



THE MENTOR TOOLKIT

110 MENTORING ACTIVITIES

LIFE SKILLS RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PREPARING FOR COLLEGE HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE CAREER PLANNING RESOURCES
TIME MANAGEMENT EDUCATIONAL PLANNING SELF-DISCOVERY FINANCIAL AID VALUES GUIDANCE GOAL-SETTING

STUDY SKILLS
SELF-ESTEEM



Take Stock in Children is a non-profit program which provides deserving low-income children in our community with scholarships to college or vocational school and guidance from caring mentors. Since 1995, Take Stock has provided over 17,000 children with scholarships and mentors in Florida.

WELCOME MENTORS!



Take Stock in Children has developed this Mentor Toolkit to make it easier for you to help your student. The Toolkit consists of simple, enjoyable activities that also have a serious purpose: to promote your student's success in school and in life. The Mentor Toolkit is not an instructional manual intended to tell you how to mentor your student. Every student is a unique individual. Every mentoring relationship is unique. Mentors and students should therefore decide for themselves how to use this collection of tools. Do not feel compelled to complete every activity. You can use these resources in any order—randomly or sequentially—or leave them aside until you feel they are needed. (If you wish to use a blueprint for addressing your student's needs, you can start with the academic calendar included in the Educational Planning section.)

Please remember that your primary task as a mentor is to meet regularly with your student. The two most important things mentors can do for their students are to listen to them and to encourage them to succeed.

Take some time to look over the Table of Contents and read the introduction to each section with your student. This will help you and your student decide how to use the Toolkit. We hope that these tools will make your mentoring sessions more productive and rewarding.

Take Stock in Children depends greatly on mentors to help children achieve their dreams. Like your student, you will receive support and encouragement every step of the way. This toolkit is one of the resources available to you. Thank you for being a Take Stock in Children mentor.

Take Stock in Children has a proven record of helping Florida's deserving low-income children graduate from high school, attend college, stay out of trouble, and become productive citizens. As a Take Stock in Children mentor, you are a vital part of an extraordinarily successful program that offers these young people real hope for a better life.

Take Stock in Children works because of the teamwork and the cooperation of individuals and their communities. This success is the result of a unique public-private partnership of private citizens, state government, business, school systems, social service agencies, and civic and religious organizations. Take Stock in Children serves at-risk children in all of Florida's counties.

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HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR STUDENT'S NEEDS



INTRODUCTION: *HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR STUDENT'S NEEDS*

More than 100 Fun Ways to Help Your Student!

Take Stock in Children has designed this mentor toolkit so that mentors may identify and address the specific needs of their students and have some fun in the process. This toolkit provides a great many activities to help your student, but do not be overwhelmed by its size! Mentors are not expected to do every activity. In fact, very few mentors and students will be able to get through every section. The purpose for providing such a wide range of resources is to allow you to be selective and to target your student's particular needs.

Mentoring Relationships Are Unique

Every Take Stock in Children student is a distinct individual with special qualities, gifts, and needs. Every Take Stock in Children mentor likewise brings his/her own particular blend of knowledge and experience to the table. Mentoring relationships are unique experiences.

Because students and mentors set the agenda, there is no right or wrong way to use this toolkit. You can start at the beginning and work your way to the end or merely pick and choose the activities you want to share with your student. Each of the sections represents a general area of student need; each of the activities focuses upon a specific student need.

You may not even wish to use the toolkit at all right now, choosing instead to concentrate on communicating with your student. That is the beauty and power of mentoring: A student's greatest need is for a caring adult to listen to his or her concerns. Your support and guidance may be all your student wants or needs at the present time.

Helping Students Set the Agenda

How should a mentor address the specific needs of a student? Mentoring should be enjoyable for the student. Students should be encouraged, but not forced, to talk about such things as preparing for college and planning for a career.

In many instances, all your student needs or wants is a confidant. In such cases, a "laid back" mentoring style is appropriate. Students and mentors can simply do fun things together during their mentoring sessions. Other students, however, may want mentors to help them in certain areas. This toolkit will allow mentors to focus upon students' specific academic and personal needs. It is therefore important that you and your student review each section and decide where to start. You can help your student set the agenda for mentoring sessions by using the Mentor-Student Agreement sheet in the first section. This activity allows your student the opportunity to communicate his/her expectations to you.

Four General Areas of Need

After consulting with mentors, local agencies, school personnel, and other sources, Take Stock in Children has identified four general areas of student need: Personal Development, Educational Planning, Academic Skills, and Career Planning.

In the toolkit, each of these four areas is divided into modules containing various individual activities. The toolkit is organized to make it easy for mentors to locate specific tools. For example, if your student has problems with homework, you can look under the third section, "Supporting Academic Success," and find the "Homework Assistance" tools. If you want to build your student's self-esteem, look for a corresponding tool under the "Personal Development" section.

Section Two: Personal Growth (Activities 1-28)

The first section of the toolkit contains tools that will promote students' personal growth and development by enabling them to learn more about themselves, recognize and appreciate their individual strengths, set realistic goals, and identify key values in their lives. Young people will enjoy completing these self-discovery activities because they enhance their sense of self-worth. Now they will have the opportunity to express themselves to a caring adult: "This is who I am, how I think, and what I want." As a mentor, you have the chance to support and empower your student: "That's great. How can I help you achieve your goals?"

Working on this section is a great way to build a close relationship with your student by providing him or her with encouragement and personal guidance. Helping students understand the relationship between their personal qualities and their goals is a great way to get them to start planning for their futures. As a mentor your job is to validate your student's sense of self-worth and promote his/her positive traits: "You have a lot of good qualities. How do you want to use them to achieve your goals?"

Section Three: Educational Planning (Activities 29-58)

Is your student taking the courses required for graduation? What courses does your student need to prepare for college? Will your student have enough money for college? Has your student signed up for the ACT or the SAT? Has he/she prepared for these tests?

The activities in this section are designed to help students prepare for high school and college. Educational planning is one area in which Take Stock in Children students will require much assistance. Such planning includes the following: identifying the right courses in high school and college, preparing for standardized tests, preparing for college, and obtaining financial aid.

Mentors are not expected to do the job of a guidance counselor; instead, these tools are constructed to make it easier for your student to work with his/her school guidance counselor. They are also intended to ensure that your student will not overlook important tasks or deadlines. The academic calendar provided in this section is a great tool for keeping your student on track. If you can get your student to use these tools, you will be able to accurately monitor your student's progress.

Section Four: Supporting Academic Success (Activities 59-82)

There are a few fundamental skills that every student must possess to succeed in high school and in college: time management, test-taking, and note-taking. The modules in this section contain practical worksheets that will help your student learn these basic skills. There is also a resource page that will direct your student to powerful online tools to help him/her with homework, writing, and other important academic tasks.

The resources in this module will allow you to monitor your student's academic performance, learn how to get help for your student in specific subject areas, and enable you to teach your student important organizational and academic skills. As a mentor, your long-term goal is to attempt to improve your student's self-discipline through the use of these tools and techniques.

When students go off to college, they will be on their own. They will have to decide for themselves how to spend their free time. Students who use the tools in these modules will gain experience constructing a work schedule, but following a schedule can be hard for a young person. Your encouragement can help a student learn the value of sticking to a schedule.

Section Five: Career Planning (Activities 83-110)

Talking about careers is a great way to motivate your student to think positively about the future. Young people want to be successful. They want to have exciting careers and a better lifestyle. But do they have a practical understanding of the world of work? Do they really know what they want out of a career? Are they aware of the many career possibilities available to them? Are they able to construct a practical career plan? Do they know what career skills and tools they will need to be employable?

In this section, students will be provided with web sites that allow them to learn about the four areas of career development: self-assessment, career exploration, career planning, and career preparation. Students who want to use their personal qualities and interests to identify possible career choices can use the first module on self-assessment. Those who simply want to learn more about careers can go straight to the second module and use the career exploration tools.

If your student wants to devise a concrete plan for a specific career, he/she can use Florida eCHOICES in the third module for this purpose. Finally, if your student wants to learn how to build a resume or portfolio, he/she can use the tools in the fourth module.

As they mature, students often change their career choices. This indecisiveness is normal, but, due to financial reasons, many students do not have the luxury of such a choice once they enter college. Mentors should encourage students to go back to the modules in this section as many times they wish before high school graduation, but also caution them that it is wise to develop a concrete career plan prior to entering college.

The Importance of Goals

This toolkit can have great practical value for students. But does your student have a plan for the future? Does he or she understand why all these activities are important? Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to talk with your student about his/her career and life goals. Students who are working for something they really want will work harder in school because they understand the practical significance of a college education. Students who can transform their dreams into practical goals have taken a big step on the road to success. Getting students to realize the importance of a college education is a major step in improving their academic performance.