



A Toolkit & Resources for Bigs & Families

Expectations for our Program Participants:

- BBBSKY STRONGLY encourages all program participants to adhere to all CDC guidelines and recommendations.
- For Bigs, youth, and guardians who are fully vaccinated: Please recognize that there are increasing numbers of breakthrough COVID cases for people who are vaccinated. Wearing a mask provides extra protection to yourself and the people around you. We encourage our vaccinated participants to wear masks when indoors for this reason. Certainly we expect you to wear a mask, indoors or outdoors, if:
 - You feel more comfortable doing so.
 - The person you are with would feel more comfortable if you wore it. Please keep in mind that many people live in households with children or other loved ones who are not vaccinated, and that a vaccinated person can still transmit the virus to others. Please have a conversation with your match to explore what will help everyone feel most safe and comfortable.
- For Bigs, youth, and guardians who are not vaccinated: It is strongly recommended that you wear a mask for the protection of yourself and the protection of others around you and their family members. We encourage everyone eligible for vaccines to get vaccinated and our Chief Program Officer is happy to discuss this with you further if you have questions about vaccines.
- Keep in mind that outdoor activities and keeping physical space of 6 feet apart can help keep everyone safe, and masks definitely help keep everyone safe.
- Communication is key! Continue to share and ask about symptoms, exposures, concerns, anxieties, testing --- we know these details can change daily for all of us and we need to have open and honest communication to keep one another healthy. Contact one of our staff if you have questions about how to have these conversations or want any kind of support around your experience in our program.

If Bigs, youth, or guardians want to know if a match member or employee is vaccinated:

- The vast majority of our staff are vaccinated. The agency does not require staff or program participants to discuss their vaccination status if they prefer not to do so.
- Program participants are welcome to ask about someone's vaccination status, and should keep in mind that the person they are asking is welcome to voluntarily share that information or share that they prefer to not disclose their status.
- Examples of how staff can help assist when a participant wants to know the vaccination status of someone else: "The Big tells us she feels more comfortable knowing who in your household is vaccinated. Is this something you feel comfortable discussing with her?"
- When creating a new match, staff will explore these guidelines with all parties and assess each person's comfort level with these guidelines to learn more about participants' preferences or expectations, which may play a role in creating a compatible match experience.

For up-to-date information from Governor Beshear, including information on mask mandates, testing centers, vaccines, and financial assistance, please go to: <https://governor.ky.gov/covid-19>. Up-to-date information for Indiana can be found at: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/>.

For virtual outings and contact, below you'll find our Virtual Mentoring Guide and Toolkit, which was first created by our colleagues at Nutmeg BBBS in Connecticut. We continually update this toolkit. This will provide you a wide range of ways you can engage your Little, even though you will be meeting virtually rather than in person. We encourage you to review these resources and chat with your Match Support Specialist to help develop a plan on how best to approach your relationship with your Little.



Big Brothers Big Sisters will continue to be singularly focused on partnering with you to meet the needs of the youth we serve that may go unmet in their schools and communities.

Amidst so much turmoil and disruption, one thing is clear: **Our Little Brothers and Sisters needs us now more than ever.** We here at Big Brothers Big Sisters are ready and willing to provide you with the tools and resources you need to continue to provide that love, support, and guidance.



Not being able to see your Little face-to-face will present some new challenges to your relationship, but following the tips below will help you navigate through these difficulties while continuing to help your Little reach their highest potential.

- Rely on regular phone calls and text messages, or video chats via FaceTime or WhatsApp to stay connected with your Little. Use this resource or this resource for great conversation starters for kids and check out this resource or this resource to get chatting with teens!
- Messenger Kids (from Facebook) is a great way to safely connect with your Little via a social media platform, while keeping their parent looped in. Here's more on how it works.
- Snail mail - still a thing! Write letters to your Little (become pen pals!), send postcards, a homemade card, pass along some print-at-home games (like these puzzles or these coloring pages), or send them a homemade craft (like these bracelets, or one of these quick/easy kids crafts)
- **STAY CONSISTENT! However you choose to connect, your consistency is more important to your Little now more than ever.** Find days, times, and methods that work best for both of you, create a plan, set a schedule, and stick to it! This will make it easier on you both, while giving you each something to look forward to and depend on.
- **ASK QUESTIONS!** It's no surprise that everyone's day-to-day schedule is experiencing incredible upheaval. Reaching out and chatting with your Little and their parent/guardian about when is best to reach out, what days and time are easiest, and how you can help are questions that will be enormously helpful for you (and your Little!) in staying connected.



To get you started, here are a few Match Activity ideas that you can dive into with your Little!

- Develop a talent, skill, or passion together! There is a ton of experts creating exceptional online content right now that can help you and your Little [learn to draw or doodle](#), [perfect an in-home workout](#), [practice ballet](#), [become a scientist](#), [become a great cook](#), [learn a second \(or third!\) language](#), or [learn how to dance](#)!
- Have a Movie night! Plan to watch the same movie ([here are some ideas](#)) and discuss via phone or text message either during or after. Make sure to get movie selection approved by parent/guardian and [here are some great questions](#) (though you'll have to swap the word 'book' for 'movie') to get you going.
 - Looking for an educational movie or documentary? There are thousands available on [Kanopy](#) or [Hoopla](#) that are free with a library card!
- Watch a virtual concert together! There are a ton of artists who are hopping on the bandwagon and hosting virtual and free concerts for their fans! [Here's a list from NPR that might be helpful.](#)¹
- Have a virtual book club! You can read to your Little via FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, or Zoom, or plan to read the same book and discuss with each other. [Here are some great book ideas](#) to get started and [here's some tips on how to get the conversation going.](#)¹
 - Have a library card? [Libby](#) is a great resource for accessing downloadable free e-books!
- Schedule an activity to [virtually check out a museum](#) or [visit a zoo](#) (or two!) together!
- Schedule game time! Using app-based games like [Words with Friends](#), [Draw Something](#), [Chess](#), [Checkers](#), or [Bowling](#) can be great ways to engage and connect with your Little, while enjoying some down time. Check out this website (and this one too!) for great games you and your Little can play on laptops or desktops.
- Does your Little have virtual homework assignments they're trying to tackle? Offer to lend a helping hand! Whether it's a book report, an algebra lesson, or anything else you can be incredibly helpful in assisting your Little in transitioning to digital learning.



With schools closed across the area, we know many Bigs will be focused on helping stem the tide of learning loss while their Littles are spending time at home. Check out resources below to help your Little stay sharp and continue to focus on their academics from home.

- [Khan Academy](#) offers a FREE library of trusted, standards-aligned practice and lessons covers math K-12 through early college, grammar, science, history, AP, SAT, and more. They are also offering [daily learning schedules](#) for kids throughout the crisis.
- Common Sense has a bunch of great (and free!) education websites and apps that kids can access (with parent permission!) to help stem the tide of learning loss. [Check them out here](#) for more info and find what resource might be best for your Little!
- [Check out Class Central](#) for a free list of online classes that range from computer science and business, to arts/designs and engineering. This is best for middle/high-school age Littles.

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- Examples of how staff can help assist when a participant wants to know the vaccination status of someone else: "The Big tells us she feels more comfortable knowing who in your household is vaccinated. Is this something you feel comfortable discussing with her?"
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We know many of our parents will be feeling the stress of supporting and providing for their children over the weeks and months to come. We wanted to be sure every Big had specific resources that might be helpful to pass along to parents who may turn to you for support:

- State of Kentucky: You can find the latest info, cases, and updates on COVID-19 here: <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>.
- State of Indiana: You can find the latest info and updates here: <https://coronavirus.in.gov/>
- NPR provides this [helpful, interactive guide](#) for how to chat with kids about COVID-19.
- Harvard Health put together a great article on [how to talk to teenagers about COVID-19](#).
- The [Child Mind Institute](#) outline some great resources and approaches on how to talk with younger kids about COVID-19.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers an incredible [COVID-19 Coping Guide](#) with specific strategies and recommendations for each age group.