

CHILD SAFETY and YOUTH PROTECTION

(1) General Child Safety Policies

- a. Little will not visit Big's home for the first 3 months of the match relationship.
 - o After the match relationship has reached 3 months, matches must discuss a home visit with their assigned Match Support Specialist. After the initial visit to Big's home, each visit after needs to be discussed with and approved by the parent.
- b. Overnights are allowed once **ALL** of these conditions have been met *(BBBS must be informed 2 weeks prior to any and all overnights) *
 - o The match has been together for over **12** months
 - o The match has completed their in-person annual review with Agency staff (where overnight rules are discussed)
 - o Parent/Guardian has provided written consent to BBBS
- c. BBBS strongly discourages match activities where there is a risk of severe injury. High Risk Activities are defined as those activities that carry a higher level of risk of injury than the child/youth would typically encounter in their daily lives. Activities that would be considered high-risk include, but are not limited to, water sports (canoeing, kayaking, waterskiing, boating, etc.) hunting, horseback riding, zip lining, non-commercial flying, hot air ballooning, hang gliding, etc. Parent/Guardians are fully responsible in granting permission for any activities and Bigs should not engage their Little in high-risk activities without first consulting with Parent/Guardian and BBBS. If Parent/Guardian grants Little permission to engage in a high-risk activity with Big, Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form must be completed by Big and Parent/Guardian prior to the activity.
- d. All Match participants must follow the BBBS Social Media policy
- e. All Match participants are prohibited from the use of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs during outings. Tobacco use by the Volunteer Big may be permitted with permission of the parent/guardian.
- f. Weapons, firearms and ammunition will be made inaccessible at all times to a child while he or she is in the Volunteer's care, unless participating in specific, approved activity(ies), which the parent/guardian and Volunteer Big have approved in advance and such approval is documented in the match file
- g. Any and all suspected child abuse will be reported to child protection authorities in accordance with state law
- h. ***All information is considered confidential*****

(2) Transportation

- a. Seatbelts will be worn by all program participants. Children must sit in the backseat of the car until they are 13 years old.
- b. Volunteer Bigs may only transport the child with whom they are matched. If the Volunteer Big chooses to transport other people during an outing, the volunteer assumes all liability and financial responsibility
- c. Only BBBS approved Volunteer Bigs and/or staff members may transport a child involved in the BBBS program

(3) Medical Procedures

- a. All Parent/Guardians of Littles must sign a medical consent form allowing BBBS and the Volunteer Big to seek medical care in an emergency situation
- b. BBBS staff and Volunteer Bigs are not permitted to administer any medication to children in the program.
- c. In case of a medical accident or incident, Volunteer Big and Parent/Guardian should immediately notify BBBS.

(4) Communication

- a. Parents/Guardians should be informed and approve of all match activities
- b. There should be open communication between all match parties (Parent, child and volunteer) and agency staff (children should never be asked to keep a secret)
- c. Respect for all match parties should be demonstrated at all times
- d. All match parties must sign and agree to abide by the social media policy of BBBS

(5) Limit Setting through Positive Reinforcement

- a. Positive limit setting strategies based on the age of the child and any developmental concerns (i.e. ADHD, Special Needs, etc.) should be followed by the Volunteer Bigs
- b. Corporal punishment, verbally and/or emotionally abusive means of discipline, by Volunteer Bigs is strictly prohibited

(6) Involvement with the Child and The Child's Family

- a. Any Gift buying should be approved in advance by the parent/guardian with agency staff notified when a gift of an excessive nature is given to a child. Gift buying should be limited to special occasions
- b. Big are not allowed to provide any monetary donation to the Little's family. Exceptions can be made with prior approval of agency staff
- c. Matches should not get together more than once a week during the first year of the match.
- d. Other children (friends or family members of the Little) should not be included in the outings between the Big and Little. Children of the Big should only be included occasionally on outings and the Big and Little must still have one-on-one time together.
- e. The Little should not be left alone with any adult or child other than the Big at any time during the outing.

(7) Respect for Privacy and Personal Boundaries

Children have the right to feel safe at all times. Appropriate and positive interactions between Bigs and Littles are essential in supporting positive youth development and making youth feel valued. Our ground rules surrounding adult and child interactions support strategies that help children establish a clear set of personal safety boundaries promoting skill-building that may prevent the child from becoming the victim of violence and/or exploitation (bullying, child sexual abuse, internet exploitation, dating violence, etc.) and/or encourage a child to disclose abuse or victimization.

- a. Volunteers Bigs should always seek permission from the child before any physical contact (*Is it ok if I give you a hug?*)
- b. Physical contact between the Volunteer Big and Little that includes tickling, wrestling, pinching, backrubs, or asking a child to sit on an adult's lap is strictly prohibited. These types of contact are likely to violate a child's personal boundaries.
- c. Display or discussion of any materials of a sexual nature is strictly prohibited
- d. Volunteer Bigs must be able to provide separate, private areas for a child to: change clothes, bathe, shower and/or sleep
- e. Volunteer Bigs should never sleep or nap with a child in the same bed, sleeping bag or couch
- f. Volunteer Bigs should never come between a parent and their child; Volunteer Bigs need to respect a parent's role and authority

Failure to follow all stated policies will lead to MATCH CLOSURE.