



Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to a “Big” and am I qualified to volunteer?

Being a Big involves spending time with a young person and fostering a healthy, positive friendship. Through this mentoring program a Big Brother or Big Sister can open a world of possibilities and opportunities for a Little simply by being a genuine friend. We ask that you meet with your Little 2-4 times a month for 2-4 hours each visit.

As a Big, you and your Little will do everyday activities like playing sports, seeing a movie, cooking, going over schoolwork, washing the car, or just hanging out. And, as in any friendship, it is the spontaneous, small moments of shared fun or discovery that you will remember forever. This is the magic a Big brings to the life of a child, and that a Little brings to the life of a Big.

There are no special qualifications needed to be a Big. Being a Big, is something anyone can do. The only requirements are the willingness to be a friend, to have fun, and to see the world (and yourself) through the eyes of a young person. Most Bigs are adults of any age, but we also have programs for High School students.

Are there different mentoring programs I can be a Big in?

We offer many different mentoring programs to fit the needs of the Greater Seacoast youth, as well as the interests of our volunteers. All programs require a one-year commitment. Our programs include:

Community Based: Adult Bigs, age 18 or older, provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention doing activities in their community. Through simple friendship, Bigs experience the joy of helping children discover a world of possibilities and opportunities. Typically, Bigs meet with their Littles two to four times per month for a minimum of one year.

School Based: Adult Bigs provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention in local schools during the child’s school day or after-school program. Activities usually include eating lunch, playing games, or simply talking. For many children school can be a lonely and challenging place. As the friendship between a Big and Little evolves they discover ways to make school and learning fun. School based matches meet one time per week, usually for one hour.

Site Based: Adult and High School Bigs provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention at a specific location within the community. These matches spend time doing activities together or simply talking. Site Based matches typically meet for one hour per week only at the site.

Career Mentoring: Adult Bigs provide their Littles with an introduction to the workforce by spending time with their Littles at their place of employment. The time spent together is geared toward an introduction to the Big’s career field. This supported and nurtured exposure to a job environment helps Littles envision a world outside of their current one. These matches typically meet for two hours every other week.

High School Bigs- High school students, ages 15 and up, provide elementary or middle school Littles with one-on-one time and attention, and/or homework help once a week. These matches meet during school or after school, depending on their school’s program. High School Bigs experience the joy and life-changing power of community service while building college resumes, and possibly earning school credits. Littles have the opportunity to connect with a role model close to their own age and whom they can identify with strongly.

Corporate Bigs- Businesses and corporations partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast to encourage volunteerism and community support among their employees. Typically,

employees are recruited and enrolled as a group and are paired one-on-one with children in a nearby school. Typically, volunteers meet with their Littles once a week during their lunch hour. Corporate volunteers can also choose to meet in the community or at a site-based program.

Couples Mentoring: A Big Couple's match provides a unique opportunity for married couples. It's a community-based match, very similar to that of the one-to-one program, except that the couple is matched together with a Little Brother. They still meet with the child and spend time with him at events or activities in the community, but the program provides some flexibility to the spouses within the match. They can participate with the child together as a couple, or if one spouse is particularly busy one week, the other can participate with the child individually. The child not only benefits from the addition of two caring adults in his life, but he also gets to see first-hand how two adults interact in a healthy, loving relationship. The Big Couple's Program is great for any married couple, but particularly for the younger married couples or the "empty nesters" with grown children.

What kind of child will I be matched with?

Our Littles are youth, ages 6 to 17 years old, who reside in either Rockingham or Strafford County. Our Littles come to BBBS either through a parent/guardian or through a referral from a local school or agency. Littles are from single and two-parent homes and are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The parent/ guardian of our Littles believe that their child could benefit from the presence of an additional caring adult in his/her life. The parent or guardian must give permission for the child to participate.

How do I become a Big?

Becoming a Big is quite simple.

1. Complete an **application** and send to the address below. You can find the application on our website www.nhseacoastbigbrothersbigsisters.org.
2. **Interview-** you will be contacted to set up a time, convenient to you, to meet with a BBBS representative. During this time we will ask you a lot of questions to "get to know you". The questions we ask are to assess your ability to be a safe mentor, as well as, to ensure we have enough information about you to match you with a Little that has similar interests and expectations of the program.
3. **Training-** you are required to attend a training before you are matched which lasts approximately 1 ½ hours and provides a complete overview of the program as well as safety issues, reporting requirements, and frequent issues that Bigs may encounter with their Littles.
4. Once background checks and references are completed, and training has been attended, BBBS will contact you to discuss a potential Little to match you with and to schedule a **Match Meeting**. At the Match Meeting BBBS staff will introduce you to your Little and their family (or school/ site staff, depending on the program) and go over the necessary paperwork to make your match official. After the Match Meeting you will be able to start meeting with your Little, and learn first hand why over 500 local people each year become Bigs.

While enrolled, BBBS will contact you regularly to discuss your match and to offer any support needed. Likewise, you can contact BBBS at any time with any questions, concerns or to share a great experience you have had!

Are there other ways I can contribute to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast?

Yes! Big Brothers Big Sister is a volunteer driven organization and there are numerous opportunities to volunteer and help support our agency's mission. We often need help with fundraising, events, and general office needs. Contact the office to learn about our current needs.

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