

Big Brothers Big Sisters Community-based Program

Program Guidelines

Scheduling

Always discuss pick up and drop off times with the child's parent/guardian when scheduling an activity. It is often a good idea to call the family the day before to confirm the outing.

Arrival/Return

When you pick up your Little, make sure that the parent/guardian knows that their child is leaving with you. When you return your Little to his/her home, make sure the parent/guardian knows that the child is there. Ask the parent/guardian for one or two backup contacts—a grandmother or close neighbor—with whom you can leave your Little if you return early from an outing or if the parent is not home when you return.

Personal Boundaries

Remember no tickling, wrestling, Little sitting on your lap, or front hugs. Side hugs are appropriate. A “high five” is a great way to acknowledge a job well done, but a slap on the bottom is not okay. Always maintain appropriate boundaries. This is for your protection as well as the agency's protection.

Others participating in activities

If your Little asks to invite a cousin or friend along, you should say no. We do not have written permission for the other child to go on outings, and taking them is a liability risk for you and the agency. If your Little asks if a sibling can go along, that is fine if the parent approves it and the sibling is enrolling as a Little or is matched already. This should happen rarely as your focus is 1:1 time.

If you would like to take a friend or significant other along on an outing, you need to talk with your Little and the parent/guardian first. The parent/guardian needs to feel comfortable with the person joining you. This should not happen often so that you and your Little share special 1:1 time the majority of the time.

Setting Limits

On the way to your activity tell your Little what behavior will be expected and is appropriate for the situation (such as when attending a play). If your Little is acting inappropriately, tell him/her honestly and firmly what specific behavior is not appropriate. If the behavior continues, tell your Little that you will take him/her home if the behavior does not stop immediately. If the behavior continues, take him/her home.

High Risk Activities

If you and your Little would like to do an activity that may be risky for your Little, please call the Program Coordinator a week before the outing. The Program Coordinator will need to obtain approval from the parent. Several factors help determine whether an activity is risky for a particular child, such as their ability level, prior experience, etc. (Examples of risky activities include but are not limited to: swimming, boating, horseback riding, motorcycle/ATV riding, repelling, zip line).

Overnight Stays

Overnights are not permitted until you and your Little have been matched for six months. Consider this activity carefully before you plan it because this may become a favorite activity for your Little, and an overnight is a lot of time compared to a few hours on an afternoon outing. Before finalizing any overnight outings, you must get prior approval from your Program Coordinator. He/she will give you an Overnight Permission Form that you and your Little's parent/guardian must sign and get to the Program Coordinator prior to the scheduled overnight. **Your little must have his/her own sleeping space.**

Drugs/Alcohol

DO NOT use drugs or alcohol when you are with your Little. Use good judgment when you are doing activities where alcohol is consumed (ex. Tourists baseball games). Please do not smoke when you are with your Little.

Automobile Accident

In case of an accident when you and your Little are together, inform the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. BBBS has an insurance policy that is supplemental to the volunteer's policy.

Injury

Check with your Little's parent/guardian to ask what facilities accept your Little's insurance - in case of an emergency. To prevent injury from occurring, please be aware of what your Little is doing at all times and re-direct them when necessary. If you or your Little are injured on an outing and require medical attention, go to the nearest hospital and show the receptionist your BBBS volunteer card.

Medication

You are not allowed to dispense medication to your Little without the parent's permission beforehand or without calling the parent first to ask them. If your Little is so sick that they need medication while on an outing, it would be best to take them home immediately.

Concerns of Abuse/Neglect

If you suspect at any time that your Little is possibly being abused or neglected, call your Program Coordinator as soon as possible. If your concerns occur over the weekend, you may also call the local Department of Social Services or the Sheriff's Department. Our agency is mandated by law to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to DSS. Though the safety of the child is our primary concern, your Program Coordinator will work with you to ensure that your positive relationship with your Little and his/her parent/guardian continues.

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