Dear Parent / Guardian,

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay offers the **Bigs in Schools & Sites Mentoring Program** to qualifying students at select elementary schools and afterschool programs.

- Mentors visit for one hour each week to provide extra attention and help with school work.
- The teacher will make sure the time of the visit does not interfere with regular classroom learning.
- **Visits occur at the school or afterschool program grounds only.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters carefully screens and trains mentors before they are matched with a child.

- The screening includes an interview, a criminal records check, and two references.
- Mentors agree to visit on a consistent, regular basis during the school year and keep in touch by phone or mail over the summer months.

**Does your child struggle to make new friends?**
**Does your child need help remembering to do their homework?**
**Could your child use extra help with reading, writing, math or science?**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters can help!** Our school/site based mentoring program has been proven to have a significant, positive impact on the children in the program. Here are some positive outcomes we saw in children that participated in 2010-2011:

- 88% improved their self-confidence
- 76% have a better sense of their future
- 77% improved their academic performance & attitude towards school

Not every child that applies will be matched with a mentor. If you would like your child to be considered for participation in this program, please sign the attached permission form and return it to your child's teacher or afterschool staff.

Your prompt return of the attached permission slip will help us pair your child with a role model, mentor, and friend.

Thank You!

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay**

www.bbbsfl.org
STEPS IN THE PROCESS:

1) Application:
- Child must attend an elementary school or afterschool program that is actively partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- A Big Brothers Big Sisters permission form signed by the child’s parent/guardian is required. Any information parent/guardians provide about their child is helpful in finding the right mentor.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters must receive a referral form signed by school personnel (teachers, guidance counselors, principals, etc.) or afterschool program staff.
- Children referred to the program must be willing to engage in a friendship with a volunteer mentor.

2) Assessment:
- After the parent permission form is received, Big Brothers Big Sisters staff will meet with the child to gather information on their interests and personality. The child's teacher will be asked to provide information on how a mentor can help develop the child’s strengths. The child's information is kept confidential.
- All volunteers complete an in person interview, background check, reference checks, and attend a mandatory training prior to being matched with a child in the program.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers are carefully screened and trained. However, they do not have additional training to work with a child who is severely emotionally challenged or severely physically challenged.
- Children with severe emotional or physical challenges will be referred to a community agency better able to accommodate their special needs. A child cannot be accepted if there is a history of in-patient psychiatric care or residential treatment.

3) Matching:
- Not every child is accepted into the program.
- Once a child is accepted, BBBS will begin looking for just the right mentor for the child.
- BBBS will make an attempt to call the child’s parent/guardian when a mentor is chosen.
- With consideration to the child’s and mentor’s availability, the BBBS Mentor Manager will schedule an in person introduction meeting for the child and mentor. Parent/guardians are welcome, but are not required to attend.
- The child and mentor will meet on school/site grounds only for 1 hour a week during the school year and will keep in touch by phone or in writing over the summer months.
- BBBS contacts the child and mentor monthly in person or by phone and calls parent/guardians once a semester for detailed updates.

Ground Rules:
- Parent/guardians are the primary custodians of child safety and should be fully informed about their child’s time and activities: It is important for parent/guardians to ask their child questions about the activities they do with their mentor.
- Parent/guardians are asked to contact Big Brothers Big Sisters if they ever have any questions about their child’s participation in the program as well as to notify BBBS if contact information changes.
- The required minimum time commitment is 1 hour a week for a minimum of 12 months. Any significant time more or less spent together should be reported to Big Brothers Big Sisters immediately.
- Parent/guardians are encouraged to attend special events sponsored by BBBS, or visit the school/site during the mentoring time, to meet their child’s mentor.
- Children and mentors in the school & site program are not allowed to visit outside of the program, except at BBBS events and the student’s parent/guardian must always provide transportation to and from the event.
Your signature below acknowledges that:

• You grant permission for your child to participate in the Big Brothers Big Sisters School/Site-based Mentoring Program.
• You authorize the school to share all information about your child with Big Brothers Big Sisters staff and to release a copy of your child’s report card and other school records to Big Brothers Big Sisters at the beginning and throughout the school year.
• You allow your child to exchange phone and/or address information with their volunteer so they may keep in touch with each other over the phone or by mail. (If you prefer that your child’s contact information not be given to the volunteer, please initial here ________.)
• You will encourage your child to meet with their mentor on a weekly basis.
• You will allow your child to talk with a Big Brothers Big Sisters staff person about personal safety.

You also agree to the following rules:

• I understand my child will be meeting with his/her mentor one-on-one only on school/site grounds. I understand that my child and his/her mentor are not permitted to have in-person contact outside of school/site grounds unless I provide transportation for my child and supervision during agency sponsored events.
• I will be supportive of this relationship for my child to benefit as much as possible.
• I will discuss activities with my child and show interest in the program.
• I will give feedback to the Big Brothers Big Sisters case manager about my child’s progress since having a mentor.
• I will contact Big Brothers Big Sisters IMMEDIATELY if a problem develops.
• In order to assist in promoting the program, I give my consent for pictures of my child(ren) to be identified in print by first name only in any Big Brothers Big Sisters publication or production. I hereby grant Big Brothers Big Sisters the right to use this image as they may desire, in all media and in all its forms including, but not limited to, publications, any televised photography, agency website or newsletter, social media, and recordings.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, creed, sexual orientation/preference or national origin. However, as the parent/legal guardian of your child you have the right to control who is matched to your child by us. You may require that your child only be matched to a mentor of a particular gender, race, creed, sexual orientation/preference, or national origin, as follows: ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________  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____________________________ Please answer the questions on the next page >>></p>
Your child’s information will be kept confidential and will assist us with determining their eligibility.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Child’s name: ____________________________________________

2. What area would like your child’s mentor to focus on? 
   *(Please choose one)*
   - Reading/Language Arts
   - Math
   - Science
   - Completing Homework Assignments
   - School Attendance
   - School Conduct/Behavior

3. Does your child attend a before or after school program? **YES** / **NO**  If YES, please provide the name of the program: ________________________________________________

4. Does your child qualify for free or reduced lunch? **YES** / **NO**

5. Has your child ever been held back at least one grade level? **YES** / **NO**

6. Has your child ever been suspended or expelled from school? **YES** / **NO**

7. Has your child ever been involved with the Juvenile Justice System? **YES** / **NO**

8. Does your child have a parent that is incarcerated? **YES** / **NO**

9. Will you be moving or will your child be changing schools within the next 12 months? **YES** / **NO**  If yes, please explain: ________________________________________________

10. Does your child have a parent that is serving in the military? **YES** / **NO**  If YES, are they currently deployed? **YES** / **NO**

11. How do you describe your child’s personality?

12. What are your child’s interests, hobbies, and favorite activities?

13. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child?