



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters®**

**OF THE MISSISSIPPI
VALLEY**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BECOMING A BIG

WHAT IS A BIG?

A Big is an adult friend who spends time with a Little getting to know them, having fun, and building on the child's strengths. Bigs are required to be 18 years old and out of high school. We have no maximum age. Currently, our Bigs range in age from 18-83. A Big is not a replacement parent, but rather someone to have fun with, spending quality, one-on-one time together.

WHAT IS A LITTLE?

A Little is a youth facing some kind of adversity who will benefit from a positive adult to trust, look to for guidance, be a role model, and have fun with.

WHAT IS A MATCH?

A Match is a one-to-one mentoring friendship between a Big and a Little, in which they spend consistent time together, and is monitored and supported by professional BBBSMV staff.

HOW MANY LITTLES ARE ON THE WAITING LIST?

BBBSMV has about 250 youth currently wanting to be matched with a Big. Of these, 75% (about 187 youth) are male. In contrast, only about 30% of our volunteers are male. We are ALWAYS looking to recruit more male Bigs. We also know that Couples Matches allow us to match our waiting list boys, so encourage community members to explore this option.

HOW OFTEN DO BIGS AND LITTLES GET TOGETHER?

We offer two mentoring options: Community-based or School-based Plus. Community-based Matches typically get together 2-3 times per month, usually during evenings and weekends. School-based Plus Matches typically meet once per week during the day at the child's school over the lunch/recess time. Bigs and Littles are asked to commit to meeting consistently for at least 12 months. All Community-based and School-based Plus matches are invited to attend BBBSMV match activities, offered a couple times per month.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY LITTLE?

Community-based Matches are encouraged to do things like riding bikes, playing at the park, visiting a library or museum, going to a ball game, getting ice cream, or attending a community event. School-based Plus Matches will eat lunch together and then can go outside for the child's recess time or stay inside and play games or do an activity. All Matches can participate in BBBSMV group match activities, which are often educational, and always fun!

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN I EXPECT FROM BBBSMV AS A NEW BIG?

Before you're matched with a Little, all new Bigs participate in a small group Pre-Match Training, led by BBBSMV staff. This training will walk you through what to expect as a new Big and situational scenarios to help you prepare for your Match. After you're matched, a BBBSMV Program Specialist will be in regular contact with you to provide assistance and give feedback as your Match progresses. They'll help you with ideas for activities, guidance for handling possible difficult situations and feedback on how you are making a difference. We also partner with local organizations to provide workshops and trainings that are beneficial to all involved in BBBSMV.

CAN I CHOOSE THE TYPE OF CHILD I WILL BE MATCHED WITH?

Through the enrollment process, a Volunteer Enrollment Specialist will get to know you and will work with you to identify a child with whom you will be best matched, based upon age preference, background, interests, hobbies, and other factors. BBBSMV only makes same gender Matches. Big Brothers are always matched to Little Brothers. Big Sisters are matched to Little Sisters and Big Couples are matched to Little Brothers.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED WITH THIS PROGRAM?

The quality of time invested with your Little is more important than the amount of money you spend. Your financial expectation should be very minimal. We encourage our Matches to explore free and low cost activities as much as possible. Your Program Specialist can help you with activity ideas if necessary. Families can sometimes contribute to an activity expense. BBBSMV has partnerships with many local groups and businesses who offer discounts to our Matches.

TO LEARN MORE CLICK HERE
OR GIVE US A CALL AT 563.323.8006