



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

MISSION STATEMENT

Companions for Children provides youth with a one-on-one mentoring relationship to increase their opportunities in life.

VISION STATEMENT

Companions for Children youth will have a better opportunity to become emotionally healthy, productive adults in our community.

NON-PROFIT STATUS

Companions for Children is a non-profit 501 (3) c that is local to the Minot area.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Companions for Children is governed by a Board of Directors who volunteer their time to better the organization as a whole. Directors meet on a monthly basis for Board Meetings and are involved in one of two committees, the Screening Committee and/or the Marketing Committee. In addition, Directors assist in fundraising on behalf of the organization. More information on joining Companions for Children's Board of Directors can be found at companionsforchildren.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Heather Cymbaluk, heather.cymbaluk@companionsforchildren.org

The Executive Director is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission and financial objectives. The Executive Director's responsibilities include but are not limited to: Financial strategies and budgeting, providing leadership to achieve long term goals for the organization, maintain official records and documents, ensure the longevity of the organization through grant writing, maintain knowledge of developments and trends in the field of non-profits and mentoring programs, conduct all

marketing and fundraising activities, establish working relationships with community groups and organizations and oversee staff and the organization as a whole.

ENROLLMENT COORDINATOR

Nya Harris, admin@companionsforchildren.org

MATCH SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Kailey Hennessey, service@companionsforchildren.org

The Enrollment Coordinator is responsible for the organization's matches from application to the time they are matched which at that point, the Match Support Specialist is responsible for ongoing support of the match. The Enrollment Coordinator and Match Support Specialist, jointly, share responsibilities that include but are not limited to: Recruiting mentors and youth; scheduling and conducting interviews with mentors, parents/legal guardians, and youth; identifying qualities and interests to implement successful matches; ensuring mentors complete all screening and intake procedures and reporting to the Screening Committee for their final review; overseeing all matches and troubleshooting any problems, questions or concerns; developing and distributing monthly newsletters; assisting in all fundraising and service activities; planning and conducting quarterly mentor meetings and annual parent/legal guardian meetings; and assisting the Executive Director as needed.

THE IMPACT

Studies have shown that youth who regularly spend time with a mentor benefit in the following ways:

- ✓ 27% less likely to begin drinking alcohol
- ✓ 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs
- ✓ 55% more likely to enroll in college
- ✓ 78% more likely to volunteer regularly
- ✓ 81% more likely to participate regularly in sports or extra-curricular activities
- ✓ 90% are interested in becoming a mentor
- ✓ 130% more likely to hold leadership positions

ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

COMPANIONS FOR CHILDREN'S ROLE

- ✓ Companions for Children will recruit and thoroughly screen adult volunteers to serve as role models and mentors to youth in the program.
- ✓ Companions for Children will match every child with a mentor as soon as possible, taking into consideration the child's age, interests, preferences, and time on the waiting list.
- ✓ Companions for Children will notify the mentors and parent/guardian of upcoming

events through phone calls, emails, texts, mailers or newsletters.

- ✓ Companions for Children will follow up with every match, in the first week of every month to check in, offer support, and complete mandatory reporting.
- ✓ Companions for Children will support the child's best interest by terminating any match which is not meeting Companions for Children's guidelines and ground rules.
- ✓ Companions for Children, in partnership with the Minot Family YMCA, will provide a free YMCA membership to enrolled youth. The YMCA has the right to refuse membership to youth in violation of any of their program's regulations; the parent/legal guardian must fill out paperwork during normal business hours at the YMCA in order for their child to have access to this membership – this must be done in advanced to an outing at the YMCA.

MENTOR ROLE

- ✓ The mentor is expected to spend a minimum of at least 4 hours per month on a minimum of 2 outings, with their mentee for at least one year.
- ✓ The mentor will plan fun, age appropriate activities to do with their mentee. The mentor and mentee can come up with ideas of things to do together, but the mentor has the ultimate responsibility to make the plans.
- ✓ The mentor is expected to initiate contact with the parent in order to make plans for match outings with his/her mentee.
- ✓ The mentor is expected to return calls to parents and Companions for Children's office in a timely manner.
- ✓ The mentor must maintain adequate records (hours and details) of match outings for mandatory monthly reporting, which is done the first week of every month.
- ✓ The mentor must abide by all guidelines and ground rules set forth by Companions for Children as detailed below. Failure to do so will result in closure of the match.
- ✓ The mentor will complete the mandated reporting training annually.
- ✓ The mentor will email the Match Support Specialist if there are any minor questions or concerns for the match outside of monthly calls to help solve any problems that may arise. The mentor will call the Match Support Specialist if there are any major questions or concerns for the match outside of monthly calls.
- ✓ The mentor will make every effort to stay engaged in the mentee's life by remaining consistent and avoiding cancellation of outings if possible.
- ✓ The mentor is expected to make efforts to attend events hosted by Companions for

Children, as well as quarterly mentor meetings. Notifications regarding dates and times of these events will be provided in advance.

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN ROLE

We need you to be an active partner!

- ✓ The parent is expected to return phone calls to mentors and the Companions for Children's office in a timely manner.
- ✓ The parent must abide by all Guidelines and Ground Rules set forth by Companions for Children as detailed in this handbook. Failure to do so will result in closure of the match.
- ✓ The parent will call Companions for Children's office or email the Match Support Specialist if there are any questions or concerns for the match in order to help solve any problems that may arise.
- ✓ The parent must abide by re-matching procedures as detailed in this handbook.
- ✓ Safety is our number one concern. Discuss each match outing with your child upon their return. Keeping the lines of communication open will allow them to let you know if there is a problem.
- ✓ The parent must maintain adequate records (including hours spent together and activities participated in together) of match outings for mandatory monthly reporting, which is done the first week of every month.

YOUTH ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT PROCESS

YOUTH ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

To be accepted as a youth in the Companions for Children – Youth Mentoring program, the youth must:

- ✓ Be within the ages of 6-18
- ✓ Reside within a 15-mile radius of Minot, ND
- ✓ Have a parent who is willing and able to support the match
- ✓ Want to have a mentor (Companions for Children staff will evaluate the child's desire to participate in their youth interview)

Companions for Children makes reasonable efforts to meet the needs of youth with special needs, but the needs of the youth must be appropriate for volunteer intervention. For that reason, Companions for Children is not able to serve youth who are severely physically handicapped or medically fragile, are currently involved in an inpatient

treatment program, suffer from significant emotional disturbances, which may pose a threat to themselves or others, or have a history of delinquent/criminal behaviors. Youth who will more appropriately be served by other agencies may be referred to those agencies. If you are unsure of your child's eligibility, call Companions for Children to discuss in more detail.

YOUTH ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- ✓ Fill out and submit an online Youth Application at www.companionsforchildren.org. Paper copies are available at Companions for Children's office or can be mailed upon request by calling our office or emailing office@companionsforchildren.org.
- ✓ Our Enrollment Coordinator will contact you to set up appointments for the Parent Interview and a Youth Interview. The Parent Interview gives us a better insight into the child's life and family background. The Youth Interview gives us a better idea of your child's interests to help find the best mentor for them. It is encouraged that the child is not present at this interview.
- ✓ Parent/Legal guardian signs all necessary documents. Failure to sign all documents will result in ineligibility.
- ✓ *Optional* Mentors and parents have the opportunity to meet in person or speak over the phone prior to the match meeting. Please note this in your interview.
- ✓ When your child has been chosen by a mentor, you are contacted with details about them and a match meeting is then set up at our office with you, your child, the mentor and our Enrollment Coordinator. At this meeting contact information is exchanged, guidelines and ground rules are reviewed, and the child and mentor are given time to get to know each other.
- ✓ Companions for Children will follow up in the first week of every month to offer support and complete mandatory reporting.

MENTOR ELIGIBILITY AND SCREENING PROCESS

MENTOR ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

To be accepted into the mentor screening process, a volunteer must:

- ✓ Have the availability to meet with their mentee at least at least **four hours per month on a minimum of two outings** for at least **one year**
- ✓ Be at least 20 years of age
- ✓ Reside within a 15-mile radius of Minot, ND

- ✓ Complete Companions for Children’s Screening Process; including a 2-hour online self-paced training and mandated reporter certification
- ✓ Have a valid driver’s license, operating vehicle, safe driving record, and vehicle insurance
- ✓ Have a working cell phone with an active voicemail at all times
- ✓ Provide Companions for Children’s staff with a valid email for regular communication

MENTOR SCREENING PROCESS

- ✓ Fill out and submit an online Mentor Application at www.companionsforchildren.org. Paper copies are available at Companions for Children’s office or can be mailed upon request.
- ✓ Our Enrollment Coordinator will contact you and send you a 2- hour self-paced training and mandatory reporter training. You will have two weeks to complete this.
- ✓ Upon completion of the training, the Enrollment Coordinator will contact you to set up an appointment for your Mentor Interview and email your background check paperwork. This interview gives us a better insight into your motivation, experience with children and volunteering, your work and family background, interests, etc. This interview typically takes 1 ½ - 2 hours – less if background paperwork is filled out ahead of time.
- ✓ Companions for Children conducts 3 or more confidential reference checks
- ✓ Companions for Children performs a Child Neglect and Abuse background check, Minot Police Department background check and a nationwide background check through American Checked.
- ✓ The Enrollment Coordinator then meets with the screening committee to present the information gathered during the screening process. All information is reviewed and the screening committee will either approve or deny the applicant. If the applicant is denied, a notice will be mailed. Please note that no reason for denial will be provided. Applicants may re-apply in one year if they are denied.
- ✓ *Optional* Mentors and parents have the opportunity to meet in person or speak over the phone prior to the match meeting. Please note this in your interview.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DETAILS

YOUTH SELECTION

Once a mentor is approved, he/she will be contacted and the youth selection process

will proceed. The Enrollment Coordinator will determine possible mentee options for a mentor by taking each eligible youth's interests, background, and time on the waiting list into consideration. The Enrollment Coordinator will then present 1-3 options to the mentor for him/her to choose from. **Timing of this will be dependent on the youth available at the time of approval.

Once a mentee is selected, the Enrollment Coordinator will contact the parent/guardian to inform them of a possible mentor for the child and share information about the mentor. The parent's opinion will be given the final approval on the mentor.

The parent/guardian has the opportunity to meet in person or speak with the mentor over the phone prior to the match meeting if he/she so chooses. **Please note this in the parent/legal guardian interview.

THE MATCH MEETING

The initial match meeting is conducted at the Companions for Children's office to introduce the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce all parties and let the new match get to know one another. Either the Enrollment Coordinator or Match Support Specialist will coordinate this match meeting and present necessary match paperwork at this time.

After this meeting the match will begin to meet for at least 4 hours per month on a minimum of 2 outings. Coordination of these outings will be conducted by the mentor and parent/guardian (not the mentee).

MANDATORY MONTHLY REPORTING

Each month the Match Support Specialist will conduct mandatory monthly reporting. This is a short questionnaire that takes no more than 5 minutes. These calls take place the first week of every month in order to discuss the previous month. It is imperative that efforts are made to contact the Match Support Specialist in a timely manner. Companions for Children makes over one hundred phone calls a month to matches, so the quicker each party can be contacted, the faster monthly reporting can be completed.

Failure to maintain monthly contact for more than two months will result in match termination. We are here to offer support and guidance to all involved in the match relationship. If you are having any difficulties in the match our Match Support Specialist is ready and willing to offer helpful suggestions. It is preferred that contact is made via phone but if that is not possible you may email your report or leave a voicemail after normal business hours.

Monthly reporting also ensures the child's safety. We compare reporting from both the parent and mentor to ensure both parties are accurately reporting on the match outing

activities. Parents - Safety is our number one concern. Discuss each match outing with your child upon their return. Keeping the lines of communication open will allow them to let you know if there is a problem.

REMATCHING PROCEDURE

If a child's match is closed, the child is eligible for re-matching as long as the parent/legal guardian complied with all guidelines and ground rules set forth by Companions for Children, maintained mandatory monthly reporting, and the child still expresses an interest in having a mentor.

If it has been more than a year since initial enrollment, both the parent and child will be re-interviewed. The Match Support Specialist will schedule this upon closure of the current match. The purpose of the update is to make a reassessment of the needs of the child and to update any change in status of the family. Companions for Children has the right to refuse a re-match under any circumstances.

MENTOR MEETINGS

The Match Support Specialist will plan and conduct quarterly mentor meetings. These meetings typically occur in the evening and are one-hour long. Mentor meetings are an opportunity for the Match Support Specialist to pass along any information that is deemed necessary for mentors to know. This can include, but is not limited to, updated information about the program, reminders of expectations or rules, or new features of the program. Mentor meetings also provide an opportunity for mentors to interact and ask each other questions to gain feedback that may be helpful for their own match. Attendance at mentor meetings is highly encouraged.

COMPANIONS FOR CHILDREN EVENTS

A few times per year, Companions for Children plans activities for mentors and mentees to participate in together. Some of the activities focus on giving back to the community, and some focus on having fun. We ask that mentors and parents coordinate when an event is coming up so that the match can attend at least 50% of the events throughout the year. Be sure to RSVP to events when they are coming up.

Youth who are un-matched or whose mentors are unable to attend may still participate. Parents must (1) drop off and pick up their child at the specified times, or (2) have their child's mentor pick up and drop off their child. Companions for Children's staff is prohibited from providing transportation to mentees while acting in an official capacity for the organization. Please do not ask staff members to provide transportation.

MATCH VOLUNTEERING

Companions for Children encourages free to low-cost activities for match outings. In addition, each match is required to volunteer for at least 4 hours per month on a minimum of 2 outings.

ADDITIONAL ENROLLMENT BENEFITS

MINOT FAMILY YMCA

Companions for Children, in partnership with the Minot Family YMCA, is able to provide a free YMCA membership to mentees after the completion of the enrollment process, and for the duration of the youth's enrollment in the program. This is an excellent resource for matches to utilize when they want to stay active during the winter months. In order to access this membership, the parent/legal guardian must fill out paperwork during normal business hours at the YMCA. As a mentor, the daily fee is waived if you arrive with your mentee. You must show a valid driver's license. **The YMCA has the right to refuse membership to youth in violation of any of their program's regulations.

HIGH AIR GROUND TRAMPOLINE PARK

Companions for Children in partnership with the High Air Ground Trampoline park, is able to provide a discounted rate for active matches. For \$10, both the mentor and mentee are able to jump for 1 hour. The purchase of \$3 jump socks are required, but may be reused on each visit. To utilize this benefit, parents must fill out an online waiver at www.highairground.com. Mentors may fill out the waiver upon arrival. When checking in the mentor must let the cashier know that they are a part of Companions for Children and provide both their name and the mentees name. This discount is only valid when the mentor and mentee are together. The mentee or mentor cannot utilize this discount when they are not together.

OTHERS (NORTH HILL BOWL, MARGIE'S ART STUDIO, THE PUTT DISTRICT)

Companions for Children, in partnership with various local businesses, is able to provide the following discounts.

- North Hill Bowl – Free shoe rental (\$3 value per person)
- Margie's Art Glass Studio – 50% off Mentors project
- The Putt District – Discounted rate of \$10 per match

When checking in the mentor must let the cashier know that they are a part of Companions for Children and provide both their name and the mentees name. This discount is only valid when the mentor and mentee are together. The mentee or mentor cannot utilize this discount when they are not together.

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.

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.

- ✓ **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.

- ✓ **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.

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Limits of Confidentiality Information will be released under the following circumstances:

- ✓ Pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- ✓ To agency counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged and its confidentiality is protected by law.

- ✓ Written requests for information must be submitted to the Executive Director. Written requests for information need to provide adequate information being disclosed is that the client intended and authorized.
- ✓ Members of the Board of Directors have access to client information only upon authorization by a formal motion of the board. Violation of this privilege shall constitute adequate cause for removal from the Board of Directors.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with Companions for Children's goals, values and program standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited.

- ✓ Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault.
- ✓ Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that belittles, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual.
- ✓ Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior.
- ✓ Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material.
- ✓ Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child.
- ✓ Denigration, public or private, of any Junior Friend parent/guardian or family member.
- ✓ Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature.
- ✓ Pursuing a personal relationship with a member of the mentee's family.
- ✓ Pursuing a relationship other than mentoring with a child or family member. (For example, but not limited to adoption, guardianship, etc. of the child or a family member.)
- ✓ Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law.
- ✓ Driving under the influence of alcohol.
- ✓ Possession of illegal substances.

F.A.Q.

WHAT IF I HAVE TO RESCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH COMPANIONS FOR CHILDREN STAFF?

Due to our small staff, Companions for Children does not have regular office hours and primarily schedules visits by appointment only. When we make an appointment with you, it is a two-way commitment and we ask that you respect our time as we do yours. Reliability and communication are very important to the success of our program and therefore we take any rescheduling or cancellations into consideration as part of your eligibility.

Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. We understand that issues can arise that may cause you to be late for your appointment. If this ever occurs, please call to inform us as soon as possible so we can do our best to accommodate you. It is likely that if you arrive more than 10 minutes late, we will need

to reschedule.

We respectfully ask that you provide us with a 24-hour + notice if you need to make a schedule change or cancel your appointment. If you must reschedule day of your appointment due to an illness or emergency, call our office as soon as possible. If you are unable to reach one of our staff, please leave a voicemail and/or send an email. After two rescheduled, cancelled or no-show appointments, your file will be closed and you are eligible to re-apply in 3 months. Thank you for understanding the value of our appointment policy as it allows us to best serve our clients and provide a high quality of service.

[Mentors, please note that the Screening Committee will be notified of any rescheduled or cancelled appointments]

HOW LONG WILL A CHILD WAIT FOR A MENTOR AFTER ENROLLMENT?

The length of time a child waits for a mentor is determined by the pool of mentors available. In the past, younger children have been matched more quickly than older children and girls have been matched more quickly than boys. Expect at least a one-month wait. The Enrollment Coordinator will be able to provide a better estimate of how long it will take to find a match after the Youth Interview.

HOW DOES COMPANIONS FOR CHILDREN DECIDE ON A MENTOR FOR A CHILD?

The Enrollment Coordinator pre-selects youth he/she feels most appropriate for a mentor. He/she works hard to facilitate matches that will be acceptable to both parties. Taken into account are the skills, needs, hobbies, interests, expectations of the match, and time of the wait time. The opinions of the youth, parent/guardian, and mentor will all be taken into consideration.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO MENTORS AND MENTEES DO TOGETHER?

Each match is unique in how time is spent together. Getting together doesn't require a special occasion or expensive activity—just 4 hours every month doing a variety of things the mentee and the mentor already enjoy. For example: They could share an activity that gives them something in common to talk about. Buy a comic book to read together. Play a board game. Hit a bucket of golf balls at the local driving range. Take a ride in the car with the radio on and talk about the music they like.

The match is also encouraged to try new activities together. Mentors can introduce mentees to different educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities available to them. Although these activities are not the goal of the organization, they may offer an opportunity for new experiences and the development of new skills for both the mentee and the mentor.

The mentor and mentee should select activities that give each of them a chance to learn more about one another. The main purpose in participating in activities is to provide a vehicle for the formation of a relationship, not just to entertain a child. It is from this relationship that the mentee may benefit from the mentor's guidance, acceptance, and assistance in meeting the challenges associated with growing up.

Most important: keep it simple and have fun! A list of free to low-cost activities will be provided at the match meeting for guidance.

HOW MUCH MONEY ARE THE MENTORS EXPECTED TO SPEND ON ACTIVITIES?

The quality of time invested with a mentee is more important than the amount of money the mentor spends; therefore, we do not set a specific financial expectation on the mentors. Companions for Children encourages free to low-cost activities. The goal of the relationship is to help the mentees see the world through a different lens so the mentor can inspire them to become something he/she never thought possible. Shoot hoops at a local park, play a game together, or share a pizza are great ways to spend time together, without breaking the bank.

Companions for Children will also provide group activities a few times per year that are a great way to meet other mentors and mentees in the program and are free of cost. Keep in mind the winter months sometimes make it challenging to do free to low-cost activities, we recommend the mentor choose a few options that are within their budget and let the mentee choose. More expensive activities such as eating out, arcades and going to the movie theaters, or purchasing gifts for the mentee, are discouraged in the early stages of a match as it sets a high standard of expectation.

The mentor should set their own budget on how much they are willing and able to spend. Financial expectations should be communicated to the mentees by the parents so that the mentor does not feel taken advantage of and the mentee doesn't become disappointed.

HOW DO I UTILIZE THE BENEFITS OF THE YMCA?

Each mentee in our program has a free membership through the Minot Family YMCA. The Match Support Specialist sends an updated list of enrolled youth to the YMCA at the beginning of every month. In order to utilize this membership, the mentee's parent/guardian must fill out paperwork at the YMCA during normal business hours to finalize the membership. If a mentor takes a mentee to the YMCA for an activity, the mentor's daily fee is waived if he/she arrives with the mentee. A valid driver's license may be requested.

WHAT IF I CAN'T GET A HOLD OF MY MENTEE'S PARENT?

Please make multiple attempts to call or text your mentee's parent. If you still have not received a phone call back, contact Companions for Children staff to notify them of the difficulties you have been having. Please do not wait for us to call for monthly reporting

to let us know of communication problems.

WHAT IF WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THE MENTOR?

We typically expect the mentors to initiate contact in order to make plans, however if time passes and you do not hear from the mentor, call or text them. Remember, this is a two-way street and your involvement as a parent is critical to your child's success. If you make multiple attempts to call or text the mentor and you still do not hear back, contact Companions for Children's staff to notify them of the difficulties you have been having. Please do not wait for us to call for monthly reporting to let us know of communication problems.

WHAT IF MY SCHEDULE GETS BUSY ONE MONTH AND I CAN'T MEET FOR FOUR HOURS?

We ask that mentors and parents make it a priority to ensure that the 4 hours per month requirement is being met. We understand that there are occasional circumstances that arise that may hinder your ability to meet the requirement. Missed time together and long gaps in communication negatively affect the matches progress.

If there are circumstances that cannot be avoided and allow no time available (i.e. serious illness, month long vacations, family emergencies, etc.) please contact the mentor or parent and Companions for Children's office to keep everyone informed. If it becomes a habit that you do not meet the minimum 4-hour requirement, your match will be closed.

WHAT IF I CAN'T FULFILL THE ONE YEAR COMMITMENT?

In order to help build a positive, lasting relationship Companions for Children requires mentors to commit to at least one year to their match. This gives time for rapport to be built and shows the child that you are there for the long haul. If at any time circumstances in your life prevent you from fulfilling the full year commitment (i.e. moving) you must contact Companions for Children staff immediately. The Match Support Specialist will help guide you in what steps to take to close the match positively, rather than causing harm by abruptly ending the match.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD A CHILD BE CLOSED OUT OF THE PROGRAM?

- ✓ When the mentee reaches the age of 18, they will be formally closed out of the Companions for Children program. However, they are able to keep an in-formal relationship with their mentor.
- ✓ The mentee moves out of the service area.
- ✓ If Companions for Children is unable to make, contact with the parent or mentor for 2 months the match will be closed. It is important to notify all parties if your address, phone number or email change and to return phone calls in a timely manner.
- ✓ The mentee's needs become such that they are no longer appropriate for volunteer

intervention

- ✓ The parent fails to uphold the Guidelines and Ground Rules set forth in this handbook
- ✓ The mentee no longer expresses that he or she wants a mentor.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD A MENTOR BE CLOSED OUT OF THE PROGRAM?

- ✓ The mentor fails to consistently meet the minimum 2 times per month for a total of 4-hours
- ✓ The mentor moves out of the service area.
- ✓ If Companions for Children is unable to make, contact with the parent or mentor for 2 months the match will be closed. It is important to notify all parties if your address, phone number or email change and to return phone calls in a timely manner.
- ✓ The mentor fails to uphold the Guidelines and Ground Rules set forth in this handbook
- ✓ The mentor shows any sign of threat or danger to a child.

CAN A MENTOR HAVE MORE THAN ONE MENTEE AT A TIME?

Companions for Children focuses on providing and supporting one-on-one relationships for a youth. Therefore, each mentor will only have one mentee, and each mentee will only have one mentor.

WHAT IF SOMEONE NEEDS TO CANCEL PREARRANGED PLANS?

If either the mentor, or the parent, need to cancel plans for an outing for any reason, the other party must be contacted immediately. Reasons for cancellation could include medical or family emergencies, or getting called into work unexpectedly. We suggest that mentors make every effort not to cancel plans with their mentee as it can cause disappointment for the child and it could hinder the relationship. Therefore, please avoid cancelling unless absolutely necessary.