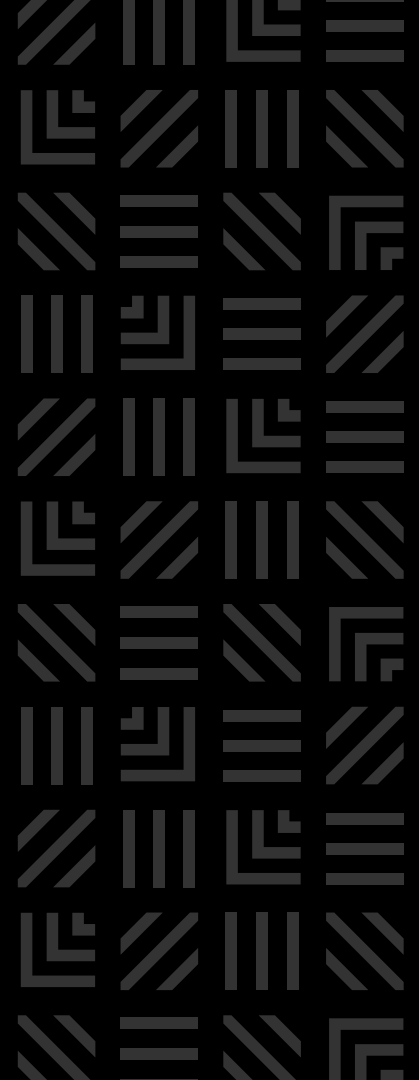




**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**[®]
OF THE CENTRAL
UPPER PENINSULA

SCHOOL/SITE-BASED VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION



OUR MISSION

is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

OUR VISION

is all youth achieve their full potential.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The program takes place during the same day and time each week for about one-hour for the entire school year. You must be able to commit to the program each week.
- You will participate for the entire school year (fall & winter semester).
- The program follows the NMU calendar & will not meet during scheduled breaks.
- You will need to have transportation to and from the weekly sessions – all sites are within 5 miles of NMU campus.
- Talk and engage in conversations related to the topics/discussions to help your Little.





VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY

Big Brothers Big Sisters has the right to accept or deny participants, or close a match at any time.

Volunteer Eligibility:

- The volunteer is able to find the time in their schedule to keep the match open for the required school year, once a week for about one-hour.
- The volunteer must be in compliance with all layered criminal background and reference checks.
- The volunteer should be mentally, physically, and emotionally able to participate.
- The volunteer has the ability to form a relationship.



WHO ARE THE LITTLES?

- Elementary and Middle School Students – depending on the program.
- All children and their parent/guardian must want to be in our program. If the child does not want to do it, we do not enroll them.
- Youth are not necessarily “at-risk,” but **their daily influences (peers / neighborhoods, etc.) could cause them to become “at-risk” without intervention**



ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Becoming a Big involves a commitment. A series of steps are used to tell you more about the program and for us to learn more about you.

- Complete and application and review the orientation presentation
 - In-person interview
 - Acceptance/Denial decision made by staff
 - If accepted, BBBS staff contacts you about potential Little.
 - Match Introductions: Final paperwork and ground rules signed. Big and Little meet for the first time and officially matched!
 - Match Support: Regular communication with BBBS Staff.
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MATCH SUPPORT

BBBS works hard to support the relationship between Bigs & Littles. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone. Bigs, Littles, & Parents/Guardians work with a Match Support Specialist from their BBBS agency.

BBBS staff is required by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to have regular communication with all parties.

Monthly updates can, but not limited to, include:

- What you and your Little have done together since the last contact
 - Any changes or updates with you or your Little
 - How the match relationship is progressing
 - Questions or concerns
 - Suggestions/feedback for BBBS
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AGES & STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

8-10 Year olds

General Characteristics

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

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.

Social Characteristics

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends.
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sports figures is common.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friend's rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

Mental Characteristics

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious, and are collectors of everything. However, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation/Skill learning
- Team play.

11-13 Year olds

General Characteristics

- Testing limits, "know-it-all attitude."
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- Are very concerned with their appearance, and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

Social Characteristics

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

CHILD SAFETY & YOUTH PROTECTION

Research demonstrates that children need caring adults in their lives to build protective factors that help reduce their chances of victimization. Big Brothers Big Sisters is committed to being a part of the solution towards reducing this violence and victimization in the lives of all children.

- ✓ We professionally screen all participants, Bigs, Littles and families. Our interviews are very in-depth for this purpose. We also complete layered background checks and references for our volunteers.
- ✓ Everyone in our program receives child safety education - Bigs, Littles, Parents/Guardians, & Staff
- ✓ We have ground rules and policies to ensure child safety in our match relationships. You will receive all of these in your volunteer handbook and you will also sign a copy during your interview.
- ✓ Match Support contacts with your Match Support Specialist are required. We discuss child safety at home, in school, and in the match. It is our number one priority!



CHILD SAFETY RESOURCES

Click the links below:

- [Types of Abuse](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting](#)
- [Youth Protection](#)
- [Myths & Facts About Child Abuse](#)



COMMON STAGES OF MATCH RELATIONSHIP

Stage 1: The Honeymoon Stage From the first meeting to approximately 3 months. You and your Little are both trying to figure each other out. Littles may try to get their Big's approval or impress them. Learn facts about your Little and reference them in conversation. Be consistent and flexible: do what you said you were going to do.

Stage 2: The Growth Stage From the 3 month stage to one year. This is the most crucial time regarding the development of the Big/Little relationship. This is the time that may be a turning point in this relationship. Your Little may begin testing you to see what you are really about and how much they can get away with. Your Little may be observing you to find a reason not to trust you.

Show your Little they can trust you through your reliability, consistency, and time together. As trust develops, they may begin to share bits of information here and there with you. Recognize and praise accomplishments. If you need to give advice or address behavior problems, give reasons and avoid "shoulds".

"It's not a straight path. It's a twisting path with some bumps in the road and a few dead ends that you need to get past. Luckily there are lots of people with great experience and advice to help you out. Take advantage of these people. They've traveled the path and can guide you past the potholes. A fabulous future awaits you and your Little."

