

TOP MENTORING TIPS

Got all that? Great! Here are some tips to help make you and your mentee get the most out of the time you spend together.

Be Caring

Don't let things get too complicated. The essence of mentoring is you caring, and that along goes a long way. Mentors care about their mentees' progress in school and career planning, as well as their personal development and the children often need just this – old fashioned warm, loving care and understanding.

Be There

Mentoring only works when you are there. You must find the time to see your mentee regularly. Good intentions are not enough, children can tell how much you care by how often you show up, so being there steadily is very important. When you show up for every meeting with your mentee and strive to make things work out you send your mentee a strong message that you care and that he or she is worth caring about.³

Listen

Talking and communicating are not the same things. This packet offers some good advice on communication. Where you go and what you do with your mentee is less important than how well you listen.

Be Resilient

Mentoring takes time to produce results. Children will not offer their trust and affection quickly, so it is important to be patient and realistic. Remember, mentees, regardless of their “risk factors” are still children and your relationship with them will be prone to natural ups and downs. Just remember that you ARE making a difference, though it may not be evident in the short term.

Be Respectful

Be sensitive to the role and feelings of the mentee's parents and issues of cultural diversity. Preserve the confidentiality of all information learned about the student and family.

Be yourself

You don't have to pretend to know everything or pretend to be someone you are not. Similarly, try not to carry empathy and sympathy to the point where you sound false or patronizing.

Be a Guide

Mentors are there to help their mentees find life direction, never to push them. As a mentor, you can give insights about keeping on task and setting goals and priorities and offer your own insight towards helping the mentee make good decisions. Try to avoid telling your mentee what to do, instead work together to help him or her reach their own decisions. Some mentees will have a lot of suggestions about what you can do together,

but most will need a little guidance on your part. If your mentee doesn't have any preferences, start by giving them a range of choices. "Here are some things we can do. Which ones sound good to you?"³

Be Proud and Rewarded

As a mentor you are providing a great service and are truly making a huge difference in the life of a child. Many mentors find the relationship is as rewarding for them as it is for their mentee.