



# WebSource

## Video Short

### **Mentoring**

By CWK Network Producer

*"Mentoring works. Children who have mentors just do better."*  
-Janice McKenzie-Crayton, President, Big Brother Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta-

Nick Wood is 13 years old. In his life, there is no dad, no older brother; he lives with his single mom.

Phil Henderson is his mentor... in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program.

"It's just like a privilege just to have fun with a big brother and go out and stuff," says Nick.

"It beats being home by yourself all the time, being bored, instead of just watching TV and stuff."

Once a week, they play games... go to movies or sporting events... the boy and the man have a lot in common.

"I'm from the inner city, you know, single parent, five sisters, only boy," explains Phil.

"So I want to make sure that another kid, if I have the time, won't have to go through the same type of things that I went through without having that positive role model or mentor around."

Advocates say more than a million kids who really need a mentor don't have one.

Why?

Janice McKenzie-Crayton, President, Big Brother Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta says sometimes, "Volunteers will see themselves as needing to be perfect. Or to be all-knowing, or to have this total heavy burden of now being responsible for a child. And what we say is, form the friendship."

And that friendship changes lives. Several studies over the past decade show mentored kids do better in school, and are much less likely to get involved in drugs or crime.

As McKenzie-Crayton explains, "Mentoring works. Children who have mentors just do better. We say little moments, big magic."

And, the mentors feel that magic, as well.

Just ask Phil, who spends several days each month with Nick. "Being that he's a kid, he kind of pulls the kid out of me. You know, I plan on it going forever, until he's grown and we can probably work together or something. I definitely plan on this relationship continuing throughout this program, throughout our life."

Right now, Big Brothers Big Sisters has more than 200-thousand mentors nationwide. The organization hopes to increase that number to one million, by 2010.

### **High School Mentoring Facts**

A recent survey showed that mentored high school students from families receiving public assistance were more likely than students without mentors to:

- Graduate from high school.
- Enroll in college.
- Have fewer children.
- Not receive food stamps or welfare.
- Have fewer arrests.
- Become involved in community service.
- Be hopeful about their future.

In another poll of 400 high school juniors and seniors who participated in a national mentoring program, the vast majority of students credited their mentors with helping improve their lives.

- Seventy-three percent of students said their mentors helped them raise their goals and expectations.
- Eighty-seven percent of students went directly to college or planned to attend college within one year of graduating from high school.
- Fifty-nine percent of mentored students improved their grades.
- Eighty-seven percent of mentoring students said they benefited in some way from their mentoring relationship.

## What Parents Need To Know

Mentoring is a very important and needed area. The mentor is able to give of him/herself and teach another individual who may not get that instruction elsewhere, and the mentoree is able to learn things from a different perspective and have another individual in his/her life to depend on and look up to. The staff at *Big Brothers Big Sisters* has developed the following tips for mentors.

- **Make the planning of activities an activity.** Pop some popcorn, take some seasonal snapshots and create a list or calendar of activities. Decorate it. Not only will you have ideas of what activities to do together for the next few months, you will learn a lot about each other.
- **Ask lots of questions about school.** What are your mentoree's favorite subjects? What challenges does your mentoree face? Is your mentoree involved in extra-curricular activities such as music or sports? Remember, your mentoree is in school the majority of the day – just as you spend most of your day at work. Does your mentoree have friends? Does your mentoree like his or her teachers? Be proactive. If you already know the characters from your mentoree's stories, he or she will be more likely to share a story with you. Personalize the discussion by adding how you did in school and what it was like for you.
- **Communicate regularly with the guardian.** Good communication between the mentor and guardian increases the likelihood of success with the match. Engage the guardian in conversation about your mentoree. The adults should communicate together before and after the activity to have the greatest impact on the mentoree.
- **Adjust your "progress measuring stick" to fit the child's needs.** Then adjust your goals and expectations to size.
- **Don't stop at simple instructions when a learning opportunity presents itself.** Create an environment around the task that will help your mentoree succeed. Asking your mentoree to call you is one example. Your mentoree might be intimidated by having to leave a message or talking to somebody live, so set up a call night and time, and then make sure you're there. Tell your mentoree it's okay to ask the guardian to call and have them pass the phone. The goal is to help your mentoree develop.
- **Set clear, concise, and achievable goals together.** Review your goals together. Measure your progress or challenges together.
- **Try something new.**
- **Incorporate education into your activities.** Build a model rocket ... and on the way discover the mysteries of gravity, inertia and "what goes up, must come down." Mentors can take little steps instead of diving in right away.
- **Be responsible to your obligations.**

## Resources

- [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#)
- [The Boys and Girls Clubs of America](#)
- [The National Mentoring Partnership](#)

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