



SCHOOL/SITE-BASED

Parent/Guardian & Child Handbook



VISION - All youth achieve their full potential.

MISSION - Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT - We partner with parents/guardians, Bigs, and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each Little in our program achieving:

- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT - At Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is an integral part of our values and mission. We recognize, affirm, and celebrate the diverse backgrounds, lives, and experiences of our stakeholders, including youth, families, board members, donors, volunteers, and staff. We ensure the opportunity for voices and perspectives to be heard and honored. In the community, we foster an environment where people can be their best selves. We affirm that every person [regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, gender expression, income, national origin, race, or sexual orientation, marital or veteran status] has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We strive to realize the full potential that is within all of us by ensuring that voices and perspectives are heard and honored.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

Big Brothers Big Sisters has been matching Littles with caring Bigs in fun and rewarding relationships since 1904. By participating in mentoring programs, young people are:

- 75% more likely to receive a four-year college degree
- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 53% less likely to skip school
- 37% less likely to skip a class

Who are Big Brothers and Big Sisters Volunteers?

- People who work and live in your community
- High school and college students from nearby schools
- Retirees
- Military personnel
- Members of faith communities or civic organizations
- Ordinary people that are extraordinary

What they all have in common is a sincere interest in supporting the Vision and Mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters. They are not paid – all of their time is volunteered.

How do we select Bigs?

BBBS staff make a professional decision about whether an applicant is eligible to mentor a Little after the applicant has completed an extensive screening process that includes:

- An application
- A criminal background and motor vehicle check

- At least three reference checks
- An in-person interview
- An orientation and training that helps prepare a mentor to support your child’s healthy development

Who are Littles?

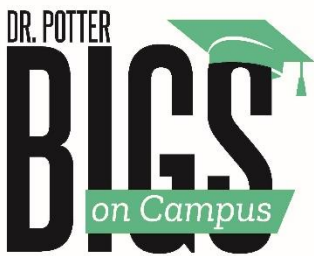
- Youth who would benefit from having a positive adult role model.
- All Littles and their parents/guardians agree to participate in our program and commit for one year.
- All interested applicants must submit an application and complete an in-person interview/orientation with a Program Coordinator. Information collected in the enrollment process will help our staff determine eligibility for our program. Upon acceptance, Littles are placed on a waiting list. Some Little’s take longer to match than others depending on volunteer availability.
- Although the matching process may take some time, please know that we work hard to find appropriate matches for all waiting Littles. While waiting for a match, waiting Littles and their families are able to participate in many of our agency activities and events.

When Bigs and Littles get together, what do they do?

Matches typically meet 2-4 times a month (no more than once a week or 4 times per month) to enjoy low/no cost activities, such as playing catch, going to the park, doing arts/crafts, cooking, playing board games, or attending agency sponsored activities.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

BIG FUTURES: COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS – BBBS provides activities for our Littles to help prepare them for college and career. This includes such activities as: scholarship opportunities, hands on career exploration activities, help with completing job, college & scholarship applications, help with completing the FAFSA, etc. These activities are open to all current and past Littles as well as high school Bigs.



DR. POTTER BIGS ON CAMPUS MENTORING INITIATIVE – In partnership with our local colleges and school districts students will be bussed to a college campus where they will be matched with an employee of that college, graduate student or business professional from the community. They will meet twice a month on campus. The purpose of this initiative is to introduce the students to college and provide professional adult mentors to the students.

LGBTQ/ALLY MENTORING INITIATIVE– We are an organization dedicated to inclusiveness and diversity. Big Brothers Big Sisters is actively looking for a diverse group of volunteers who identify as part of the LGBTQ community or consider themselves Allies to match Littles with Bigs who can provide a positive, supportive, and consistent mentor relationship.

TYPES OF BIGS

BIG – Individual who wants to positively impact the life of a child.

BIG DUOS – Two adults can team up to mentor a youth. “Duos” may be a spouse, significant other, or close friend. As a Big Duo, the two mentors provide a child with a team of support.

BIG FAMILIES – This opportunity allows a family to invite a child to join in on their family activities! A couple or individual with a child or children all benefit when adding a Little to their family.

HIGH SCHOOL BIGS – We provide a unique opportunity for high school students to volunteer as mentors in our school-based program. High school Bigs must be 9th grade or older.

MY ROLE AS A PARENT/GUARDIAN

- **Know about each activities taking place with BBBS.**
- Talk openly with your child after they return from home BBBS activities.
- Communicate with BBBS Staff often, and with Big if appropriate.
- Encourage communication and ensure your child feels safe spending time with their Big.
- Communicate any concerns to BBBS Staff, or the Big if appropriate, in a timely manner.

BBBS MATCH SUPPORT

BBBS works hard to support the relationship between Bigs and Littles. **Our goal is for the match to be as successful as possible for everyone.** It is required for us to talk to your child and their Big every month.

We'll also need to check in with the **parent/guardian twice during the school year and once during the summer.**

- These check-ins typically take place over the phone.
- Please feel free to contact us at any time to discuss the match and share stories.
- This communication allows us to ensure your child's safety and provide support, feedback, and coaching.

Your Program Coordinator is the main link between you, your child, the Big, and the agency. They will...

- Find information and resources that you might be interested in
- Connect you with community resources
- Keep you updated on activities offered by the agency
- Help you communicate with your child and their Big
- Work with you on any conflicts or challenges that may arise

Why Match Support is required:

- To discuss your child's safety or well-being; this is our number one priority
- To discuss general concerns, or concerns you may have about your child's Big
- To report any changes in address or phone number
- To report any important family changes
- To share success stories about your child's progress or special honors

**If we are unable to reach you or your child after three attempts, the match may be suspended or even closed. Be sure to return phone calls within 3 business days to stay in good communication with your Program Coordinator.*

As an affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, **we are obligated to report on the progress of each match in our program on a scheduled basis.** If this contact is not maintained, it puts at risk our standing with the national

BBBSA organization and our ability to provide match liability insurance for every Big in our program. Finally, by being aware of match activities and any issues that may arise, **we are better able to support your match.**

Your Role: We need you to be an active partner in helping to build a successful and meaningful friendship between your child and the Big.

BIG THINGS YOU COULD DO TO HELP

- Share your concerns, hopes, and wishes for your child with your Program Coordinator.
- Let us know if there is anything you feel the Big should know, or if you have tips that would help them be successful.
- Always ask your child about what activities they did with their Big and their feelings about the activity.
- Participate in agency sponsored events and activities. You can view and sign up for these events through our activity emails or by visiting our website: www.BigDefenders.org
- Bigs are "older friends." They are not substitute parents, babysitters, disciplinarians, financial support, a taxi service, or counselors. Bigs are not allowed to babysit their Little or their Little's siblings.
- In the summer, please help make sure that your child returns phone calls and stays in regular contact with the Big and Program Coordinator. Regular contact is important to the success of the match. We would like Bigs and Littles to keep in touch twice a month over the summer through phone calls, texting, emailing, writing letters, or attending BBBS activities.
- Give it time: This relationship needs time to develop – at least three months – so don't judge it too quickly.

CHILD SAFETY

Our Top Priority

We focus on the child's safety and well-being throughout the match, not just at the beginning. We want to work together to keep your child safe. While our staff carefully screens each volunteer, we need your help to make sure the relationship is healthy and the volunteer is making good judgments about your child's safety and wellbeing.

- Please notify us immediately if you have a concern with the match.
- The Big should never ask your child to keep a secret.

If the following patterns arise, you should discuss them with your Program Coordinator:

- Your child's Big wants to spend more and more time with your child.
- Your child's Big is frequently buying them gifts.

Work with your child to teach them skills to help keep them safe. Discuss these issues and any other issues related to child safety with your BBBS Program Coordinator. We want to work with you to keep your child safe. During the enrollment process you will be assigned a training titled "Your Child's Personal Safety." This is an optional training but will better prepare you to help us identify any safety concerns.

As a parent/guardian, you recognize the potential of your child better than anyone. By giving them the opportunity to be part of BBBS, you're starting them down a path to an even brighter, more promising future. We look forward to working with you and your child!

If at any time you have concerns regarding your child's match, please contact BBBS staff for support.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Who should report suspected child abuse or neglect?

Anyone may voluntarily report suspected child abuse, neglect or exploitation to the appropriate local child protection or law enforcement agency. Minnesota law requires professionals who work with children and families and their delegates to make a child protection report if they know, or have reason to believe:

- A child is being neglected or abused.
- A child has been neglected or abused within the preceding three years.

This applies to all BBBS staff and all Bigs. It is against the law to **not** report suspected abuse or neglect to a local child protection or law enforcement agency. All Bigs are mandated reporters.

Anyone who reports child abuse in good faith is immune from civil liability. The reporter's name is confidential and accessible only if the reporter consents or by court order. The inconvenience of reporting is offset by one simple fact: the action you take could save the life and spirit of a child and provide a family with much needed support.

Immediate danger - If you know or suspect that a child has been abandoned or is in immediate danger (such as recent sexual assault or a serious physical assault), contact your local law enforcement agency immediately.

No immediate danger - If the child is not in immediate danger, but you have reason to believe a child has been maltreated:

- Contact your Program Coordinator immediately. They are there to assist and offer support during the reporting process.
- Reports need to be made within a 24-hours after the suspected abuse or neglect has occurred. A written report is required within 72 hours of the report.
- Contact the child protection unit of the county social service agency of the county in which the child resides.

If you are unsure whether you should make a report, contact your Program Coordinator and they will assist you.

OFFICIAL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Big Brothers Big Sisters requires all volunteers who work with children to abide by the following policies while they are involved in our program.

If you have questions about these policies or if the Big violates any of these policies, please contact the Program Team at 320.253.1616 immediately.

USE OF CHEMICALS BY BIGS:

BBBS requires volunteers to ensure that interactions are free from the influence of drugs and alcohol.

We prohibit volunteer Bigs from being under the influence of, or using, any substance (including alcohol, illicit drugs, and legal drugs, which includes medical cannabis and general cannabis use in jurisdictions that have legalized it, and prescription medications) that could potentially affect their judgment, driving, reaction time, or otherwise jeopardize a child's safety and well-being while the Little is in the volunteer Big's care or company.

Bigs are prohibited from the use of tobacco products and electronic cigarettes in front of their Littles.

* High school Bigs are expected to be a role model in and out of school and agree to be chemical free. If convicted of any type of drug/alcohol related offense they will lose their privilege to be a Big. High School Bigs must agree to not violate any Minnesota High School League rules; please refer to <https://www.mshsl.org/about/mshsl-handbook> (section 205 - Chemical Eligibility, and section 206 - Good Standing and Eligibility Requirements).

GIVING MEDICATION:

High School and Site Based Bigs are not allowed to give Littles any medication (prescription/non-prescription).

FIREARM/WEAPON SAFETY:

- Personal Firearm/Carry and Conceal Policy – Bigs are prohibited from carrying, possessing, or using firearms including, but not limited to, pistols or other weapons while Littles are in the Bigs' care and while at BBBS sponsored events, at the BBBS office, or at off-premise locations, unless for hunting or target practice purposes. This policy applies to all Bigs, including, but not limited to, those who have a valid permit to carry a pistol.
- Law Enforcement Personnel who carry a firearm as part of their uniform will be permitted carry their firearm in accordance with their agency standards and engage in BBBS activities while on duty.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

It is BBBS' objective to resolve problems and complaints promptly, keep the resolution as close to the source as possible, and offer graduated steps for further discussion and resolution at higher levels of authority as necessary. Child safety is BBBS' highest priority in resolving conflicts among adults (e.g., between a Big and their Little's parent/guardian). We encourage the person who believes there is a problem to talk directly to the person with whom they have a conflict. If the discussion does not resolve the issue, the adults involved in the conflict should discuss the situation with their Program Coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Given the nature of the program, our Bigs may be introduced to sensitive and extremely personal information about the child with whom they are matched. Every Big in the program must agree to treat all information pertaining to areas of concern and background with strict confidentiality. BBBS encourages confidentiality between the Big and Little. For a trusting relationship to develop, friends need to feel confident their thoughts and feelings will not be shared with others without their permission. However, there are certain things that must not be kept secret:

- Concerns about the health or well-being of a Little should be discussed with their Program Coordinator.
- Anytime a Big learns about or suspects physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect the Big and/or BBBS is required by law to report the actions to the proper authorities. The Program Coordinator should be used to help facilitate this process.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN (BBBSCM) prioritizes child safety, confidentiality and the privacy of program participants. All electronic documentation is maintained in a safe, secure file via Matchforce. Our confidentiality policy, which addresses program participants' information and the limits of confidentiality is signed by all program participants and staff.

BBBSCM asks all volunteers who are accepted into the program to recognize that their personal information available on the Internet can be viewed by Littles and their families. Volunteers are expected to be positive role models on all Internet websites that are accessible to the public, their Littles and their Littles' families.

BBBSCM may search public information on the Internet about each volunteer. Volunteers must confirm parental consent prior to posting pictures or personal information of any BBBSCM youth or BBBSCM family. BBBSCM requires its volunteers to respect the confidentiality and privacy of the children and families of BBBSCM in regard to social networking and Internet technology. The volunteer must adhere to all state and federal laws where applicable.

BBBSCM recognizes that social media, and other digital technology is an integral communication tool. In general, personal use of social media sites is typically for communications between peers, including friends and family. Not all social networking sites are designed to support mentoring relationships. BBBSCM encourages volunteers to interact with their youth on a one- to-one, in-person basis, but understands that there are certain circumstances where the use of social media is acceptable with specific authorizations and safeguards to ensure a mentee's safety, confidentiality, and privacy. When necessary to communicate outside of face to face, BBBS encourages matches to communicate on a BBBS provided or approved platform.

As a condition of being a Big, volunteers must abide by these Social Media Guidelines. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in termination of their match.

Social Media/Digital Technology Guidelines

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It is the policy of BBBSCM that all agency volunteers, youth, and Parent/Guardians who engage in the use of digital technology (texting, video chats) and/or social networking, which includes, but not limited to social media, blogs, wikis, Twitter, Facebook, etc., agree:

1. To remain a positive role model in all postings and/or communications.
2. To respect our youth, families, staff and volunteers' privacy and dignity.
3. To honor privacy and confidentiality by not sharing confidential information about a youth, family, volunteer, employee or BBBS, or use their image without consent, even in a private forum.
4. To model healthy boundaries when communicating over social media/digital technology. Examples: To use prudent judgement in the time and manner in which you are contacting each other.
5. To be transparent in interactions.
6. To be aware of surroundings especially when utilizing video technology.
7. To ensure privacy controls and settings restrict accessibility of youth in the program to only age-appropriate content when using any device while in the care of the volunteer.
8. To speak respectfully about BBBS and those affiliated with BBBS and refrain from posting information that reflects negatively on BBBS or any match participants.
9. To report any potentially inappropriate content immediately to BBBS.
10. To abide by any other policy or procedure that BBBS may put into effect regarding social media, social networking and/or digital technology.
11. Most social media platforms have requirements that minors be age 13 before using the service. Mentors should not connect with youth under the age of 13 on social media.

12. To adhere to all local, state and federal laws.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the termination of your match.

CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES

The following safety rules were designed to protect program participants from harm, identify potential areas of risk, and define ways to minimize liability. Bigs will be expected to follow these rules while matched with a Little. Contact us at 320.253.1616 with any questions or concerns.

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES:

- Respect the need for personal space and privacy.
- Provide separate/private areas to use the restroom, change, or bathe.
- Showering or bathing together is not permitted.
- Affection is best expressed through positive or affirming comments.
- Physical affection may be expressed using a handshake, high five, pat on the back, or hug if permission is obtained prior to engaging in any form of physical contact.
- Sitting on laps, massage, or touch of any private areas (genitals, breasts, buttocks) is not permitted.
- Wrestling and tickling is not permitted between Bigs and Littles.
- Bigs are never allowed to sleep or nap with their Little in the same bed, sleeping bag, or sofa.
- Contact your Program Coordinator if there are any concerns about boundaries or expressions of affection.
- Consult with parent/guardian before discussing values, sexuality, religion, and/or life choices with a Little.
- Never come between the parent/guardian and their child. Respect the parental role/authority.

DISCIPLINE/SETTING LIMITS:

- Verbally, physically, and/or emotionally abusive means of discipline are never allowed.
- State expectations for behavior and set appropriate boundaries.
- Verbally address behavior concerns and clarify what needs to change or happen.
- If the Little does not respond to verbal redirections for concerning behavior, inform the parent/guardian, take the Little home, and inform the Program Coordinator.

ABUSE, NEGLECT, MALTREATMENT, AND SAFETY ISSUES:

- Both Bigs and BBBS staff are mandated reporters.
- Consult with the Program Coordinator if you suspect abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or safety issues.
- If there is immediate danger, contact legal authorities and follow up with BBBS after the call has been made.

SUPERVISION AND TRANSPORTATION OF LITTLE:

- Bigs are responsible for the supervision of their Littles at all times from start to finish of a match activity.
- At no time should the Little be left unsupervised or left with someone else during a match activity.
- High School and Site Based Bigs are not allowed to transport Littles.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH USING UBER/LYFT TO BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS' EVENTS

- Families are encouraged to reach out to Big Brothers Big Sisters to discuss transportation options when it is a barrier for their child/children to attend a Big Brothers Big Sisters' agency sponsored activity.
- If a family decides to use hired transportation it is recommended that families use [Uber Teen](#) when the child is riding without an adult present. Only youth ages 13 and older can ride in an Uber alone. The family must have a signed waiver on file prior to using Uber.

- Youth under age 13 can ride in an Uber without their parent/guardian if an older sibling (between 13 and 17) rides with them.
- Lyft doesn't allow riders under the age of 18 to ride alone, therefore Lyft should only be used when the youth is 18+
- If a family decides to use Uber, we ask that they notify Big Brothers Big Sisters prior to the start of an activity so Big Brothers Big Sisters staff is aware of this and what the plans are to get home.
- If the family is using Uber for the ride home, they should schedule the ride 10 to 15 minutes before the activity ends, so the Uber arrives by the time it ends. The child should wait with a Big Brothers Big Sisters staff until the Uber arrives and wait to get into the vehicle until the Big Brothers Big Sisters staff person says it is okay for them to get in.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH WALKING TO AND FROM BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS' EVENTS

- Families are encouraged to reach out to Big Brothers Big Sisters when transportation is a barrier for their child/children to attend a Big Brothers Big Sisters agency sponsored activity to discuss transportation options.
- With parent/guardian permission, youth 13 and older may walk to and from an activity alone if the distance is under half a mile. Youth under 13 may walk to and from an activity with an older sibling if the distance is under half a mile. Time of day and time of year should be taken into consideration when deciding if walking is an option.
- If a family decides to allow their child/children to walk, we ask that they notify Big Brothers Big Sisters prior to the start of an activity so Big Brothers Big Sisters staff is aware of this and what the plans are to get home.
- If a family decides to allow their child/ren to walk to and from an activity, they must have a signed waiver on file prior to doing so.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS:

- Bigs are instructed to walk the Little to any public restroom to ensure safety and wait for the Little either in the restroom if there are stalls or just outside of the restroom.

GIFT GIVING:

- Gifts for birthdays, holidays, special events, or recognition of personal achievements are acceptable. Bigs must inform their Program Coordinator if they purchase a gift for their Little. The value of the gift should not exceed \$25. Staying in the \$5 to \$10 range is preferred. Giving gifts is not an expectation.

THE LITTLE GETS SICK, GETS INJURED, OR IS INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT:

- Bigs are instructed to take the Little to the school nurse or Program Coordinator.

MOVIES, VIDEO GAMES, MEDIA, AND INTERNET GUIDELINGS

Bigs and parent/guardians are responsible for determining age-appropriate content/ratings in all media forms when with their Little.

- Viewing rated R (under 17 requires a parent/guardian) or NC-17 (no one under 17 admitted) movies or playing video games rated M (Mature-17+) is not allowed.
- Exercise caution and careful consideration when viewing movies rated PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned—some material may be inappropriate for children under 13) or playing video games rated T

(content suitable for ages 13 and older) with your Little. If the Little is under the age of 13, the Big must get the parent/guardian's permission first.

- Viewing content with explicit sex, graphic violence, or pornography is not acceptable while with a Little.
- Consult with your Program Coordinator for further consultation or clarification of these rules.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

This is what we ask all of our volunteer Bigs to agree to:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN provides children and youth with safe, quality mentoring relationships with caring adults who serve as volunteers. Our Bigs teach by example the importance of giving and giving back, of staying in school, and of having respect for family, peers, and community. As a Big, you share with your Little, their parents/guardians, and the agency, a commitment to fostering a safe, enjoyable, meaningful, and healthy mentoring relationship by observing our code of conduct.

I agree to conduct myself in a manner consistent with my position as a positive role model to a child/youth, and as a representative of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN.

I will not inflict any physical, sexual, emotional, or other abuse or exploitation on children and/or youth.

I will use respectful and appropriate language in all interactions with my Little and avoid use of the following: profanity, derogatory terms, inappropriate jokes, name calling, or discussion of intimate personal details of my life.

I will respect my Little's personal space and boundaries and avoid inappropriate physical contact, including tickling, wrestling, sitting on laps, back rubs, etc.

I will provide fair treatment to youth and their family, no matter gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, medical needs, and/or sexual orientation.

The Big-Little relationship is based on mutual respect. I agree to treat my Little and their family in a respectful manner at all times.

I agree to notify BBBS immediately of any safety issues in the life of my Little that I become aware of in the course of volunteering.

I understand that failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

BULLYING

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have [serious, lasting problems](#).

As defined by the state of Minnesota, "bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Intent to Cause Harm:** actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors often happen, or have the potential to happen, more than once to the same person.

TYPES OF BULLYING:

- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, threatening to cause harm
- **Social:** spreading rumors, purposefully leaving people out, breaking up friendships, embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, shoving, pushing, spitting, tripping, taking someone's things
- **Cyberbullying:** bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network, internet website, or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.

No single factor puts a child at risk of being bullied or bullying others. Bullying can happen anywhere—cities, suburbs, or rural towns. Depending on the environment, some groups—such as [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning \(LGBTQ\) youth](#), [youth with disabilities](#), and socially isolated youth—may be at an increased risk of being bullied. [Stigma](#) can also spread false and harmful information that can lead to increasing rates of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against certain groups of people.

Steps you can take to help a child in a bullying situations

- Contact the program coordinator, teacher, or principal with concerns.
- Keep notes of any witnessed bullying or take a screenshot of cyberbullying.
- Encourage your little to keep a journal about the highs and lows they experience each day.
- Ensure there is a plan in place to keep the child safe at school.
- Encourage respect for all people. Repeat expectations of honesty, empathy, responsibility, and kindness.
- For more information and help handling a bullying situation, check out the resources listed below.

Resource: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/safesupp/> - The Minnesota Department of Education's website dedicated to safe and supportive schools.

Resource: StopBullying.gov - An official U.S. Government Web site managed by the Department of Health & Human Services in partnership with the Department of Education and Department of Justice.

TOP 10 SUCCESSFUL MATCH RECOMMENDATIONS

1. KEEP APPOINTMENTS & BE CONSISTENT.

- When you follow through and show up on time for activities, it sends a positive message that you value the match and the time you spend together, which will help build trust in the relationship.
- Contact the Program Coordinator when you can't keep an activity appointment to keep communication open and honest.

2. COMMUNICATE OPENLY & REGULARLY.

- Keep the Program Coordinator informed if there are any schedule changes.

- Be honest about match activities or actions you are not comfortable or happy with.
- Keep the Program Coordinator informed if there are things going on in the Little's life that may affect their mood or behavior while on an activity. They can then pass that along to the Big.

3. MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH BBBS.

- Check-ins with your Program Coordinator are required with the Big and your child to ensure that your child is safe and happy in the match. **It is required for us to talk to your child and their Big every month.**
- Returning all phone calls, emails, or letters from BBBS will help ensure a strong, healthy match.
- We'll also need to check in with you - **twice during the school year and once during the summer.**

4. SET BOUNDARIES & KEEP THEM.

- Discuss clear expectations with your child before the match begins meeting on their own. Discuss your expectations for their behavior when with their Big. Make it clear that your child is not to ask the Big for gifts or money spent on activities. The focus of the match is solely on developing a friendship.
- Address concerns as they arise – do not wait until it becomes a larger issue.

5. BE PATIENT.

- BBBS has worked hard to match you and your Little based on shared interests, but that does not mean friendships form overnight. Take the time to check in with your Child before and after each activity. Your affirmations will help your child feel more comfortable participating in BBBS.

6. MAKE A CALENDAR.

- Knowing your meeting days can help cut down on communication issues.

7. BE FLEXIBLE.

- Cancelling with as much notice as possible will keep the match running smoothly.

8. HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

- Remember that friendships and change take time. The impact of the match may not be easy to see, especially early on, but to prevent frustration and burnout, focus on consistent activities and the fun they are having together.

9. FOCUS ON TRUST AND SAFETY.

- Big Brothers Big Sisters takes every possible precaution to ensure the safety of your child when being matched with their Big, including background and reference checks of each and every volunteer.
- Trust that we are doing everything possible to keep the match and your child safe.
- Remember that you play an important role in this as well.
- Talk to your child after each match activity to help ensure their safety and satisfaction in the match.

10. ENJOY YOUR TIME WITH BBBS! - Thank you for partnering with us to defend your child's potential!

MATCH COMPLETION

Addressing Completion in the Match

Most mentoring relationships end at some point. Sometimes they end because the match just doesn't fit, one of the parties has moved or changed schools, or life circumstances have changed. Whatever the reason, positive match completion is an important part of healthy relationship management. Listed below are some important aspects of successful match completion.

Remember Closure in Your Life

First, consider a time in your life when you experienced the end of an important relationship; perhaps a break-up, divorce, etc. How did this event make you feel? How was it handled? How could it have been addressed in a different, more positive way? What practices do you have regarding endings and transitions?

Consider Your Child

Next, consider how ending the relationship may affect your child. Your child may feel they are at fault, feel hurt, abandoned, or angry. They may also act indifferent. If handled inappropriately, completion can have a very negative impact on a child.

Acknowledge Emotions

It is helpful to acknowledge your own emotions and the emotions of your child. Match completion is common and honesty around the situation is most helpful. Consider this an opportunity to handle saying goodbye in the most healthy, respectful way. If addressed properly, match completion can be a positive experience.

Steps to Completion

It is the commitment of BBBS to assure closure is handled in the most respectful, positive manner possible. Therefore, we ask all participants to participate actively in completion and adhere to the following steps:

- Notify your Program Coordinator as soon as the need for completion is identified.
- Focus on the positive aspects of the match. Perhaps share photos, stories, etc. Matches often make a farewell project such as a memory book or cards.
- Allow an opportunity to discuss completion if they desire.
- Acknowledge that the closure can also be difficult for your child. Use this event as an opportunity for a teachable moment. Discuss how moving on is a part of life.
- Discuss with your child's Big what you can expect from them going forward. Do they plan to stay in touch with your child? If so, how? What will it look like?
- Complete closure questions with the Program Coordinator. This is a requirement, especially if your child would like to be re-matched.

BBBS appreciates your commitment and follow-through in this process. We recognize this can be very difficult for all involved. We are dedicated to supporting you in match completion and hope you will work with us to ensure a positive mentoring experience for all involved.

BIG HAPPENINGS

Big Happenings is a weekly activities email newsletter highlighting upcoming activities being offered by our agency for matches and various other opportunities in the community that your match can take advantage of. See past issues of the Big Happenings [here](#).

Agency Sponsored Activities take place often. These events are a great way to meet other matches and staff members. A few examples include ice skating, movies, fishing, and picnics. You can learn about activities through the Big Happenings activity emails or by visiting our website: BigDefenders.org/calendar.

We offer several **Special Events** for matches/Bigs to participate in throughout the year including an annual picnic, the Big Celebration for matches that honors our volunteers, and our annual Go Big for Kids' events. Events vary from year to year and will be listed in the Big Happenings.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

There are more ways than ever to connect with the BBBS community online. Share ideas and receive agency updates by searching for "**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota.**" You can find us on:



Like us on Facebook [@BigDefenders](#) and visit [BIGDEFENDERS.ORG](#) for agency news, activity information, merchandise, photo galleries, and more.

SPREAD THE WORD

If you know someone who you think would be a wonderful Big, encourage that person to apply.

If you would like posters or brochures for advertisement, let us know!

We are always looking for Bigs!

In summary, the top 3 Expectations for Parents/Guardians are:

1. Know what your child is doing with their Big.
2. Communicate any concerns to BBBS staff.
3. Be an active partner!



FEDERATED CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The three Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in Minnesota (BBBS of Central Minnesota, BBBS of the Greater Twin Cities, and BBBS of Southern Minnesota), through generous donations from the Federated Insurance Foundation and the donors to the Federated Challenge, have established a scholarship program to assist current and past Littles, as well as High School Bigs, who plan to continue their education in a non-four year postsecondary program at an accredited Minnesota school that is focused on apprenticeship, certificate, trade school, technical, or community college. Scholarships are offered each year for study at an accredited institution of the student's choice.

Eligibility:

Applicants to the Federated Challenge Scholarship for Big Brothers Big Sisters Agencies in Minnesota must:

- Be a current or past Little or High School Big for a minimum period of 18 months prior to application deadline date and have been matched through either Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota, or Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota.
- Be a U.S. citizen or have permanent resident status.
- Have attained a high school diploma or GED (or will have graduated prior to the term for which the scholarship application is being submitted).
- Be enrolled or plan to enroll part-time or full-time in a non-four-year program at an accredited Minnesota postsecondary school that is focused on apprenticeship, certificate, trade school, technical, or community college.
- Have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent).
- Have completed the FAFSA.

Awards:

- If selected as a recipient, the student will receive an award ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Funding can be applied toward tuition, fees, books, and other necessary expenses related to the particular program or training (i.e. tools, materials, cookware, etc.).
- Scholarships are a one-time award. Students may re-apply each year, but funding cannot exceed \$5,000 per year, and will not continue beyond the established time necessary to complete the program or degree.

To Apply:

- Application deadline: Please check website.
- Click here to apply: <https://bbbs.tfaforms.net/4842163>
- Contact Ann Matvick at Ann@BigDefenders.org or (320) 258-4517 if you have any questions.

BRIANNA KRUZEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

BriAnna Kruzel Memorial Scholarship

BriAnna Kruzel is a former Little Sister and High School Big Sister (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN), who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in September 2013. BriAnna's family would like to honor her memory by awarding a scholarship to a High School Senior who is a current/past Little or High School Big who demonstrates some of the same characteristics of BriAnna.

BriAnna's experience with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program was quite unique. When her father was deployed in Iraq, BriAnna began as a Little Sister. Years later, BriAnna decided to become a High School Big Sister to provide a mentoring experience to another child. BriAnna was matched with a Little Sister whose father was deployed overseas, which helped them form an instant bond. BriAnna was able to relate to her Little Sister and provide advice and support. BriAnna was a dedicated friend and mentor for over two years. She was selected as the 2013 High School Big Sister of the Year for her outstanding commitment to the program and her Little Sister. She was also honored by the St. Cloud Optimist Club with the "Youth Appreciation Award" for her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters.



BriAnna was a hardworking, dedicated student who worked diligently at achieving the best grades that she could. BriAnna may not have always received the "A" that she was striving for, but she would never throw in the towel. BriAnna believed strongly in giving and volunteering. She was an active member of Big Brothers Big Sisters, volunteered with Sartell Community Education, her church, and would help anyone in need of assistance. She was also a person who believed in loving each and every person that she came across. She was strong in her faith, she didn't judge, and was compassionate towards everyone. BriAnna had a contagious smile that would light up a room.

Since BriAnna passed away, her family and friends have decided to live out the mission of WWBD by evaluating situations in their own lives by asking themselves "What Would Bri Do?" Check out <https://brislodge.com/> for more information on support with the loss of a loved one.

BriAnna's family would like to honor her memory by awarding a current/past Little or High School Big with a \$500 scholarship to a college of their choice. Payment of scholarship will be awarded after submitting proof of completion of first semester of college.

Eligibility:

- The applicant must be a current/past Little or High School Big in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN program.
- The applicant must be a senior in high school.
- The applicant must have been matched thru Big Brothers Big Sisters for at least 18 months.

To Apply:

- Application deadline: Check website for date.
- Click here to apply: <https://bbbs.tfaforms.net/4843657>

- Contact Ann Matvick at Ann@BigDefenders.org or (320) 258-4517 with any questions.

DAHLIAS ALONGSIDE GRAND LAKE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Dahlias Alongside Grand Lake Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of past and current Big Brothers Daniel Weidner & Nathan Molitor, we are excited to offer two scholarships for current and former Littles in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota program who are graduating from high school or currently attending college.



DAHLIAS
ALONGSIDE GRAND LAKE
SCHOLARSHIP

Dan and Nate have both been involved in the BBBS program as Big Brothers. They believe Big Brothers Big Sisters is an important organization that defends the potential of youth. This scholarship was established to support students in Central Minnesota as Dan and Nate both believe education plays a key role in unleashing someone's full potential.

"Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom." -Oprah Winfrey

Award

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a current or former Little graduating from high school. A second \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to one current or former Little currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution. The awards will be paid to the educational institution on behalf of each student. Funds may be used for tuition, fees, books, and other necessary expenses. Payment of scholarship will be awarded after submitting proof of completion of the first semester of college.

Eligibility

- The applicant must be a current or former Little in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MN program for at least 18 months.
- The applicant must be a senior in high school planning to attend college part-time or full-time or a college student currently enrolled at a trade, technical or community college, or a 4-year college/university.

To Apply:

- Application deadline: Check website for date.
- Click here to apply: <https://bbbs.tfaforms.net/5002995>
- Contact Ann Matvick at Ann@BigDefenders.org or (320) 258-4517 with any questions.

AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

General Line	320.253.1616	Address	203 Cooper Avenue North
Fax	320.253.1702		Suite 162
Toll Free	1.888.600.1616		St. Cloud, MN 56303

PROGRAM SUPPORT TEAM

www.bigdefenders.org/our-leadership-team

	<u>Direct Line</u>	<u>Email</u>
Ann Matvick (Program Director)	320.258.4517	Ann@BigDefenders.org
<u>Enrollment</u>		
Tasha Bruns-Notsch (Lead)	320.258.4516	Tasha@BigDefenders.org
Katherine Swanson	320.258.4532	Katherine@BigDefenders.org
<u>Community Based</u>		
Mary Bellefeuille (Lead)	320.258.4538	Mary@BigDefenders.org
Kylie Nelson	320.258.4519	Kylie@BigDefenders.org
<u>School/Site Based</u>		
Robyn Rieland (Lead)	320.258.4512	Robyn@BigDefenders.org
Madeline Briekos	763.688.0205	Madeline@BigDefenders.org
Callie Huus	320.258.4530	Callie@BigDefenders.org
Raquel Minkel	320.241.7996	Raquel@BigDefenders.org

After hours emergency contact: Jackie Johnson 320.292.9235 or Ann Matvick 320.258.4517

HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES/CHILD PROTECTION

Benton County	320.968.5087
Morrison County	320.632.2951
	or 1.800.269.1464
Stearns County	320.656.6000
Sherburne County	763.765.4000
Wright County	763.682.7400

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Benton County	320.968.7201
Morrison County	320.632.9233
Stearns County	320.251.4240
Sherburne County	763.765.4000
Wright County	763.682.1162

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND BIGS

www.bigdefenders.org/resources

LGBTQ RESOURCES

www.bigdefenders.org/lgbtq

COMMUNITY HELP LINE

United Way 2-1-1

