Commitment

You must be reliable, trustworthy and honest and be prepared for a long term commitment. We ask for a commitment of a minimum of 2 visits per month for at least 12 months. This request is based upon research that indicates a minimum of 12 months allows for meaningful, life-changing relationships to grow and flourish.
What is a volunteer mentor?

A mentor is a responsible adult volunteer who befriends and supports a child or young person who is in the care of the Department for Child Protection. These children and young people are aged between 9 and 17 years and may be living in residential group homes or foster care. Because they have experienced a difficult start in life, they need to form a positive stable relationship with a special friend who enjoys spending time with them and participating in activities that will help them to develop life skills. Volunteer mentors are everyday people, male or female, studying, working full or part-time, or retired who have a commitment and willingness to change the life of a young person in care.

What does a volunteer mentor do?

A mentor is matched with a young person based upon interests, personality, availability and location. After getting to know each other, the mentor spends time with the young person on a regular basis; usually for a few hours every second weekend or in the evenings. Although the timing of the contacts can be flexible, the mentor must be reliable and consistent. Activities are worked out between the mentor and the young person and will depend upon a number of factors such as the young person’s interests and the nature of the support and guidance they need. What is important is that both the mentor and the young person enjoy the time they have together.

How are volunteer mentors selected?

The Department for Child Protection want to ensure that the right people become mentors for the right reasons; consequently, there is a thorough selection procedure including comprehensive criminal and departmental records screening checks.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor please visit www.childprotection.gov.wa.au and complete the volunteer mentor expression of interest form. You will then be invited to attend an informal chat where we will collect references and ask you to complete a Working with Children card application form and a consent to screening.

As part of the selection process, training will be arranged for suitable applicants and, when completed, your commitment and suitability will be assessed by a (friendly) panel comprised of the mentors’ support team from the Respite Program. If successful, you will be invited to join the team as a volunteer mentor.

How are young people matched to a volunteer mentor?

Young people are referred to the mentor program by Departmental staff who believe the young person would benefit from mentoring. The coordinator of the Mentor Program meets with the young person to learn more about them and check that they would like to be matched with a mentor. At this meeting we also find out what their expectations of a mentor are. This information is considered and, in consultation with the young person and volunteer, the most appropriate match is made.

What support does a volunteer mentor receive?

You will receive ongoing support, training and supervision from the Mentor Program which is part of the Respite Program at Fostering and Adoption Services. This includes telephone supervision and support, individual supervision and group support meetings. Group support meetings are a great way of meeting with other volunteer mentors for informal discussions and training on relevant topics.

Will my expenses be covered?

Volunteer mentors are asked to send in monthly claim forms detailing their expenses for mileage and activities, information about their visits, the number of hours they have spent with the young person, and their planned visits for the following month. This helps the Mentor Program keep up-to-date with how your match is going and gives you the chance to tell us about any problems or issues you may be experiencing. You will be reimbursed for all reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred during visits within a pre-agreed limit.