

MENTORING PROGRAM

Curriculum August – May

Content for introductions/icebreakers as you get to know your mentees before diving into activities:

- At the beginning of each session establish/remind students of session rules and expectations
- Share your: Background/hometown, job, hobbies, fun facts
- Learn their: Grade, favorite subject, hobbies, favorite color/food/animal/outdoor activity
- Discuss: Goals for school year, what they want to learn/improve on in school or in activities, etc.

August Curriculum

Activities:

Here is an activity to kick-off the start of the new school year. Have students create a time capsule. Have the group write about where they envision themselves at the end of the school year. Then share as a group. Collect what was written and save for the end of the school year to reconvene as a group.

Ideas for time capsule: Predictions for school year and favorite subjects, pictures or drawings, what they think will be most exciting and challenging for this upcoming school year.

Discussion of the Month: *Adjusting to the new school year*

How to talk to students about change (<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/wiomk/files/2012/10/KidsAndChange.pdf>)

(<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/helping-kids-handle-change-at-school>)

Character Development: *Time management*

How to talk to students about time management (<https://gradepowerlearning.com/10-time-management-tips-students/>)

Ask students to utilize their planners for writing down and remembering homework. This is a good skill to hone in on and can easily be practiced during mentoring sessions. As a group, you can practice the best way to write down assignments, how to manage time to complete homework, and how to mark items as complete. Ask students to then bring their planner to the next session to see how they have been utilizing them

Show possible used planner (your own or pictures) and sketch out a model planner and how to write down daily work, projects, and things to remember to bring to school.

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

September Curriculum

Activities:

Here is an activity to learn more about what your mentees like and value. For this activity, everyone is stranded on a desert island by themselves. Each person is only able to bring 5 items with them. Have each person go one at a time explaining what they chose to bring and why. For an extra round, tell mentees that they need not worry about food, water, and a way off the island.

To expand this discussion of values, ask mentees what skill they think would be most important to have to survive on the island—creativity, teamwork, empathy, etc.

Discussion of the Month: *Assessing good and bad habits.*

How to talk to students about habits (<https://time.com/4175574/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-their-habits-good-ones-or-bad-ones/>)
(<https://www.educationalplaycare.com/blog/encourage-good-habits-in-children/>)

(<https://community.today.com/parentingteam/post/how-to-talk-with-your-kids-about-their-good-or-bad-habits-5-tips>)

Character Development: *Common Sense*

How to talk to students about using common sense: (<https://allmychildrendaycare.com/teaching-kids-about-using-common-sense/>)
(<https://ourkingdomculture.com/how-to-teach-your-kids-to-use-common-sense/>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

October Curriculum

Activities:

Here is an activity to get your students thinking about a topic that may be foreign to them. Utilizing [Ted-Ed videos](#), choose a topic that you or your mentees are curious about/find interesting and watch a related Ted-Talk video on it. After the video have the group share: one thing they learned, one thing they found interesting, and one question on the topic they now have from watching the video. There are a variety of short Ted-Talk videos to utilize to generate fun and interesting conversations.

From the video, have the students each pick a phrase or point that resonated them, or that they felt was most memorable from the video. Then discuss why this part stood out to them and how it relates to something they've recently experienced.

Discussion of the Month: *Goal Setting*

How to talk to students about goal setting (<https://positivepsychology.com/goal-setting-students-kids/>)

(<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/goal-setting-for-kids>)

(<https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/style/how-to-teach-kids-perseverance-goal-setting/>)

(<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/goal-setting-kids/>)

Character Development: *Honesty*

How to talk to students about honesty (<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-honesty>)

(<https://www.familyeducation.com/life/honesty/talking-about-honesty>)

(<https://imaginationsoup.net/teach-children-value-honesty/>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

November Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees and revisit session rules and expectations. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals? The holiday season can be a lot of fun, but also very hard for some people. Check in with your student and learn about their traditions, what their favorite part of the seasons changing is, and integrate your own traditions or excitement into your mentorship.

Activities:

Here is an activity to get your students thinking about the year so far and what they are thankful for. This activity can be played with many colorful items such as pipe cleaners, colored pencils, or other items that come in a variety of colors. You can refer to these items for this game as “sticks.” Place the sticks in a basket, bag, or sack so that your mentees cannot see the colors. Have mentees draw one stick randomly. Next, write the words below on a piece of paper. Then, have the mentees take turns responding to the statement below using their colored sticks as a guide to fill in the blank word.

Name one _____ that you are grateful for and explain why.

person – (red) animal – (orange) food – (yellow) place in your house – (green) thing about school – (blue) place in your community – (purple)

You may want to have your students restate the statement aloud with their item. For example, if I drew red, I would say, “I am grateful for my grandma because she loves to spend time with me and teaches me how to bake.” Based on what comes up at the activity, continue the conversation about this theme of gratitude! It's always nice to reflect on how to practice gratitude more often by saying extra thank yous, telling people what they mean to you, and expressing your appreciation for others.

Discussion of the Month: *Community Involvement*

How to talk to students about community involvement (<https://www.seattletimes.com/sponsored/5-ways-to-teach-kids-about-community-involvement/>) Community service ideas for kids (<https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/community-service-for-families/>)

Character Development: *Loyalty*



It takes Big Shoulders to carry a child's dreams.

How to talk to students about loyalty (<https://health.usnews.com/wellness/for-parents/articles/2018-02-05/talking-to-kids-about-the-tricky-trait-of-loyalty>) (<https://kiddieacademy.com/blog/parenting-resources/teaching-your-child-about-loyalty/>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

December Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. Revisit the beginning of the year goals. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? [reference November Curriculum] As we head into a new calendar year, this can also be a good time to talk about fun new year goals and end of year reflections ex. highlights of 2022, new things I did in 2022.

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students with their writing as they prepare for winter break. You can have mentees create a poem about winter, write a short story about a snowman, write down any fun family traditions, and/or have them write about their first experience with snow. Once everyone is finished, have the group share their writings.

This is also a time to talk about their favorite parts of winter and talk about things like playing in the snow, family recipes, and traditions.

Discussion of the Month: *Having a meaningful winter break*

How to talk to students about tips to using free time productively (<https://blog.planbook.com/free-time/>) (<https://www.verywellfamily.com/why-free-time-is-important-for-kids-3288593>) (<https://handsonaswegrow.com/fun-things-over-winter-break-kids/>)

Character Development: *Compassion*

How to talk to students about compassion (<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/using-compassionate-curiosity-to-drive-empathy>) (<https://positivepsychology.com/compassion-for-kids/>) (<https://www.pbs.org/parents/being-kind>) (<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/social-emotional-learning/social-skills-for-kids/13-ways-to-raise-caring-and-compassionate-child.html>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

January Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals? Ask about how they took advantage of free time over winter break and hear about anything fun or memorable over the holidays.

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students think more about Martin Luther King Jr. and his, "I have a dream," speech. Have your mentees draw or write down what their dream for the world is, what their dream for their family is, and what dream they have for themselves. This is a great way to open up conversations on Martin Luther King Jr. and his fight for equality. (<https://www.thirtyhandmadedays.com/martin-luther-king-jr-printable/>) Ask them what lines or words from the speech stand out to them most? Why? Continue the discussion based on their activity.

Discussion of the Month: *How to Stay Motivated*

How to talk to students about staying motivated on their goals (<https://www.whatihavelearnedteaching.com/8-ways-to-increase-student-motivation-through-goal-setting/>) (<https://allroundclub.com/blog/achieve-smart-goals/>) (<https://www.bgca.org/news-stories/2019/July/How-to-Keep-Kids-Motivated-During-the-School-Year>)

Character Development: *Initiative*

How to talk to students about initiative (<https://www.rootsofaction.com/take-initiative-kids/>) (<https://skidos.com/blog/teaching-children-to-take-initiative/>) (<https://www.physicianscenter.org/parents/parenting-resources/articles/teaching-elementary-age-children-take-initiative/>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

February Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals?

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students think more about Black History Month. Check out this video of the history of Black History Month then discuss as a group - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9O5AE_-pw4 Discuss: parts that stood out, how they have celebrated Black History Month in the past.

Discussion of the Month: *Black History Month*

How to talk to students about Black History Month (<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/black-history-month-resource-guide-for-educators-and-families/>) and Black Lives Matter (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lzt3gFgYVYk>) (<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/teaching-your-child-about-black-history-month>)

Character Development: *Responsibility*

How to talk to students about responsibility (<https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/beverlywoodsES/Documents/ResponsibilityOctober2015.pdf>) (<https://proudtobeprimary.com/teaching-responsibility-in-the-classroom/>) (<https://heartandmindteaching.com/2022/01/teaching-responsibility-in-the-classroom.html>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

March Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals? As we approach spring do you have anything you're trying to accomplish by the end of the school year?

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students think of careers (<https://www.careers.govt.nz/assets/pages/kiwi-cards/career-starter-activities.pdf>)

Job Web - List a starting word like "Car" and have students come up with possible jobs as it relates to the word. Try to list as many jobs as possible. This can easily be turned into a game/competition. Based on what they come up with, have a discussion on types of jobs and group common themes or types of work. Look at the variety of what you come up with and talk about what surprised them.

Discussion of the Month: *Careers/Government (March Madness Bracket)*

How to talk to students about careers (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-engage-students-conversations-careers-rudy-ruiz/>)

Pro Tips: Draw connections between student's experiences and future opportunities. Share your own story – especially challenges and failures. Talk about their interests and what they like doing (writing, being creative, building things, solving problems, working with people, talking to customers) and come up with types of jobs for these skills.

Character Development: *Patience*

How to talk to students about patience (<https://www.livingwellspendingless.com/patience-is-a-virtue/>)

(https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_help_your_kids_be_a_little_more_patient)

(<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/social-emotional-learning/social-skills-for-kids/teaching-patience.html>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

April Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals? What is your favorite part about spring?

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students think about their social media use. Have students put a yes next to the question if they have experienced something similar.

- Accidentally sent an email or text to the wrong person?
- Been in school when someone showed you a post about you, a colleague, a parent, or a child that made you feel sad or anxious and didn't know what to do next?
- Had a friend or someone in your family post something that made you really upset and affected your relationship with that person?

Now write down a few sentences that describe your experiences and feelings to any of these questions. Look back at the last 6 months of social media usage and ask students:

- If a stranger saw the posts you just looked at, what would they think about you?
- What do you want people to think about you and your life?
- How accurately do your online posts and interactions reflect what's going on in your life?
- Do you take steps to protect your online privacy? How important is privacy to you?
- Is the way you handle conflict online similar to the way you handle conflict in real life? Are you proud of how you conduct yourself in either or both contexts?

Reflect on both activities. Encourage them to ask any questions they have after if they have things they want to change or do differently.

Discussion of the Month: *Social Media*

How to talk to students about social media (<https://www.eschoolnews.com/2018/02/15/talk-students-social-media/>) (<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/social-media-smarts.html>) (<https://www.readbrightly.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-social-media-and-self-respect/>) (<https://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-social-media.html>)

Character Development: *Humility*

How to talk to students about humility and kindness (<https://www.allprodad.com/10-ways-to-teach-your-children-humility/>) (https://kids.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Activities_for_Kids_On_Humility)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)

May Curriculum

Goals Check In:

Use this time to check in with your mentees. How is school going? How is home life? What are things you are looking forward to? What are things you are anxious about? How are you doing on your goals? What have you learned this year? What are you excited about this summer?

Activities:

Here is an activity to help students think about healthy lifestyles.

Have students do a specific exercise when they choose a particular answer or agree with a response.

Some examples are:

Do 10 jumping jacks if you watch TV once you get home from school.

If you like pizza more do 5 jumps if you like spaghetti more do 5 arm circles.

Choose exercises that students can easily perform like jumping jacks, running in place, jumping up and down, etc.

Talk about how they can incorporate more outdoor time, movement and being active into their lives over summer break.

Discussion of the Month: *Physical and Mental Health*

How to talk to students about health

(<http://www.foodandfun.org/?p=learn/staff/activities&subject=Tips+for+Talking+to+Kids+about+Nutrition+and+Physical+Activity&unit>About>)

(<https://healthpoweredkids.org/lessons/living-a-healthy-life/>)

How to talk to students about mental health (<https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/starting-a-conversation-about-youth-mental-health>)

(<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/active-kids.html>)

Character Development: *Self Control*

How to talk to students about self control (<https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-self-control.html>)

(<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/ptn/2014/12/self-control>) (<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/three-strategies-for-teaching-children-self-control>) (<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/grade-school-build-self-control>)

Current Events: [Chicago Tribune](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Chicago Defender](#), [La Raza](#)