

Guidelines to Mentoring Young Entrepreneurs

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Why do we need youth mentors?

Mentoring young people is a powerful way to support and contribute to their growth. Research confirms that having an adult who takes an interest in a young person can have a significant influence on the youth. One way to help young entrepreneurs is to utilize mentors as guides.

Who can be a mentor?

Any adult 21 years or older, male or female, can be a mentor if they are willing to: meet regularly with a student and assist him or her by listening, encouraging, and suggesting resources.

How do I start a mentor program in my town or county?

Starting a program in conjunction with a class or a club is an excellent component. Utilizing a 4-H club, Girls or Boys Clubs or other established youth programs are also great ways to start. If your school district has a mentor program or an adult volunteer program, you can work with them to identify youth entrepreneur mentors.

What does a mentor program look like?

Mentor programs come in all shapes and sizes. The basic premise of the project is to have a volunteer adult from an area business working toward a common goal with a young protégée.

When do they meet?

Mentors must be able to meet with mentees on a regular basis. Once a week, every other week or once a month can work as long as there is ongoing communication and regular meetings.

Where do they meet?

Mentor meetings should be held in a group setting until all volunteers' background checks are completed. In a school operated program, mentors can initially meet with students during class or club periods. After background checks are complete, the mentors can meet with students at other times. It is always prudent to meet in public places with several other mentor/mentee pairs. For programs that are community based, the same guidelines could be employed. Be guided by concern for the safety and welfare of all participants.



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Mentor and Mentee Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to serve as guidance as you develop your mentor/mentee relationship.

- Mentee tours business or makes arrangements to go out on the job with Mentor. (This invitation is extended by the Mentor to the Mentee after background approval is complete)
- Mentors and Mentees join another mentor/mentee pair and have coffee or lunch together. (Sometimes conversations flow more readily with 4 people getting to know one another rather than 2)
- Mentee invites Mentor to class a minimum of 2 times during the school year.
- Mentee shares his/her business plan with Mentor prior to making class presentation pitch. (Preferably in person but this may be done electronically)
- Keep the lines of communication open; respond to all text, emails or phone calls, even if it just to acknowledge that you received the communication. If you do not get a response to your emails from your mentor/mentee, call him/her. You may have a wrong address or be stuck in someone's spam box.
- Be punctual, respectful, and work towards developing a business relationship that is beneficial to both of you for now and in the future.
- Communicate weekly via email with your mentor/mentee about things that are going on in general or in an entrepreneurial project in which you are involved. The email should also be sent to a third party the project coordinator or perhaps a parent.

