

Keeping in Touch

Big and Little ways to Communicate

Writing:

- EMAIL is fast, but your Little will have to get to a computer. If he/she doesn't have one at home, perhaps his/her school is near a public library or other agency that will let them use email (a map is included in your Little's packet). Most Libraries require a parent or guardian to come in and sign permission forms before allowing minors to use the computers.
- POSTCARDS are slower, but your Little receives something real to read or see. There are 3 postcards for each of you to send to each other during the summer.
- LETTERS are another way to keep in touch with your Little. There is a stamped envelope for each of you and some extra supplies for Littles.
- JOURNALING is a way to record your thoughts and ideas. You can keep your journal private or share it with your Little:
 - a. through letters,
 - b. through email,
 - c. by writing your thoughts down and sharing them in the Fall, or
 - d. through Blogging.

Speaking:

Give you're Little a phone call. You might both plan to listen to the same radio station, or watch the same TV show. Call and talk about the program.

Communicating without words:

Art communicates! Draw, color, doodle or paste pictures on your postcard and mail it to your Little. Words don't have to be part of your message.

Other Activities:

Attend BBBS summer events! A calendar is included in your packet. Your BBBS Match Support Specialist will let you know about any upcoming activity that isn't listed there.

Included in your packet are handouts on activities that you might want to try with your Little (depending on his/her age)—they can be done separately and discussed, sent through the mail, or done while on the phone together. Copies of instructions are in your packet.

Twelve Questions Activity

Ask your Little to write the answer to any or all questions in whatever order he/she wishes. When your Little has finished, ask him/her to discuss his/her answers. Make “I learned...” statements, or discuss how the assignment made him/her feel. Your Little may want to record his/her responses in a journal.

1. What do you wish would happen?
2. What would you like to do better?
3. What do you wish you had more time for?
4. What do you wish you had more money for?
5. What more would you like to get out of life?
6. What are things you'd like to do, but haven't done yet?
7. What angered you recently?
8. What have you complained about?
9. With whom would you like to get along better?
10. What would you like to get others to do?
11. What takes too long?
12. What would you like to organize better?

This is also a good time to introduce goal setting to your match as a technique for gaining control over his/her life and achieving at least one of the things mentioned on the above.

Adapted from: 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom, a Handbook for Teachers and Parents by Jack Canfield & Harold C. Wells (Allyn and Bacon, A division of Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1976) P.173

“Who Am I?” Activity

To get to know your Little better, ask him/her to complete these sentences—either over the phone, through email, or in letters. Discuss the ones that interest you the most and feel free to add new ones.

1. In general, school is....
2. My best friend is...
3. Something I'd like to tell my teacher is...
4. I don't like people who...
5. I'm at my best when I...
6. People I trust...
7. The best thing that could happen to me is...
8. When I don't like something I've done, I...
9. When I like something I've done, I...
10. I'm very happy that...
11. I wish my parents knew...
12. Someday I hope...
13. Five adjectives that describe me are...

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Create a TIME CAPSULE for the summer

Materials needed:

- Shoe box, large manila envelope or other container
- “Time Capsule Entry Journal” Pages
- Items collected over the summer to share with your Big/Little

How to create and keep a time capsule:

- Match will make a commitment to create a time capsule for the summer. You will have a chance to share your time capsules with each other at match activities over the summer or at the first match meeting when school begins in the fall.
- Each week, this summer, both you and your Little will collect an item to add to your time capsule and write a time capsule entry explaining why you’ve included the item in your time capsule and what about the item you want to share with your match partner.
 - Examples of possible time capsule items:
 - Small rock from a beach that you visited this summer.
 - Ticket stub from the local fair or other festival you attended.
 - A drawing of a special moment you experienced--a friend’s birthday party, a day at the swimming pool, or watching fireworks.
- You should remind each other of your commitment when you talk on the phone or correspond throughout the summer.

Create a CIRCLE JOURNAL for the summer

Materials needed:

- Journal, which can be as simple as paper fastened together or a decorated spiral notebook

How to create and keep a circle journal:

- Match will make a commitment to create a circle journal for the summer.
- The journal will be passed back and forth, between Big and Little, throughout the summer, either at set BBBS activities or through the mail.
- Every time a Big or Little has the journal he/she will create an entry before passing the journal back to his/her match partner. The entry can include writing, pictures, drawing, and items glued into the journal.
- The match should remind each other of their commitment when they talk on the phone or correspond throughout the summer.

Although a circle journal doesn't have to have a theme, here are a few ideas of themes that might be fun:

- Questions—Every time a match partner has a journal they end their entry by writing a question for their Little or Big to answer.
- Themes—Pick a common interest and focus journal entries around sharing about this interest. For example, fishing, arts, popular culture, music, magic, sports, recipes, exercise, or charting the stars.
- Years—Envision where you will be 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20 years from now. Each time you have the journal write about where you want to be at this time, or where you hope your match partner will be and tips on how to get there.
- Circle Story—Either match partner begins a stories and writes a few paragraphs, and then hands the story off to their match partner to create the next few paragraphs. Keep the story going in a circular pattern throughout the summer.

If you're going to go with more of a free flowing journal here are some topics you may want to write about:

- Describe your dream job or dream vacation.
- Write about your biggest fear, your proudest moment, or what you hope to achieve this coming year.

PLANT A SEED to remember

Materials needed:

- 2 seed packets, one for the Little and one for the Big
- A place to plant the seeds (may require a pot and soil)
- A library card and access to a library, if you decide to take on the reading challenge.

Activities:

- Bigs and Littles plant their seeds at the same time.
- Throughout the summer matches can check in to compare how their plants are doing. In conversations over email or on the phone the match can describe how their plants are doing and see if their development is similar. Matches can also take pictures or sketch images of their plants week by week. And if it's a vegetable plant, matches can share ideas of things to create with the vegetables that their plants are producing.
- Matches can independently go to the library and check out any of the following books about seeds. These are children's books, although even teens and adults can learn from them. The match can read a book a week over the phone:
 - Glenna's Seeds by Nancy Edwards
 - Corn is Maze, A Weed is Flower by Alike
 - Bean and Plant by Christine Back
 - The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
 - You Can't Smell a Flower with Your Ear by Joanna Cole
 - The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss
 - The Great Big Enormous Turnip by Helen Oxenburg
 - The Magic School Bus Plants Seeds by Patricia Reif

Create PUZZLES to send to your Little

Visit <http://www.puzzles.ca/freefun.html> for free puzzles you can print and mail to your Little.

Phone Activities

(Some of these can also be done through email or mail)

- **“Frumdiddle”** from Games for Reading—a frumdiddle is secret object, plant, or animal. To play Frumdiddle one person must choose a secret object, plant or animal and then give clues, one at a time, until the other person guesses. After each clue, the other person has a chance to guess. When they guess correctly, the first person yells out “Frumdiddle.” This is the reward for having figured out the secret! This is a chance to stretch your Little’s vocabulary. Each time you play Frumdiddle try to introduce a new word, so you’ll have to explain the meaning for them to take an educated guess. It’s fun, and could be a great opening or closing activity for a phone conversation.
- **“Circle Story”** from Games for Reading—Begin by introducing a name for your story. Then let your Little create the first line to your story. You each will go back and forth, adding lines to the story, until you come to a conclusion. Have your Little title the next story.
- **“Grandmother’s Trunk”** from Games for Reading—The first person begins by saying “In my grandmother’s truck, I packed...” then filling in the blank. The second player begins by saying “In my grandmother’s truck, I packed [the item the first person packed], and a...” then fill in the blank. Each person goes back and forth repeating the entire list of what’s been packed in the truck, in the proper order, until one person either says the items out of order or can’t remember.

More Phone Activities

- **Chats and Ponderings**—Talk about any of the following questions:
 1. Who makes the best ice cream?
 2. What’s your favorite Halloween costume?
 3. If you could choose a wild animal as a pet, what would you choose?
 4. If you had to pick an animal that best characterizes you, what would it be?
 5. If someone gave you two roundtrip airline tickets to anywhere in the world, where would you go?
 6. If you could meet anyone in history, who would you meet?
 7. If you could meet anyone living today, who would you meet?
 8. If you won one million dollars what would you do with it?
 9. Who has the greatest job of all?
 10. What is the quietest place you have ever been?
- **Book Club**—Choose a book that you both want to read this summer. Read a chapter of the book each week. Every week, at a set time, make a phone date to talk about the book.

- **Let's talk about Role Models**—Both Big and Little name off one person they admire. Now answer the questions about the person you listed:
 1. How does that person view the world?
 2. How do they treat other people?
 3. How do they put their beliefs into action?
 4. What great things do they say? Do they use certain words often?
 5. What worthwhile things do they do?
 6. Do you see any of your role model's characteristics in yourself?

- **Talkin'**—Decide if it's easy or difficult to talk about the following topics with your family, friends, and Big:
 - Money
 - Friends
 - Career
 - Future plans
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Conflict
 - Television
 - Parties
 - Smoking
 - Movies
 - Politics
 - Race Relations
 - Music
 - Fashion
 - Crime
 - Religion

Email: Getting Started

Many of you may have already been meeting with your Little for several weeks or months now, but it will be helpful to define your email relationship since this may be a new way of communicating for you.

The following are a list of some pointers to help you begin email communication with your Little:

- Share how often you check your email and ask your Little the same question.
- Work out a schedule for when you'll email each other.
- Discuss whether there will be times (e.g., a trip for your job or vacation) when you won't be able to answer your email.
- Set up some guidelines: let each other know if you're not going to be able to email, tell each other if something made you feel uncomfortable, agree to work together to solve any problems that arise.
- Be sure to ask a lot of questions—this will help your Little respond.

Email Activities

- **Word Games**—These games are probably best suited for older Littles. Send you're Little a word game each week. For the first week, send two—a sample with its answer and one to solve. If your Little solves the puzzle within a week, give them a point. If you'd like, if they reach a set amount of points for the summer you may want to bring them a reward in the fall when you see them...maybe a pack of gel pens or a book that you'll read together during your match meetings. Here are some brainteasers:

1. SIDE SIDE (side by side)
2. GREENNV (green with envy)
3. LOOK KOOL CROSSING (look both ways before crossing)
4. HIS.TORY (a period in history)
5. $\frac{I}{8}$ (I overate)
6. SIGHT LOVE
SIGHT
SIGHT (love at first sight)
7. VAD ERS (space invaders)
8. O! 144 (Oh, gross!)
9. BAN ANA (banana split)
10. ONCE
TIME (once Upon A Time)
11. 2 UM
+2 UM (forum)
12. T I M E
AB--D (long time, no see.)
13. **ALL** WORLD (small world after all)
14. ONE
ONE (one on one)
15. DICE
DICE (paradise)
16. 0
B.S.
M.D.
Ph.D. (3 degrees below zero)
17. GROUND
FEET
FEET
FEET
FEET
FEET
FEET (6 feet underground)
18. STAND
I (I understand)

