

Florida League of Cities

MuniMentor to Students



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OVERVIEW

Mentoring students is important and has the power to impact a student's academic and personal life. The following is general information on becoming a mentor. If you are interested in mentoring, you should contact your school district for specific information and requirements for schools in your area. *(Note: In the state of Florida, all state agencies and some businesses allow their employees up to one hour per week for mentoring. Check with your employer!)*

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring matches the volunteer mentor one-on-one with a student. He/she usually meets with the student at least once a week, spending 30 minutes to one hour with the student. Mentoring takes place on the school property during the school day. Mentoring is not a one-time meeting with a student; it is a long-term commitment. Students meet with the same mentor for at least a year, or in some cases over several years, providing them with a sense of continuity and allowing the mentor-mentee relationship to build trust and blossom.

WHO CAN BECOME A MENTOR?

Schools encourage volunteer mentors who are willing to put in the time and commitment to work with their students. However, there are usually criteria for becoming a mentor, and you should check with your local school district on their criteria for participation. In general, here's what schools may require:

- Many school districts have a mentor/volunteer application that must be completed.
- Some school districts require mentors to complete formal mentor training. This training can take one hour, one day or a bit longer, depending upon your school district.
- Many school districts require that the mentor be fingerprinted and pass a state and national criminal background check. (Some school districts may pay for this so that the proposed mentor does not have to.)
- Some schools (upon clearing the background check) will issue an official volunteer/mentor I.D. badge that the mentors must wear when volunteering.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU ARE CLEARED TO MENTOR?

After your background check is approved, you will be assigned a school. Or if you have a school, the school's volunteer/mentor coordinator will match you with a mentee and give you the specific school information for mentoring (*i.e. schedule, location, school rules, etc.*).

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS AFTER YOU BECOME A MENTOR?

Most districts have volunteer coordinators who can assist the mentor. And at the school, the mentor can ask their mentee's teacher, volunteer/mentor coordinator or guidance counselor for assistance.

- **Set Goals** – The mentor will work with the student to develop long-range goals for their academic and personal life. The success of this relationship will depend on the mentor helping the student reduce these goals to short-term, manageable and weekly activities.
- **Assist with Academic Assignments** – The mentor can check homework, assist with test preparation, make suggestions about research, check the student's assignment list regularly and tutor the student, if materials are provided by the teacher or staff person at the school.
- **Be an Advocate for the Student** – One of the most valuable things a mentor can do for a student is to be their advocate as far as securing other resources or services the student may need. Sometimes just letting the school know that there is a new situation or need is worthwhile.
- **Be a Role Model** – The mentor will be a role model for the student, demonstrating values of punctuality, dependability and reliability.
- **Encourage the Student to Stay in School** – The mentor will help the student appreciate the importance of education, both personally and professionally. The mentor can help with homework or missed class work and encourage attendance.
- **Be a Friend** – The mentor will listen to the student, understand the obstacles the youth perceives and help him/her find solutions. He/she will work with the student to use existing services in the school community. The mentor can help with homework or missed class work and encourage attendance.
- **Be Positive and Give Praise** – Help the student understand that they have the ability to achieve and succeed in life. (Source: Leon County Schools)

STILL WONDERING ABOUT WHETHER YOU SHOULD BECOME A MENTOR?

Here are more incentives:

A child who regularly meets with a mentor is:

- 27% less likely to experiment with alcohol.
- 37% less likely to skip a class.
- 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs.
- 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school.
- 55% more likely to enroll in college. (Source: Mentoring.org)

NOTE: Every school district's requirements are different for their mentors. Please check with your specific school district's volunteer office about what it requires to become a mentor.