



Tips for Building a Mentoring Relationship

Before the first session, doing some research can help you prepare

- For example, look up the neighborhood the school is in, your student's nationality or native language, or the developmental stage of a child at that age.

Get to know the “whole child”

- Try to learn about the student's family, likes/dislikes, hobbies, and interests. Share these things about yourself as well!

Expect that the relationship will take time to build

- It can take time for the student to trust you or outwardly show appreciation for your help. As your relationship grows, the students will become more open to your help, asking questions, and listening.

Be consistent

- Your regular attendance is critical. Being at the sessions and engaged with your student goes a long way.

Set boundaries and expectations with the student

- Make sure your students know why you're in their classroom and what you hope to help them accomplish. Set limits like personal space, only communicating in the classroom, and what you'll do during meetings.

Give praise to the student

- Focus on students' strengths. Acknowledge student success by complimenting their growth, effort, hard work, and persistence.

Be patient but persistent

- Working through areas of struggle can be frustrating for both you and the student. By modeling persistence, you can teach the importance of being patient with oneself.

Incorporate some fun into your mentoring time each week

- For example, a fun warm-up, a brain break, or a rewards system for when the student meets goals or completes assignments.

Motivate the student and work hard

- Part of your role is to be a cheerleader for the student. Students are often nominated in part because they are unmotivated or disengaged from school. Teach them the importance of and a love of learning and school.

Tips for Supporting Students Academically

Talk to the student about academic strengths, struggles, and goals for themselves.

- Be prepared to answer questions about why you are there to work with them. For example, you can explain that the teacher thought it would be a good idea for them to work with someone and you are excited to be there.

Understand the student's strengths and challenges.

- Always make the student feels supported and accepted. Then you can set high expectations to challenge them. All students have many strengths you can focus on, while helping them grow.

Don't go into the match with any assumptions.

- The students and classroom may surprise you. Starting with an open mind can help create an open, welcoming environment for mentoring.

Encourage the student to do the work

- Leave time for quiet reflection and thought after asking a question or when a student is stuck, and don't immediately offer the answer. Try prompting them with a related question or by reviewing what you already did if needed.

Expect there to be repetition in the skills you work on.

- It often takes students several tries, different strategies, and lots of practice to begin to truly understand something new. Expect that you may have to repeat concepts, ideas, and skills –maybe in different ways – throughout a session or multiple sessions.

Emphasize the learning process as much as a specific skill or the answer.

- Learning the general skills that will support them throughout school (study skills, organization, taking your time, self-correction) are important too.

For Small Group Matches: Emphasize students learning from one another.

- Have students learn from each other, explain things to each other, and work together when something is challenging.

Create a productive, focused environment while working with your student.

- If students get off task, ask the student why they are disengaged and include them in working together to find a solution.

Try new things and experiment with how you approach your student.

- Try different strategies, ways of thinking, or methods of doing something. Sometimes this will fail. Use this as a teachable moment with your student. Check-in with your teacher with questions about different strategies and struggles. You can also reach out to us with questions, for resources, or to share a success!