



### **Welcome!**

- *By joining the Big Brothers Big Sisters community, you believe in the power of mentoring and you are making a difference.*
- *Bigs have the powerful opportunity to influence youth outcomes by supporting and promoting healthy habits and skills. The 6Cs represent the core skills that lead to a healthy and productive adolescence and adulthood and through research and firsthand experience we know that with intentional effort, a Big can help a Little develop and maintain these life-changing habits. These habits are the 6Cs.*

### **Mentors can do this!**

- *So why are mentors in this influential position?*
- *Because only a trusted friend can talk to a Little about who they are and who they want to be. A meaningful relationship is the basis for this trust and this trust creates the opportunity to set goals around positive youth development*
- *Mentors have the opportunity to play an important role in a child's life because they can talk about habits without judgment and it is this unconditional stance that creates the trust needed to inform habits.*
- *Studies show that trusted mentors can impact the social and emotional well-being of a child.*

### **Socio-Emotional Learning Study**

- *An influential study conducted in 2006 by BBBS of Canada followed 1,000 Bigs and Littles for 30 months, evaluating the socio-emotional well-being of the child every 6 months.*
- *In the conclusion of the study, Littles with consistent (1-2 times per month) and positive mentors in their lives were more likely than never mentored youth to exhibit a wide range of positive behaviors **INCLUDING** higher levels of self-esteem, stronger social and emotional coping skills and prosocial behavior, the outcomes also highlighted that these mentored youth had increased support from peers and teachers, more positive school adjustment, and higher quality relationships with parents.*

### **Every Child has Potential**

- *Every child in the BBBS program is filled with potential. Unfortunately, there are fewer opportunities for children living in under resourced circumstances to reach their fullest potential. A Big can provide learning opportunities for children and opportunities to practice and build the 6Cs. More importantly though, is that a Big has the capacity and influence to raise a child's drive and awareness so that they pursue their own path towards a fulfilling life -- and with consistent mentoring early on, this influence continues even after your role as a mentor comes to an end.*

- *Bigs are not alone in this effort.*
- *BBBS of America brand states that **"TOGETHER**, we are defenders of potential" When Bigs, guardians and BBBS staff partner together, we are a stronger force in defending the youth potential and providing opportunity to build the core 6Cs skills to help youth thrive now and later in life.*

### **Pygmalion Effect or Labeling Theory**

- *A theory connected to this idea that others can influence one's self perception is called The Pygmalion effect. The idea focuses on how **self-identity** of individuals may be influenced by the terms used to describe them, also known as the self-fulfilling prophecy. The research around this happened in a 5th grade classroom. Teachers held and voiced high expectations for some students and lower expectations for others, despite what their actual ability was. Kids experiencing the high expectations from the teacher, along with positive reinforcement excelled more and their IQs actually increased. This study shows the power of self-perception and why it is so important in a mentoring relationship. !*
- *If we apply this to mentoring- Mentors are in a position to be a **strength-based**, positive support in a child's life to reinforce a Little's **self-perception** that they can achieve their goals. Mentors who help Littles recognize their potential and encourage effort, especially in times of disappointment or failure, supports that child's belief that they can determine their future and have the capacity to accomplish their goals. For example, when Bigs challenge their Littles to try new or hard things, along with encouragement on their efforts and reinforcing the idea that they can succeed, it supports the Little believing in themselves to achieve the task at hand. And In contrast - Mentors who focus on negative behaviors or identify a lack of skill only reinforces the negative image the child has on themselves and decreases their determination and motivation to work hard to achieve their potential. BBBSMB is a strength based mentoring organization for this reason!*

### **Give genuine praise and Celebrate with your Little**

- *Mentors can support their Little's self-perception and growth mindset in forming the 6Cs by finding ways to **genuinely praise effort**. Kids need to know they have the potential to succeed even if they are not achieving the immediate goal or task at hand.*
- *It can be tough, especially as an adult mentoring a child, to not immediately jump to correcting a behavior or habit that is not getting desired results, we call this the righting-reflex. This approach only supports short-termed results and it not a strength-based approach to helping a child learn and grow.*
- *Mentors should focus on effort vs ability, talent or outcomes. Effort is within a child's control while desired outcomes may not be. Praising effort will motivate a child to continue working hard even in times of failure rather than giving up.*

### **6C's = Good habits | Good habits = thriving kids**

- *The common goal Bigs, Guardians and BBBSMB staff share is focusing on helping children develop good habits.*
- *A child's habits influence their every day (like self-regulating around video games or sharing empathy with a friend having a bad day) and ultimately influence the opportunities they will have to thrive in life*
- *What's the Bad news? Habits are very sticky. It's hard to end bad habits, because they have probably gotten a Little something they want in the past so they can be harder to adapt.*
- *But the good new? Habits are sticky! Once you have the right set of habits, along with opportunities to continuously strengthen these habits, they can stay with you for a lifetime and help you thrive.*
- *Strengthening the 6Cs helps kids focus on building and maintaining these good habits.*

### **Growth takes time- patience is key!**

- *So what are the key takeaways here for how can mentors make the biggest impact?*
  - *Be consistent- Trust is the foundation for a mentoring relationship*
  - *Be patient, remember that all growth takes time*
  - *Be strength-based and help a Little recognize their potential*
  - *Utilize supports - Link the Littles guardian and match support*
  - *Remember, just by joining BBBSMB and committing to a child in our program, you are making a huge difference*