

WHO ARE WE?

The Lake County Youth Mentor Program is a grant-funded program that is housed at the Lake County Education Service District. The mission of the program is to connect youth, grades K-12, with caring adult mentors to enhance both academic and personal achievement. The program is open to any youth who voluntarily enters the program and agrees to adhere to program requirements and guidelines. Both the youth and the parent(s) must agree to the youth's participation.

Adult mentors are recruited to work with youth in one-on-one mentoring relationships. The mentor meets with the youth once a week for one hour for one year. The mentor's responsibility is to listen, offer encouragement, and provide support and friendship. The mentor is NOT a teacher, counselor, or parent. The majority of the time spent together occurs outside of school, participating in mutually enjoyable activities that focus on building positive outcomes for the youth.

WHO DO WE SERVE?

The program serves Lake County students, grades K-12. Referrals can be made by parents, school personnel, or even students themselves. Students facing the following challenges can benefit from joining the program:

- difficulties in school, (grades, attendance, or behavior)
- issues with peers
- uncomfortable with social interactions
- challenges with family interactions



Lake County Youth Mentor Program

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LakeCounty Mentoring



LAKE COUNTY YOUTH MENTOR PROGRAM

PARENT INFO



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO I KNOW THAT MY CHILD WILL BE SAFE?

The Lake County Youth Mentor Program takes the following steps to keep your child safe:

- The mentor submits an application and provides four references who are contacted by staff.
- The mentor undergoes a background check, which includes both an FBI fingerprint and Sex Offender Registry check.
- The mentor is interviewed by staff and board members.
- The mentor attends a three-hour training session.
- Your child, the mentor, and a staff member will hold an initial meeting at your child's school. This meeting will also generally include the school counselor.
- You, the mentor, and a staff member will meet to discuss the relationship prior to your child participating in any activity with the mentor.
 - Staff contact mentors monthly and youth quarterly to monitor the relationship.
 - Staff contact parents semi-annually.

CAN OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE WITH MY CHILD AND HIS/HER MENTOR IN THEIR ACTIVITIES?

A mentoring relationship is special because it is a one-on-one relationship. Even youth who feel very close to their parents sometimes need to talk with someone outside the family. The mentor is an adult friend with whom your child can safely talk and share concerns. Friends and family members may occasionally be invited to participate, but on a limited basis only.



WHO WILL PAY FOR THE ACTIVITIES FOR THE MENTOR AND THE YOUTH?

The most important part of mentoring is the relationship between the mentor and the youth, not participating in costly activities. If the mentor chooses to occasionally participate in an activity that involves costs, the mentor will pay for the activity. You should never feel obligated to pay for these activities. You also have the option of not allowing your child to participate in an activity that involves costs.

The youth should not expect the mentor to buy gifts for him/her. If the mentor chooses to buy a gift for special events or holidays, the mentor should always consult you before giving your child a gift.

Again, a discussion at the beginning of the mentoring relationship with your child and the mentor regarding expenses and gifts will avoid later misunderstandings.

WHAT IF FAMILY PLANS CONFLICT WITH A MEETING?

Time with the mentor is not intended to displace time with the family. The mentor and your child should plan their time together around your normal schedule. The mentor and your child should also discuss with you when they are planning special activities. Advance communication will help avoid conflicts.

HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THE MENTOR WILL SUPPORT MY RULES?

Before the mentoring relationship begins, a parent-mentor-staff meeting will occur. At that time rules about curfews, places the youth may or may not go, activities you do not allow, foods he/she may or may not eat, or other rules you want the mentor to follow, are discussed. By discussing rules at the beginning of the relationship, later misunderstandings can be avoided.

WHAT IF THE MENTOR SAYS THINGS WITH WHICH I DO NOT AGREE?

No matter how carefully we match mentors and youth, you may find some areas where your beliefs or ideas differ from the mentor's. Mentors are expected to respect and reinforce the parents' right to their beliefs and values. At no time will the mentor undermine the parents' authority, beliefs, or ideas.

IF I GROUND MY CHILD, SHOULD I ALLOW HIM/HER TO SEE THE MENTOR?

The mentor's weekly visit should NOT be used to discipline your child. Time with the mentor is a pleasure but it is also a time of learning and growth. Even if your child is grounded, the mentor should be allowed to see him/her. Definitely let the mentor know the reason for your child being grounded so that the mentor can discuss the behavior with your child and help them discuss alternative behaviors that might have better outcomes.