents can help their children master the reading skills they are missing with online tutoring. Some Internet tutoring centers even work with their middle school clients to teach them to read textbooks!

Used with permission: *How to Get the Most Out of Middle School Textbooks,* by Math-and-Reading-Help-for-Kids.org at: http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/How_to_get_the_most_out_of_middle_school_textbooks.html)

Addressing Reading and Math

Mentors will inevitably be asked by their mentee for help with reading or math assignments. Instead of trying to provide mentors with "cheat sheets" for every reading and math problem that might arise, this section introduces some of the concepts being taught to students and provides strategies for assistance around these subject areas. The following handouts, although designed for parents, provide mentors with background information about reading and math for mentees. These handouts do not replace the need to learn about what the youth is actually learning in class, but are intended to provide mentors with background information about each subject.

Elementary Concepts: Fifth-Grade Reading

Evaluating a child's reading skills can be difficult because many parents do not know the specific concepts their child should have learned. By monitoring a fifth-grader or other elementary student by specific reading components instead of looking at reading as a whole, parents will be able to accomplish a more effective assessment of their child. This article discusses many of the reading skills your child should master in the fifth grade.

Reading comprehension is one of the most important components of reading. This is because children are sometimes able to merely memorize words and string them together into sentences and paragraphs but do not fully understand what they have just read. In the fifth grade, students will learn how to find and describe the author's purpose for writing the text. This is connected to reading comprehension because it relies on the understanding of the reading and finding the "larger picture" or meaning of the text. Your fifth-grader should also be able to describe how a writer's perspective will influence the text's meaning and purpose.

Vocabulary acquisition is another important skill for elementary students but by the time a child reaches the fifth grade, more emphasis is starting to be placed on figurative language. A child in grade five will learn about various figurative language components such as similes, metaphors, idioms, and personification. By the end of the year a student should be able to determine the meaning of these figures of speech when reading them in a text. This is not only linked to vocabulary but is also a component of reading comprehension.

Literary analysis is an extremely important skill that is fairly new to fifth-grade students. It is at this age that students are encouraged to dig deep into the text to find the general and personal meaning. In grade five students learn about the components of a plot including main events, conflict, the rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. By the end of this grade they should be proficient in mapping or recording these parts of a story. Fifth-graders should also master the concept of themes in text and be able to identify the various themes introduced in their literary readings. There is much more involved in this reading category such as distinguishing between major and minor characters, and understanding the purposes of each in a text. Along with these skills comes character analysis in which students determine how a character's traits influence their actions and the story as a whole.

By the fifth grade, elementary students are also exposed to a wide array of literature. Fifth-graders are expected to know various types of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. While reading a text, the student should be able to categorize the piece under a specific genre based on the characteristics and format of the writing. It is at this age that technical and business writing is introduced into the classroom. Students will learn about these styles and their functions in the workforce. Before entering the sixth grade, kids should be able to use the details within these writings for a specific purpose.

Monitoring a fifth-grader's reading skills is a large task to take on. Even though they may work with their child on their homework each day, many parents do not know where to start when assessing their child's skills. This is why so many states now have end-of-the-year standardized testing. These tests assess a child's progress in accordance with state educational standards. However, some states do not issue these tests each year. Additionally, some of the states that do issue these tests may not promote your child into the next grade level if he or she does not score at an adequate level. This means you will want to monitor your student's progression before the end of the school year to give them the chance to catch up with their peers.

An effective way to ensure your child's success in the fifth grade is through professional tutoring. Learning centers offer one-on-one help that many students need to succeed in reading and other subjects. These lessons are also offered online to make the sessions more convenient for busy families. It is highly recommended for parents to research more about online tutoring centers so they can learn for themselves the benefits they offer elementary children.

Used with permission: *Elementary Concepts: Fifth-Grade Reading,* by Math-and-Reading-Help-for-Kids.org at: http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/Elementary_concepts%3A_Fifth_grade_reading.html)

Middle School Concepts: Seventh-Grade Reading

Middle school introduces seventh-grade students to a wealth of new skills, especially when it comes to reading. This is the period in a student's life when English class becomes more serious, filled with literary essays, persuasive papers, and research projects. This article was created to help parents of seventh-graders assess their child's reading skills. It is critical for middle schoolers to keep up with reading because it is widely used for their English and other academic classes such as history, science, and even math. This article is only a guide; many states have different reading standards for each grade.

Vocabulary is a skill that is constantly expanding, especially in middle school. Seventh-graders should be able to grasp the concept of roots by the end of the year. These middle schoolers will learn how to use the linguistic root to find meaning in new and unfamiliar words. This skill will greatly enhance their reading comprehension capabilities. Students of the seventh grade will likely learn Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin roots to help them with their vocabulary acquisition.

Literary analysis is another reading skill that is expanded and fine-tuned in middle school. Seventh-graders focus on plot development, analyzing conflict, subplots, and parallel plots throughout a text. This is used to determine how conflicts are resolved and how the author is able to move the story along. Middle schoolers are also expected to be able to recognize multiple themes in literary works such as novels, poetry, and drama. These themes are used to analyze various parts of the text. Seventh-graders should also be able to describe and analyze characters and contrasting points of view. As indicated, this grade level will focus a lot on literary analysis. Parents can help their students progress through these skills by aiding them with their homework and monitoring their improvement.

The development of technical and business document skills is also enhanced during the seventh grade. Before entering the eighth grade, a student should be able to determine what type of information is missing from these documents. This includes steps in directions, a legend, supplies, illustrations, and diagrams. Being able to make suggestions for document writing indicates a student understands the various components of a document and their proper uses. It is also an indication that a child has appropriate reading comprehension skills. Seventh-graders should also be able to use the details from these documents to solve problems, perform procedures, or answer questions.

The reading skills taught to seventh-grade students are extremely diverse. This is why it is increasingly important for parents to take an active role in their child's education by monitoring their understanding and mastery of reading.

Used with permission: *Middle School Concepts: Seventh-Grade Reading* , by Math-and-Reading-Help-for-Kids.org at: http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/Middle_school_concepts%3A_Seventh_grade_reading.html

Middle School Math Help

Middle school is a time for independence for children. Students are given increasing responsibilities at school and at home but parents must still remain active in their seventh- and eighth-grade student's academics. Math is a subject that is extremely important to monitor because students can pass through their mathematics course with decent grades without truly understanding the concepts they have been presented! Unfortunately, many students at this age will not be willing to perform fun math activities at home with their parents. This means helping your child with his homework is critical because it will be one of the few daily experiences and times you will have to help him comprehend mathematics.

Students in grades seven and eight are introduced to a lot of new probability, algebra, geometry, and even measurement concepts. All of these skills and the knowledge that is needed to successfully complete the homework problem associated with these concepts can easily become jumbled. Help your child create a chart of important math skills they have learned during the week, month, and even the entire school year. Separate these skills by chapter from the math book or by mathematical concept. This will serve as a fast study guide when trying to complete a problem or studying for the next test. Additionally, keep in contact with your child's teacher to make sure she has not missed a skill or equation for their chart. When creating the chart, make sure your seventh- or eighth-grade student does the majority of the work. The physical act of creating the chart will help reinforce the organization of the skills within her head.

It is also important to encourage your child to actually read through his math book. Many students skip over the writing, not realizing there is valuable instruction that they are missing. If your child is absolutely stumped by a problem, and you cannot help him with it, read through the chapter with him. Additionally, many books have helpful examples, and some have answers to either the even or odd math problems in the back of the book. These answers usually have explanations of how the math book company reached the results, so teens can work backward to see where they went wrong.

If your seventh- or eighth-grade student constantly has problems with the same type of math problem, try creating practice questions that are slightly easier. For example, if it is multiplying mixed numbers, create a sheet of fraction multiplication and show how you can multiply fractions and regular numbers together. If there are skills that your child's textbook does not adequately teach and you have difficulty explaining, do not forget to consult the computer. Computers, especially Internet Web sites, are excellent mathematical resources for middle school students. There are math homework sites where students can ask experts about specific problems or skills. There are also online math tutoring centers. These learning centers employ the same proven methods as traditional centers but make the lessons more convenient by allowing students to access their help from any computer that has World Wide Web capabilities.

If you are looking for more middle school math help for your students, do not forget to consult with their teacher or other math teachers. They are probably aware of numerous math activities and tips that parents can implement at home to help their students. They will also be impressed and excited that a middle schooler's parent is so eager to help them excel in school.

Used with permission: *Middle School Math Help,* by Math-and-Reading-Help-for-Kids.org at:
http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/Middle_school_math_help.html

Finding and Using Content-Specific Curriculum and Resources

As mentors and mentees become comfortable in their relationships, mentees may begin to ask for help with certain academic subjects. Although OSDFS mentors are not trained teachers, or even formal tutors, they are facilitators of learning. This means that when asked, mentors should be able to point their mentees toward resources that can help them academically. We felt it best not to attempt to cover the vast array of potential subjects and classroom content that a middle school–aged youth might be working on. So, instead of including specific learning tools for teaching fractions or the Civil War, we simply point mentors to the many, many places on-line where such materials are readily available. In the following handout, we provide a variety of links to content-specific curriculum and resources designed to be used by parents and kids. These resources can easily be adapted for use in the mentoring relationship.

Content-Specific Curriculum and Resources on the Web

General Resources

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE)
http://www.ed.gov/free/index.html

The U.S. Department of Education Homework Help
http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework

Math and Reading Help for Kids.org
http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/

Literacy Resources

Bank Street College of Education
http://www.bnkst.edu/literacyguide/

LEARNS
http://www.nwrel.org/learns/

New York Public Library
http://kids.nypl.org/

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)
http://www.nifl.gov/

Reading Rockets
http://www.readingrockets.org

The U.S. Department of Education America Reads
http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/index.html

Math, Science, and Technology Resources

America Counts
http://www.ed.gov/inits/Math/index.html

Eastside Literacy Tutor Support
http://www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/math/mathtips.htm

Educational REALMS
http://www.stemworks.org

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education
http://www.enc.org

Family Education Network
http://www.fen.com

Figure This! Math Challenges for Families
http://www.figurethis.org/index40.htm

KidSource
http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/Learnmath8.html

LEARNS Math Tutoring Links
http://www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/math/index.html

Links Learning
http://www.linkslearning.org

The Math Forum
http://www.mathforum.org/parents.citizens.html

Math in Daily Life
http://www.learner.org/exhibits/dailymath/

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
http://www.nctm.org/families/

National Institute of Standards and Technology
http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/kids/kidsmain.htm

National Science Foundation
http://www.nsf.gov

Newton's Window
http://www.suzannesutton.com/

The U.S. Department of Education's Mathematics and Science Initiative
http://www.ed.gov/inits/mathscience/

9. Getting Out Into the World

No matter how much time a mentor and mentee spend on academics, both in and beyond the school setting, the question of school's relevance to the real world is likely to be an ongoing one. Mentors need to use the real world to show how academic work relates to future goals and dreams.

Depending on the age of the youth involved and the structure of your mentoring program, there are a multitude of opportunities out there that mentors can use to broaden their mentee's horizons and encourage academic interests.

Career Exploration

Career exploration helps students learn about the range of job opportunities that exist in the world and begin to think about which careers they might be interested in. Career exploration often includes talking about dreams and goals, what activities the student most enjoys doing, what he's best at, and what he hates doing.

For younger students (grades K–6), career exploration starts with understanding the world of work, gaining knowledge of some general career fields, and beginning to see how their skills and abilities relate to future career interests. Middle and high school students are ready to explore their job interests and skills more thoroughly, to interact directly with the world of work and workers, and to think about how education and career planning go hand in hand.

The handouts in this section offer your mentors suggestions—and activities—for career exploration.

Career Interest and Exploration Activity

Your mentee may not have spent much time thinking about all the possible jobs that exist. Together, brainstorm all the jobs you can think of. You can use the alphabet as a guide and try to list at least one job for every letter. When you have run out of ideas, look at the list and talk about which jobs sound most interesting to your mentee and why. Use the list to explore further by:

- Researching the job and related careers on the Internet
- Making a list of skills, education, and aptitudes needed for the jobs
- Finding organizations in your community where these jobs exist
- Setting up an interview with someone who does one of these jobs

Career Exploration Activities for Mentors and Mentees

- **Take a career interest inventory or survey**. These range from simple lists of what the mentee enjoys doing, to more comprehensive skill and interest assessments. Ask your school counselor or librarian for help locating an age-appropriate career interest survey, or find one online. Remember that these surveys aren't for everyone.

- **Online searches for career information**. Many Web sites offer career information, including your state's employment department. Searching for interesting information about jobs and careers can also help students become more familiar with online research, a useful academic tool.

- **Your dream jobs**. You and your mentee can do this together. Talk about, or write about, your dream job and share ideas together. The sky is the limit on this exercise! If you could do anything in the world, what would it be? What are the differences and similarities between your two dream jobs? Can you go somewhere to find out more about these jobs?

- **Field trips to job sites**. You can start with your own job, or find someone you know who is willing to have you and your mentee explore her place of employment. Help your mentee develop a short list of questions to ask while visiting the site and record the answers. Use the experience to generate more ideas for job site visits.

- **Job shadowing** (spend a part of or full day at a job site). A job shadow gives the student a more indepth look at a particular job, including actually performing some tasks at the job site. It usually requires more advanced planning, written permission from parent or guardian, and other formalities. Check with your program staff before setting up a job shadow experience. Some schools have job shadowing programs already established, so be sure to ask if one exists at your mentee's school.

- **Read books on careers or famous people** who had a job that interests your mentee. This offers an excellent opportunity for learning library skills as well.

Community Service

Community service can offer a wealth of real-life experiences that expand awareness of careers and develop basic job skills, introduce students to the rewards of volunteer service, and help communities meet real needs. There is growing evidence that community service experiences increase self-esteem, improve problem-solving skills, and increase interest in academics (Stephens, 1995, pp. 10–16). Community service activities also look great on college applications and résumés. In addition, these activities offer mentors and mentees many opportunities to do things together while helping others, thus strengthening their relationship in the process. Suggestions to help matches get started are on the following handout.

Tips for Setting up Successful Community Service Activities

1. Brainstorm a list of ways in which your mentee would like to help in his community. Ask questions about his interests, such as:

   - Are you interested in the environment?
   - Do you like interacting with people of all kinds, or would you prefer to work alone?
   - What careers interest you that could be explored through a community service activity?
   - Do you want to do a one-time activity, such as a park clean-up on Earth Day, or make a regular commitment, such as working at the food bank once a month?

2. Find a place to volunteer. There are many ways you can research what's out there:

   - Look through the phone book or online for places that can help you find volunteer opportunities in your area. Most communities have organizations that "broker" volunteers and community needs, such as United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, Salvation Army, or other social service organizations.
   - Churches, parks departments, food banks, and community centers are usually in need of volunteers.
   - Teachers and your mentoring program staff are likely to have many ideas for community service activities.

   If you are not able to go out into the community to do service activities, think of ways you can do a project at the site. Raise money for a good cause, organize a food drive, or do a craft project that benefits others (www.recipelink.com/crafting.html has some great ideas for those interested in crafts).

3. Get permission from your program staff and parent or guardian before starting your project. You can also have your student talk to her teacher to see if extra credit is available for the experience.

4. Talk about the experience afterward. What did you each learn from the activity? How does it relate to the student's schoolwork? Did the activity spark interest in other activities or subjects? Use your active listening skills so that the mentee can give his honest feedback.

5. What's next? Decide if you want to do the same activity again, or try something different. If you can develop a regular date for community service activities, you are more likely to get into a routine that makes it part of your relationship.

Service Learning

Service learning is the integration of community service and classroom learning that strengthens both experiences. Service learning requires that the experience outside the classroom be supported by, or anchored to, the classroom experience or curriculum. For example, students may act as math tutors to younger youth, thereby gaining skills and confidence in their own math abilities while learning about the career of teaching. Service learning is structured to ensure that students not only do the activity, but that they also prepare, reflect, and evaluate the experience. Specific goals and objectives are usually part of the service learning agreement. Service learning, therefore, is almost always initiated through schools and is often offered for credit. Check with the mentee's school to see if this is an option.

Exploring Higher Education

Exploring higher education doesn't have to wait until the student is in high school. Mentors can play a significant role in helping students recognize the importance of going on to college, and can help them understand the steps they need to take to get there. This can be especially important for students who do not have access in their lives to adults who have been to college, or who believe that college is out of reach for them.

Students who have postsecondary education as a future goal may also be better able to see the importance of doing well in school (and avoiding high-risk behaviors) now. For younger students this may be less of a motivation, but middle schoolers are often offered options such as foreign language classes, participation in science fairs, or student-leadership experiences. Mentors can encourage mentees to take advantage of these opportunities to be better prepared to succeed in high school and begin building a college application résumé. See the activities list on the next page for ideas.

Did you know?

Some colleges offer special incentives for low- to moderate-income students, minorities, and other groups. For example, Harvard University recently implemented a financial aid program for families of talented students with incomes of less than $40,000 that eliminates parental contributions to the cost of attendance.

Activities To Help Students Begin Thinking About College

- **Make a list of your mentee's job or career interests**. Use online and print resources to find out how much education is needed for each job, what majors are most useful, where the programs are offered, entrance requirements, and other information.

- **If possible, visit a college campus** – more than once. Take a walk around the campus, drop in at the admissions office, attend an art show or other event, see if the school has any activities for young people. The more often your mentee is exposed to college life the more likely they will be to include college in his or her future goals.

- **Encourage dreaming!** Don't let students get discouraged by the cost of a college education, or by their worries about grades and college aptitude tests. Use a goal-setting activity, such as the ones included in this book, to help your mentee look to the future.

- **Overcoming the fear of college costs**. Money for college is a real issue, but millions of students each year find ways to deal with it. A good starting point for learning about the financial side of college is your own state schools or community colleges. Drop in on their financial aid office or visit their Web sites to see how much they cost and what opportunities they have for aid. And don't overlook very expensive colleges, which usually have very large endowments, and often are able to offer better financial aid packages.

  For students who want to get more information about financial aid and scholarships (older middle school youth), investigate some of the many resources on the Web. The Web site www.finaid.org, for example, lists thousands of scholarships available according to a student's interests.

Web Resources for Exploring Careers and Education

General Career and Education Exploration

Bureau of Labor Statistics Career Information
http://www.bls.gov/k12/

Tells about jobs for kids who like music/arts, science, P.E./outdoors, social studies, reading, and math. From the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Career Voyages
http://www.careervoyages.gov/students-elementary.cfm

A successful career starts with a good education. Work experience, on-the-job training, associate degrees, vocational certifications, as well as four-year college degrees can all lead to good-paying jobs with rewarding futures. This site shows how to start exploring different career options.

America's Career InfoNET
http://www.acinet.org/acinet/

Find out how much different careers pay in different parts of the country and how much education and training are needed. Look at videos of careers in action. A page for students has many more links for researching careers and educational options.

Jobsmart Career Guide
http://jobstar.org/tools/career/

Though geared to adults, this site has links to detailed career information, salary trends, and free online career tests.

Mapping Your Future
http://mapping-your-future.org/

A comprehensive Web site for young people with information about careers and how to choose them, planning for college, including financial aid and saving, and job search information. This link is specifically geared toward middle and high school students. Be sure to check out their CAREERSHIP, an on-line career exploration adventure geared toward middle school students.

The College Board
http://www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/index.html

Collegeboard.com is a major resource for looking at planning for college. This section of the Web site offers an encyclopedia of occupations with details on working conditions, training required, job outlook, earnings, related occupations, and more.

For Girls and Young Women

Girl Power—Girls at Work
http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/sciencetech/jobs/index.htm

This site features information on careers for women in science and technology.

Girls Go Tech: Careers You Can Count On
http://www.girlsgotech.org/careers.html

Careers in math, science, and technology are as varied as they are exciting.

Role Model Project for Girls
http://www.womenswork.org/girls/careers.html

This site is a "sampler" and is meant to give girls an idea of the breadth of their choices, encourage them to explore ideas that they may not have thought possible before, and offer ideas about how they could achieve their goals.

Exploring Specific Career Areas

Life Works
http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorks.nsf/feature/index.htm

Learn about different health and medical science careers. You can read "Success Stories" that are interviews with real people in various job positions, such as science writer, health educator, medical scientist, and much more.

GetTech.org
http://www.gettech.org/

Ever wondered about the world of technology behind the things in your life? From the moment your alarm goes off in the morning—until you turn off your light at night—there is a behind-the-scenes world you never imagined! This interactive site offers lots of information on the wide variety of technology jobs.

NASA Educator Astronaut Program
http://edspace.nasa.gov/

Learn about astronaut school, living in space, and the crew here on Earth. You can also nominate your teacher for NASA's educator astronaut program.

U.S. Department of State for Youth
http://www.future.state.gov/

Although headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Department of State's embassies span the world in more than 190 countries. The diplomats who work in these embassies come from all over the United States and represent a variety of backgrounds. Can you see yourself as a diplomat someday?

When I Grow Up: The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
http://www.uspto.gov/go/kids/

This site for kids, educators, and parents has lots of activities and information on inventors and inventions, patents, copyright laws, and more. Useful for career information as well as homework.

American Dental Association's Career Resources
http://www.ada.org/public/education/careers/index.asp

Would you like the opportunity to provide a needed health service and create healthy smiles? Learn more about the various careers in the dental profession.

Aquarium Careers: Monterey Bay Aquarium
http://www.mbayaq.org/lc/kids_place/kidseq_careers.asp

Even if you love the seas, but get seasick as soon as you leave the shore, you can still find a marine-related career that suits your talents and interests.

Careers in Veterinary Medicine
http://www.avma.org/vcc/default.asp

The American Veterinary Medical Association's career information page has a section on types of careers in veterinary medicine, including educational links.

Working at the San Diego Zoo
http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/job_profiles.html

There are so many jobs you can do at the zoo. Learn about working with animals, plants, science, conservation, and much, much more.

Animal Doc Com
http://www.uga.edu/~lam/kids/

Ever think about being a veterinarian? Find out what vet students are learning about dogs, horses, sheep, cattle, llamas, and more.

Community Service, Volunteering, and Jobs for Teens

The Teenager's Guide to the Real World Online
http://www.bygpub.com/books/tg2rw/volunteer.htm

This site offers 20 ways for teenagers to help other people by volunteering. It's a good list to look at when planning a community service project. The site has lots of other interesting links for teens, including career and goal setting information, so check them out while you are there.

Crafting for a Cause
http://www.recipelink.com/crafting.html

Clever ideas for craft projects that can be done for the benefit of people around the world. If you need projects to do in a school-based setting, this site may be helpful.

Servenet: The Premier Web Site for Service and Volunteering
http://www.servenet.org/

People interested in volunteer opportunities can type their Zip code into a search box and find local agencies and organizations with volunteer needs.

Guide to the Business of Babysitting
http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/babysitting/index.html

Are you ready to be responsible and to work with families who might be different from your own? The purpose of this site is to prepare potential babysitters with the knowledge and skills necessary to care for children.

Mentoring and Career Development Books

Cool Women, Hot Jobs . . . and How You Can Go for It Too! by Tina Schwager and Michele Schuerger. (2002). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit. For grade levels 6–12. ISBN: 1-58542-109-7

The first part of this book takes a look at 16 women from various fields who have landed their "dream jobs," including a choreographer, a journalist, a dolphin trainer, a fighter pilot, and an FBI agent. They explain what their jobs are like and are open about the obstacles they faced in getting there. Each profile focuses on what help they needed and the steps they took to achieve fulfillment in their careers. The second section of the book is a guide to help girls along their own career path. It offers advice and exercises to help girls develop confidence and determination in achieving the career goals they have set for themselves. A great resource for any mentor.

Giving Much, Gaining More: Mentoring for Success, by Emily Wadsworth. (2002). West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. ISBN: 1-55753-291-5

This book contains several descriptions of mentoring programs and relationships with a career development focus. The audience is mostly adult-to-adult workplace programs, but many of the ideas are applicable to programs geared toward helping young adults enter the workforce with the help of a mentor. The book also focuses on the benefits of having a mentor for women in technical careers.

Making Choices: Life Skills for Adolescents, by Mary Halter and Barbara Fierro. Instructor's curriculum guide and student workbook. (1994). Santa Barbara, CA: Advocacy Press. Instructor's curriculum guide: ISBN: 0-91165-549-2; workbook: ISBN: 0-91165-537-9

This resource offers a full curriculum for teaching adolescents a wide range of critical-thinking and decisionmaking skills. Originally developed for classroom use, this material would likely be useful for mentors or staff in programs with heavy and focused youth development components. Each lesson contains an educational objective, necessary materials, a lecture, an activity, and a youth assignment. Topics include diversity, goal setting, career planning, and self-esteem.

Mentoring for School to Work: Fostering Student Success, by William Gray. (1997). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

A collection of successful examples of school-to-work mentoring practices, the book describes mentorship, details work-based learning relationships and responsibilities, offers guidance on constructive communication, and includes activities and exercises to prepare mentors.

My Mentor and Me: The High School Years. 36 Activities and Strategies for Mentors and Mentees to Do Together During the High School Years, by Dr. Susan G. Weinberger. (2001). Hartford, CT: Governor's Prevention Partnership.

An excellent guide for mentoring relationships with high school–aged youth. The 36 activities are designed to guide the relationship through the weeks of the school year. Topics covered include choosing a college, writing a résumé, and working on communication skills.

General Career Development

Best Jobs for the 21st Century, by J. Michael Farr, Laurence Shatkin. Paperback: 669 pages. IST Works; 3rd edition (August 1, 2003). ISBN: 1-56370-961-9

Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance, by Andrew Morkes. Chicago, IL: Ferguson Publishing Company; 12th edition (2003). ISBN: 0-89434-418-8.

The Famous Outrageous Cool Kid's Guide to the Future: The Unique Career Guide for Pre-teens and Young Teens Based on Their Talents and Interest, by Mark Edwards. Paperback: 64 pages. Medwards (November 11, 1999). ISBN: 0-64636-567-3

Ferguson's Careers In Focus (Series). By Ferguson Staff. Chicago, IL: Ferguson Publishing Company. (Various dates).

Getting Real : Helping Teens Find Their Future, by Kenneth C. Gray. Paperback: 152 pages. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc. (2000). ISBN: 0-76197-515-2

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Appendix

Similarities and Differences Between Mentoring and Tutoring Programmatic Functions

Effective Mentoring Programs . . .	Effective Tutoring Programs . . .	Similarities and Differences
Develop a statement of purpose and long-range plan.	Planning with the end in mind, what outcomes do you want to see in tutees?	Missions of mentoring and tutoring programs differ. Mentoring programs often focus on several areas of "risk" for mentees, while tutoring programs focus on improving academics.
Prepare indepth risk management plan.	Coordinate with the school's existing risk management plan.	Mentoring programs often have to have a plan that accounts for alone time with children and off-site activities such as riding in mentors' cars and risk of injury due to activities.
Involve stakeholders in the planning process.	Involve stakeholders in the planning process.	Mentoring programs may involve a variety of stakeholders from community leaders to school officials, while tutoring programs often involve people directly related to the school and youth. OSDFS-funded mentoring programs will need to consider a blended approach.
Have a recruitment plan.	Have a recruitment plan.	Because of the different types of missions, tutoring and mentoring programs use different messages to recruit volunteers. A classic theme of mentor recruitment is "changing a life." Mentoring programs often ask for a longer, more in-depth commitment that reflects the multiple youth risk factors they are trying to affect.
Screen mentors.	Screen tutors.	The level and focus of screening for mentoring and tutoring programs can be very different. Both types of programs use job descriptions, applications, interviews, and reference checks as part of the screening process. However, mentoring programs are often required to perform a criminal history records check and driving record check. Because of the highly supervised tutoring environment, only some tutoring programs require criminal history checks. Tutoring programs may emphasize screening for academic skill levels of potential tutors.
Orient and train mentors.	Orient and train tutors.	Tutoring programs often focus on teaching the tutor about academic assistance skills, while mentoring program training includes topics such as youth development, communication, confidentiality, dealing with difficult situations, and recognizing child abuse.
Have a strategy for monitoring the match, including periodic match "check-ins."	Have regular (often monthly) meetings for tutors to talk with other tutors and supervisors.	Monitoring mentoring programs ensures the pair is meeting, mitigates risk of abuse, and ensures bonding. Check-ins are conducted via phone, during ongoing training events and meetings, and through mentor logs. Tutoring program monitoring usually occurs in a classroom setting and during monthly team meetings. Monitoring usually focuses on sharing tutoring strategies, dealing with difficult situations, and ensuring effectiveness of current tutoring efforts.

Effective Mentoring Programs . . .	Effective Tutoring Programs . . .	Similarities and Differences
Provide mentor support, recognition; apply mentor retention plan.	Volunteer training, supervision, and feedback.	Both types of programs follow guidelines for quality volunteer support, recognition, and retention
Provide a formal closure at the end of the match.	Provide closure at the end of the school year.	Closure for tutoring programs usually includes a review of the tutee's academic progress over the academic term and allows a personal good-bye between tutor and tutee. Mentoring matches typically last longer—sometimes much longer—making closure an important step. Mentoring closure can occur at various times in the match (if it has to be closed early) but most often at the end of a 12-month period. Match closure for mentoring programs outlines next steps in relation to the progress of the mentee, policies around future communications, and a personal good-bye between mentor and mentee.
Conduct evaluation of program outcomes.	Regular program evaluation.	The types of outcomes that are measured differ between mentoring and tutoring programs. Both types of programs recognize and measure youth accomplishments. Mentoring programs measure progress in a variety of areas related to youth risk factors, such as gang involvement, drug and alcohol use, bonding to school, family, and peers, and effects on self-concept. Tutoring programs focus on outcomes more closely related to school such as academic progress and bonding to school.

Parent/Guardian Contract

Name: _____ Date: _____

By allowing my son/daughter to participate in the New Insights Mentoring Program, I agree to:

- Allow my child to participate in the New Insights Mentoring Program and to be matched with a New Insights mentor
- Follow and encourage my child to follow all rules and guidelines as outlined by the program coordinator, mentee training, program policies, and this contract
- Support my child in this match by allowing him/her to meet with his/her mentor at least eight hours per month and have weekly contact with him/her for one year
- Support my child being on time for scheduled meetings or have him/her call the mentor at least 24 hours beforehand if unable to make a meeting
- Regularly and openly communicate with the program coordinator as requested
- Inform the program coordinator if I observe any difficulties or have areas of concern that may arise in the match relationship
- Participate in a closure process when that time comes
- Notify the program coordinator if I have any changes in address or phone number
- Provide the program coordinator and the mentor with any updated health insurance information for my child

_____ (please initial) I understand that upon match closure, future contact between my child and his/her mentor is beyond the scope of the New Insights mentoring program, and can happen only by the mutual consensus of the mentor, the mentee, and his/her parent/guardian.

I agree to follow all the above stipulations of this program as well as any other conditions as instructed by the program coordinator at this time or in the future.

_____ _____
(Signature) (Date)

Adapted from: *Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual*, by Linda Ballasy, Mark Fulop, & Diana St. Amour (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, National Mentoring Center, 2003).

Sample Memorandum of Understanding

We are looking forward to a partnership with your organization. This agreement between [name of your organization] and [name of partner organization] specifies the expectations of the partnership. The partnership is in effect from [date] to [date].

Partnership Goals

[Name of your organization] and [name of partner organization] agree to work together to:

-
-

Roles and Responsibilities

[Name of your organization] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

[Name of partner organization] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

Finances and Liability

[Name of your organization] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

[Name of partner organization] agrees to:

-
-

Evaluation

We agree to use these criteria to identify whether the partnership is achieving its goals:

-
-

[Name of your organization] will:

-
-

[Name of partner organization] will:

-
-

Communication

We commit to open and regular communications:[Fill in details]

- [Who—name or job title—in each organization will be primarily responsible for the ongoing communication?]
- [How, and how often, will the communication take place?]

Your organization (signature and date)

_____

Partner organization (signature and date)

_____

Reprinted with permission from: *Strengthening Mentoring Programs Curriculum. Module 4: Forming and Maintaining Partnerships*, by Public/Private Ventures (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, National Mentoring Center, 1999).

Consent To Share Information

Directions: Use of this form permits organizations and cooperating agencies to share confidential information and work together in providing services for students. Examples of organizations and cooperating agencies include educational service organizations, social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, mental health service providers, and health care providers.

I authorize the following organizations and cooperating agencies to exchange information related to _____
STUDENT NAME

(List name and address of organizations in space below.)

This information will be kept confidential by the receiving organization or agency.

This agreement will expire on _____
DATE

The information exchanged will be used to provide medical, educational, and welfare management services in the best interests of the student. I understand that personal records are protected by various federal and state laws and cannot be disclosed without this, my written consent, unless otherwise authorized.

Signature _____

Relationship _____ Date _____

Name (PRINTED) _____

Student signature (optional) _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

This form has been sent to _____

Agency name _____ Date _____

Agency name _____ Date _____

Agency name _____ Date _____

Reproduced with permission from: ***Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After-School Programs*** **(2nd ed.), by Judith G. Caplan, Carol K. McElvain, & Katie E. Walter (Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001).**

How To Help Your Child With Homework

Want to help your child with homework but just don't have the time? Or maybe you're too tired after working a full day? Or feel you're too "rusty" to help with some of the subjects? Maybe you can do more than you think you can. Just following all or some of these tips can go a long way toward helping your child improve:

- Provide a clean, well-lighted, quiet place to study. It doesn't have to be elaborate. A kitchen table (with pets, siblings, TVs, and other distractions banned). Even a card table in the corner of a bedroom will work.

- Establish a schedule with your child whereby he or she agrees to set aside a certain time each day to do homework. Then insist that your child stick to the schedule.

- Provide encouragement. Let your child know you're interested.

- Be positive—praise improvement, no matter how small.

- If you don't know how to do a problem, tell your child, "I don't know how to do this either, but maybe we can work on it together and both learn."

- Tell your child that you're proud of her or him for being in the mentoring program—and insist that your child meet his scheduled meetings.

- Keep in touch with your child's mentor: he or she will appreciate your interest and be delighted to work with you to benefit your child.

- Finally, visit the mentoring center and your child's school. Get to know the staff and you'll find out they're eager to work with you to help improve your child's educational experience.

Soon you'll think of other ways you can provide support and encouragement. And soon you'll see signs that your involvement is paying off in positive ways!

Classroom Management Web-Based Resources

Discipline vs. Group Management—A helpful way of looking at managing youth.
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/Clover/303DisciplineVsGroupMgt.pdf

Group Management Strategies That Work
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/Clover/303GroupManagementChart.pdf

Instructional Resources for Paraeducators. A huge amount of information for those managing classrooms and group environments.

- Unit 3: *Organization and Management of the Classroom*
  http://para.unl.edu/para/Organization/Intro.html

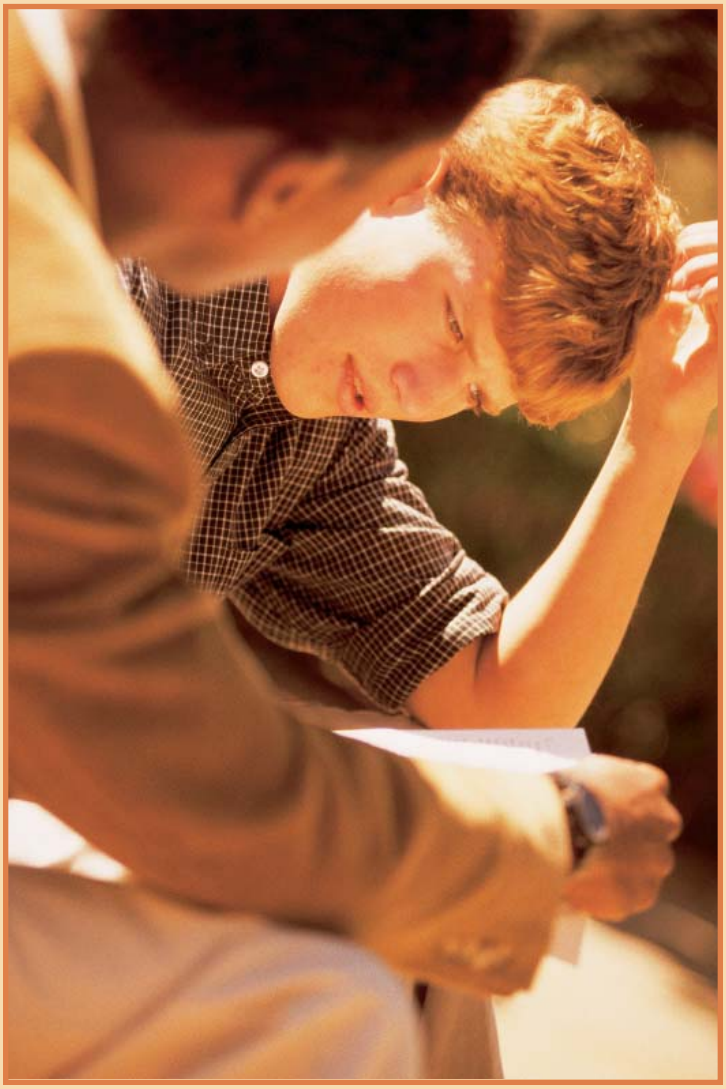
- Unit 5: *Behavior Management*
  http://para.unl.edu/para/Behavior/Intro.html

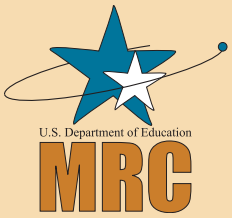
Strategies for Classroom Management
http://osi.fsu.edu/waveseries/htmlversions/wave3.htm

Multi-Grade Classroom: A Resource for Small, Rural Schools, Book 3. Written for teachers in rural school settings, but still full of wonderful advice on managing groups of youth and keeping things organized.
http://www.nwrel.org/ruraled/publications/multig3.pdf

Teacher Talk: What Is Your Classroom Management Profile? This Web site offers a nice self-reflection tool for staff, to determine their classroom management style.
http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/what.html

Top 10 Tips for Classroom Management and Discipline
http://712educators.about.com/od/discipline/tp/disciplinetips.htm





Mentoring Resource Center
c/o EMT Associates
771 Oak Ave. Parkway, Suite 2
Folsom, CA 95630

MRC Toll-Free Number: 877-579-4788
Fax: 916-983-6693
E-mail: edmentoring@emt.org
Web: www.edmentoring.org