



GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES

- ✓ **The start of the match is an adjustment time for the mentor, mentee and parent. Relationships take time and action to develop.** Try to be patient - don't expect quick changes. The combined effort, support and approval of the mentor and the parent can help create a successful match.
- ✓ **The mentor is providing a service to the mentee, their family and Companions for Children as a volunteer.** The mentor's time and financial limitations need to be respected and appreciated. Everyone can help build the relationship by saying "Thank You," being courteous, discussing the joy of visits together, and positive changes noticed in the youth.
- ✓ **Mentors are volunteers.** The mentor is not an ATM, babysitter, teacher/tutor, social worker, psychologist, or parent. A mentor is an adult friend, guide, listener, confidant and resource for your child. It is the parent's responsibility to communicate these expectations with their child.
- ✓ **Limitations.** We encourage clear communication between the parent and volunteer regarding any limitations the parent may have. It is appropriate for mentors to set ground rules and correct misbehavior during a visit - physical punishment and/or cutting an outing short is prohibited. The mentor must communicate behavioral problems with the parent upon drop off.
- ✓ **Do not "ground" a child from seeing their mentor.** In most situations, the outing can be restricted in some way, rather than canceled. Not allowing a child to have an outing with their mentor, as a means of discipline, will result in the closure of the match.
- ✓ Consistent, reliable communication between the mentor and parent, is important for a healthy, trusting relationship to develop. **Communication is critical to match success, therefore the mentor and parent are equally responsible to arrange outings.** If communication becomes a problem, Companions for Children must be notified immediately.
- ✓ Matches are required to get together at least **four hours per month on a minimum of two outings, once before the 13th of the month and the second before the 26th of the month.** It is recommended that outings are scheduled with as much notice as possible and the mentor and parent mutually confirm outings at least 24 hours in advance.

- ✓ **It is mandatory for both the mentor and parent to keep adequate records of outings and report monthly to Companions for Children.** Monthly phone contact with Companions for Children is required by the 3rd of each month to report on outings. Monthly contact is gathered to ensure match progression, provide support and to compare reports for safety. Information gathered includes, but is not limited to: dates and length of outings, activity details, mentor/parent communication, updates on contact information, vacations, etc.
- ✓ **We expect both the mentor and parent to let Companions for Children know of any important changes ASAP.** (i.e. guardianship changes, address or phone number changes, marital status or job changes, serious illnesses, vacations longer than two weeks, etc.)
- ✓ **Pick up/Drop off:** The mentor should arrive at the mentee's home at the agreed upon time. The mentee should be ready to go, well-groomed and dressed appropriately for the activity and weather. If it is necessary to cancel or be late for a visit, please call ASAP. Allow as much time as possible - the closer the cancellation or delay is to the expected outing, the more disappointing it is and damaging to the mentee and the relationship.

Children under the age of 9: The parent must be present at pick up and drop off. The mentor and parent must communicate details about the outing in person at drop off.

___ Parent/Legal Guardian
 ___ (Initial) Mentor

Children over the age of 9: The parent should be present at pick up and drop off. If this is not possible, prior arrangements need to be discussed at the time the outing is arranged. The mentor and parent must communicate details about the outing in person at drop off or via a phone call within 24 hours of an outing.

___ Parent/Legal Guardian
 ___ (Initial) Mentor

- ✓ **The mentor is expected to pay for the cost of activities and provide transportation.** Companions for Children encourages free to low-cost activities. The mentor should plan activities and projects within their budget and set financial boundaries. Gift giving is restricted to special occasions (i.e. birthday's, holiday's and matchiversaries) in order to maintain reasonable expectations. Companions for Children is a free service for families, therefore, mentors are prohibited from accepting money from the mentee or his/her family.

The mentor is responsible for the supervision, safety and welfare of the child during outings. ND law requires children under the age of 8 to be in a booster seat. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to provide a booster seat and ensure it is

ready for outings. If a booster seat is not available, the mentor is prohibited from transporting the mentee. In addition, ND law requires children under the age of 12 to sit in the backseat of a vehicle having passenger airbags.

___ Parent/Legal Guardian
___ (Initial) Mentor

- ✓ **Companions for Children’s program philosophy is based on a one-on-one relationship.** Other family members and/or friends are strictly prohibited to participate in outings. On occasion, it may be appropriate for the mentor’s family members to be present at the house or be present on special occasions. Mentors should be aware of the mentee’s one-on-one needs and discuss with him/her before bringing another family members around. Please contact Companions for Children’s Service Coordinator for advice on whether this is right for your match.
- ✓ **Out of Town Travel.** Companions for Children encourages matches to support the Minot community by conducting match outings within the constraints of Minot and the surrounding 15-mile radius. However, should a mentor on occasion find it necessary to travel out of town for a match get together, they may do so with parent permission and within a 200-mile radius. Matches are strictly prohibited from traveling to Canada. Failure to comply with the above conditions will result in termination of a match without notice.
- ✓ **Companions for Children does not see overnight visits as necessary to a good match and therefore strictly prohibits overnight visits.** Failure to comply with the above conditions will result in termination of a match without notice.
- ✓ **Social Media.** Companions for Children highly discourages mentors, mentees and parents/legal guardians from using social media to interact with each other. Companions for Children encourages mentors to interact with their mentees and his/her parent/legal guardian via telephone, text or e-mail.

If the mentor chooses to use social media with his/her mentee then he/she accepts the following terms: If the mentor views on the mentee’s social media site(s) information that endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the mentee (i.e. information or pictures of the mentee engaged in underage alcoholic drinking, drug uses, cyber-stalking, cyber-harassing, cyber bullying, or inappropriate sexual behavior; the mentor will report the information to the staff at Companions for Children and to the mentee’s parent(s), legal guardian, or other appropriate person or entity. If it is an emergency, the mentor must call the Minot Police Department to report the information and then call Companions for Children the following business day.

- ✓ **Confidentiality.** Do not release or discuss information about the child or his/her family with anyone outside the confines of the Companions for Children organization or the child's parent/legal guardian. I understand that this agreement pertains to the time period prior to, during, and after the match closes. This agreement does not pertain to the reporting of suspected child abuse, neglect, or criminal activity to the appropriate authorities. Failure to comply with the above conditions may result in termination of a match without notice. Limits of confidentiality are in the Program Handbook.

I have reviewed these Guidelines & Ground Rules and agree to uphold them during my time within the Companions for Children program.

Applicant Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____