



Read Well Speak Well Live Well

Ideas for Mentor/ Mentee Activities Outside of School Work

The following are suggestions for mentor/mentee activities. Current mentors contributed many of these ideas for activities. Choose activities that are appropriate for the age of the mentee.

- **Encourage the mentee to keep a record of meetings.** Ask the child to keep a journal and ask the child to write down his or her thoughts each day after meeting together. Stress that this is confidential unless he or she wants to share it. Girls will probably be more amenable to this than boys since it is similar to keeping a diary. Reluctant boys might at least be willing to record the dates of the meetings with their mentors; the lengthening number of entries becomes a concrete record of the commitment to them. Writing about the time together, even if sporadic, will help mentees develop reflection skills. It will also be useful to them near the end of the mentoring relationship to see the changes that have occurred. Mentees may come to value the notebook as symbol of friendship.
- **Let the mentee be the expert.** Discover something the mentee is knowledgeable about and let him or her be the teacher. One woman mentor brought a computer football game for her male mentee to play. He explained the rules of the game and the types of plays to her. Another mentor had a Muslim mentee. He encouraged his mentee to teach him about his religion and share the significance of Muslim religious holidays as they occurred during the school year. When the mentee has the opportunity to be the expert, and the mentor shows genuine interest, the mentee's sense of competence and self-worth may blossom.
- **Work on skills the mentee would like to improve.** One student, who had been hired by a fast food restaurant, was uneasy about her ability to count change. The mentor brought paper and coins and practiced with her until she felt capable of managing this aspect of her job. She also helped her mentee study for her driving for her driving permit. Mentors might also show mentees how to balance a checkbook or savings account.
- **Discuss a current event from a newspaper or magazine article with the mentee.** Encourage the student to express his or her own opinion about it.
- **Bring magazines that would appeal to the interests of the mentee.** Sports magazines (such as Sports Illustrated), fashion magazines (like Seventeen), magazines of specific ethnic groups (such as Ebony) are possibilities. Look through them together and talk about some of the articles and photographs.

- **Share cultural traditions.** Differing traditions can be fertile ground for conversation and better understanding of one another. Mentors can explain some of the special aspects of their heritage and encourage mentees to share theirs.
- **Find a creative way to deal with an area of concern in the mentee's life.** A student suffered the loss of a treasured dog during a crisis in his life a number of years previously. He still felt sadness about the loss. His mentor helped him make a simple drawing of his dog and carve it out of wood. He received credit for the completed project in his careers class.
- **Find mutual interests to share.** One mentor discovered her mentee writes poetry, as she does. They share poetry with each other. Adolescent poetry often reveals the internal struggles and concerns of young people and can provide new avenues of conversation.
- **Help the mentee develop decisions making skills.** One mentor had her mentee write in a column all the positives that could result from a particular decision and in another column all the negatives. Putting these on paper helped the mentee clarify the issue, sort out the possible consequences of this decision and evaluate whether it would be a wise decision.
- **Create a pictorial life journey.** Show the mountain tops and the valleys, the special events and the meaningful persons along the way. Use symbols of rain, lightning bolts or sunshine, happy or sad faces, or different colors for different emotions. Then continue the journey into the future. What is on the road ahead? When both the mentor and mentee create and share their journeys, trust and understanding are built. All that is needed is a little creativity.
- **Share the discovery of five new words a week.** The words mentors have to learn might be you jargon or slang that the mentee can define for them.
- **Assist the mentee in organizing school work and developing study schedules.** One mentor showed his mentee how to use a business planner to help organize his time. The student now carries it with him.
- **Attend class with the mentee.** Important insights are gained when a mentor experiences the classroom firsthand. Ask the mentee and teacher permission to attend class with him or her.
- **Do something active with the mentee.** Although gymnasiums are usually in use during the school day, mentors and mentees could walk the track, shoot baskets outside court, throw football or toss a Frisbee.
- **Bring something special to share.** Perhaps something special like a hobby or an interesting object. Bring something that has particular meaning such as a treasured item from a grandparent. Share the story behind it. Ask the mentee to also bring something that is of particular interest or significance to him or her. These make excellent entrances to conversation.
- **Help keep the mentee accountable for attendance and work completed (if this has been a problem).** Ask each week if he or she missed any school or did not complete school work. Explore the reasons for the absence of incomplete

work, help develop goals for the following week and review progress each week. However, be sure this is done in a friendly, helpful way. Mentors are not teachers or parents, but supportive caring friends.

Taken From: <http://community.dadeschools.net/Mentor%20activities.htm>