

How it works for our families

Bigs are adult friends and role models, not parents. That's why we work with you, the parent/guardian, every step of the way.

The inquiries we receive for children must be between the ages of 6-12, however once matched, a child can be in our program until they are 18.

Children in the Big Brothers Big Sisters must meet two of the following three requirements:

1. Qualify for free or reduced lunch at school
2. Come from a non-traditional family (i.e. single parent, foster family, grandparents, etc.)
3. Have a parent who is, or has been incarcerated

First Step:

Call our office to fill out a child inquiry form. We ask for your contact information and background about your family and the child/ren you wish to enroll.

Second Step:

If your child qualifies based on the information provided, we will schedule a home enrollment for us to understand the needs of you and your child, and determine complete eligibility for the program. The interview also helps us identify any preferences you may have regarding the volunteer. We will interview both you and your child, and provide an orientation of the program.

Third Step:

Your child is officially on the waitlist! Our goal is to match your child with a volunteer with whom they share common interest. This is important to help retain a year-long commitment. The wait may take some time. If you wish for the agency to check-in with your child for additional support, please make sure to let us know at the time of the enrollment.

Fourth Step:

When the potential "Big" is found, a meeting with you, the child, the potential Big, and the Match Support Specialist is arranged. Every party must agree to work with each other to officially create the match. This is a great opportunity for you as the parent/guardian, to ask the volunteer questions and for your child to determine if this will be a good fit.

Guidelines for the Match

For the first three months, the Big and Little do activities in the community to get to know each other. After three months, with parent/guardian consent, the Big is able to take the Little to their home. Bigs and Littles should always see each other between 2-4 times a month according to our national guidelines.

After six months, the Big is allowed to take the Little on day trips, out of county with a permission slip from Big Brothers Big Sisters. Parents/guardians must sign the permission slip and the Big must submit it to the Match Support Specialist BEFORE the activity takes place.

Our department will contact the parent/guardians, the child, and the Big on a monthly basis to see how the match is progressing and ask if there are any issues or concerns. Once a match has reached their first anniversary, the calls will switch to every three months.

You can call the Match Support Specialist any time you have a questions or concerns. Our goal is to have every match last at least one year, but we strive for a lifelong friendship between the Little and the Big. We want you to feel comfortable with the program, because matches are proven to last longer when parents/guardians are supportive of the Big and the Little's friendship.

Child Safety is our #1 Priority

The safety of all children in the program is our number one priority. We require fingerprints and run an extensive background check on each volunteer which looks at criminal and DMV records. Bigs are required to provide us with three references of personal and professional backgrounds. Our agency also conducts thorough interviews to assess for red flags that might indicate a potential problem.

In addition, our staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. If a mentor or parent/guardian has any concerns about possible abuse or neglect, please call us so we can contact Child Protective Services.

In emergency situations after regular business hours, please call your Match Support Specialist, Program Manager Mitzi at 559-618-0398, or Executive Director Diane at 559-283-3842.