

## **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State**

### **FAQs for Parents and Families**

#### **How do children come into the program?**

Children and parents may hear about Big Brothers Big Sisters from a teacher, a counselor, a community group, a friend, commercials, etc. All children and their parents must want to be in our program.

#### **Who are the children in the program?**

Our Littles come from many types of home environments and family structures, different social-economic levels, ethnic backgrounds, and neighborhoods and schools across all communities. Their backgrounds and personalities are unique, but they all have a need for friendship with a caring adult who believes in them.

#### **What is my role as a Parent/Guardian of a Little?**

When it comes to the future of our children and the well-being of our community, we're all in this together. So it should come as no surprise that we need the parents and guardians of Littles to be involved every step of the way, starting with the initial match.

Not only will you provide information about your child's strengths and needs, but you'll also approve the selection of the Big Brother or Big Sister. Once the match is made, you remain closely involved in many ways, including:

- Approving activities and outings for your child and their Big
- Asking your child questions about those outings, and sharing what you learn with the agency staff
- Reporting your child's progress and milestones to the agency on a regular basis (Big Brothers Big Sisters will contact you, but we welcome your feedback any time)
- Participating in training on child safety offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State staff, and communicating with your child about the training he or she receives.

#### **What is the cost to participate in the program?**

No cost! Our program is offered to families free of charge.

#### **Why is my child on the waitlist?**

Your child may be on our waitlist after either inquiring to be a 'Little' or after they have been enrolled for several reasons. We may not have a Big ready to be matched within proximity to where you are located or with the same interests. Also, we receive a greater number of potential Big Sisters than Big Brothers and so Little Brothers may wait a bit longer to be interviewed or matched. We do appreciate your patience. Please know that we are doing everything we can to find the right mentor for your child.

#### **How often will a volunteer meet with my child?**

BBBSOS asks our volunteers to meet with their "Little" 4-6 hours a month. This can be done weekly or every other week. An average Big/Little pair meets 3-4 hours every other week.

#### **What is the screening process for volunteers?**

Big Brothers Big Sisters National Standards of Excellence require each volunteer to complete an extensive screening process that includes:

- Completion of a formal written application
- Background and reference checks
- An in-person interview
- An orientation and training process that outlines the individualized needs of your child and provides information and resources on how to encourage your child's development