

GUIDELINES FOR CHILD SAFETY

Introduction

Thank you for being a part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program and for being a defender of potential. The BBBS program wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our adult volunteers and generous and caring guardians.

We want to take a moment to review important information about child safety. The safety of each child in our program is our top priority. Spending time having fun in your match is the heart of the BBBS program and we want you to be well-informed about our agency's child safety guidelines and feel prepared to handle safety issues that may arise. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will be, and the less likely it is that you will encounter safety situations.

The guidelines and recommendations in this document were developed by our professional staff based on our years of experience supporting thousands of matches along with input from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, child safety experts and best practices from the mentoring field. This document is not exhaustive; however, it does outline specific guidelines for most common issues.

In addition to this guide, remember that Match Support is here to support each match, and our amazing guardians, and we will provide ongoing guidance around ensuring the Little's safety. We always want you to feel supported on your BBBS journey, so please don't hesitate to discuss with a Match Advocate any questions or concerns that may arise about safety issues or our child safety guidelines. That's what we're here for!

Please remember that participants are required to adhere to local, state and federal laws and the guidelines provided in this document at all times; not doing so may result in the termination of a match.

BBBS Match Support: 617-956-0283

Monday-Thursday: 9-7pm, Friday: 9-5pm

Match Safety Guidelines Overview

(Refer to full guidelines for details)

Supervision & Transportation

- Bigs are responsible for Littles at all times during outings, including travel.
- Drop off to other adults or alone is age specific and must be approved by Guardian.
- Littles must not be left in the supervision of other adults during outings.
- Car use must comply with local, state, and federal laws (back/booster seat, seat belts, cell phone use, permitted drivers).

Home Visits & Overnight Activities

- No overnight activities or sleepovers allowed.
- Littles may not visit Big's home during the first 3 months of the match. Check with MSC for guidelines after.

Health & Safety

- Bigs must not administer medication without guardian consent.
- Weapons/firearms are strictly prohibited during outings.
- Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use is forbidden before and during outings.

Boundaries & Conduct

- Physical or emotional harm is strictly prohibited.
- Bigs must not ask Littles to keep secrets or promise confidentiality.
- Any safety concerns must be reported to guardians and Match Support Coordinator (MSC) immediately.

Activities & Sports

- Follow all safety laws and use required gear (waivers, helmets, life jackets).

Online Safety

- No social media connections with Littles under 13.
- Bigs are responsible for online safety; guardians are expected to monitor virtual interactions.

Costs & Gifts

- Outings should be low-cost (\$10–\$40).
- Gifts are allowed when a match or mentee hits a milestone but must not exceed \$25.

Media Use

- All music, movies, and video games must be age appropriate.

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Supervising a Little

Bigs are responsible for the safety and well-being of their Littles when they are spending time together (or traveling by car). It is not appropriate to leave a Little in the care of another adult for any substantial amount of time (even if the Big knows the adult and trusts them). Littles may not be under the supervision of any adult who has not been appropriately screened and approved through our program. Contact Match Support for further discussion and guidance about this.

As the BBBS program is designed to be one to one, in general, we also expect that Bigs will not include others on their outings together (e.g. their friends or significant others; a Little's siblings, cousins or friends). In fact, many Bigs and Littles hardly ever include any other people on their outings.

For the first three months, Bigs and Littles should spend time one-to-one exclusively. However, as the match develops or as a Little gets older, Bigs and Littles may be interested in getting to know each other's friends and families. We also recognize this especially comes up with Littles' sibling(s). Please talk to Match Support for tailored guidance given each Little's unique family dynamics.

Steps to take before including others on any outing:

- Talk to Match Support about plans to include others on a match outing
- Bigs should always check in with both their Littles and their guardians ahead of time to make sure they are both comfortable and interested in the plan to include anyone else on outings (including close friends, significant others and/or relatives of said Little).
- If a Big includes another child along on an outing, said Big is responsible for that child and should make sure to get that child's parent's permission.
- Each match should still plan for one-to-one time together to be at least 2/3 of time together, overall.

Public Places

We hope each Big and their Little will enjoy activities in the community. Bigs are responsible for the safety and well-being of Littles when spending time together (or traveling in their cars). *In case of emergency, reach out to your Little's guardian immediately. If they cannot be reached, please use your electronic match membership card that contains emergency contact information for your Little.*

Stick together:

- When in a crowded place or while using public transportation, Bigs should make sure that their Littles are by their sides at all times so they don't get separated from one another
- In public places, Bigs should accompany their Littles to the bathroom (until a Big knows their Little can handle using the restroom independently). Bigs should ask their Littles' guardians if unsure.

Create a safety plan in case matches are separated:

- Bigs should talk to their Littles' guardians and use a safety plan that their Littles' families may already use. Verify with guardians that the emergency contact information located on your match membership card is up to date and accurate.
- Make sure each Little knows their address and phone number.
- For each outing, make sure each Little knows their Big's name and phone number (has it written down in their pocket or programmed into their cell phone)
- If a guardian is unavailable during an emergency, Bigs should reach out to the emergency contact.
- Whenever matches are out together, pick a spot to meet up in case of separation
- Remind Littles, in case of separation, to stay in one place and not wander around
- Remind Littles to ask a nearby employee or staff member for help.

Car Safety

It is important for Bigs to follow all local, state and federal laws while driving with Littles:

- All passengers must wear seatbelts
- No texting while driving; We also recommend no cell phone use
- **Children 12 and under** should sit in the back seat.
- If a Big's car does not have a back seat, children 12 and under can sit in the front as long as the front passenger airbag is disabled.
- **Children 7 and under** should be in booster seats:
- Massachusetts Child Passenger Safety Law requires children to ride as passengers in a booster seat/safety belt combination that is properly fastened and secured until they are 8 years old OR over 57" tall.
- If a Little's guardian does not have a booster seat for their Big to use, talk to Match Support as we may have some available
- We also recommend Bigs use their cars' child safety locks as an additional safety precaution
- If anything unusual occurs while driving (e.g. being pulled over, any accident, etc.) it's important to let the Little's guardian and Match Support know what happened immediately.
- Volunteers must self-report during the course of their match, if they violate any of the motor vehicle standards listed below. A new driving record check is conducted every three years for an active match and also at the time of re-assessment for a re-match.
 - Volunteers who have had their license revoked or suspended for any reason.
 - Volunteers who have received multiple tickets for speeding or moving violations from the time of application.

Overnights

BBBSEM does not permit overnights.

Matches may not engage in overnight activities in any form, including sleepovers. This includes overnights with Little's family and/or in Little's home. Bigs are expected to always model healthy adult-child relationships and therefore are expected to set appropriate boundaries for Littles. Overnight activities can often result in overstepping these boundaries due to the care a child requires in a 24-hour period including sleeping, dressing, and mealtimes.

******In extraordinary circumstances BBBSEM may issue a waiver to this policy. To apply for consideration, please talk to your Match Support Coordinator and they will complete the appropriate paperwork to submit for leadership approval. This process takes 2 weeks to complete, any overnights scheduled within that time frame will not be considered. Waivers will not be considered within the 1st year of the match.

Spending Time at a Big's Home

Our hope is that Bigs and their Littles will explore all of the fun and exciting activities out and about in the community. At some point, a Big may also be interested in spending time with their Little at their home as there are many potential fun activities to do there.

For the first three months of the match the Big is not allowed to bring their Little to their home. It is important for Bigs, Littles and their guardians to get to know each other and establish trust before doing so because it is such a personal gesture. There may be specific situations where exceptions could be warranted; however, Bigs should always make these special requests ahead of time with Match Support. As a match considers spending time at a Big's home, keep safety issues in mind.

When Bigs would like to spend time at their home, they should:

- Before talking to the Little about the idea, talk to the Little's guardian first to determine their comfort level and to get permission.
- Consider extending an invitation to the Little's guardian to visit the Big's home first. Some guardians find it reassuring to be familiar with a place their child will be spending time away from their home.
- Consider providing basic information to the Little's guardian about any other people living in the home.
- Again, remember that it is not appropriate to leave a Little in the care of another adult.
- Discuss this with Match Support for further guidance and support.

Make sure a Big's home is a child-friendly environment:

- Always supervise the Little while in the Big's home
- Be aware of surroundings and consider potential safety hazards, dangers or breakable items: lighters/candles, doors, windows, kitchen, balconies, pools, etc.
- Keep any adult-only material put away (consider screen savers, posters, pictures, etc.)
- Keep all medications safely stored away
- Firearms and ammunition should be made inaccessible to Littles at all times. (See *Weapons and Firearms* (p. 5) for more information)

Activities:

- Take safety precautions for any activities that may cause harm or injury to Littles.

For example:

- o Building projects using any tools, especially power tools
- o Cooking & kitchen safety (knives, stoves, ovens, open flames)
- o Refer to policy on weapons below
- Internet usage: Surfing the internet can be fun. However, it's important that the activity be safe and age-appropriate for the Little.

Health, Medications & Allergies

Bigs should not give their Littles any medications without permission from their guardians. This includes over the counter medications. Many adult medications are not suitable for children.

Bigs should be proactive and review with their Littles' guardians ahead of time any allergies, including food allergies, medications and health conditions. If Bigs administer any medication while on outings, again, they must have prior permission from the Littles' guardians and must follow all dosage instructions.

If a Little needs any medical attention while on an outing, contact the Little's guardian. In the event of an injury or accident (e.g. scraped knee, etc.) do what can be to provide basic first aid and call the Little's guardian to let them know what happened. If there is a more serious medical emergency, take the Little to the emergency room or call 911.

Weapons & Firearms

If a Big owns or acquires any weapons or firearms, they must disclose this information to BBBS staff at the time of enrollment and throughout the life of their match; BBBS staff will notify the child's guardian. All weapons and ammunition should be made inaccessible at all times while a Little is in a Big's care. Therefore, any gun or weapon related activities, such as hunting or archery, are not permitted.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs

Remember, Bigs are role models at all times. As such, it's important to keep in mind how a Big's behavior will impact a Little's safety and a Little's impression of their Big.

- Illegal drug use is against the law and inappropriate at any time.
- Bigs should not drink alcohol before or during an outing with their Littles
- This includes at any BBBS sponsored events (e.g. Red Sox games)
- If in a situation where others are drinking heavily and/or behaving inappropriately around a Little, it is important to leave.
- There may be specific occasions that exceptions are warranted. All exceptions must be discussed with Match Support and the Little's guardian ahead of time for approval.
- Bigs should not smoke cigarettes, snuff, pipes, or cigars, or chew tobacco during an outing.
- Bigs should not take prescription drugs that may impair judgment or inhibit ability to function normally before or during an outing.

Physical Contact & Boundaries

Children have the right to feel safe at all times. A relationship between a Big and a Little is one that requires particular focus on appropriate physical contact and boundaries because Bigs are role models that are reinforcing a healthy adult-child relationship. It is also important for Littles to develop trust with their Bigs. In thinking about physical contact and boundaries, considerations include the child's development, personal history, family dynamic and culture as well as agency guidelines. Match Support can help Bigs navigate this aspect of friendship as it relates to each Little in particular.

Appropriate and positive interactions between Bigs and Littles are essential in making Littles feel valued. Conversely, inappropriate or harmful interactions that injure a child physically and/or emotionally are strictly prohibited.

- There should be no tickling, wrestling or other physical horseplay, nor sitting in laps*
- Hugs are okay only if initiated by the Little or with the Little's permission
- Bigs and Littles must change in separate areas (i.e. for swimming or boating activities)
- Bigs and Littles should never sleep or nap in the same bed
- Bigs should not physically restrain a child **except** when required in an emergency or to keep them from immediate harm.

*We recognize that Littles may tickle their Bigs, start to wrestle, or jump in their Bigs' laps at some point as these are things some kids do. If this happens, while being considerate of the Little's feelings, gently remind the Little "no tickling" or ask the Little to sit next to their Big instead. While there's no reason to overreact or treat the Little as if they did something wrong, it is important to maintain appropriate boundaries. It can be helpful to offer an alternative: high-fives, thumb wrestling or arm wrestling. If a Big would like more help on how to approach this situation if it arises, please contact Match Support.

There should be no physical contact or interaction of a sexual nature between Bigs & Littles. It is not acceptable for Bigs and Littles to view, use or share pornography or sexually explicit materials.

Secrets & Confidences

As friendships with Littles deepen and grow, Littles will grow to trust their Bigs more and more. Sometimes this leads to Littles sharing personal things about their lives. Keeping things confidential between friends is okay, unless a Big is concerned for their Little's safety or if their Little is engaging in risky behavior. Do not promise to keep secrets before knowing what the secret is. If a Little talks about hurting themselves or someone else, or talks about any risky behavior, it is important for their Big to bring this up with Match Support and the Little's guardian. If a Big is not sure how to talk to the guardian about the information their Little has shared, Match Support will help walk through that process. There may be some cases where Littles safety could be compromised by sharing certain confidential information with others such as if a Little comes out as LGBTQ+. Bigs should talk with Match Support to get support and determine a plan to best support their Little. When in doubt as to whether or not a Big can keep information their Little has shared confidentially, err on the side of caution, assume it can't be kept confidential and talk to Match Support for guidance.

- Keeping things confidential is okay, unless there is a concern or safety issue
- Don't promise to keep a secret before hearing what it is
- Bigs should never ask their Littles to keep a secret from anyone

Why Bigs shouldn't promise to keep secrets:

- Keeping safety-related information a secret could harm a child
- A Little's guardian is in charge of their well-being and needs to know anything related to safety concerns or risky behavior
- If a Big has to break the promise, it could harm the trust between said Big and Little

We don't expect Bigs to know all the answers in the moment:

- Getting caught off guard with a more challenging question is fairly common
- It is okay to be honest with Littles and let them know their Bigs want to think about it
- Bigs can always bring up the topic again (i.e. "remember when you asked me...")

Be honest. Let Littles know about the limitations

- Bigs can say something like "I am your friend; I want to be here for you and listen. But, you need to know if you tell me something that makes me worry for you and your safety, I may need to tell someone to make sure you are okay. I want you to know that up front."
- Bigs can try to talk to their Littles about this proactively, before an issue comes up. However, Bigs should always remind their Littles of this in the moment as these situations arise.

Helpful Tips

- Follow the Little's lead with sharing personal information. It is okay to ask questions and show care, but a Little should never feel pressured to share more than they wants.
- Don't rush into "problem-solving mode." Often Littles just need a friend who will listen to them. Just because a Little shares something challenging doesn't mean they are asking their Big to fix it. It is generally wise to start by listening.
- Help a Little identify other people in their life with whom they can talk about the issue (parent, relative, school counselor, or teacher).
- If appropriate, offer to help a Little talk to their guardian about the issue (practice it out, talk through potential reactions, offer advice).
- If a Little says their guardian knows about the issue, make a plan to ensure they in fact do know about it. Match Support can help Bigs with this.

When to Escalate or Disclose to Match Support

- If a Big witnesses or hears from their Little about any harmful behavior or experiences, they should notify their Match Support Coordinator immediately (e.g. concerns of abuse or neglect, hurting themselves or someone else, bullying, physical altercations, use of medication without supervision, use of illegal substances, hateful or exclusionary language).
- If anything unusual occurs while driving (e.g. being pulled over, any accident, etc.) it's important to let the Little's guardian and Match Support know what happened immediately.
- Volunteers must self-report during the course of their match, if they violate any of the motor vehicle standards listed below. A new driving record check is conducted every three years for an active match and also at the time of re-assessment for a re-match.
 - Volunteers who have had their license revoked or suspended for any reason.
 - Volunteers who have received multiple tickets for speeding or moving violations from the time of application.

Athletic Activities & Extreme Sports

Bigs and Littles may enjoy a lot of athletic and sports related activities. Bigs are responsible for the safety and well-being of their Littles when preparing for and participating in such activities. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, so be sure to consider safety precautions before all activities. Also, Bigs must get their Littles' guardians' permission for all activities.

Biking, Rollerblading, Skateboarding and Ice Skating:

- Assess your Little's ability on a bike, skateboard, etc. and choose the route accordingly (e.g. have them ride on the sidewalk, steer clear of heavily trafficked areas)
- Littles may say "I can do it!" when in actuality, they cannot. Be sure to discuss with the Little's guardian to confirm their skill level for any activity.
- Wear Protective Gear It is MA law that anyone under 17 years old must wear a helmet while on a bike, scooter, skateboard, etc. As Bigs are role models, we also recommend they wear helmets when participating in these activities with their Littles.
 - If a Little doesn't have a helmet, they can't participate.
 - Discuss with the Little's guardian about coming up with a plan to get one.
 - Ask Match Support if help with this is wanted or needed.
- Stick together and remind Littles to be aware of their surroundings at all times.

Boating & Water Activities:

- Assess a Little's swimming ability and decide on where the match will swim accordingly (e.g. if a Little isn't a great swimmer, stick to a shallower pool, make sure there's a lifeguard on duty, etc.)
 - Again, Littles may say "I can do it!" when in actuality, they cannot. Be sure to discuss with the Little's guardian to confirm their skill level for any activity.
- Wear Life Preservers: Massachusetts requires all youth 12 years old and under to wear life preservers while on a boat, canoe, or kayak. As Bigs are role models, we also recommend they wear a life preserver when participating in this activity with their Littles.
- Respect privacy: Make sure that Littles have private places to change into/out of bathing suits. Bigs must change separately from their Littles.

Extreme Sports:

For any and all extreme sports (i.e. paintballing, skiing, boating, motorcycle riding, or rock climbing):

- Discuss with the Little's guardian for permission first
- Be prepared and follow any and all safety precautions and guidelines
- Follow any and all applicable local, state and federal laws

Athletic Injuries & Accidents:

If the Little needs any medical attention while on an outing, contact their guardian. In the event of an injury or accident (e.g. scraped knee, etc.) do what can be to provide basic first aid and call the Little's guardian to let them know what happened. If there is a more serious medical emergency, take the Little to the emergency room or call 911. (See *Health, Medications & Allergies* (p.3) for more information).

Leaving a Little or Young Sibling Home Alone

Introduction:

Bigs and guardians should remain proactive and communicate with each other before outings to create a plan for what to expect during pick-up and drop-off. Generally speaking, an appropriate age to start leaving a child home alone is at 12 years of age, depending on the child's maturity, level of responsibility and preference of their guardian. If under 12 years of age, Little's guardian or another adult identified by their guardian should be present at drop off. Here are a few best practices in creating smooth hand-offs before and after outings:

Be proactive:

- Big should have access to their digital membership card during outings which contains emergency contact information for their Little.
- Big and guardian should discuss alternative options to emergency contacts if needed prior to the outing Ex a nearby friend, family member or neighbor.
- Bigs and guardians should discuss ahead of time when the outing will be finished and the child will be back home, so the guardian can plan accordingly.
- Guardian should share with emergency contacts the Bigs contact information, should Big need to be in touch.

Bigs should take the following steps if no adult is at home during drop-off:

- First call the Little's guardian to find out what is going on and make a plan.
- If unable to get a hold of Little's guardian, leave a voicemail/send a text, then reach out to the emergency contacts listed on your membership card.
- If unsuccessful with reaching emergency contacts listed on your membership card, Bigs should ask their Littles if they know anyone else to call.
- If during business hours, Bigs should call the general Match Support Line at 617-956-0283 (Monday-Thursday 9-7pm; Friday 9-5pm) as we may have alternate contact information.
- If Bigs have prior permission from their Littles' guardians to spend time at the Bigs' homes, Bigs may opt to take their Littles home to wait until guardian/ emergency contact is available to pick up Little. We do not expect this to always happen as Bigs may not be available (e.g. have to go to work or have other plans, etc.)
- If it is after hours, after attempting the general Match Support line, emergency contacts, and all other known phone numbers and waiting *at least* an hour, Bigs should call the police. BBBSEM suggests that the police be contacted as a last resort when emergency contacts are unavailable.

Don't take your Little out if this will leave their younger sibling home alone:

- If a Little is 12 and over, they may be old enough to supervise a younger sibling (depending on the child's maturity and level of responsibility), so in that case, Bigs should tell their Littles the outing will have to be rescheduled for another time.
- Bigs should call the guardians afterward to find out what happened and to work together to coordinate a better plan.
- Call Match Support if help is needed in a situation like this.

Connecting Safely Online

Connecting Virtually Matches are often communicating or meeting virtually (using video platforms such as Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangout/Meet/Duo, Skype, Discord, gaming sites, etc.). Bigs are responsible for ensuring the safety of all online spaces in the same way they are in community spaces, including being aware of privacy settings, being present for the entire time they are in the space, not leaving little in the care/presence of other individuals and following any and all safety guidelines introduced by the platform and/or BBBSEM.

Bigs Should:

- Ensure that the online spaces (including game chats, messaging and texting) are private only for you and little. Bigs should share with guardians as well so that they have access to monitor content as they choose.
- Ensure games are age appropriate, approved by little's guardian and comply with BBBSEM Music, Movies and Video Games guidelines.
- Ask for consent from Little and Guardian before posting any content regarding little or match information. (Be sure to follow the social media guidelines below.)

Prior to each virtual outing or shared game play:

- Guardians should be made aware when Bigs and littles are meeting online and when possible, join briefly at the beginning or end to touch base with Bigs.
- Big should remember that meeting online is an opportunity to role model good digital citizenship and discuss online safety with littles. **Recommended Resources for Online Safety:** [Online Safety Tips for Families](#) (English and Spanish)[NetSmartz Online Safety Resources for Kids](#)[How to use your NetSmartz](#)

Social Media: Bigs must protect the privacy of their Littles at all times. Social media sites, such as but not limited to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X, and Snapchat, do not prevent the public viewing of information and pictures.

Therefore, BBBSEM has established the following guidelines to help Bigs understand their obligations when sharing information online. These policies will continue to evolve and be updated as new technologies and social networking tools become available. It is important to know that these policies complement the agency's child safety guidelines and the terms of service for the social media platforms listed above. **Please note that Bigs and Littles are not to engage on these platforms until the little has transitioned to the teen team.** [Once your match has transitioned to the teen team, you must complete the following steps PRIOR to connecting on social media:](#)

- Talk with your match support coordinator to review the guidelines for connecting on social media
- Guardian approves social media communication and connection on social platforms.
- Little has an account Guardian is aware of and was created with their knowledge.
- Big, Guardian and little have had a conversation about online safety.
- Match Support is aware and can help support online communication and safety.

If a little meets the guidelines and their guardian agrees to connect through social media, BBBSEM volunteers should adhere to the following:

- BBBSEM volunteers are role models at all times. Many social media platforms provide options for customizing privacy settings so Bigs can edit what content their littles can see. Please make the appropriate adjustments to photos, videos, comments, and posts to ensure that all content is appropriate and child friendly. This includes but is not limited to references of alcohol, drugs, sexualized photos or comments.
- BBBSEM volunteers should not post any personal information about their Little, such as their full name, where they live, or descriptions of their personal or family background.
- Talk to little and Little's guardian about what is ok to post before connecting. Always have consent prior to posting about little.
- Honor the confidentiality of Little and their family when posting comments. An appropriate post would be, "Today I'm going to my Little Brother Joey's (First Name only) first Red Sox Game from @Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Massachusetts".
- If you are connecting with your little via social media, you have a responsibility as their big to flag concerning or unsafe behavior either directly to your little's guardian and/or your Match Advocate. See **Secrets and Confidences** section of these guidelines. Failure to adhere to these guidelines could result in the termination of a match. If a big is ever concerned with the information on their little's page, please contact your Match Support Coordinator as soon as possible.

Match Outing Costs & Gift Giving Policy

Match Outing Costs:

Match outings will involve varied costs for activity fees, travel and food. It's important to keep costs at a minimum overall so the focus can be on the friendship and relationship building. Each match will have an individual financial plan to cover outing costs and for each match the arrangement can be slightly different based on everyone's budget, resources and comfort level.

Depending of each match, the total average cost for outings, including activity, travel and food should fall within the range of \$10-40 per outing. A higher average of spending would be considered excessive. We also recognize the importance of including the Little in discussions about managing the match outing budget. This is a key role modeling opportunity and gives the Little tangible practice with setting limits to a budget, learning how to spend wisely and how to be creative, frugal and resourceful.

Money matters can be awkward to discuss. Open and honest communication throughout the match will help. We also understand this is a volunteer program and many Bigs and families do not have lots of extra money to put toward the program—and this is okay. Match Support staff can help brainstorm ways to plan around this and minimize costs. See tips below.

TIPS to keep costs low:

- Use agency partnerships, tickets and events
- Keep an eye on promotions and discounts (Groupon, library passes for museums, etc.)
- Plan ahead and bring snacks and drinks from home to defray food-related costs
- Eat meals separately before outings—going to restaurants can be a special treat
- Research outing ideas in the Little's neighborhood to avoid extra travel costs (community events, parks, libraries, YMCA, local coffee shop to play cards, etc.)

Gift Giving Policy:

- Toys should not be purchased by Bigs during outings, unless a part of an agreed upon plan (buying a frisbee to use for outings, etc.) A Little may spend their own money with prior Guardian permission.
- Littles shouldn't ask Bigs to buy them things, but they probably will. It's important to say "no" to these requests (gift shops, toy stores, convenience stores, etc.)
- Birthdays, holidays and match anniversaries allow for thoughtful gift giving opportunities (small gifts in the realm of a printed photo-frame, mementos from an outing, a handmade item or heartfelt card). A small gift (less than \$25) is reasonable but should always be reviewed with Guardian first.

Music, Movies, & Video Games

It's important for Bigs to ensure that they're only exposing their Littles to age appropriate music, movies, or video games during outings since they are a mentor and role model. It is the Big's responsibility to review the content of various media to determine if it should be included in an activity.

Discuss this with the Little's guardian:

- Get clarification around the following topics in music, movies, and video games:
 - Swearing, sexual content, violent content, scary/suspenseful content
- Respect the Little's guardian's guidelines, even if they seem strict

If necessary, create your own, additional guidelines as a Big:

- If the guardian provides minimal or no guidelines for music, movies, and video games, Bigs should construct their own guidelines
- It is okay to say something like "I understand you are okay with PG 13 movies. But when I pick movies for us, I'm more comfortable if we stick with PG."
- Follow the official content ratings of the media based on a Little's age (see appendix)
- Be sure to let both the Little and the Little's guardian know of the guidelines the Bis is using.
- Talk to Match Support for tailored guidance on how to set up your own guidelines as a Bigs.

APPENDIX: RATINGS FOR MUSIC, MOVIES & VIDEO GAMES

MUSIC: Parental Advisory Explicit Content

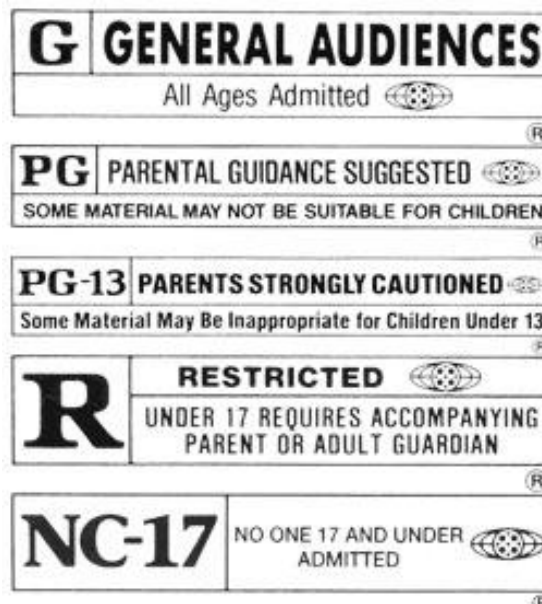
Parental Advisory Explicit Content labels on CD's are warnings that the material may not be suitable for children. More information about the warning label can be found here,

<http://www.riaa.com/parentaladvisory.php>



MOVIES: Film ratings from the Motion Picture Association of America

Further guidelines can be found at <http://www.mpaa.org/ratings/what-each-rating-means> **Error!**
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VIDEO GAMES: ESRB Rating Symbols for Video Games

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.

EVERYONE

Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild

EVERYONE 10+

Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.

TEEN

Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

MATURE

Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.

ADULTS ONLY

Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.

RATING PENDING

Titles listed as **RP (Rating Pending)** have been submitted to the ESRB and are awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)