



## **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Elkhart County GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES**

- 1. The start of a match is an adjustment time for the volunteer, child, and parent (guardian).** Relationships take time and action to develop. Try to be patient and don't expect quick changes. The combined effort, support and approval of the volunteer and the parent can create a successful match and make family life easier.
- 2. The volunteer is providing a service to the Little's family and the Big Brother Big Sister agency. The volunteer's time and financial limitations need to be respected and appreciated.** Everyone can help build the relationship by saying "Thank You", being courteous, discussing the joy of visits together and positive changes noticed in the home situation.
- 2. The parent's rules and discipline need to be respected.** We encourage clear communication between the parent and volunteer regarding the limits and schedules of the child.
- 4. We expect consistent, reliable contact between the volunteer and child so that a healthy, trusting relationship can develop.** If this is not occurring, call your case manager. The volunteer and child are expected to see each other 2-5 hours each visit, 2 to 4 times a month.
- 5. Please do not "ground" a child from seeing the volunteer.** We suggest that the situation be discussed with the volunteer and by mutual consent, possibly, the outing can be restricted in some way, rather than canceled. (Not allowing a child to have regular visits with a volunteer, as a means of discipline, will result in termination of that child from the program.)
- 6. Parents please be considerate of volunteers.** When your child is ill or recovering from an illness, the child should not participate on outings with the volunteer.
- 7. It is appropriate for volunteers to set ground rules and correct misbehavior during a visit.** We do not permit physical punishment (spanking, slapping) or withdrawal of visits as a means of discipline.
- 8. The volunteer has the responsibility for arranging the time of visits. Clear arrangements for the visit need to be made with the parent.**
  - The volunteer should arrive at the agreed upon time and the child should be ready to go.
  - The child should be well groomed and dressed appropriately for the activity and the weather.
  - The volunteer is responsible for the supervision, safety and welfare of the child during the visit. Reminder volunteers: We require the use of car safety belts for the child when you are traveling together. Children under the age of 8 MUST be in a booster seat. Children under age 12 need to sit in the back seat of a vehicle having passenger air bags.
  - The child should be returned home at the agreed upon time. If this is not possible, the parent should be notified.
- 9. Prior agreement needs to be made for the child's return home, when the parent is not going to be there.**

- 10. If it is necessary to cancel or be late for a visit, please call.** Allow as much time as possible because the closer the cancellation or delay is to the expected outing, the more disappointing it is and damaging to the relationship.
- 11. It is prohibited for an adult volunteer or a minor child to use alcohol or illegal drugs prior to a visit or during any time they are in the presence of one another.** It is illegal for children under the age of 18 to possess or use tobacco products. Volunteers, please be courteous of your Little's sensitivity and do not smoke in their presence if warranted.
- 12. Family members or friends of Bigs or Littles are not encouraged to participate on outings on a regular basis.** Our program philosophy is based on a one to one relationship.
- 13. We expect you to let our agency know of any changes in your living situation – address or phone change, marriage or job change, serious illness, etc.**
- 14. The agency staff does not see overnights as necessary to a good match.** They may only occur with the mutual consent of the parent, volunteer, and the agency case manager. An overnight cannot occur within the first year of the match. Prior to the first overnight visit, the parent must provide written consent to our office and the case manager must approve. Separate sleeping facilities (rooms) are required.
- 15. Generally, the volunteer is expected to pay for the cost of activities and transportation.** The parent is encouraged to help out, but we recognize that this is not always possible. We suggest that the volunteer avoid spending money on the child except for activities, projects done together and special occasions.
- 16. It is necessary for you to have monthly contact with your case manager.** Failure to maintain monthly contact with your case manager may result in your removal from the program. We are here to offer support and guidance to all involved in the match relationship. If you are having any difficulties in the match your case manager is ready and willing to offer helpful suggestions. If you are having personal or family problems, your case manager may also be able to help with them or direct you to someone who can.
- 17. Guidelines for training: Children, parents and volunteers accepted into the program must complete all mandatory training requirements before a match can be proposed and completed.**
- 18. Confidentiality: Information about the child and/or family situation may not be shared outside of the program.**

The preceding guidelines have been set up for the benefit of the child and to aid in the success of the match. Continued problems in one or more of these areas may result in termination from the program.