

A Mentor's Guidebook

“The best thing you can spend on kids is time.”

Five in Five



Mentoring Works in School District 5

This guidebook was developed from materials provided by Richland School District One, the National Dropout Prevention Center, Big Brothers & Big Sisters, the New York Mentoring Program, Public Private Ventures, Cities in Schools, and numerous other organizations dedicated to establishing nurturing, caring relationships between adults and children.

Dear New Mentor:

You are about to embark on a very exciting and meaning experience, one that has the potential to influence a child's life – and yours – in a dramatic way. By committing to be a mentor, you are joining with others in your community who may make a difference between success and failure in the life of a child.

Many children today need the time and attention of a caring adult in their lives. Parents often can't fill this need. Just knowing that someone cares enough to give time every week to visit with you, read to your, laugh with you and have fun with you can give a child the extra boost he or she needs.

After all, if someone other than the people who are "supposed" to care about me thinks I am special, just maybe I am. Maybe it is worth it to come to school. Maybe it is worth it to do my homework. Perhaps it is in my best interest to keep my temper and tongue in check. Maybe I am worth the effort.

Thanks for volunteering to be a child's special friend and for giving the most important gift of all, your time.

Please don't hesitate to call if I can make your experience more meaningful. I can be reached by phone at 803-331-1276 or by e-mail at sdanley@lexrich5.org.

I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together.

Stephanie

Stephanie L, Danley
Mentoring Coordinator

Table of Contents

What Is The Purpose Of The District Five Mentoring Program	
Why Do We Need A Mentoring Program In Such An Affluent And Successful District	1
What is A Mentor	1
What Every Mentor Wants To Know	2
A Word About Schoolwork	5
Internet Resources	6
Off-Campus Activities	8
District Five's Policies And Procedures	10
Three Stages of Mentoring	13
Beginning Your Mentoring Relationship: Keys to Success	15
Developmental Stages of Children and Youth	17
I Hear You	25
Active Listening Is the Most Important Skill of a Good Mentor	25
How to Kill a Conversation	26
Communicating With Your Mentee	28
Feeling Helpers	31
Feeling Stoppers	31
Building Self-Esteem	32
Tips for Tutoring	34
Other Tutoring Concepts	34
Ready Set Tutor	35
Sharing Reading Experiences	37
Guidelines for Goal Setting	39
A Memorandum From Your Student	41



What Is The Purpose Of The District Five Mentoring Program?

The purpose of the program is to:

- Establish nurturing relationships between students and caring adults so that students can discover their self-worth, their strengths, and a positive vision of their future.

Why Do We Need A Mentoring Program In Such An Affluent And Successful District?

Living in an affluent suburb is no protection. In fact, suburban kids are almost as likely as those in urban neighborhoods to report what sociologists call “parent absence: lack of a parent who is approachable and attentive; who sets rules and enforces consequences.

We are proud of the many accomplishments of our students and teachers in District Five, but we must acknowledge that there are students who “fall through the cracks” every year.

The good news is that the presence of a consistent, supportive adult in a child’s life is even more crucial than genes; home environment or income and can make the difference between the child who flounders and the one who thrives.

What Is A Mentor?

A mentor is a caring adult who is willing to be a good listener and non-judgmental friend to a student in need of extra attention.

A MENTOR *is* a:

Advocate
Resource
Helper
Positive Role Model



Motivator
Guide
Companion

A MENTOR *is not* a:

Social
Santa
Judge
Psychiatrist



Worker
Claus
Parent

A mentor...

- ✦ Makes a child's world bigger by exposing the student to new activities, people and places, as well as challenging him to dream about a promising future.
- ✦ Builds self-esteem by promoting a positive self-image through praise and constructive feedback,
- ✦ Offers a child a chance to learn trust through consistency and security of the relationship; and
- ✦ Teaches the student the value of education.

"All successful students have a vision of their future. Less successful students think that their future lies in someone else's hands. IQ and family background many times do not play as important a role in a student's success as having a vision of where they want to be as an adult."

*— The Positive Effects of Mentoring
Economically Disadvantaged Students*



What Every Mentor Wants To Know

Q. Does mentoring really work?

A. Yes. Research by Public/Private Ventures shows that students who have regular, consistent relationships with mentors are:

- ✦ Less likely to start using drugs and alcohol;
- ✦ Less likely to hit someone;
- ✦ Have better school attendance and feel more competent about their ability to do well; and
- ✦ Report more positive relationships with their peers and family.

In the first evaluation of the District Five Program held at the end of the 2001-02 school year, most students with mentors demonstrated a marked improvement in behavior, self-concept, and relationships.

Q. *What is the most important attribute of a good mentor?*

A. A heart for kids and the ability to keep commitments.

Q. *How can I be a successful mentor?*

A. The key is consistency and the development of trust, which is decided to a great degree by the mentor's initial approach.

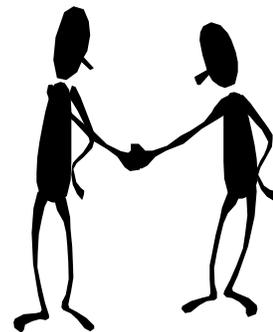
Mentors who take the time to develop a trusting and meaningful relationship tend to do the following:

- ✦ Involve the mentee in deciding how the pair will spend their time together;
- ✦ Make a commitment to being consistent and dependable, a steady presence in the mentee's life,
- ✦ Recognize that the relationship may be one-sided for some time, expect silence and unresponsiveness in the beginning, and take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive,
- ✦ Pay attention to the mentee's need for **FUN**, not only as an important part of relationship building, but as a chance for the mentee to have experiences that are not otherwise available to them;
- ✦ Respect the mentee's viewpoint; and
- ✦ Seek and utilize help and advice from the program staff— school coordinator, district coordinator, school guidance counselor or social worker.

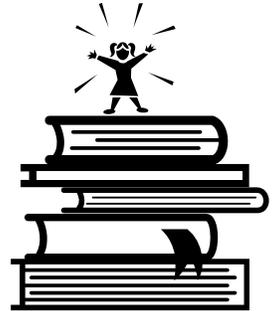
Q. *How will I know I'm making a difference?*

A. Some mentors will know immediately, others may not ever know that they made a difference. However, here are some encouraging signs to look for:

- ✦ Improved eye contact / paying more attention
- ✦ Smiling / happier at school
- ✦ Taking more risks in class and with friends
- ✦ Raising hand more in class
- ✦ Increased communication / opening up to mentor



- Improved appearance and / or hygiene
- Improved interaction with peers
- Increased consideration with others
- Decreased hostility
- Fewer trips to the principal's office
- More enthusiastic
- Improved attitude



“Children will not remember you for the material things you provided, but for the feeling that you cherished them.”

— *R. Evans*

Q. Now that we've met, what do we do?

A. First session suggestions: Start the process of friendship by opening up a little of your life to your mentee.

- Bring photos of your family, home, pets, etc.
- Bring samples from a hobby collection if you have one.
- Explain what “hooks” you about your hobby and work that goes into maintaining it.
- Play 20 Questions to get acquainted – “What is your favorite song, food, color, T.V. show, subject in school, etc.
- Bring a camera and have someone take your picture together. Bring the developed photo back in an inexpensive frame for your mentee. Make sure that *your* copy of the photo is displayed in a prominent place.
- Bring your favorite children's book to read.
- Start a scrapbook or journal about your time together.

Can the two of you start a hobby collection together? Check out the library at another session to see what might “hook” both of you.

If you are working with a young child, have a “clipping marathon” using colorful magazines. Let your mentee pick out the pictures and words that describe his interests and personality. Clue them onto construction paper folded to make a book; write captions. Another option is to glue the cutouts to poster board to form an “All About Me” collage.



A Word About Schoolwork...

As you know by now, your main goal is to build a nurturing, supportive relationship with your mentee. One of the ways you will do that is to use fun activities as a relationship-building tool. Spending your hour each week doing homework may not accomplish that goal.

Therefore, if you are working with a student with academic problems, you may want to meet with your mentee’s teacher to discern what area needs the most attention. Choose one – spelling, math or reading – focus on that. For instance, you may want to spend the first thirty minutes of your session using flash cards and the second thirty minutes playing games.

If you find that your mentee has severe academic problems, you may be able to assist the parents in finding a tutor or tutoring program. **Although tutoring and mentoring have similarities, the major difference is that tutors are primarily responsible for working on academic problems with students; mentors are responsible for providing a consistent, positive relationship for a child who needs a caring role model.**

Other suggestions:

- ✦ The media center is filled with books, audiotapes, computers and other learning materials. Ask the media specialist to suggest some ideas for working with your student and about age appropriate books. The public library has a good list of suggested reading for different age groups.
- ✦ Play board games. Teach your mentee how to do something you enjoy doing.
- ✦ Learning and playing chess together is a great activity.
- ✦ READ, READ, READ
- ✦ Bring a project to school for you and your mentee to do together. Consider something that will take a few weeks to finish – painting a picture, learning how to cross-stitch, and simple sewing. (One mentor taught her mentee how to quilt!)

- ✦ Bring a coloring book or other activity book for you and your mentee to use. Educational Wonderland in the Boozier Shopping Center is a great place to find resources. Read the “funnies” together or the sports page.
- ✦ Bring a tape recorder to school and record your mentee’s voice. Make a “movie” about the school using a video camera.
- ✦ Teach your mentee how to manage his allowance. If the mentee doesn’t get an allowance, discuss ways to earn money.
- ✦ Have lunch with your mentee. Take a picnic outside on a pretty day.
- ✦ LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN 
- ✦ Make and study flash cards, study for an important test, “surf the net.”
- ✦ Write a letter – maybe to the mayor, a senator or the President. Help your student find a pen pal – especially if writing skills are weak.
- ✦ Do crossword puzzles, read a joke book, make seasonal greeting cards for your mentee’s family or for residents at a senior citizens home.
- ✦ Play catch or shoot hoops.
- ✦ Take an imaginary trip. Pick a foreign country or another state and send off for information. Addresses can be found on the Web or by calling the general reference desk at the public library.
- ✦ Fly a kite. 
- ✦ Build a model.
- ✦ Attend school activities when your mentee is involved – sports events, concerts, awards presentations.

And, there’s always the Internet:

KidsDomain

This site has all kinds of projects and games. Best of all, the ideas are seasonal.
www.KidsDomain.com

Straight Scoop News Bureau

Mentors and mentees can develop a story and enter a contest.

www.strightscoop.org

World Village

Download software, play online games, or read reviews or articles of interest to kids.

[URL:http://www.worldvillage.com](http://www.worldvillage.com)

Free Games Online

All your favorite computer games available on line: freeware and shareware versions.

[URL:http://fgo.threadnet.com](http://fgo.threadnet.com)

Cyberkids

This is the site for cool cyberkids! Features puzzles, games stories, and the current issue of *Kidzeen Magazine*.

[URL:http://www.cyberkids.com](http://www.cyberkids.com)

B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper

If you are looking for homework help, this is the place to start. This easy-to-use site includes a reference section, news, and plenty of links to help you with math, science, English and other classes.

[URL:http://tristate.pgh.net/pinch13/](http://tristate.pgh.net/pinch13/)

Free4Kids

This site lists all the coolest free stuff on the web for kids. Plenty of freeware and more fun stuff including how to get an e-mail from the President of the United States. Best free stuff on the web.

[URL:http://members.aol.com/free4kids/freekids.html](http://members.aol.com/free4kids/freekids.html)

Freezone

Fun and games, bulletin boards, chatrooms, personal e-pals – all monitored by adult watchers for your mentee's safety.

[URL:http://freezone.com/](http://freezone.com/)

This list compiled from the book, *Free Stuff for Kids*, Meadowbrook Press

When working with older students, you may:

- ✦ Discuss career options; help prepare a resume, practice interview skills.
- ✦ Create a list of resources about occupations and employment opportunities.
- ✦ Assist in researching colleges and help with admission forms.
- ✦ Teach about time management or goal setting.

- Discuss ways to earn and manage money.
- Read and discuss a book together – “*The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Teenagers*,” by Steven Covey, is a good suggestion.
- Share information about your job, the company you work for and the decisions you have made in planning your career.
- Discuss the day’s headlines and write a letter to the editor.
- Play computer games.
- Ask your mentee to teach *you* how to use the computer!
- Ask your mentee what he would like to learn from you.



*“If we treat people as they are, They will stay as they are.
But if we treat them for what they might be and might become,
they will become their better selves.”*

– G.T. Smith

Off-Campus Activities

School District 5’s mentoring program is a school based mentoring program; therefore, outside activities are prohibited without parent permission. However, with parent permission, the following is a list of suggested activities for mentor and mentee.

- Go to Riverbanks Zoo, the State Museum, the Columbia Fire Dept. Museum, the Columbia Marionette Theater, or the Museum of Art. Operating hours are in the *BellSouth Yellow Pages*.
- Watch or participate in a sport. Go to the movies.
- Pretend you are a tourist in Columbia. Visit typical sites and the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

- ✦ Bake a cake. Make homemade ice cream or chocolate chip cookies. Let your mentee share the goodies with her class.
- ✦ Take your mentee to your place of employment. Visit a career fair; take a tour of a college campus.
- ✦ Give your pet a bath or wash your car.
- ✦ Visit the airport.
- ✦ Attend the State Fair.
- ✦ Picnic at Finlay Park, go fishing, visit the Congaree Swamp.
- ✦ Attend a cultural event – a play, the ballet, the symphony.
- ✦ Teach your mentee to use the public library.
- ✦ Check out the local parks and recreation centers for interesting activities.
- ✦ Tour the Governor’s Mansion.
- ✦ Attend a political debate. Research the candidates.
- ✦ Fix up an old bike, learn bike safety, or bike together.
- ✦ Paint a room, plant a garden, or rake a yard. Better yet, rake someone’s yard who can’t do it for themselves.
- ✦ Shop for groceries and fix a simple meal together.
- ✦ Play putt-putt, go bowling; try roller/ice skating or jogging.
- ✦ Work on a volunteer project together – Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, a local soup kitchen. Make holiday cards for meal trays at a nursing home.

For more information on local attractions and monthly events, simply check your current *BellSouth Telephone Directory*. Items of community interest can be found in the front of the book. The Weekend Section of *The State Newspaper* is another place to check for community happenings.



“It is better to build children than repair adults.” – Unknown

District Five's Policies And Procedures

All mentors are expected to act in ways that encourage the mentee to grow positively and to display responsible behavior. Most of your activities will focus on building a relationship and shared interests. However, there may be times when your mentee wishes to discuss certain issues that cause concern or involve risk-taking. If this happens, pat yourself on the back! You've established the kind of relationship we hoped for, and have a real opportunity to help your student grow. Remember, too, that this may be a test of your patience and values.

While you may not expose your mentee to situations that involve sexual behavior, alcohol or drug use, you may certainly discuss those issues. Take a position of a caring friend. Do not preach or proselytize, no matter what your religious convictions. Let the mentee lead the conversation and encourage him to think through the issue. Ask questions like: "What do you think would happen?" Or "How would it affect your life?" Share your own experiences. Suggest that the two of you find additional sources of information. Do not try to be a counselor unless you have been professionally trained.

All communications are to be kept strictly confidential. In order to develop the type of relationship in which you can be effective, you must first be perceived as trustworthy. The only exception to this is if you feel that the mentee is being abused, neglected or is involved in a life-threatening activity. Report this at once to your school coordinator, principal or guidance counselor. You are not expected to be a social worker.

Keep your promises to your mentee. These young people are too familiar with adults who are not consistent in their words or actions. Your role is to demonstrate that adults *can* and *do* keep promises.

Follow-through is critical to establishing trust. Set up a system for communicating with your mentee. If for some reason you miss a meeting, notify your mentee or the school as soon as possible. Reschedule immediately.

Encourage your mentee to keep his promises to you. Schedule meetings in advance, so you help the mentee develop a sense of responsibility. Mentees have been informed of their responsibility to you and to the program. If for any reason you suspect there is a problem, take steps to correct it. Mentees have made a commitment to the program just like you and we expect them to live up to their agreement.

Your primary responsibility is to your mentee, not his family. You are in this program to supplement a mentee's experiences and opportunities. You are NOT expected to take on the parental role or undermine parent authority. You are

encouraged to talk to your school coordinator who can give you valuable insight about your mentee.

You are not encouraged to play fairy godmother or Santa Claus to the mentee or his family. The object of the program is to be a friend. It's hard to believe, but sometimes the biggest problem mentoring programs face is the generous spirit of the mentors! Despite all the information to the contrary, some mentors insist on buying gifts. They have also ignored requests not to bring candy to school. As a result, we have teachers who have formed a negative attitude about the program. If one child gets a present and the other children don't, it can be disruptive to the classroom. It also sets up a competition between mentors. Children start to expect a surprise each week.

Here's what one mentor wrote about the issue of playing Santa Claus –



“It was very difficult for my mentee to know that her sister’s mentor bought her a new outfit or her brother’s mentor took him to a steak house. My gift was my time and consistency. It’s important that mentors understand that buying stuff for a child doesn’t fix their life. In some respects, it may make it more difficult. I really learned that I couldn’t fix my mentee’s life, nor could I save her. I could only be her beacon of light – and in hindsight, I believe that was enough!”

If you've chosen to go off-campus, it's fine to buy an ice cream or burger. Birthday or seasonal greeting cards are appropriate – students love to get mail. If you must buy a birthday or holiday gift, please limit the cost to less than \$25.00.

Obtain written parental permission if you and your mentee plan a weekend or evening activity. This is for your protection. Make sure the parent understands what you plan to do and where you will be going. Be clear about departure and return times. **The school district does not provide liability coverage for mentors or students when away from the school grounds.** (Unless on a school-sponsored field trip.) Always have an emergency phone number for your mentee's parent with you.

What if you and your mentee are not compatible? Unfortunately, not all matches are on target. If, after six weeks of consistent activity, you and your mentee seem to conflict, it may be necessary to be rematched. Please remember that the relationship will take time to establish. Should you experience any problems, ask your school coordinator for help.

What if you should decide to leave the program? Sometimes circumstances beyond our control can make it impossible to keep our commitments. If you leave the program, please consider finding another mentor for your student – after all, you will probably know him or her pretty well by now. We also ask that you help the student

recognize that your leaving has nothing to do with him or her. Closure is important to both you and your mentee.

123

Three Stages Of Mentoring

1. **Beginning Your Relationship**

Do and say things to get to know your student and help build a relationship with him/her. Your first meetings will build the foundation for your relationship. You may want to use an icebreaker exercise as you and your student get to know each other.

Be patient. While most students are excited to have their own mentors, others may not easily trust others or may simply be shy. If after several weeks, your student continues to be withdrawn, talk to his/her teacher and or guidance counselor. She may be able to give you ideas as to how to better reach your student. Caring and persistence will pay off!

- a. Tell your student a little about yourself and talk to him/her about the mentoring program. Ask him if he has questions about the program. Find out how he feels about being part of the mentoring program. This is a good time to tell your student when to expect you at school and how long you will be his mentor. Give your student an opportunity to ask questions about the program.
- b. Let your student know that you will not repeat things he has told you unless you are told something that involves a danger to the student or others. If your student tells you not only about current, potential and/or past abuse, you must report this to the school's coordinator or guidance counselor.
- c. Have fun! Plan activities that are fun for your student. This will help get your relationship off to a good start.

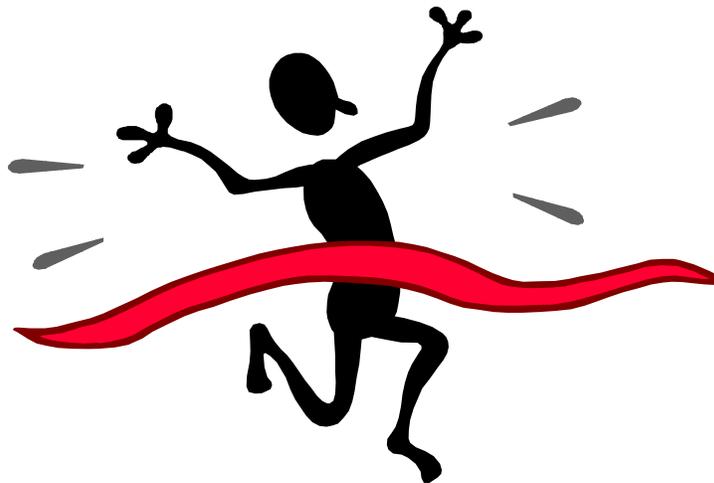
2. **Keep The Momentum Going**

There are a number of activities outlined in the last section of this handbook which will help you in moving forward with your student.

3. **Ending Your Relationship**

As the school year ends and/or as you end the mentoring relationship with your student, careful preparation can help your student make this adjustment more easily.

- a. About four weeks before your last meeting of the year with your student, let him know the week/date of your final meeting.
- b. Talk about some of the good times you've shared and the things you like about each other. Reaffirm your student's strengths.
- c. Let your student discuss how he feels about ending the relationship.
- d. Write a letter or send a card telling your student how much you've enjoyed meeting and working with him. Make clear any expectations about communication during the summer.
- e. Have fun during your last meeting together. End on a positive note.





Beginning Your Mentoring Relationship: Keys To Success

1. Listen

Listen to your student as they talk about their interests and ideas as well as their concerns.

Body language speaks volumes – pay attention and make eye contact while he/she is talking.

Keep your face at the student's eye level. Towering over him is a way of expressing authority.

2. Use Active Listening

Watch and listen to your student. Then make statements (not questions) that summarize what he/she is saying or doing or feeling.

Example: You ask your student how school is going and he/she just stares out the window.

You say: "I see that you are looking at the children (sky, playground, etc.) outside."

Example: Your student tells you things he/she did at school that day.

You say: "You had a busy day. You went to music, read part of *Charlotte's Web*, and sat by Janie at lunch."

Example: Your student says, "I hate school!"

You say: "You are upset about school today."

3. Ask Questions

Try to find out "what" and "how" students think and feel:

What is your favorite thing to do with your friends?

How do you and your friends make new friends?

What is your favorite book?

How do you choose which books to read?



4. **Tell About Yourself**

Tell your student about your life and experiences as it relates to his/her interests and concerns. Your experiences may help your student understand his/her situation better or he or she may feel better knowing that someone else has had a similar experience. Just make it brief and timely and, above all else, make it relevant.



Developmental Stages Of Children And Youth

Children may be of similar chronological age but at different levels of maturity. Eventually, most children will end up at the same maturation level, but it may take some children longer than others. What defines each child's development is both that child's biological clock and what has happened to him or her emotionally and environmentally. Most of the children you encounter as a mentor may have had some disturbance in development, such as a loss through divorce or death. Some children seem to weather these changes, while others are more vulnerable to their effects. It is important to be aware of this and have realistic expectations for your mentee.

A child's development is an individual and continual process. The following pages outline typical developmental characteristics of four age groups. Remember that your mentee may be behind or advanced in any of these areas.

Five to Seven Year Olds

General Characteristics

1. Eager to learn; easily fatigued; short periods of interest.

2. Learn best when they are active while learning.
3. Self-assertive, boastful; less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very active; need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
2. Need rest periods – good quiet activities include reading books together or doing simple art projects.
3. Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles (for example, building models that have small pieces) are difficult.
4. May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics

1. Enjoy organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
2. Can be very competitive – this may lead them to cheat at games.
3. Very imaginative and involved in fantasy – playing.
4. Self-assertive, aggressive, boastful, want to be first; becoming less cooperative.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Alert to feelings of others but unaware of how their own actions affect others.
2. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
3. Inconsistent in level of maturity; regress when tired; often less mature at home than with outsiders.

Mental Characteristics

1. Very eager to learn.
2. Like to talk.
3. Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.

4. Difficulty making decisions.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Be patient, encouraging and flexible.
2. Give supervision with a minimum amount of interference.
3. Give praise, opportunities for successful competition, and suggestions about acceptable behavior.

Eight to Ten Year Olds

General Characteristics

1. Interested in people; aware of differences; willing to give more to others but also expects more.
2. Busy, active, full of enthusiasm; may try too much; accident prone; interested in money and its value.
3. Sensitive to criticism; recognizes failure; have capacity for self-evaluation.
4. Capable of prolonged interest; may make plans on their own.
5. Decisive; dependable; reasonable; strong sense of right and wrong.
6. Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion; often outspoken and critical of adults, although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
2. Early maturers may be upset about their size – as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
3. May tend to be accident – prone.

Social Characteristics

1. Can be very competitive.

2. Are choosy about their friends.
3. Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
4. Team games become popular.
5. Often idolize heroes, television stars, and sports figures.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Because friends become very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules – your honesty and consistency can be helpful.

Mental Characteristics

1. Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.
2. Eager to answer questions.
3. Very curious; collectors of everything, but may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
4. Want more independence while knowing they need guidance and support.
5. Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Recognize allegiance to friends and “heroes.”
2. Remind child of responsibilities in a two-way relationship.
3. Acknowledge performance.
4. Offer enjoyable learning experiences – for example, this is a good age to teach about different cultures.
5. Provide candid answers to questions about upcoming physiological changes.

Eleven to Thirteen Year Olds

General Characteristics

1. Testing limits; a “know-it-all” attitude.
2. Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
3. Identification with admired adults.
4. Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

1. Good coordination of small muscles; interest in art, crafts, models, and music.
2. Early maturers may be upset about their size – as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
3. Very concerned with their appearance; very self – conscious about their physical changes.
4. May have bad diet and sleep habits and, as a result, low energy levels.

Social Characteristics

1. Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
2. Cliques start to develop.
3. Team games become popular.
4. Often have “crushes” on other people.
5. Friends set the general rules of behavior.
6. Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to “belong.”
7. Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
8. Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.

9. Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Because friends are very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
3. Caught between being a child and being an adult.
4. Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
5. Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

1. Tend to be perfectionists; if they try to attempt too much, may feel frustrated.
2. Want more independence but know they need guidance and support.
3. May have lengthy attention span.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Offer alternative opinions without being insistent.
2. Be accepting of different physical states and emotional changes.
3. Give candid answers to questions.
4. Suggest positive money making opportunities.
5. Share aspects of your work life and rewards of achieving in work.
6. Do not tease about appearance, clothes, boyfriends/girlfriends and sexuality. Instead, affirm them.

Fourteen to Sixteen Year Olds

General Characteristics

1. Testing limits; a “know it all” attitude.
2. Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
3. Identification with admired adults.
4. Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very concerned with their appearance; very self-conscious about their physical changes.
2. May have bad diet and sleep habits and, as a result, low energy levels.
3. Often a rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence; enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

1. Friends set the general rules of behavior.
2. Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to “belong.”
3. Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
4. Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.
5. Go to extremes; often appear to be unstable emotionally while having a “know-it-all” attitude.
6. Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
7. Strong identification with admired adults.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Caught between being a child and being an adult.
3. Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
4. Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

1. Can better understand moral principles.
2. May have lengthy attention span.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Give choices and don't be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
2. Use humor to defuse testy situations.
3. Give positive feedback – and let them know your affection is for them, not for their accomplishments.
4. Be available and be yourself – with your true strengths, weaknesses and emotions.
5. Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust.

[Used with permission from "Child Development Seminar." *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

"I Hear You"

Nicole didn't talk at all when I first met her. The adults in the house where she lived didn't take the time or have the time to talk to the kids. I had to learn not to ask her questions she could answer in a few words. Instead of asking, "How was school today?" I ask, "What did you do in school?" Or when we go to the movies, I don't ask her if she liked it but what her favorite part was. When we're planning a meal, we go shopping together and talk about what we're buying.

- A Mentor

People tend to think of listening as something passive, or they tend not to think about it at all. But listening is actually a skill – a valuable skill that can be practiced and learned.

One writer has compared a listener to a catcher in a baseball game.* Observers who don't know a lot about baseball might believe that a catcher is doing nothing more than waiting for a pitcher to throw the ball. They think that all the responsibility rests with the pitcher, who is, after all, the one who is winding up and delivering the pitch. In the same way, some people believe that all the responsibility in communication rests with the person who is talking.

In reality, though, a good catcher is not a passive target waiting to receive the pitch. He or she concentrates on a pitcher's motions; tracks the path of the ball; and, if necessary, jumps, stretches, or dives to make the catch. Similarly, a good listener actively tries to

catch and understand a speaker's words. The next section offers tips for active listening.



Active Listening Is The Most Important Skill Of A Good Mentor

When you talk with your mentee, try to remember to:

- ✦ Clear your mind of unnecessary thoughts and distractions, so you can give her or him your undivided attention.
- ✦ If your mentee is a child or much smaller than you, sit when you talk, so you are at about the same level.
- ✦ Make eye contact.
- ✦ Be aware of your body language.
- ✦ Pay attention to your mentee's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
- ✦ Read between the lines for your mentee's feelings. Learn to say, "How did that make you feel?"
- ✦ Ask open-ended questions. Don't ask, "How was school today?" Instead ask, "What did you do in school today?" Then, as appropriate, ask non-threatening follow-up questions.
- ✦ Ask questions when you don't understand.
- ✦ Put yourself in your mentee's "shoes" and try to understand the world from her or his perspective.
- ✦ Put aside preconceived ideas and refrain from passing judgment.
- ✦ Acknowledge that you are listening by occasionally nodding your head and saying things like, "I see."
- ✦ Give your mentee the same respect that you desire for yourself when you are talking to someone.



How To Kill A Conversation

“You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.”

– M.Scott Peck

1. Tell the speaker that the way he or she feels is wrong. “It’s silly to feel that way.”
2. Don’t look at the person who is speaking to you.
3. Sit slouched over, look distracted, drum your fingers on the table, or use some other body language to signal to the speaker that you’re not really interested.
4. While the person is speaking, think about what you’re going to say in reply. It’s not possible to be forming your own words and concentrating on the speaker’s at the same time.
5. Be judgmental and challenging. Ask questions that put your mentee on the spot. “Your grades should be better.” “You shouldn’t have said that to her.” “How could you possibly think that?”
6. Interrupt the person who is talking. Finish his or her sentences.

Some Additional Ideas For Killing A Conversation On The Telephone

1. Be totally silent for minutes at a time while your mentee is talking. Don’t say, “I see,” or “OK,” or ask any questions. That way, your mentee will wonder if you’re even there.
2. Do something else while the conversation is taking place: work at your computer, read your e-mail, do dishes, fold laundry, pay bills.

Communicating With Your Mentee

*Jim Kavanaugh. *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook for Mentors*. 1998. Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, "Los Sabios," and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health, p. 27.

The following tips may help you communicate more easily with your student.

Encourage Dialogue

Invite the student to talk.

"Would you like to talk about it?"
"I'll listen whenever you want to talk."

Acknowledge students feelings.

"You seem (upset, sad, angry) about something."
"You don't seem to feel well."

Share what you feel.

"I find it hard to know what to say when I first meet someone."

If You Feel You Need More Information

Draw out the student.

"How would you do that?"
"Can you share why you did that?"
"What do you like (most/least) about this?"
"Could you tell me more?"
"How does that make you feel?"

Use nonverbal techniques.

Establish soft eye contact (direct, but not a glare).
Be silent and wait for student to continue.
Nod and smile.
Find a quiet place to converse.

Face student and lean forward slightly.

Listening Without Giving Approval Or Offering Solutions

Ask leading questions that encourage the student to think.

“What would happen if you did that?”

“What do you think you could do in this situation?”

“What’s the best/worse that could happen?”

“How would you handle this situation?”

“How would you feel?”

Respond neutrally. Do not approve or disapprove.

“That’s one way. What’s another?”

“How would your (best friend, parents, teacher) react?”

“What do you think is the best way to handle this?”

Ensuring That You Understand What Is Said Or Felt

Restate what the student said in your own words.

“Did you mean that...”

“What I heard you say...”

“Do you think...”

Look for clues. Check:

Tone of voice

Facial expression

Body language

Gestures



When The Conversation Stops Abruptly

Review your actions. Did you:



Change the Subject?

Indicate disapproval or dislike by your facial expression or body language?

Misread how the student felt?

Respond to how the student felt?

To restart the dialogue:

Ask if you upset the student.

Share a similar situation in your life.

Express appreciation of the student's trust.

Feedback

Feedback is an integral part of the communication process. We must have some indication of our progress or the lack of it. We ask you to provide your student with positive feedback, but also to correct him or her when necessary.

Praise can make a student feel wonderful when given in a way that can't be discounted. Find specific occurrences of observable behavior. Don't generalize; for example, "You made an 'A' on that English paper. You must have studied really hard." Focus on what the student can control, not motivations or feelings.

Corrections should gently instruct, not demean a student; for example: "You hurt Mary's feelings when you laughed at her." Corrections should include the positive and negative. Give information rather than demand a change in behavior. Put yourself in the student's place. How would you like to be treated in this situation?

Feeling Helpers

The following help a person get feelings out so he can see the problem and try to solve it alone or with limited help:

1. **Feedback** – mirroring back feelings

“You feel (disappointed, pleased, etc.)”

“Sounds like you _____”

“You think maybe _____”

“You wish _____”

Feeling Stoppers

The following often stop a person from getting feelings out:

1. **Ordering** – “Don’t talk to me like that!”
2. **Warning** – “If you do that, you’ll be sorry.”
3. **Moralizing** – “You ought to ...”
4. **Advising** – “I suggest you ...”
5. **Reasoning With** – “Let’s look at the facts.”
6. **Using Praise** – “You have the ability.”
7. **Judging** – “You’re very wrong about that.”
8. **Name Calling** – “You’re acting stupid.”
9. **Diagnosing** – “You feel that way because ...”
10. **Reassuring** – “All people go through that sometime.”
11. **Questioning** – “What will you do if ...”
12. **Distracting** – “Let’s talk about something more pleasant.”

If you feel terribly uncomfortable about a statement a student has made and you don’t know what to say, be honest. “I’m really bothered by that statement. I don’t even know what to say.”

Remember: be generous with praise and sparing with criticism!



Building Self-Esteem

Integral to a child's sense of identity is self-esteem, feeling that "I'm okay." Mentoring programs must be extremely sensitive to mentees' self-esteem to avoid sending the message that "You're not okay, so we're going to help you." Keep in mind that children who have grown up in one environment all their lives view that environment as the norm – until someone tells them otherwise. To engender healthy, two-way friendships, mentors should learn to see the mentees as young people with potential.

Self-esteem, or how a person feels about himself or herself, is closely tied to family and environment, including social and economic background. When children feel listened to, taken seriously, and genuinely cared for, their self-esteem will be high. With love and support, any person can feel valued and special.

If children are raised in an environment where important adults – parents, teachers, or others – have continuously criticized, corrected, or restricted them, they may lose faith in themselves. They may begin to feel there are limited opportunities for their future. When young people feel they are unimportant, they may experience difficulty making decisions and plans for their lives.

How can mentors help raise self-esteem in mentees? Consider the following four conditions:

Connectiveness: Being part of a family, community, and being in touch with self, personal history and culture enhances self-esteem.

- ✦ Share your interest, hobbies and life concerns;
- ✦ Do something special for your mentee that meets his/her needs;
- ✦ Encourage participation in cultural programs and community service.

Uniqueness: Developing a special sense of self and recognizing uniqueness is important to self-esteem. A young person may be unique in appearance, talents, hobbies or interests.

- ✦ Notice and affirm special characteristics;
- ✦ Encourage your mentee to express ideas, even when they are different from yours;
- ✦ Show your mentee how to use his/her special talents or interests to benefit others.

Power: Having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to control one's own life enhance self-esteem. Young people are empowered when they are taught to make decisions, set personal limits, take responsibility, solve problems, and teach others.

- ✦ Encourage personal responsibility – solve problems, and teach others.
- ✦ Help your mentee become aware of his/her own decision-making process;
- ✦ Encourage your mentee to set goals – short and long-term;
- ✦ Set standards for achievement but allow for mistakes;
- ✦ Emphasize strengths, not weaknesses.

Models: Good role models can affect self-esteem. Models serve as examples to help young people establish their own values, goals, ideals and personal standards. Being in contact with someone that you admire can make you feel good about yourself.

- ✦ Expose your mentee to people you admire;
- ✦ Help your mentee think through what is important to him/her;
- ✦ Help your mentee face the consequences of his/her behavior;
- ✦ Spend time teaching the how and why of tasks that your mentee hasn't learned yet;
- ✦ Share your own values, goals, ideals, and personal standards;
- ✦ Encourage discussions around values, beliefs and interests.

People who learn to believe in his or her own ability to solve problems, rather than waiting for some outside cure, increase his or her ability to handle the situations in which he or she finds themselves. Similarly, as a person recognizes problems and develops the necessary skills to deal with these events, his or her judgmental ability increases and the person will feel better about himself or herself. As a person's self-esteem increases, so too will his or her ability to solve his or her own problems.



Tips For Tutoring

Tutoring can be a component of your mentoring relationship. In order for your tutoring to be successful, consider the following suggestions:

Reading Tips: As your mentee is learning to read, remember that this is one of the most valuable skills he or she will achieve. You can facilitate your student learning by setting aside time each month or session to read with your mentee, as well as demonstrating that reading can be a fun cooperative effort of gathering information. Your reading activities can be special times for sharing your experiences with each other. This time you spend together will foster your relationship with your mentee, as well as reinforcing your mentee's positive attitude toward books. Here are a few suggestions:

- ✦ Allow your mentee to select books based on his or her special interests.
- ✦ Encourage your mentee to express emotions and voice fluctuations as he or she reads.
- ✦ Try shared reading – you read a line or paragraph, and then your mentee reads the next line or paragraph.
- ✦ Read in a quiet and relaxed environment with few distractions.
- ✦ You may want to stop every few pages to ask your mentee questions about the story – the characters, events, what the mentee believes will happen, etc.

Activity: Your mentee may want to make a personal bookmark. Use cardboard, glitter, markers, glue, etc.

Other Tutoring Concepts

View tutoring as a process that begins a day before the session with your mentee, and is not completed following the session, but continues after your session in self-evaluation and future plans for your next session.

Tutoring involves **Preparation, Patience** and **Perspective**.

Preparation: Your tutoring should begin with preparation, including an assessment of your mentee’s academic needs and appropriate activities, which will enhance his or her knowledge, and sense of self. You should become familiar with your mentee’s school materials as you develop your relationship. Think of innovative techniques to review material and help your mentee to learn. Have fun!

Patience: It is important to be understanding, supportive and open to your mentee’s problems with communication and patience. Your mentee will most likely be familiar with the material from class; so do not attempt to “teach” the lesson by introducing new concepts and ideas. Tutoring should be a cooperative effort between you and your mentee, so focus on reteaching the information and refreshing your mentee’s memory with supportive listening and hints when necessary.

Perspective: This aspect includes self-evaluation. As a mentor, you may want to take time after each session to determine the usefulness of each procedure you used. You can be critical about what you did or did not do during the session. This process also includes goal setting for the following sessions, which activities you may want to try, and how future sessions will be different from the one you just completed.

Ready...Set...Tutor

- 🔹 Be optimistic, supportive and patient. Don’t lose faith.
- 🔹 Come to your mentoring session prepared with activities, and alternatives if those do not work out.
- 🔹 Your words are powerful. Accentuate the positive. Offer assistance instead of criticism.
- 🔹 Do not blame your mentee for not understanding.
- 🔹 Give your mentee small successes by praising his or her accomplishments frequently. This will encourage your mentee and provide him or her with the validation to continue.
- 🔹 Take a short break. Go for a walk or enjoy a drink.
- 🔹 Be clear. Explain information using simple, age-appropriate language.
- 🔹 Do not do your mentee’s homework for him or her. Allow your mentee to make mistakes and learn through this process.
- 🔹 Encourage mentee to check spelling and grammar in a dictionary by being an example – use these instruments yourself!
- 🔹 Switch roles. Have mentee teach or explain to you the concepts.
- 🔹 Get comfortable. Your sessions should take place in a quiet, relaxing environment.
- 🔹 Share. Provide studying hints and practices which have been effective for you.

- ✦ Have closure. Review the material at the end of each session and plan for future meetings. This will help your mentee retain information and will provide him or her with goals to think about.
- ✦ Enjoy yourself. Have fun with academic assignments of homework. Quiz each other. Be a part of the learning process.

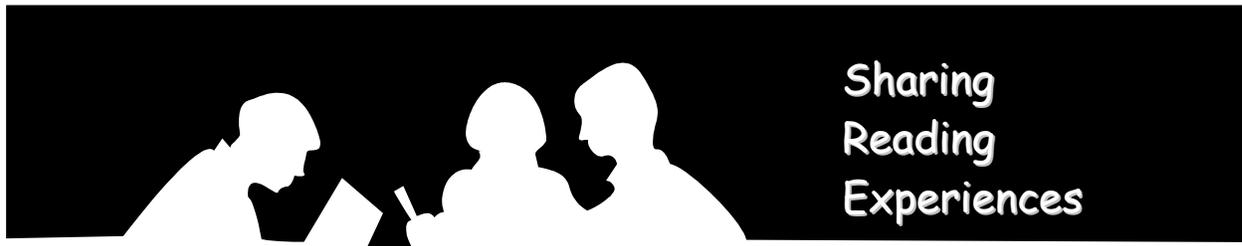
Academic Checklist

This checklist will provide you with the knowledge and understanding of your mentee and their performance in school. As you work with your mentee on academic skills and/or class work, keep these questions in mind:

- ✦ Does your mentee attend school regularly?
- ✦ Has your mentee approached his or her teacher for assistance with problem areas?
- ✦ Does your mentee listen in class?
- ✦ Is any subject too difficult for your mentee's level of understanding? Does your mentee have a positive approach to any or all subjects?
- ✦ Is there a student-teacher conflict? How can you assist your mentee in finding a resolution to the problem?
- ✦ Is your mentee easily distracted by others or noises during class or mentoring sessions?
- ✦ How are your mentee's study skills?
- ✦ Does your mentee budget time to study?
- ✦ Are social activities interfering with study time? In what ways can you provide your mentee with alternatives, which will enhance studying?
- ✦ Does your mentee take good notes?
- ✦ Does your mentee have a quiet, well-lit area at home to study?
- ✦ Does your mentee have a specific study period after school or in the evening?



Also, be sensitive to your mentee's physical health and well being. If your mentee indicates that he cannot see the blackboard, or cannot hear his or her teacher, bring these issues to the attention of the school coordinator.



Bringing good literature and children together can be a very rewarding experience. Data continue to document and support one of the major findings by the Commission on Reading “that the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.”

Instilling a love of books and reading is the most valuable thing an adult can do to expand learning experiences. District Five’s media centers sponsor or promote a number of special reading programs, all of which lend themselves to volunteer/mentor involvement.

RIF Reading Is Fundamental

A federally sponsored program aimed at building personal libraries through the distribution of free books. Parents and community volunteers are needed to serve on RIF planning and distribution committees.

Accelerated Reader

A computerized reading motivation program that tests students’ comprehension of outstanding and popular books.

Book-It!

A national reading incentive program that motivates children in grades K-6 to read more, both at home and at school, by rewarding them for their reading accomplishments.

South Carolina Book Award Programs

Three reading motivation programs designed to encourage students to read good, quality, contemporary literature and to honor the authors of the books annually chosen the favorite by student vote.

Ask your school's media specialist to help you select titles from the Children's Book Award Program, the Junior Book Award Program or the Young Adult Book Award Program.

Silent Reading Programs

Many schools offer uninterrupted periods of silent reading to encourage and nurture the reading experience.

For More Information...

Feel free to contact your school's media specialist for assistance in making your reading experiences an enjoyable part of your mentoring activities.



Guidelines For Goal Setting

Some students may be fearful of achieving a self-enhancing goal. Many students believe themselves to be “losers” and become accustomed to making poor choices, which reinforce their negative self-image. You may need to speak to your mentee about his/her fears of being successful and making self-enhancing decisions.

Once a person has decided where he is, who he is, and where he wants to go, he has identified what success means to him. Now he needs to learn how to establish goals to carry him along the road to success. To set effective goals, it is important that one observe the following guidelines. A goal must be:

1. Conceivable

You must be able to conceptualize the goal so that it is understandable and then be able to identify clearly what the first step or two would be.

2. Believable

In addition to being consistent with your personal value system, you must believe you can reach the goal. This goes back to the need to have a positive, affirmative feeling about one’s self. Bear in mind that few people can believe a goal that they have never seen achieved by someone else. This has serious implications for goal setting in culturally deprived areas.

3. Achievable

The goals you set must be accomplishable with your given strengths and abilities. For example, if you were a rather obese 15 year old, it would be foolish for you to set the goal of running the four minute mile in the next six months – that simply would not be achievable.

4. Controllable

If your goal includes the involvement of anyone else, you should first obtain the permission of the other person to be involved; or the goal may be stated as an invitation. For example, if your goal was to take your girlfriend to a movie on Saturday night, the goal would not be acceptable as stated because it

involves the possibility that she might turn you down. However, if you said your goal was to merely invite your girlfriend to the movie, it would be acceptable.

5. Measurable

Your goal must be stated so that it is measurable in time and quantity. For example, suppose your goal was to work on your term paper this week. You would specify your goal by saying, “I am going to write twenty pages by 3:00 PM next Monday.” That way, the goal can be measured.

6. Desirable

Your goal should be something you really want to do. Whatever your ambition, it should be one that you want to fulfill, rather than something you feel you should do. We are well aware that there are many things in life a person has to do but if he is to be highly motivated, he must commit a substantial percentage of his time to doing things he wants to do. In other words, there should be a balance in life, but the “want” factor is vital to changing style of being and living.

7. Stated With No Alternative

You should set one goal at a time. Our research has shown that a person who says he wants to do one thing or another – giving himself an alternative – seldom gets beyond the “or”. He does neither. This does not imply inflexibility. Flexibility in action implies an ability to be able to make a judgment that some action you are involved in is either inappropriate, unnecessary, or the result of a bad decision. Even though you may set out for one goal, you can stop at any time and drop it for a new one. But when you change, you again state your goal without an alternative.

8. Growth-Facilitating

Your goal should never be destructive to yourself, to others, or to society. A student recently set a goal to break off fourteen car antennas before 9:00 AM the next day. The goal was certainly believable, achievable, measurable, and so forth. Obviously such a goal cannot be supported. If a student is seeking potentially destructive goals, an effort to encourage him to consider a different goal should be made.





A Memorandum From Your Student

1. Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for. I'm only testing you.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.
3. Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.
4. Be consistent. Inconsistency confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything that I can.
5. Don't make promises; you may not be able to keep them. That will discourage my trust in you.
6. Don't fall for my provocations when I say and do things just to upset you. Then I'll try for other such "victories".
7. Don't be too upset when I say, "I hate you". I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.
8. Don't make me feel smaller than I am. I will make up for it by behaving like a "Big Shot".
9. Don't do things for me that I can do for myself. It makes me feel like a baby, and I may continue to put you in my service.
10. Don't let my bad habits get me a lot of your attention. It may encourage me to continue them.

11. Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
12. Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of a conflict. For some reason my hearing is not very good at this time, and my cooperation is even worse. It is all right to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.
13. Don't try to preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what is right from wrong.
14. Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.
15. Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
16. Don't demand explanations for my wrong behavior. I really don't know why I did it.
17. Don't forget that I love to experiment. I learn from it, so please put up with it.
18. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn from my own experiences.
19. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. I may learn to enjoy poor health if it gets me much attention.
20. Don't put me off when I ask honest questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.
21. Don't answer "silly" or meaningless questions. I just want you to keep busy with me.
22. Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm toward you.
23. Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too much to live up to.
24. Don't worry about the little amount of time we spend together, since it is HOW we spend it that counts.

25. Don't let my fears arouse your anxiety. Then I will become more afraid. Show me courage.

26. Remember that I need lots of understanding and encouragement to thrive, but I don't need to tell you that, do I?

Treat me the way you treat your friends, then I will be your friend, too.

Remember, I learn more from a model than a critic.