Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

CONNECTION

Composed of **respect and trust** – the genuine willingness to listen and attempt to understand; **Good Communication** –self-assured sharing and listening without threat or ultimatum; **Negotiation and Compromise** – engaging in dialog until there is consensus brought about with compromise (each person giving up a bit until both can agree).

Role-Model

- Model self-assured communication by being willing to talk openly about positives and negatives from your life.
- Build trust through your commitment to the match guidelines -- especially keeping a healthy communication pattern and outing schedule.
- Seek moments to learn about the background and unique characteristics of your Little's family. Honor the traditions and cultural norms you learn about.
- Talk through outing ideas until you find common ground.

Respond

- Create a culture of "safe sharing." Give permission to a Little to openly talk about positives and negatives from their life. Be clear that sharing will not be judged.
- Validate the ideas your Little chooses to share. Compliment mature and honest forms of expression regardless of whether you agree with the sentiment.
- Explore observed or broached relationships as a way to help a Little learn about their (un)healthy connections. Facilitate reflection on the benefit of these connections.

Provide Opportunities

- Try activities that require awareness of safety best practices like rock climbing and sailing. Trust and effective communication are fostered through these activities
- Try collaborative activities, like building a model, working on a puzzle, cooking, or filming and editing a short video. Again, self- expression is bound to happen.
- Capture the growing trust and respect that you have together. Start a scrap book (or fill a shoe box) with artifacts of the activities you do together.