

Mentor Tips: BUILDING IMPACTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Building a relationship between a mentor and mentee can be quite challenging, because it is so important that we bring only the best of our relationship experience into play.

Here are some guidelines, adapted from the California Governor's Mentoring Partnership and Los Angeles Youth Mentoring Connection and included in the Mentor Toolkit published by Mentor (www.mentoring.org), that can help you as you work to build the best relationship you can with your mentee.

1. Be there.

When you show up for your reading session determined to make it fun and interesting, you send your mentee a strong message that you care, and that your mentee is worth caring about.

2. Be a friend, not an authority.

Be the adult in your mentee's life who is just there without having to "teach" him or her. Young people learn more conversing with adults than they do just listening to them.

3. Be a role model.

The best that you can do is to lead by example. By becoming a mentor, you've already modeled the most important thing a human being can do: caring about another. Here are some other ways you can be a positive role model for your mentee:

- Keep your word: Be there when you say you will.
- Have a positive outlook.

4. Help your mentee have a say in your reading session.

Some mentees will have a lot of suggestions about which books to read, but most will need a little guidance. If your mentee doesn't have any preferences, start by offering a range of choices. "Here are some books we can read. Which ones sound good to you?"

5. Be ready to help out.

Your mentee may be struggling with a problem in school or on the playground. You can help by following these tips:

- Be there for your mentee and make it clear that you want to help.
- Don't fix the problem. Ask questions and help your mentee figure out how to come up with answers.
- Model ways to solve problems. Describe how you overcame a similar problem. Metaphor is a great teacher.
- Be ready to help by checking back and seeing how things worked out.



Power Lunch mentee Anthony Fuentes at Marie Reed Community Learning Center.