



## Characteristics of a Successful Volunteer

### Be Focused on the Children

1. **Be a good listener.**
2. **Be consistent and reliable.**
3. **You are responsible for building the relationships.**

### Be a Friend

1. **Volunteers are role models who provide support and gentle guidance. Being a friend will demonstrate to your students that you are reliable and committed to them.**
2. **The students will appreciate that you are not their parent. They are unlikely to warm up to an unrelated adult who demonstrates parental characteristics.**

### Don't Preach Values

1. **Take a "hands-off" approach when it comes to the explicit transmission of values. Let your actions do the talking by being a role model and setting an example. Use guided questions.**
2. **It can be difficult for youth to befriend an unknown adult. If the student believes they risk criticism if they share something personal, they are unlikely to open up to you.**

### Have Realistic Goals and Expectations

1. **The relationship takes time to develop.**
  - **A lot of children have been traumatized by adults and have a hard time developing trust. Strong mentoring relationships do lead to positive change in youth. Changes occur slowly over time as the result of a close, trusting relationship.**
2. **Change will not happen quickly or automatically.**
  - **It is not our responsibility to rescue the student. We should not push the students to change. Successful volunteers believe that their role is to support the youth and help them grow and develop.**
3. **Prioritize the relationship over goals.**
  - **Set goals for your time with the student. Use those goals as an outline for your time together, but be adaptable to the needs of your student and be willing to change the plan in order to listen, build trust, and show love to your mentee.**
4. **Have Fun Together**

- **Have fun! Let your light shine in front of the children. Be joyful and cultivate an atmosphere that the children are excited to be in.**
- **Youth experience a growing sense of self-worth when adults pay persistent, positive attention to them. As your student comes to see you as a friend, he or she is more likely to be receptive to spending time together in activities that are perceived as less fun, such as working on school-related assignments.**

## **Supporting School Administration, Teachers, and Parents**

1. **We supplement and support the school staff, children, and families. We are there for them, knowing and respecting their mission and vision.**
  - **We seek to empower and support families. Focus on supporting the positives and seeing opportunities in struggles.**
  - **We support the teachers. Respect their leadership and expertise.**