

Building the Mentoring Relationship

Some things to consider as you and your student partner get to know each other...

Get to know your student

Some students will be very open; others will be shy. Using open-ended questions rather than short-answer questions will help you get to know your student. Rather than, “Did you do anything last weekend?” ask “What did you do last weekend?” Or, “Tell me about your weekend.” Parents or teachers will complete a student interest form that you’ll have available on your first day.

Be flexible

There may be times when your student wants to spend much of the session talking rather than reading. Don’t fear that you’ve spent too much time in discussion; this is just one more positive aspect of the one-to-one relationship between student and reading mentor. **However, if you find that your student *never* wants to read, please bring this to the RIF Coordinator’s attention.**

Seek assistance from the RIF Coordinator

If you have a question, would like additional resources, or find your relationship with your student to be challenging, the RIF Coordinator is available to help you. Please let her know of any issues immediately. Reading Mentors are not expected to handle difficult situations that may require expert assistance. RIF Pittsburgh values the time you generously give, and we want to make sure you feel supported. Provide us with the opportunity to address any concerns you may have about your student, the program, the school, etc.

Names

Our program is more informal than a classroom setting, the students generally feel more comfortable using Miss or Mr. and your first name. You can introduce yourself to your student in the way you’d like to be referred.

Participation

Attendance: Students and Mentors are expected to keep consistent attendance throughout the year. If you are unable to make a reading session, please notify the RIF Coordinator in advance. We also provide you with a cell phone number to call us on your reading day if you find unexpectedly that you are unable to come on your reading day (i.e. you are sick, or have a meeting.) If your student is absent, the RIF Coordinator will notify you via phone or text message.

School Calendar: We’ll provide you with a listing of all days when there will be no reading sessions due to the school calendar.

Inclement Weather and other Unexpected Schedule Changes: If there is a two-hour delay, reading sessions will be cancelled. The RIF Coordinator will send an email to notify volunteers if reading sessions are cancelled due to school closings, two-hour delays, or any other reason.

Mutual Respect

As described in the Reading Buddy Agreement, students are expected to act respectfully at all times and follow the program guidelines. If you have concerns about your interaction with your student, the RIF Coordinator will provide support and assistance. You and your student have many experiences to share with each other, both similar and different. Treat all experiences, ideas, and traditions with respect and an open mind.