

Saying Good-Bye

Coming to the end of any relationship, even a healthy one, is difficult. It can bring up many emotions, including guilt, fear of change, sadness, feelings of abandonment, or anger. There are many different reasons for ending a mentor relationship. If your mentoring relationship is ending permanently, it is important to call LSS.

Ending Before One Year

If you need to end the match before the one year requirement, please follow the steps below:

- Notify LSS and the school as soon as possible.
- Set a specific date for your last meeting.
- Communicate to the student that the relationship is ending and the reason why. This should be done in person. If that is not possible, a letter or card to your student is acceptable as a last resort. Do not rely on someone else to deliver this news for you.
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings. Encourage your student to do the same. Be positive and supportive.
- Help your student understand that it's not their fault and that the relationship is not ending because they did something wrong.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep (i.e., that you will always keep in touch or that they will get another mentor).

Saying Good-Bye for Summer

Everyday Hero mentors will not have any personal contact with your student over the summer months. Each year, it is important to follow steps to ensure both you and your student feel proud of the year you had and leave school feeling excited for more fun the following year! At the end of the school year, mentors may wish to follow these steps:

Reflect

Think about how the experience: what has happened, what you observed, what issues you faced, and what events occurred during your time together.

Decide

Decide if you will continue mentoring next school year. Most mentors do this by simply asking their student if they want them to return the following year. If you are unsure about your ability to continue or if the student is unsure what school they will be attending, be prepared to make contingent plans. Do not make promises that you cannot keep, as this is more damaging than simply bringing the relationship to a close.

Discuss

Three weeks to a month before the end of the school year talk to your student about how many meetings you have left. Share your thoughts and feelings and encourage your student

to do the same. Remind your student about all the fun things you have done together and everything you have accomplished.

Celebrate

Plan a special activity for your last day together. Ask for your student's input in the weeks before. Play a special game or work on a project together that reflects on the last year. Some ideas include:

- Take a picture of you and your student and put it in a frame for your student to keep.
- Write a letter of congratulation and encouragement to your student. Share with them how much you have enjoyed the past year. Tell the student about his/her positive qualities (creativity, sense of humor, hard work, perseverance, etc.). Let him/her know how those qualities and strengths will help throughout his/her life.
- Put together a scrapbook of your relationship together. Draw pictures to represent each of the things you have done together.
- Read a children's story that discusses how difficult it is to say goodbye.
- Encourage your student to draw a picture or write a paragraph about mentoring.

Keep in Touch

If you want to keep in touch, please keep in mind the program does not allow personal contact with a student outside of school. LSS insists that outside of school contact only be done through a structured program. Remember – once a mentee, always a mentee. Here are some simple ideas to help matches stay in touch:

- Give your student stamped and addressed envelopes. Ask them to write a paragraph or draw a picture and mail it. Postcards are a good option for younger children. Mentors may also mail letters to keep in touch.
- Exchange email addresses (if your student has access). Ask them to send you updates about what they are doing. You may want to set boundaries on the frequency and amount of email to be exchanged.
- If you want to see your student more often, consider joining a community-based mentor program so that you can meet with him/her outside of school. If your student is entering high school, consider USucceed.
- Although Facebook is a popular way to keep in touch, it is important for mentors to maintain clear boundaries for communication. These sites can undermine those boundaries and should be avoided as a means for communication.
- **Mentors must notify LSS or the school of their intentions to keep in touch over the summer.**