

**BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS
OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**



**BIG TRAINING
MANUAL**

**COMMUNITY BASED
MENTORING PROGRAM**

www.slobigs.org



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About BBBS and SLO Bigs

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has been changing children's lives for the better by matching them with adult volunteers in fun and rewarding relationships since 1904. Locally, Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Luis Obispo County (SLO Bigs) began making matches in 1995. Our local agency has received numerous awards; including "Big of the Year" and "Gold Standard" award from the State of California and BBBS of America. We are very excited that you are considering joining our agency as a volunteer mentor.

A list of steps regarding the enrollment process for Bigs and Littles can be found in [Appendix A: Enrollment Process](#).

Currently, we have two core programs:

1. In our **Community Based Program**, each adult mentor meets with a Little in the community at a time convenient for both. This one-to-one mentoring program requires a minimum of 6 to 8 hours a month for at least a year, with phone, postal or electronic contact in-between visits. Many matches meet more often. This booklet is designed for new volunteers who are considering a match in the Community Based Program.

Within this program we have several models:

- a. 25 Year Promise – Serving children ages 5-25
 - b. Bigs in Blue- Building bridges between Peace officers & vulnerable communities
 - c. Generation to Generation (Boomer Bigs)- Providing senior citizens with meaningful volunteer opportunities focused on youth development
2. Our **School Based Programs** allow teen and young adult mentors to guide elementary students one day a week after school. Volunteers are 14 to 24 years old. If you are unavailable during the summer months, volunteering in our School Based Program may be a better fit. Our School Based Programs meet at:
 - a. Pacheco Elementary (SLO)
 - b. Morro Bay Elementary (Del Mar)
 - c. Nipomo Elementary (Nipomo)

We serve all of SLO County from our office at:

142 Cross Street, Suite 140, SLO (805) 781-3226



Who are our Littles?

- Children from your community who could benefit from having a positive adult role model.
- Children who have asked to be matched with a mentor.
- Children ages 6 to 18.

How do Children come into the program?

Most children in our Community-Based programs come to us through their parent or care-giver. Most children in our School-Based programs come to us through a teacher or counselor. We also reach out to involve children through youth service agencies, and other referrals. All children and their parents are excited to be in our program.

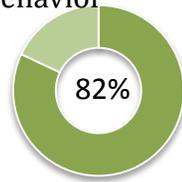
We partner with parents/guardians, volunteers and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each child in our program improving in the following major categories:

- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success

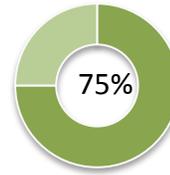
**In 2018 Littles in San Luis Obispo County showed the following
"positive outcomes"**



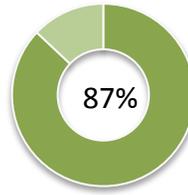
Attitude Toward Risky Behavior



Parental Trust



Academic Expectations



Your Role as a Volunteer Mentor

The success of each match friendship depends greatly on the efforts of the Big, the Little, and the Parent. Each one plays an important role in helping build a meaningful friendship.

What is a "Big"?

A Big provides children facing adversity with a strong and enduring, professionally supported

1-to-1 relationship that changes their life for the better, forever.

What makes a successful "Big"?

Successful Bigs...

- Emphasize friendship over changing the behavior.

- Are not authoritarian.

- Decide activities together with Littles.

- Acknowledge that positive impact on the child comes after the relationship is built.

- Have realistic expectations about the Little.

- Are patient.

- Are consistent & dependable.

- Focus on having fun.

- Set boundaries and limits.



Put child safety and well-being first.

Successful Bigs are not...

Financial support.

Childcare providers.

A social worker or doctor.

If your "Little" tells you about experiences or health conditions that concern you, always turn to staff for help.

A therapist

A savior.

You should not see your role in this relationship as coming in to make a young person's life better or to fix their problems. Don't forget that every young person—regardless of circumstances—has gifts and talents that make him/her more than a "recipient" of your support. Your Little should be treated as having much to offer to the world, because he/she does.

What Will You Do?

You likely had someone, other than a parent- such as a coach, grandparent or neighbor- who made a difference in our life. This is what you can do for a child in our program. It's really pretty simple; it's a matter of making yourself available on a consistent basis. It's showing you care. It's having fun with a child. It's listening to him/her talk about whatever is going on in his/her life. It's a series of small, teachable moments that, in the end, make a BIG difference.



Bigs must make themselves available to a Little for at least 6-8 hours each month, for a minimum of one year. Volunteer Bigs should reside in the same county as the Little for at least a year and should offer consistent activities with the Little. Stability is vital for our Littles. We must emphasize the importance of communicating with our agency about any life changes you anticipate during the next 12 months

Looking for ways to further understand how you can make a difference in the life of a child? (Refer to



Appendix B: Building Resilience for more information)

The Matching Process

Step 1. Contact our local Big Brothers Big Sisters agency to learn more about the Community Based program. VISIT www.slobigs.org

Step 2. Complete the stream-lined application process with the help of friendly, supportive staff. This includes an application form and questionnaire, in-person interview, Livescan, and training session. Agency staff may contact your references and complete a background check.

Step 3. Meet the Little you have been matched with based on careful consideration.

Step 4. Invite your "Little" to join you for 6-8 hours each month to share hobbies, sports, interests and activities you already enjoy.

The Match Relationship

CONSISTENT CONNECTION WITH THE LITTLE: Bigs and Littles spend a minimum of 6 hours a month with each other for at least 12 consecutive months. They share in-person outings no fewer than twice per month and communicate by phone, text, email, U.S. Post or social media during the weeks they don't see each other.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARENT: Open and on-going communication between the parent and the Big is necessary for the development and maintenance of a healthy, happy mentoring relationship for the child. Bigs must secure permission and approval for all outings and activities from the parent.

CHECKING IN WITH THE AGENCY: Bigs, Littles and parents all communicate with the Match Support Specialist two weeks after the match is made, and then once a month for the first year of the match. After the first year, check-ins with the Match Support Specialist are required quarterly.



Free and Low Cost Activity Ideas

Why "Free and Low Cost?"

While expensive outings are sometimes allowed after permission and approval from both the parent and the SLO Bigs Staff, pricey activities are discouraged.

- We want to teach children it doesn't cost money to have a friend or to have fun.
- We want to prevent resentment or envy among other family members.
- We want to avoid confusion about the Big's role in the family and in the child's life.
- We want to set realistic expectations for the child.
- We want to empower youth by teaching them how to set goals, work toward achievements and earn success.

What if we run out of ideas for Free and Low Cost stuff to do?

- ❖ Contact your Match Support Specialist!
- ❖ Ask the parent for suggestions.
- ❖ Check out the current SLO Bigs newsletter in your email inbox.
- ❖ Google search with your Littles age and interests in mind.
- ❖ Read a local newspaper.
- ❖ Ask a librarian.
- ❖ A list of free or low cost activities is printed here: [Appendix G: 150+ Free & Low Cost Activities](#) which can also be found at www.slobigs.org.

Reviewing the choices together and making plans to try the things that interest you both can be a fun activity in itself. Discussing opportunities and creating a "wish list" or plan is also a great way to start a conversation that helps you get to know your Little better.



Guidelines and Ground Rules for ALL Program Participants

These rules are based on in-depth studies of mentoring successes and challenges during the last 100+ years since Big Brothers Big Sisters of America began. They are IMPORTANT for ensuring youth safety, adult liability protection, and healthy happy outcomes for all parties. I understand and agree to abide by the guidelines and ground rules listed above. I will communicate directly with SLO Bigs staff if I am unable to consistently comply for any reason.

- Starting today, for at least one year, I will meet with my Little for a MINIMUM of 6 hours each month, divided into at least 2 meetings, and stay in touch during weeks without in-person visits. Acceptable methods include: phone, voicemail, skype, Facebook, text, postcards, letters, etc.
- Monthly contact between SLO Bigs Staff and me will be conducted via phone, email, text or social media. I will reply to ALL Agency contact attempts within 2 business days.
- SLO Bigs Staff will be notified immediately if my contact information changes.
- My Little and I will limit involvement of others during their shared outings, to promote the development of a one-to-one mentoring relationship. I will personally supervise my Little at all times during outings and never leave him/her to be supervised by another adult who has not been thoroughly screened by the SLO Bigs Staff and approved by the parent.
- All sensitive or personal information I learn about other program participants can be discussed openly with SLO Bigs Staff, but will otherwise be kept confidential.
- I will report all child safety concerns, including SUSPECTED abuse or neglect, immediately to SLO Bigs Staff, who will contact Child Welfare Services when appropriate.
- I understand that permission from the parent/guardian is required BEFORE all match activities.



- I understand that permission from SLO Bigs Staff is required before overnight activities, expensive outings or gifts.
- I understand that my Little and I may ONLY participate in over-night activities AFTER 6 months of being matched. Permission from the parent and Agency Staff is required.
- NO SECRETS are allowed between me and my Little . All social media and electronic communication between my Little and me will be accessible and/or monitored by the parent. All activities shared between my Little and me will be reported to parent/guardians and to SLO Bigs Staff.
- During match activities, reasonable safety precautions will always be taken to avoid risk or injury to the child. The parent and SLO Bigs staff will be notified if an injury occurs during an outing. If necessary, I will seek emergency medical treatment for my Little. I shall only administer medicine to my Little if his/her parents have previously given clear permission and instructions for doing so.
- I will strive to communicate openly, respectfully and directly with the other parties of the match, be on-time and give advance notice when changing plans.
- I shall not make monetary donations to the family. Donations of services shall be discussed and arranged with SLO Bigs Staff in advance.
- I will contact SLO Bigs right away if I feel unhappy, uncomfortable, confused, frustrated, disappointed, unsure or concerned about the relationship or the program.
- When it is time to end the match relationship, I will consider the needs of the other parties and actively participate in the closure procedure, guided by SLO Bigs Staff.



Guidelines and Ground Rules for Bigs Only

- I will maintain automobile liability insurance on any vehicle owned by me which will be used to transport my Little, and I will transport him/her only in vehicles which are covered by an auto liability insurance policy..
- I will be aware of and agree to follow all safety laws including but not limited to relevant state laws regarding seat belts and car-seats.
- I accept complete responsibility for my actions as a volunteer in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Luis Obispo County Community Based program; and, I agree to hold Big Brothers Big Sisters and all members, agents, representatives, and employees of that organization out of harm and free from liability for my actions as a volunteer in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.
- I agree to refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol, or using any mood altering substances or having related paraphernalia loose in my car or in my home when I am with my Little. I understand all medications are to be locked up, or safely put up, when a Little is visiting my home or when medications are in my car and I am transporting my Little.
- I acknowledge that Big Brothers Big Sister of San Luis Obispo County will not be held liable for any damages, risk or harm to the Little Brother/Little Sister in regard to guns in the household. I agree to place all guns in a locked and safe compartment and to keep all ammunition in a separate, locked compartment.

Guidelines and Ground Rules for Parents Only

- I will not take away outings with the Big as a means of discipline for my child.
- I will help my child promptly return all contact attempts by the Big and SLO Bigs Staff. If I need help communicating directly with my child's Big, obtaining resources for my family or supporting my child academically, I will remember that SLO Bigs Staff is available to assist me.



"Match Support"

Big Brothers Big Sisters works hard to support the relationship you have with your Little. Our goal is for the relationship to be as successful as possible for everyone. Bigs and Littles work with their Match Support Specialist from their agency. This specialist also works with the Little's parent / guardian. Along the way to forming a safe and lasting friendship, your Match Support Team will be in touch with all of you to help you and your Little. Sometimes they will call, meet you in person, Facebook or email you to make contact.

~Monthly communication with the SLO Bigs office is required for the first year of the match and quarterly thereafter.~



You can think of your Match Support specialist as the main link between you, your Little, your Little's parent and the agency.

Your Match Support Specialist will

- ~ Give you ideas about low cost, fun and educational activities you can do with your Little.
- ~ Provide coaching on specific topics when questions arise.
- ~ If necessary, help you work through any problems you might encounter with your Little and/or his/her parents.



Regular "check ins" with SLO Bigs staff are MANDATORY.

Please refer to [Appendix C: Match Support](#) for more details about Match Support Services.

Safety - A Top Priority

Safety is our #1 priority. With your help, we focus on the child's safety and well-being throughout the match.

We do this by providing:

- Thorough professional screening.
- Child Safety and child abuse prevention education programs for volunteers, parents and children.
- Guidelines that establish appropriate boundaries and respect a child's right to feel safe.
- Ongoing Match Support contact with each party in the match. This helps provide up-to-date information about safety issues and early warnings of potential problems throughout the match relationship.
- The Match Support Specialist maintains required, consistent, scheduled contacts with each member of the match party.
- Required surveys



As a Big, you play a role in supporting the parent's primary role of keeping their child safe. Bigs need to model appropriate behavior as well as assume responsibility for their Little's safety during outings. Some safety issues include:

- Internet safety
- Bullying and violence prevention
- Little's medical condition
- Child abuse prevention.

Our agency has expectations and guidelines relating to Child Safety. We expect you to know and follow these guidelines.

1. Support the Child's Sense of Physical and Emotional Safety
2. Children have the right to feel safe at all times. Appropriate and positive interactions between Bigs and Littles are essential in supporting positive youth development and making youth feel valued. Conversely, inappropriate or harmful interactions can potentially injure a child physically and/or emotionally. Agency



ground rules and guidelines surrounding volunteer and child interactions are designed to support children in establishing a clear set of personal safety boundaries. This promotes skill-building that may prevent the child from becoming the victim of violence and/or exploitation (such as bullying, child sexual abuse, internet exploitation, dating violence, etc.) and/or encourage a child to disclose abuse or victimization.

3. Be mindful of whether a hug or other form of physical touch would be comfortable to a child or not. For example, especially at the early stages of a match, a child can be asked if it's okay to give him/her a hug. Certain types of physical contact, such as tickling, wrestling, pinching, backrubs or asking a child to sit on an adult's lap are more likely to violate a child's personal boundaries and are discouraged in the Big/Little match relationship.
4. Display or discussion of any material of a sexual nature are prohibited, including but not limited to viewing pornography or sexually explicit or suggestive materials.
5. Avoid discussion of sensitive topics such as: sex, religion or politics.
6. Never keep secrets, or ask children to keep secrets.
7. Bigs will always provide separate, private areas for a child to change clothes, bathe, shower and/or sleep, when applicable.
8. Corporal punishment, and verbal and/or emotional abuse by Bigs, is strictly prohibited with enforcement measures clearly outlined in child abuse reporting and responses section.

How to Respond to Child Safety Concerns

If a child discloses abuse, a volunteer's immediate response may play a role in determining how well a child heals from the associated trauma. Additionally, our response can impact law enforcement's ability to conduct a thorough investigation.



If you ever have a situation where your Little talks to you about any abuse, neglect or violence s/he is subject to, contact your Match Support Specialist immediately. Our response to the disclosure by a child can prevent negative outcomes for the child and their family. For that reason, it's critical that volunteers follow our agency protocols on reporting abuse.

THERE ARE **NO SECRETS** WITH BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS.

Our program puts safety first. Any concerning information a Little discloses must be shared with the necessary parties (match support specialist, parents and so forth).

Help teach and empower children

SLO Bigs Protocols on Reporting Abuse

1. Listen to the child calmly. Be open and understanding. If you react strongly, the child may stop talking because you're noticeably upset and they may feel worse because they've upset you.

2. Reassure the child that you are glad they told you what happened, and that it was not their fault.

3. Let the child know that you are going to help them, and that you'll need to share what they told you with a Big Brothers Big Sisters staff person (and/or parent/law enforcement, if appropriate) so that further abuse can be prevented and they can receive the help they need.

4. Do not attempt to question the child further or you may interfere with the formal investigation process. Get in touch with agency staff immediately to allow a trained professional to conduct an interview with the child (generally a child protective services social worker, law enforcement officer, or Child Advocacy Center professional).

5. If you ever feel that a child is in imminent danger, don't hesitate to call 911 or local law enforcement.



Any suspicion of child abuse or neglect must be reported to Child Welfare Services with the help of your Match Support Specialist within 24 hours. Therefore, if you are concerned about something that might be abuse or neglect contact BBBS immediately so that we have plenty of time to talk about the situation before we make that call with you. (805) 781-KIDS



~Follow your gut, when in doubt call your Match Support Specialist.~

For other safety concerns regarding **bullying** please refer to **Appendix H: Bullying**.

Additional resources for supporting **a child who identifies as LGBTQ+** can be found in **Appendix I: Supporting a Child who identifies as LGBTQ+**.

Creating a Partnership with Your Little's Parent/Guardian

Parents have entrusted their child to you. They remain the leaders in their family and our role is to support them whenever we can, when appropriate. It's important that we respect and honor their family role. The parent's support is critical to the success of the match. It may take a while to establish your role with the parent. Listed below are some ways you can work with the Parent/Guardian.

- Communicate with them before and after an activity. Describe what you plan to do and what you've done together.
- Make sure they are aware of activity plans, and ask if the activity is ok (do not rely on the Little to tell the Parent/Guardian about plans).
- Let them know about any changes in plans. If, for some reason, your plans need to change mid-outing, contact the parent immediately to discuss the change with the parent.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of your Little's family.
- Maintain a primary relationship with your Little and do not become overly involved with the rest of his/her family.
- Talk to your Match Support Specialist about any concerns you have regarding your Little/Little's family or your Little's well-being
- Work with the parent as a team to support the Little.



- Refer to [Appendix D: Mentoring Children with Special Needs](#) to learn more about how to best support a Little with special needs and his/her family.

Volunteer mentors need to respect a parent's role and authority. They should strive to support the existing family relationships. They should never come between a parent and a child, as doing so can do more harm than good for the child as well as damage the mentoring relationship. If the child says something negative about the parent, it may be appropriate to contradict him/her. It may also be appropriate to let the child express his/her emotions without contradictions. It is never appropriate to agree with a child who is criticizing or complaining about his/her parent.



When returning the child to the home after an outing, always walk the child to the door and take a moment to check in with the parent.



Do not communicate with the parent through the child. Build trust and confidence with advance scheduling. Permission and approval for outings and activities should be obtained directly, not second-hand. If a language barrier exists, it is ok to accept translation assistance from the child but the conversation should still be happening directly between the parent and Big, with all parties present. Remember that SLO Bigs Staff members are also available to provide translation services. Contact the office for more information.

The best time to schedule the next outing is before the current outing ends. During your time together, discuss with the Little what activity you will do next time. The best method is to offer the Little 2-5 choices and let him/her choose. Get permission and approval from the parent when you return the child to his/her home.

Healthy Communication

-Basic Rules-

Make your communication positive



Be clear and specific

Recognize that individuals see things from different points of view

Be open and honest about your feelings

Accept your Little's feelings and try to understand them

Be supportive and accepting

Do not preach or lecture

Learn to listen

Maintain eye contact

Allow time for your Little to talk without interruption; show you are interested in what he/she has to say

Get feedback to be sure you are understood

Listen for feeling tones as well as for words

Ask questions when you do not understand

Set examples rather than give advice

For Conflict resolution strategies please see [Appendix E: Conflict Resolution Strategies](#).



"I" Statements

One way to think about the difference between effective and ineffective communication is to think of sending "I" or "you" messages. "You" messages are belittling, blaming, and put



the responsibility of your feelings on your Little. Consequently, "I" statements are more effective by allowing you to express your feelings and thoughts directly, honestly, and clearly without blaming, accusing, or labeling. They state how you feel about a specific behavior and the effect that behavior has on you.

"You" Statements

"You disappoint me!"

"Why do you always do that to me?"

"You really know how to frustrate me!"

...ou say? It is important to remember that children do not have the same communication patterns as adults. A sigh of relief, a complete change of subject, the beginnings of a smile, or an interest in an object nearby may be the only response. If your Little does respond to you, you then have the opportunity to encourage him/her to share. But an "I" statement from you, without a direct response from your Little, may have been enough. Trust that your Little is listening. Remember to watch their body language. Whether or not there is immediate discussion, you'll know that you didn't put your Little in a position of blame.

How to structure an "I" statement:

1. **I Feel...** (name feeling)
2. **When...**(name behavior)
3. **Because...**(explain why)
4. **What I need is...**



Cultural Awareness



Cultural Awareness lays in the foundation of how we engage with others. Our ability to stand back from our own point of view and be understanding is an important component of communication. Learning how to set aside our own biases that may be projected onto others can be a difficult task. However, in order to create a more welcoming environment it is important to dive into learning more about ourselves and others.

Here at BBBS San Luis Obispo County, cultural competency is heavily valued. There are certain attitudes that help with cultural awareness:

- Admit that you don't know
- Suspend judgements
- Empathy
- Systematically check your assumptions

For more information regarding Cultural Awareness please refer [Appendix K: Building Cultural Awareness](#)

3 Specific Strategies for Bigs and Parents who do not speak the Same Language.

1. Using a translator in the home.

Often, another family member in the home is bilingual. Sometimes it is a child...maybe your own Little. Remember to speak and listen directly to the parent, and then ask the translator to explain. It's fine to discuss activities and plans with the Little present, but if more detailed discussions are needed, use an adult translator, preferably your Match Support Specialist.

2. Using SLO Bigs staff for translation.

Our agency can usually provide Spanish/English translation by phone anytime during our office hours. If in-person translation is needed, or if another language is required, call to schedule help a few days ahead of any expected conversation.

3. Learn simple words and phrases that will be used frequently.

Times of day, names of the month, days of the week, local places and activity descriptions are the most common topics of conversation between parents and Bigs.

More strategies for overcoming language barriers can be found in:

[Appendix J: 8 General Strategies for Overcoming Language Barriers.](#)



Relationship Stages

Common stages that most match friendships will go through at different times, usually depending on the level of trust that has been established.

Honeymoon Stage

(0-4 months)

- You both are trying to figure one another out.
- Littles may try to get their Bigs' approval or impress them.

What can you do to build a connection?

- Pay attention to facts about your Little and reference them in your conversations: e.g. favorite things, best friend, where they've traveled.
- Be consistent and flexible, do what you said you were going to do, but be understanding if the family's plans change.
- Be patient and remember that relationships have ups and downs, and don't "happen" by themselves.

Growth Stage

(4-12 months)

- This is the most crucial time regarding the development of the Big/Little relationship.
- This is the time that may be a turning point in the relationship.
- It is common, around the four-month date, that your Little will begin testing you to see what you are really about and how much they can get away with.
- Your Little may be observing you to find a reason not to trust you.

What can you do to maintain the connection?

- Show your Little that they can trust you, through your reliability, consistency, and time together. As trust develops, your Little will likely begin feeling closer.
- Keep in contact with your Support Specialist for ideas.
- Recognize and praise accomplishments.
- If you need to give advice or address behavioral problems, give reasons why certain choices might work better for the Little and/or for you. Avoid saying you "should."



Maturity Stage

(Beginning at 12 months)

- You will notice your relationship with your Little has become more positive and realistic and match activities may be less structured.
- Most Bigs have shed their preconceived notions regarding the match and their Little.
- As the friendship matures, you will see the maturity of your Little grow and develop.

What can you do to deepen the connection?

- Develop long term shared interests and activities that you will do frequently together and that you both enjoy.
- Identify past shared experiences and enjoy shared "jokes."
- Learn something new to both of you, together.

What if it's time to close the match?

- The original commitment was just for 12 months. For some Bigs and Littles, that's as long as the relationship lasts.

*If you are interested in finding out more about the age group your Little falls under refer to [Appendix F: General Characteristics of Children in Different Age Categories](#).



Transition and “Match Closure”

Things to Consider When Closing a Match:

- Recognize that you have made an impact at some level on your Little.
- The Little you now know is probably not the same Little with whom you were initially matched. Celebrate the experience as much as you can together - highlights and hurdles.
- There are not just two people involved; there are parents, siblings, school teachers, social workers, and staff involved in the lives of almost every Little. It is important that you do not attempt to terminate the relationship on your own.
- The transition of closing the match can be a very positive experience that helps prepare the Little for future relationship transitions. But, if the closure is not approached carefully, a child can be hurt by the experience. Our staff will work with you, the child and his/her parent to help you with this transition.



- It is important to let your Little know it is not their fault the relationship is ending. Common emotions for Littles that accompany a match closure include denial, depression, anger, hurt, frustration, and/or rejection.

How Will You Know When It's Time to End the Match?

Termination is not something unique to a Big/Little relationship. Many examples from life show a call for change such as: changing jobs, leaving school, moving, and losing a loved one.

It is important to remember that your relationship with your Little, due to his/her age and level of vulnerability, can be somewhat complicated and requires more than a "fade out."

Never-ending Friendships

Some Big/Little pairs will maintain close relationships for decades or even a life-time! These matches will be officially "closed" in the SLO Bigs records when the child reaches the age of 25 AND/OR earns a living wage. At that point, the Big and Little can decide on their own terms for the relationship, hopefully with continued communication and support from the parent/guardian. It is important to remember that SLO Bigs Support staff are only just a phone call or email away. We LOVE hearing from alumni Bigs and Littles any time for any reason!

One Year Commitments

Occasionally Bigs, Littles or parents enroll in the program knowing ahead of time that they will not be able to continue much beyond the one-year anniversary of the match. This can be due to planned life changes, such as starting one's own family, re-locating, new work schedule, parental custody agreements or graduation from school. When this is the case, Bigs and Littles should begin discussing the plans for ending the match with each other AND the Match Support Specialist while there is still plenty of time to work through the feelings and logistics of changing or ending the relationship. 8-12 weeks is ideal.

Natural Transitions

Your relationship with your Little may transition to less regular contact. This could be due to a change in where you or your Little lives, a change in life circumstances, a feeling that



you have successfully taken your Little through a critical stage, a change in the school your Little is attending, declining interest as the Little grows older and becomes more peer-focused, decreasing times that the Big and Little are both available, or because of new or on-going challenges in the match.

When one of these circumstances occurs, the Big and/or Little may decide it is time for a change in match. At this time, discuss the situation with your Match Support Specialist. Together, you may decide that some adjustments of expectations for the relationship or changes to the arrangements for shared outings may allow you to continue the positive, important role-modeling relationship you have with the child. Or, you may agree that the best course of action is to officially end the match.

Gradual Disappearance

Slowly reducing the frequency of contact and outings until the relationship seems to end on its own is NOT a healthy or supportive way to end a Big/Little relationship. If there is less frequent contact, it is important to speak openly about the shift with the parent, child AND Match Support Staff.

Sudden Closure

Occasionally, an unexpected event leads one of the program participants or the Match Support Staff to suddenly close the match without warning. This is rare, and difficult to achieve without causing emotional harm to the child and perhaps the adults as well. Possible causes may include: child safety concerns, failure to comply with agency guidelines or lack of communication.



What Are the Steps to Ending the Match Relationship?



1. **Announcing the Decision**

In most cases, it is best to discuss the impending closure with Match Support Staff BEFORE discussing it with the parent and/or child. This gives the Big a chance to plan the conversation and final outing with help and insight from someone with a lot of experience in facilitating these transitions. Together, you can anticipate and prepare for the responses you are likely to elicit from the child and/or parent. It also offers an opportunity to review the closure procedures to ensure compliance with program guidelines, which are designed with child safety and liability protection in mind. Generally, the second person who learns about the Big's decision to close the match is the parent. Together, the Big and parent can decide the best way to inform the child.

2. **Scheduling the Final Outing**

Ideally, the match closure is announced **8-12 weeks** before the final outing, so all the program participants have time to ask questions and emotionally process the transition. However, even in cases where the decision is sudden or where outings have been hard to schedule, we strongly advise a final in-person meeting between the Big and Little. In all cases, the announcement is made BEFORE the final outing.

3. **What to Do on the Final Outing**

The final outing can be a fun activity, similar to the ones you shared during the span of the match, or a special date to focus on the transition. It may even be a visit to the child's home and a chance to say goodbye to everyone in the family. Regardless, several things should be achieved during this time:

- Face-to-face communication and quality time.
- Clear expectations. All the program participants need to have clear and mutually understood expectations for the future of the relationship. If it is likely you will never see each other again- discuss this openly. If you will continue to welcome contact from the Little, say so and explain what kind of contact you would welcome (Post cards? Phone calls? Showing up at your house unannounced?) Indicate what kind of response the Little and/or parent should expect from you. Try to avoid



vague phrases such as "See you around," or "Gimme a call sometime," which may lead to anxiety, guilt* or disappointment for your Little.

- Review the match. The final outing is an excellent opportunity to remember how much fun you have had together. Talk about the changes you've observed in your Little as s/he has gotten older. Share how much you have gained from the relationship. Look at photos together or just sit and reminisce. This is a chance to show the child that just because the relationship is ending doesn't mean it isn't meaningful and valuable.
- Make space for feelings. Sometimes Bigs feel the need to act as if they don't have any sad feelings about the end of the match. The little and/or parent may feel that pressure too. You can set a good example for everyone by openly expressing your sadness about the transition.

***Guilt** sometimes accompanies termination. You may feel that you did not help or that the Little did not benefit from the relationship. All matches have a positive impact. If you have difficulty with feeling positive about the way things are being left, are experience feelings of guilt or would like more support processing your feelings and thoughts, contact your match specialist as who have some insight into benefits you may have overlooked.



After the Final Outing

- All parties of the match are expected to inform the Match Support Specialist that the final outing has occurred. At that time, you might discuss whether a re-match is a good option for you or your Little. You will receive a letter in the mail, thanking you for your participation and confirming that your match is closed. You will no longer receive check-in phone calls or program activity invitations from the agency. You will, however, continue to receive the monthly e-newsletter until you choose the "unsubscribe" option at the foot of the email. If you have supported the agency as a donor or non-Big volunteer, you will continue to receive information related to those roles, until you inform us otherwise.
- For the emotional well-being of the child, it is important that you confine your future interactions with him/her and the family to the parameters you discussed during the termination process. If changes occur or you feel a re-negotiation is in order, contact the agency to discuss the situation with a Match Support Specialist.
- After the official match closure, SLO Bigs staff approve of on-going communication between Big and Little in the form of special occasion and greeting cards, occasional letters and post-cards, in-frequent phone calls and/or invitations to important life events such as graduations and weddings. However, it is NOT suggested that the Big and Little continue with regular contact, planned outings and unsupervised one-to-one time together. On-going relationships based on regular, meaningful contact between the adult volunteer and the disadvantaged youth have the lowest rate of child-safety or liability concerns and the highest rate of positive impact for the Little when they are conducted with the cooperation, support and supervision of the Match Support Team.

As your match begins, and throughout the entire life of your match, **we want to THANK YOU!** You are stepping forward on a journey where you don't know exactly what will happen, but you are doing this because you care for others and know that there is great reward in life through the relationships you develop. We wish you all the best in your match with your Little Brother or Little Sister. Have great fun. Take pride in your



contribution to the happiness of your Little. We will be with you, supporting you, throughout your journey.





Appendix

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Appendix A: Enrollment Process

Enrollment Process for Bigs

Step 1. Contact our local Big Brothers Big Sisters agency to learn more about the specific need for mentors in YOUR neighborhood. Call the office nearest to you: (805) 781-3226 in SLO, or email office@slobigs.org. Or, visit www.slobigs.org

Step 2. Complete the stream-lined application process with the help of friendly, supportive staff. Complete an application form, in-person interview, and training session. Register your fingerprints at a local LiveScan location. Agency staff will send you an email link to do your Background Check.

Step 3. When you're ready, you will meet the child you will mentor.

Step 4. Invite your "Little" to join you for 6 hours each month to share hobbies, sports, interests and activities you already enjoy.

Enrollment Process for Littles

Step 1. Contact our local Big Brothers Big Sisters agency to learn more about the program and it's availability in your area.

Step 2. Complete the stream-lined application process with the help of friendly, supportive staff. Complete an application form, in-person interview, and training session. Agency staff will assess child and family for need and fit.

Step 3. When you're ready, you will meet your mentor.

Step 4. Join your "Big" for 6 or more hours each month to share hobbies, sports, interests and activities you both enjoy.



Appendix B: Building Resilience

Trauma

According to the ACE Study, two thirds of the population faces one or more forms of trauma throughout childhood. Trauma includes but is not limited to: racism, bullying, witnessing domestic violence, losing a caregiver, homelessness, involvement with the foster care system, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. All demographics are vulnerable to childhood trauma and there is a significant correlation between childhood trauma and an increased risk for health, social and emotional problems. Fortunately, trauma can be overcome when we foster resiliency. **Resiliency** is

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset

“**In a fixed mindset** students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. **In a growth mindset** students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.”

—Carol Dweck, *Stanford University*

Article by Carol Dweck:

<https://www.stem.org.uk/system/files/community-resources/2016/06/DweckEducationWeek.pdf>



Asset Development

There are two components to asset development, internal assets and external assets.

Internal assets cover the personal skills and values that lead to positive choices, responsibility and feeling purposeful in life. **External assets** are composed of what one's environment can provide. These opportunities involve supportive relationships, community empowerment, healthy structure, and constructive use of time. The following Asset Development characterization was created by the Search Institute.

<https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>

Internal Assets



Commitment to Learning

- Achievement motivation- Young person is motivated to do well in school
- School engagement- young person is actively engaged in learning
- Homework- young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.



- Bonding to school- Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- Reading for pleasure- Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.



Positive Values

- Caring- Young person places high value on helping other people.
- Equality and social justice- Young person places a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- Integrity- young person acts on convictions and stands up for their beliefs.
- Honesty- young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- Responsibility- Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- Restraint- young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.



Social Competencies

- Planning and decision-making- Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- Interpersonal competence- Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.
- Cultural competence- Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Resistance skills- Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- Peaceful conflict resolution- Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.



Positive Identity

- Personal power- Young person feels they have control over "things that happen to me".
- Self-esteem- Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- Sense of purpose- Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- Positive view of personal future- Young person is optimistic about their personal future.

External Assets



Support



- Family support- Family life provides high levels of love and support
- Positive family communication- young person and their parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel.
- Other adult relationships- Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
- Caring neighborhood- young person experiences caring neighbors.
- Caring school climate- school provides a caring, encouraging environment
- Parent involvement in schooling- Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.



Empowerment

- Community values youth- Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- Youth as resources- Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- Service to others- Young person serves in the community one our or more per week.
- Safety- Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.



Boundaries and Expectations

- Family boundaries- Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
- School boundaries- School provides clear rules and consequences.
- Neighborhood boundaries- Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
- Adult role models- Parent(s) and other adult model positive, responsible behavior.
- Positive peer influence- Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
- High expectations- Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.



Constructive Use of Time

- Creative activities- Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater or arts.



- Youth programs- Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
- Religious community- Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
- Time at home- Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do", two or fewer nights per week.

Finding Your Little's Spark

A person's spark is what they are really passionate about doing, an activity that unleashes their energy and joy, one that may allow them to really express their personality and perhaps make their own unique contribution to the world. Asking your Little questions to explore what their spark may be can be a fun, rewarding activity to do together. Spark questions include:

- What's your spark?
- Is your spark listed on the spark catcher? If not, is there a spark that's related to what YOU love to do (art, music, sports)?
- Are there any passions you would add to the spark catcher?
- What simple step could you take today to nurture or use your spark?
- Can you see using your spark in a career someday, or would it be a hobby?
- Does your spark help other people?
- How does your spark make you feel?
- Is there anyone in your life who helps you with your spark (a teacher, friend, parent, coach, neighbor)?
- Could you help someone else with his or her spark?





Appendix C: Match Support

You don't need to wait to hear from your Match Support Specialist– we love to be contacted by Bigs. Here are some good reasons for calling your Match Support Specialist:

- To get feedback from the Little, and Parent/Guardian about how the match is going.
- Share fun stories about your match.
- Discuss concerns you are having with your match or the safety of your Little.
- Ask for activity ideas and find out about current events at BBBS.
- Report any emergency situations.

Your Match Support Specialist Will:

- Feedback on how you're making a difference.
- Find information and resources for which you might be interested.
- Offer donated tickets to community/sports events.
- Keep you updated on activities offered by the agency.
- Help you communicate with your Little and their parent.

If your Match Support Specialist is not available please ask to speak to anyone in the program office. We make it a priority to serve you when you need it. Please be aware that due to staff and turnover, your Match Support Specialist may change from time to time. Learning the history of our existing matches is an important part of training for new Match Support Specialist. So, even if you speak to someone new, s/he will be learning about your history with the program and excited about getting to know you better.

Contact your Match Support Specialist by phone and/or email--whichever is most convenient for you. Phone/Voicemail: (805) 781-3226 Text: (805) 242-5964



Appendix D: Mentoring Children with Special Needs

(ADD/ADHD, high energy, impulse control issues, high functioning autism spectrum, emotionally sensitive, etc)

Set aside specific times for everything.

Set up specific times for meeting with your Little Brother or Sister. Changes in scheduling are disturbing to many children, so be as consistent as possible. Do not break the pattern without first explaining, so that the child can anticipate the changes in routine and be proud when they handle them.

Set out rules and consequences for everyone!

Set clear and concise rules of behavior for all involved. These rules should include: (1) rules, (2) consequences for breaking rules, and (3) rewards for following rules. They should be written and posted in a prominent place. Consistency is the key here if a rule is broken, consequences should follow every time, and if a rule is followed appropriately, the child should be rewarded. Remember, praise is a reward and a child cannot learn how to take a compliment or give a compliment unless there is a role-model to follow, so be generous with appreciation and be gracious in receiving compliments back.

Give instructions as simply and clearly as possible.

Ask the child to repeat the instructions back to you, then praise them when the response is correct, be patient when it is not. Do not give them more than one or two instructions at one time. If the task is difficult, break it into smaller parts and teach each part separately. Demonstrate what you want, if necessary.

Be aware of the environment.

If over stimulation is a problem, try to keep the stimulation level as low as possible. If calming down or focusing is a problem, try to provide a quiet spot, free from distractions, for slower, more focused activities to be shared. For example choose a spot with a desk toward a blank wall, minimize clutter, avoid bright light, distracting colors or patterns in décor. If the child easily gets out of control:

- (1) Limit exposure to/involvement of others...especially other children, (2) focus on only one activity at a time, (3) Put unused toys, games, tools, projects, puzzles etc.



out of sight. However, it is important to remember that some children do much better with "background" noise and should be allowed to leave radios on.

Keep a mental diary of foods eaten, noting if certain behavior patterns develop after eating and what foods were eaten.

Allergies may sometimes produce reactions similar to hyperactivity and inability to focus, or may cause crankiness and oppositional behaviors. Some common food culprits are chocolate, tomato products, wheat, sugar, milk products, peanuts and/or aged food, such as sausage, some cheeses, soy sauce and wine. Also note any strong reactions (i.e. headaches) to perfumes, inks, detergents or cleaning products, or other items with distinctive smells.

Say what you need to say, briefly and clearly. Say it once completely, firmly and calmly.

Repeated messages, directions, requests, etc. are inefficient disciplinary techniques that create a variety of unpleasant behaviors in both you and the child. Repeat yourself if, and only if, requested to repeat. Otherwise, expect that information has been heard or that requests will be met. If information is not heard, respond with a restructuring technique, such as putting your hand on the child's shoulder while delivering information or if requests are not met, follow through with a logical consequence. ACT-DON'T YAK!! Also remember to be firm when setting limits, but express love and affection while doing so.

Allow the child choices within the limits you have set.

To help your Little develop initiative and self-control and give a sense of personal influence, it is important to present choices as early as possible. The trick is to present limited choices from your list of approved choices.

For instance, if the child wants to snack before dinner, and you don't object, you might offer the following choices from those that you prefer. "You may have a glass of water and two cookies, or you can have a glass of juice and three pretzels. " Not, "you can have something, just don't eat too much."

Distinguish between the child's behavior and the child.

Always take time to let the child know that bad behavior does not mean that the person behind the behavior is bad. For instance, "I love you, but I don't like it when you track mud



through the house because you forget to check the bottoms of your shoes." Remember, it is important to be as specific as possible when describing unlikable behavior.

Compliment the child often and as soon as possible.

Sometimes, when you are just beginning to work on problems with the child, there will be very little to compliment, so it becomes your job as a mentor to search for the positives. For instance, "I like the way that you got into the car without stopping, thank you for helping us to get home faster." Or, "I am so pleased about how you washed your hands the first time I asked, maybe you'll beat me to the punch next time and do it without my asking." Remember how it feels to have your good actions noticed and how easy it is to repeat the behavior? The same is true for the child, ADD or not.

Always remember that ADD/ADHD and other diagnoses involves real, essential deficits.

Often in more than one area. These children need compassionate understanding. The child did not cause the condition and it is as frightening to them as it is to you. Parents and teachers do a disservice to a child if they pity, tease, nag, overindulge, or misconstrue the child in any way. What the child needs most is information about what they may have to deal with for the rest of their lives.

For more information on working with special needs youth, visit

www.slobigs.org/resources



Appendix E: Conflict Resolution Strategies

Negotiating: Bigs and Littles listen to the others' points of view and discuss which position might be the best.

Compromising: Meeting halfway -- both parties agree to sacrifice something in order to resolve the conflict.

Active Listening: Big shows that he or she understands the Little's wishes.

Distracting: Helping Littles to forget about the conflict by focusing attention on some other interesting activity. (Especially useful for young kids with shorter attention spans or when the conflict doesn't need much discussion.)

Humor: Diffusing negative emotions by looking at the brighter side of the situation. It's amazing how quickly a mood can change with some humor.

Chance: Flipping a coin, playing row-sham-bow or drawing straws.

Sharing: Working together to meet the needs of both parties.



Appendix F: General Characteristics of Children in Different Age Categories

The information is designed to help you understand what your Little might be like depending on his/her age. They also include some suggested activities. Keep in mind that they are generalizations. While they may provide a description of children in general, you may encounter something slightly different with your Little. Sometimes a child's development may be delayed because of trauma or negative experiences or simply a slower or faster development than others, so the stage they're in at present may not correlate to their age in years.

5-7 Year Olds

General Characteristics

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they are active while learning.
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics

- Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks. They like to do things that are fun and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles are difficult (i.e., working on models with small pieces).
- May tend to be accident prone.

Social Characteristics

- Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
- Can be very competitive. May cheat at games.
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing.
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative than at five, and boastful.
- Learn best through active participation.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are alert to feelings of others, but are unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.



- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regress when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.

Mental Characteristics

- Are very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

Developmental Tasks

- Sex role identification.
- Early moral development.
- Concrete operations - the child begins to experience the predictability of physical events.

8-10 Year Olds

General Characteristics

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expects more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.

Social Characteristics

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends.



- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sports figures is common.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friend's rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

Mental Characteristics

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious, and are collectors of everything. However, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation/Skill learning
- Team play

General Characteristics

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expects more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.



- May tend to be accident prone.

11-13 Year Olds

General Characteristic

- Testing limits, "know-it-all attitude."
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early matures may be upset with their size.
- Are very concerned with their appearance, and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

Social Characteristics

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.



Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

14-16 Year Old

General Characteristics

- Testing limits, "know-it -all attitude."
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Going to extremes, emotional instability with "know-it-all" attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with an admired adult.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical

Mental Characteristics

- Can better understand moral principles.



- Attention span can be lengthy.

Developmental Tasks

- Physical maturation.
- Formal operations.
- Membership in the peer group.
- Relating to the opposite sex.



Appendix G: 150+ Free & Low Cost Activities

1. Visit the Museum of Natural History in Morro Bay.
2. Visit the Hearst Castle visitor center. Tour the free museum. Watch the IMAX movie to learn about art, architecture and local history. Look for zebras.
3. Write a letter to congress or your local representative, sharing your feelings about local issues- positive or otherwise.
4. Roast mini-marshmallows with toothpicks over the flame of a candle.
5. Go dancing at or just listen at one of the many free outdoor summer concerts throughout SLO County.
6. Participate in a coastal clean-up day.
7. Grocery shop together. Make it fun or educational by planning a meal, practicing math, or having a scavenger hunt!
8. Check out a theatre production. Enjoy a High School production...especially at the school your attends or will attend in the future. Call the SLO Bigs office to find out about free tickets for SLO Little Theatre, Kelrick Productions, Cal Poly or PCPA.
9. Visit Boo-Boo records and listen to the featured artists at the listening stations.
10. Go to Farmer's Market. See if you can identify the different types of fruits and vegetables. Sample something you've never eaten before.
11. Tour local yard sales. Let each person have \$5 and see who can buy the best item for it. Learn the stories behind the stuff.
12. Have a competition to design a protective package for an un-boiled egg. You cannot spend more than \$1 on supplies. Then see whose egg can be dropped from a pre-determined height without breaking.
13. Take an architectural or art tour of a nearby city. Spend a few minutes researching the buildings, sculptures or murals online and then stake them out. You may have passed by cool sites you have never even noticed.
14. Make up short stories and remove random nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Ask your Little to fill in the blanks, then read the story aloud.
15. Hold a movie marathon. Show classic movies that the Big enjoyed when s/he was the Little's current age.
16. Go rock climbing at SLO OP bouldering gym. (call the office for free passes)



17. Visit the Green Acres Lavender Farm in Atascadero.
18. Play your favorite sport with a twist (with your non-dominant hand, make up silly rules, hop on one foot.)
19. Go to Doc Bernsteins Ice Cream in Arroyo Grande on Tuesdays and check out the Reading Lab.
20. Learn to skate at a local skate park. Talk about why it's important to wear safety gear.
21. Take a trip to a discount clothing store. Design a new look for each other. (No purchases necessary.)
22. Get a free make up demonstration at Sephora in downtown SLO (Remember to get parent permission!)
23. Teach a dog a new trick. If you don't have a dog, sign up to borrow one from the local shelter.
24. Write a letter to one of your favorite celebrities.
25. Shoot paintball guns at each other in Santa Maria. (call the SLO Bigs office for discount)
26. Take a tour of the Monarch Butterfly Grove in Pismo from November to February.
27. Visit Carrizo Plain National Monument, the nationally protected wilderness & ecotourism area in Paso Robles.
28. Play a board game. (SLO Bigs has some for loan if you don't have any.)
29. Learn a magic trick.
30. Sketch or paint self-portraits. Then switch and do portraits of each other.
31. See the animals, stroll through the herb garden, and pick fresh produce at Jack Creek Farms in North County.
32. Visit the Dallidet Adobe in SLO and learn about local flora and history.
33. Check out the oldest residence in SLO County, the Dana Adobe in Nipomo
34. Go otter spotting near Morro Rock (mornings are best).
35. Visit your local library, or a branch elsewhere in the county. Help your Little get a card of his/her own. Check out the on-going calendar of special events.
36. Take a ride in a sail boat with the Morro Bay Yacht Club (call SLO Bigs office for details)
37. Bake and frost cut-out cookies.



38. Learn about plants and ecosystems of five Mediterranean climate zones, from California and Chile to Australia and South Africa at the SLO Botanical Garden.
39. Write thank you cards or letters to loved ones who are far away.
40. Roll up and make paper balls. Hold an indoor snowball fight or shoot hoops into a waste paper basket.
41. Volunteer at the Cal Poly Organic farm or with SLO Glean.
42. Learn about local birds on a guided hike with the Morro Coast Audubon Society
43. Take a walk together or at a local beach and with a memento bag, collect interesting leaves, rocks, junk.
44. With your Little's birthday money, open a savings account for him/her at a local bank
45. Call your Match Support Specialist together and ask her for ideas.
46. Take your Little to visit the middle school or high school he/she will attend.
47. Skip rocks on the water at a local lake.
48. Take turns playing advice columnist and help seeker. Take turns to see who can come up with the worst problem and the best advice. Then try coming up with some of society's most challenging problems, and use your ideas for real solutions.
49. Buy and decorate old t-shirts for each other. (Use old ones you own, or visit a thrift store.)
50. Make chalk art on the sidewalk.
51. Have a water balloon fight.
52. Learn to sing a song together from your favorite musical movie, rock-star or childhood memory.
53. Research famous individuals that have lived in SLO County. Find out which ones attended Cal Poly.
54. Pick up a free map of SLO open space and hiking trails at the Parks and Rec office downtown, then explore them!
55. Visit and tour Cuesta and Cal Poly. Explain the difference between a junior college and a university.
56. Go geo caching! Use a GPS watch or smart phone to find local treasures!
57. Cheer on your favorite racecar at the Santa Maria Speedway



58. Plan an outing around a book checked out from the library (i.e., astronomy, origami, French cooking, etc.)
59. Challenge each other to a contest. Anything works, and the sillier the better! Try sand castle building, hop scotch, name that tune, marbles, or kite flying.
60. Hike the "9 sisters," starting with Bishop's Peak.
61. Learn to Salsa dance with the Salsa Club at Cal Poly. (best for teens)
62. Visit the San Luis Art Center and the Historical Museum.
63. Fly a kite. (Make your own, borrow one from the SLO Bigs Office, or visit the Morro Bay Kite Festival in April)
64. Hike up the sand dunes in Los Osos or Oceano and then slide down!
65. Use a Frisbee to knock down 2 liter plastic soda bottles, set up like bowling pins. Score the game the same as bowling.
66. Try out a few fitness classes at the SLO YMCA or any local gym that offers a free trial membership. (best for teens)
67. Practice filling out applications for everything.
68. Take a health and safety class at the SLO Country Red Cross.
69. Visit a local coffee shop to sip hot chocolate or soda while playing chess, checkers, or backgammon.
70. Create a time capsule and bury it. Open the capsule on your next year matchiversary.
71. Take a tour of City Hall or attend a City Council meeting to find out how your local government works.
72. Visit the Sweet Springs Preserve, Elfin Forest, meditation maze or Audubon Overlook in Los Osos.
73. Make up a non-sense word and come up with a creative definition. Add the word on Wikipedia.
74. Read through the Guinness Book of World Records together. Look for a record you and your Little could potentially beat.
75. Get active with a local intramural sports team. (Meathead wrestling offers scholarships for Bigs and Littles.)
76. Visit the Children's Museum in SLO or Paso. (contact office for free passes)



77. Create your own treasure hunt and use a camera to capture the goal items. Example- find one thing from each color of the rainbow, or, spell a word with photos of things that look like letters of the alphabet. Make a photo collage with all the "treasures" you found.
78. Go out to breakfast before school. Many schools have "late start" Mondays.
79. Explore a specialty shop learn about the hobbies or careers of the people who shop there. Examples: boating, plumbing, knitting, photography...
80. Write a letter to the editor about your relationship and what it has meant to you. (Copy SLO Bigs staff when you email it!)
81. Raise money for future outings by collecting recyclable bottles and cans, holding a lemonade or ice cream stand.
82. Practice one-on-one drills for any team sport you are interested in.
83. Give each other a pedicure or manicure, or give each other a new hair-style.
84. Buy a glow in the dark Frisbee and two glow sticks. Go to the beach at night and play a game of Frisbee. Each person wears a glow stick so the other knows where to aim.
85. Have a sock war- five minutes and 20 pairs of socks.
86. Build a fire at Avila Beach.
87. Attend a local sporting event at the High School your Little attends (or will attend) or call the SLO Bigs office for tickets to local games.
88. Learn a new trick. It could be a day of learning card tricks, learning how to juggle or learning to make bird calls.
89. Take a tour of the Luffa Farm in Nipomo
90. Volunteer together at a local non-profit or charity during the holidays. (We especially recommend the Food Bank and Must! Charities.)
91. Go to the airport for lunch and watch planes take off and land.
92. Practice a map-reading or map-making skills. Take turns navigating on a walk or drive.
93. Rent a paddle boat at Lake Nacimiento.
94. Make a card, create a gift, or go shopping for a loved one's upcoming birthday.
95. Go to the Avila Bay Natural History Museum.
96. Hold a thematic dinner for your friends or family (e.g. beach, 50's, jungle, superhero, etc.) Pick foods, decor, invitations that reflect the theme, and ask everyone to dress up.



97. Learn how to play a musical instrument together. Form a band-choose a name for your band and make a music video.
98. Walk around a boat show, car show, or convention of some kind.
99. Swim at Sinsheimer pool or at the Avila Hot Springs
100. Get a book of animal's tracks and explore a pond or trail together to see what animals live in the area.
101. Bowl a strike at Paso Bowl, Mustang Lanes, or Pismo Bowl.
102. Pick berries, fruit or vegetables at a local farm.
103. Create a mini-golf course with plastic cups. Use real clubs and balls if you have them, or an orange and a stick if you don't.
104. Volunteer to help preserve our local trails.
105. Use pre-made pizza dough or pie crust and make pretzels or cinnamon snacks.
106. Explore Poly or Stenner Canyon, Oso Flaco or the Salinas River bed.
107. Develop a list of 30 questions: odd and unusual facts you would like to know about each other. Fill them out and read them to each other.
108. Make a calendar of the major events of the upcoming year. Include family birthdays and plan to help each other make gifts or treats.
109. Enter a 5-K race together.
110. Collect leaves and safe plants on a hike. Make plant rubbings or press the leaves between wax paper and hang in your window.
111. Create an "International Night." Decorate the home with an international theme, dress up, prepare ethnic foods, listen to appropriate music, and watch a foreign film on DVD.
112. Take bags and gloves to your favorite open space and pick up trash. Take before and after pictures.
113. Build a sand-structure. Use things you find in the surroundings to enhance your creation.
114. Open the hood of a car and learn about the different parts of an engine. Change the oil in your car. Or practice changing a tire.
115. Grow fruits and vegetables. Then eat them!
116. Become a local expert. Choose a SLO County place or event that you love and learn more about it. Give a tour or a speech each other.



117. Ride local transportation. Learn about the bus routes and trolleys in SLO County by trying them out.
118. Go tide-pooling at San Simeon, Montana de Oro and Shell Beach.
119. Sit on a bench and watch people. Play "Sherlock Holmes" by looking for clues and take turns guessing where you think people are going.
120. Look at the stars through telescopes and learn about the galaxy with the Central Coast Astronomical Society.
121. Visit a local mission.
122. Use the library or internet to research and conduct age-appropriate science projects.
123. Check out the listings in the local papers for activities in the area.
124. Listen to a poetry reading or slam poetry at a coffee shop.
125. Invent a new meal. Or check out cookbooks from the library and try a new recipe.
126. Set up a coffee date or on-site interview with someone who has a job in a field the Little finds interesting.
127. Go fishing off the pier in Pismo or by the lake.
128. Hold your own Olympic games. Create your own teams, flags, colors, etc. Use sports you already love or invent new ones.
129. Check out the SLO Bigs Monthly Newsletter to learn about more free and low cost activity ideas! (www.slobigs.org)
130. Test-drive a new car. Discuss safe driving practices.
131. Make a date to meet your Littles teacher afterschool. Let the Little take you on a tour of the classroom and other areas. Encourage your Little to "show off" the school work and other projects s/he has completed lately. Find out about upcoming field trips and consider volunteering as a chaperone.
132. Make a themed picnic lunch.
133. Do chores together. Teach your Little to do laundry, use a dishwasher, make a bed, fold contour sheets, clean windows, vacuum, etc.
134. Attend a Central Coast Roller Derby bout in Paso Robles.
135. Build a blanket fort.
136. Make a cake together. Decorate it. Eat it!



137. Organize a tea party. Invite real friends or stuffed animals to attend.
138. Join the free project classes at Home Depot in SLO. All materials are provided and all projects are kid-appropriate.
139. Do homework together or help with a school project. (This can be an occasional or regular event.)
140. Learn about holidays that are celebrated in other cultures. Then, invent your own and celebrate it together.
141. Contact SLO Rowing Club in Santa Margarita to tour the boat house and get a chance to try sculling (sliding-seat rowing.) Or, attend one of their regattas or open house events.
142. Visit the Coastal Discovery Center across the street from Hearst Castle in San Simeon.
143. Visit Spooner's Cove and the Spooner Ranch House History Museum on Pecho Valley Road in Los Osos.
144. Bike, jog, walk or roller skate along the Bob Jones trail.
145. Climb the structures at the "architecture graveyard" behind the Cal Poly Campus.
146. Hike to the Lighthouse at Port San Luis for a docent-led tour.
147. Watch the Elephant Seals at Piedras Blancas and learn about their life-cycles from the docents and educational displays.
147. Add your own adventures! Then, call or email the Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Luis Obispo office to share your ideas with other Bigs and Littles. (805) 781-3226
slobigsnewsletter@slobigs.org





Appendix H: Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

Kids Involved in Bullying

The roles kids play in bullying are not limited to those who bully others and those who are bullied. Some researchers talk about the "circle of bullying" to define both those directly involved in bullying and those who actively or passively assist the behavior or defend against it.

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying** involves saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting; threatening to cause harm.

2. **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public

3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures



Most kids play more than one role in bullying over time. In some cases, they may be directly involved in bullying as the one bullying others or being bullied and in others they may witness bullying and play an assisting or defending role. Every situation is different. Some kids are both bullied and bully others. It is important to note the multiple roles kids play, because:

Those who are both bullied and bully others may be at more risk for negative outcomes, such as depression or suicidal ideation.

How to Talk to Your Little About Bullying

Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.

Importance of Not Labeling Kids

When referring to a bullying situation, it is easy to call the kids who bully others "bullies" and those who are targeted "victims," but this may have unintended consequences. When children are labeled as "bullies" or "victims" it may:

- Send the message that the child's behavior cannot change
- Fail to recognize the multiple roles children might play in different bullying situations
- Disregard other factors contributing to the behavior such as peer influence or school climate

Instead of labeling the children involved, focus on the behavior. For instance:

- Instead of calling a child a "bully," refer to them as "the child who bullied"
- Instead of calling a child a "victim," refer to them as "the child who was bullied"

Help Kids Understand Bullying



Kids who know what bullying is can better identify it. They can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others. Kids need to know ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.

1. **Encourage** kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Encourage the child to report bullying if it happens.
2. **Talk about how to stand up** to kids who bully.
3. **Give tips**, like using humor and saying "stop" directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don't work, like walking away.
4. **Talk about strategies for staying safe**, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
5. **Urge them to help kids who are bullied** by showing kindness or getting help.

Model How to Treat Others with Kindness and Respect

Kids learn from adults' actions. By treating others with kindness and respect, adults show the kids in their lives that there is no place for bullying. Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict, as well as how they treat their friends, colleagues, and families.

Support ALL the Kids Involved

- All kids involved in bullying—whether they are bullied, bully others, or see bullying—can be affected. It is important to support all kids involved to make sure the bullying doesn't continue and effects can be minimized. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Know that kids who are bullied may struggle with talking about it. Talk to your Match Support Specialist for help connecting them with a school counselor, psychologist, or other mental health service.
- Give advice about what to do. This may involve role-playing and thinking through how the child might react if the bullying occurs again.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and mentor are a team in supporting the child and keeping him/her safe.
- Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging classroom or bus



seating plans for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching classrooms or bus routes, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.

- Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between schools, organizations, and parents. Discuss the steps that are taken and the limitations around what can be done based on policies and laws. Remember, the law does not allow school personnel to discuss discipline, consequences, or services given to other children.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.
- Be mindful that youth with disabilities, special health needs, and those who identify as LGBTQ+ are at an increased risk of being bullied.

Avoid these mistakes:

- Never tell the child to ignore the bullying.
- Do not blame the child for being bullied. Even if he or she provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
- Do not tell the child to physically fight back against the kid who is bullying. It could get the child hurt, suspended, or expelled.
- Parents should resist the urge to contact the other parents involved. It may make matters worse. School or other officials can act as mediators between parents.
- Follow-up. Show a commitment to making bullying stop. Because bullying is behavior that repeats or has the potential to be repeated, it takes consistent effort to ensure that it stops. .

How to Address Bullying Behavior

- Parents, school staff, and mentors all have a role to play.
- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example: Sometimes children bully to fit in. These kids can benefit from participating in positive activities. Involvement in sports and clubs can enable them to take leadership roles and make friends without feeling the need to bully.



- Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support, such as mental health services.
- Use shared activities to teach. Activities that involve learning or building empathy can help prevent future bullying. For example, a mentor can help the child who bullied to:
 - Lead a class discussion about how to be a good friend.
 - Write a story about the effects of bullying or benefits of teamwork.
 - Role-play a scenario or make a presentation about the importance of respecting others, the negative effects of gossip, or how to cooperate.
 - Do a project about civil rights and bullying.
 - Read a book about bullying.
 - Make posters for the school about cyberbullying and being smart online.
 - Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the mentor can help the child:
 - Write a letter apologizing to the student who was bullied.
 - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for others in your community.
 - Clean up, repair, or raise/earn money to pay for any property they damaged.

Strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:

1. **Zero tolerance** or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or expelling students who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Students and teachers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or expulsion is the consequence.
2. **Conflict resolution and peer mediation** don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
3. **Group treatment** for students who bully doesn't work. Group members tend to reinforce bullying behavior in each other.

Make sure to Follow-up.

After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good friend.



What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Prevent Cyberbullying

Bigs and Littles can prevent cyberbullying. Together, they can explore safe ways to use technology. Help your Little be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.

Encourage your Little to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren't friends could use it.

Tell your Little to keep his/her passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise control over online identities and activities.

Bullying Related to Race, Ethnicity, and National Origin

It is not clear how often kids get bullied because of their race, ethnicity, or national origin. It is also unclear how often kids of the same group bully each other. Research is still growing. We do know, however, that Black and Hispanic youth who are bullied are more likely to suffer academically than their white peers.

Although no specialized interventions have yet been developed or identified, some federal partners have developed campaign materials for specific racial and ethnic minority groups. For example, the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services has developed a series of materials for American Indian and Alaskan Native youth called "Stand Up, Stand Strong."

~When bullying based on race or ethnicity is severe, pervasive, or persistent it may be considered harassment, which is covered under federal civil rights laws.~



Bullying Related to Religion and Faith

Very little research has explored bullying based on religious differences. Bullying in these situations may have less to do with a person's beliefs and more to do with misinformation or negative perceptions about how someone expresses that belief. For example, Muslim girls who wear hijabs (head scarves), Sikh boys who wear patka or dastar (turbans), and Jewish boys who wear yarmulkes report being targeted because of these visible symbols of their religions. These items are sometimes used as tools to bully Muslim, Sikh, and Jewish youth when they are forcefully removed by others. Several reports also indicate a rise in anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh bullying over the past decade that may have roots in a perceived association of their religious heritage and terrorism.

~When bullying based on religion is severe, pervasive, or persistent, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division may be able to intervene under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act.~



Appendix I: Supporting a Child who identifies as LGBTQ+

For some parents or Bigs, learning that a child or Little is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally or pansexual ("LGBTQ+") can be a very difficult juncture. For others, this information is welcomed and recognized as a sign of trust. How a parent/Big respond to their child/Little who identifies as LGBTQ+ will have an enormous impact on the child's healthy development and on the quality of the parent-child relationship.

You Are Not Alone

Upon learning that your child/Little identifies as LGBTQ+, you may feel a variety of emotions ranging from relief and acceptance to shock, denial, guilt, and anger. It's important to know that you are not alone in this experience. In fact, approximately one in every four families in this country has a family member who identifies as LGBTQ+. Many families struggle in isolation, unaware of community resources to help them. You owe it to your child/Little and to yourself to find the resources, support, and education you may need to move towards understanding and acceptance.

What is an Ally?

An LGBTQ+ ally is any individual who supports LGBTQ+ social movements, equal civil rights, and gender equality. Although your child/Little may not identify as LGBTQ+, it is important to learn how you can best support your child/Little who is an ally.

PFLAG

One of the most valuable resources is Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). PFLAG offers a volunteer-based network of peer-supported chapters around the country (see their website at www.pflag.org to find the chapter nearest you).

Show Appreciation or the Strength and Courage It Takes To Come Out

If your child/Little has come out to you, it's likely that it took them a lot of strength and courage to make that disclosure. It's now up to you to match this with your own courage, commitment, love, and support. If you learned that your child/Little identifies as LGBTQ+



from another source, avoid confronting your child/Little. You may want to have a conversation about LGBTQ+ issues generally so your child/Little knows you are open to them confiding in you. Do your best to embrace your child/Little, their identity, and decision about whether to be open with you. ~Most, importantly, reassure your child/Little of your unconditional love.~

Expand Your Knowledge of LGBTQ+ Issues

Don't rely on unfounded myths and stereotypes about people who identify as LGBTQ+. Supportive literature specifically intended for parents of youth who identify as LGBTQ+ can help you develop a better understanding of these issues and a better relationship with your child/Little. Such resources can be obtained through PFLAG, your local library or bookstore, an LGBTQ+ community center (to locate the one nearest you, see the National Association of LGBT Community Centers website at www.lgbtcenters.org), or the Family Acceptance Project's website at familyproject.sfsu.edu.

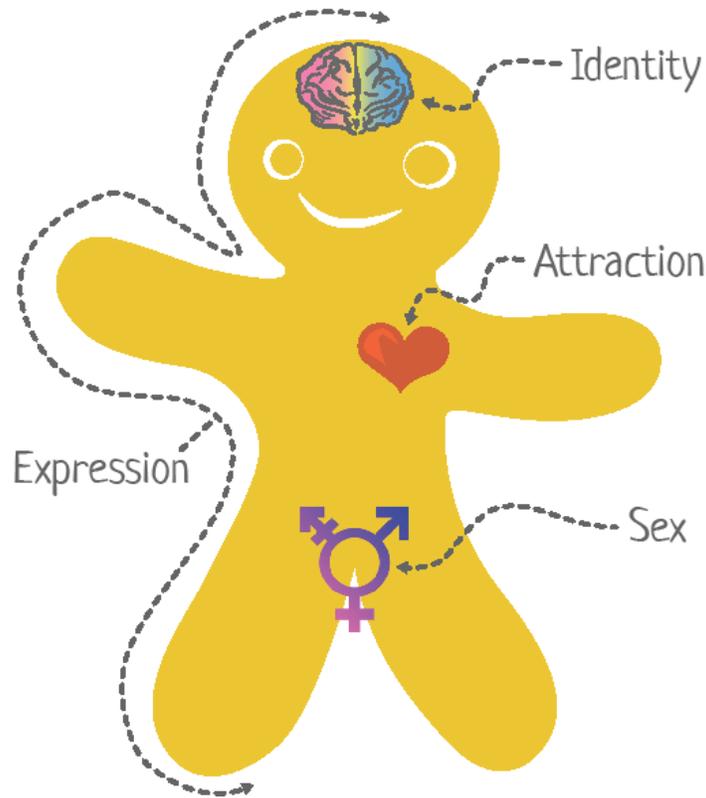
Understand the Importance of Your Support

Be mindful that your reaction to your child's/Little's sexual orientation or gender identity will have a major impact on their life. Children who identify as LGBTQ+ and are rejected by their parents, families and community members face a significantly higher risk of depression, suicide, and substance abuse compared with youth who identify as LGBTQ+ who come from accepting families and communities. Once they understand the importance of their support, many parents and individuals involved in the child's life eventually develop a stronger, closer relationship with the child who identifies as LGBTQ+.

The Genderbread Person

One way to better understand gender is by referencing the Genderbread person. The Genderbread person illustrates a variety of identities that fall along a spectrum. One individual can identify with any combination of identities. These identities include: Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Anatomical Sex, and Attraction. The importance of understanding the concept of the Genderbread Person is recognizing that all people are unique in their identity. Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Luis Obispo actively strives for all youth to feel safe and supported in their identity.

The Genderbread Person v4 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



⊘ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

-  Woman-ness
-  Man-ness

Gender Expression

-  Femininity
-  Masculinity

Anatomical Sex

-  Female-ness
-  Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
 Female Intersex Male

-  Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)
-  Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
 -  Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

-  Romantically Attracted to...
-  Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
 -  Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People



Appendix J: 8 General Strategies for Overcoming Language Barriers

by Kate Berardo at <http://www.culturocity.com/>

Language barriers are a common challenge — and a two-way process. What native speakers often don't realize is that frequently it is not the other person's accent but their own way of speaking that creates the greatest barriers to effective communication. Use the strategies below to ensure you're not putting up your own roadblocks to effective communication.

1. **Speak slowly and clearly.**

Focus on clearly enunciating and slowing down your speech. Even if you're pressured for time, don't rush through your communication. Doing so often takes more time, as miscommunication and misunderstanding can result and you'll ultimately have to invest additional time in clearing up the confusion.

2. **Ask for clarification.**

If you are not 100% sure you've understood what others say, politely ask for clarification. Avoid assuming you've understood what's been said.

3. **Frequently check for understanding.**

Check both that you've understood what's been said and that others have fully understood you. Practice reflective listening to check your own understanding (e.g. 'So what I hear you saying is...') and use open-ended questions to check other people's understanding.

4. **Avoid idioms.**

Language is often contextual, and therefore culture specific. For example, in US business, baseball terms are used extensively: 'Straight off the Bat,' 'Ballpark figures,' 'Out in left field,' 'Touch base,' 'Strike a deal'. As a good general rule, if the phrase requires knowledge of other information—be it a game or metaphor—recognize that this may make your communication more difficult to be understood.

5. **Be careful of jargon.**

Watch the use of TLAs (Three Letter Abbreviations) and other terms that may not be understood by others. If you use them, provide a description of what these are so others can learn to use the same language you do.



6. Choose your medium of communication effectively.

Carefully choose your form of communication (in-person, phone, email, instant message, etc.). Be mindful not to 'overuse' email or text. While useful, there are times when these mediums are likely to be ineffective. When a message is complex and complicated or there is tension or conflict that needs to be resolved, switch to another medium..

7. Provide information via multiple channels.

Follow phone calls with emails that summarize what's been said.

8. Be patient.

Cross-cultural communication takes more time. If not at all times, certainly initially you cannot expect your communication to occur with the same speed and ease as when you are communicating with someone from your own culture.







Appendix K: Building Cultural Awareness

What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?

*"A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it.
Our own culture is like water for the fish. It sustains us. We live
and breathe through it."*

by Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore

Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way?

Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in a different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality.

As an Italian it is almost automatic to perceive US Americans as people who always work, talk about business over lunch and drink their coffee running in the street instead of enjoying it in a bar. What does it mean? Italians are lazy and American hyperactive? No, it means that the meaning that people give to certain activities, like having lunch or dinner could be different according to certain cultures. In Italy, where relationships are highly valued, lunch, dinner or the simple pauses for coffee have a social connotation: people get together to talk and relax, and to get to know each other better. In the USA, where time is money, lunches can be part of closing a deal where people discuss the outcomes and sign a contract over coffee.

Misinterpretations occur primarily when we lack awareness of our own behavioral rules and project them on others. In absence of better knowledge we tend to assume, instead of finding out what a behavior means to the person involved, e.g. a straight look into your face is regarded as disrespectful in Japan.

Becoming aware of our cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is not conscious to us. Since we are born we have learned to see and do things at an unconscious level. Our experiences, our values and our cultural background lead us to see and do things in a certain way. Sometimes we have to step outside of our cultural boundaries in order to realize the impact that our culture has on our behavior. It is very helpful to gather feedback from foreign colleagues on our behavior to get more clarity on our cultural traits.

Projected similarities could lead to misinterpretation as well. When we assume that people are similar to us, we might incur the risk that they are not. If we project similarities where there are not, we might act inappropriately. It is safer to assume differences until similarity is proven.¹



Degrees of Cultural Awareness

There are several levels of cultural awareness that reflect how people grow to perceive cultural differences.

¹ Adler, *Organizational Behavior*, 1991



My way is the only way - At the first level, people are aware of their way of doing things, and their way is the only way. At this stage, they ignore the impact of cultural differences. (Parochial stage)

I know their way, but my way is better - At the second level, people are aware of other ways of doing things, but still consider their way as the best one. In this stage, cultural differences are perceived as source of problems and people tend to ignore them or reduce their significance. (Ethnocentric stage)

My Way and Their Way - At this level people are aware of their own way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they chose the best way according to the situation. At this stage people realize that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits and are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives. (Synergistic stage)

Our Way - This fourth and final stage brings people from different cultural background together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People dialogue repeatedly with others, create new meanings, new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation. (Participatory Third culture stage)

Increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. Cultural diversity could be a source of problems, in particular when the organization needs people to think or act in a similar way. Diversity increases the level of complexity and confusion and makes agreement difficult to reach. On the other hand, cultural diversity becomes an advantage when the organization expands its solutions and its sense of identity, and begins to take different approaches to problem solving. Diversity in this case creates valuable new skills and behaviors.



In becoming culturally aware, people realize that:

- We are not all the same
- Similarities and differences are both important
- There are multiple ways to reach the same goal and to live life
- The best way depends on the cultural contingency. Each situation is different and may require a different solution.



How Do I Manage Cultural Diversity?

We are generally aware that the first step in managing diversity is recognize it and learning not to fear it.

Since everyone is the product of their own culture, we need to increase both self-awareness and cross-cultural awareness. There is no book of instructions to deal with cultural diversity, no recipe to follow. But certain attitudes help to bridge cultures.

- 1 **Admit that you don't know.** Knowing that we don't know everything, that a situation does not make sense, that our assumptions may be wrong is part of the process of becoming culturally aware. Assume differences, not similarities.
- 2 **Suspend judgments.** Collect as much information as possible so you can describe the situation accurately before evaluating it.
- 3 **Empathy.** In order to understand another person, we need to try standing in his/her shoes. Through empathy we learn of how other people would like to be treated by us.
- 4 **Systematically check your assumptions.** Ask your colleagues for feedback and constantly check your assumptions to make sure that you clearly understand the situation.

