

Building the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development

Competence: *Positive view of one's skills and abilities, including social, academic, cognitive, personal, and vocational*

- Help your mentee get used to praise and recognizing accomplishments. Take turns identifying and talking about a strength you possess. Then do the same about each other's strengths. (This exercise doesn't have to a serious conversation.)
- Invite your mentee to teach you a game or a skill or about some pop-culture element.
- Let your mentee take the lead in problem-solving.
- Encourage setting personal goals for improvement.
- Engage the child in learning of all kinds.

Confidence: *The internal sense of overall positive self-worth, identity, and belief in the future*

- Encourage dreaming about the future by asking "what if" questions, and support him in setting short- and long-term goals to make a plan for the dream.
- Use talking about goals for each session as a springboard for moving to longer-term goals.

Connection: *Positive bonds with people and institutions, including peers, family, school, and community, that provide a sense of membership, safety, and belonging*

- Spend time learning each other's likes and interests.
- Let your mentee set some of the rules and expectations of the relationship with you, e.g. being on time, talking about personal issues, what you call each other, etc.
- Find out what your mentee thinks about topics that come up and view her as a resource.
- Model small-talk with staff members to build your mentee's school connectedness.
- Notice what opportunities are advertised in the hallways and on the office counter and mention them to your mentee.

Character: *Recognition of societal and cultural rules, a sense of responsibility and accountability for one's actions, personal value, spirituality, and integrity*

- Learn about your mentee and the family's culture, traditions, and values, in order to respect them. Share yours in turn.
- Build trust in order to make it safe for your mentee to talk about difficult topics, including moral or ethical issues.
- Talk about fulfilling responsibilities in your life.
- Read books or articles together about people who have lived lives of integrity.

Caring and Compassion: *A sense of sympathy and empathy for others, leading to a desire to contribute*

- Remain calm when your mentee shares a difficult story. Acknowledge that you understand that s/he is experiencing something difficult.
- Ask open-ended questions to allow the continued expression of feelings. Allow the mentee to name the feeling.
- Thank your mentee for trusting you.
- Talk about movie or book characters and ask your mentee to put himself in the character's shoes.
- Find out what your mentee cares about and use as a jumping off point to talk about larger issues. For example, if s/he likes dogs, engage in a conversation about animal rights.