



# BEST Kids

**BUILDING  
BETTER FUTURES**

One Child at a Time, With Your Help

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**BEST Kids, Inc.**

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## OUR MISSION

**BEST Kids** is a nonprofit mentoring organization that empowers youth in foster care to build better futures, one child at a time.



BEST Kids is guided by the belief that all children are talented. Through our one-on-one volunteer mentoring, extensive training, staff support, and experiential learning-based Peer Groups, we encourage our youth to discover and develop their unique skills and abilities. Beginning with children as young as six and continuing, as needed, until adulthood, BEST Kids works to enable youth to develop a positive sense of self and acquire teamwork skills. We believe that the way to achieve these goals is to have a stable, caring adult support them along this journey. We believe that **no** child should get “lost in the system” when there are empathetic role models right here in DC who have the wisdom and compassion to inspire them to achieve their potential.

# FACTS OF FOSTER CARE IN DC

**850**   
youth in  
D.C.'s Foster  
Care System

**30.6**   
Median number  
of months a  
child spends  
in foster care  
in D.C.

**86%**   
of youth enter  
the system  
because of  
neglect and/or  
abuse

**Up to 80%**  
of victims of  
commercial sex  
exploitation  
have been  
in care 

**Up to 30%**   
of the homeless  
population have  
been in foster  
care

**25%**   
of foster youth  
are incarcerated  
within two years  
of aging out

**99%** of children enter the system because of maltreatment.

## There is a Better Way, and it Begins With You

BEST Kids matches each individual youth with one mentor – that’s you! Our one-on-one model provides mentees with undivided attention, intentional conversations, and sustainable support. As with any meaningful relationship, mentors are in it for the long haul. It is a level of stability urgently needed by these children. At BEST Kids, mentors are asked to mentor for at least one year; however, the relationships typically last far longer than that, and the value of the relationship lasts a lifetime.

Unlike a coach or teacher, mentors aren't assigned to one area of a youth's life – mentors can be present in every decision, life event, and experience their mentee goes through. Whether it's applying to college, dealing with peer pressure, or learning a new hobby, mentors can guide a young person through the many challenges and opportunities they will face. You are not randomly assigned. We have a structured matching process in which our mentors and mentees are paired based on their personalities, locations, schedules, and interests. You'll spend time with your mentee sharing in activities that you both enjoy. That could range from hiking along the Potomac, to bowling, visiting our city's world class museums, experiencing a cultural festival, or even better – finding something totally unconventional and uniquely enjoyed by both of you. Your engagement can help determine if a foster child becomes a success or statistic.

## Facts of BEST Kids Mentee Outcomes

Every aspect of our programming is designed to reach positive outcomes for the children and youth we serve. Of the youth we surveyed:

**88.24%** said they can learn new things in school

**88.24%** said their caregiver understands them

**76.47%** said they think they are doing as well as other kids their age

**80.39%** said they always work hard to complete their schoolwork

**Through one-on-one mentoring relationships with caring adults, mentees at BEST Kids consistently show:**

- Increased academic achievement
- Improvement in social and/or emotional wellness
- Increased set of independent living skills
- Avoidance of risky behaviors

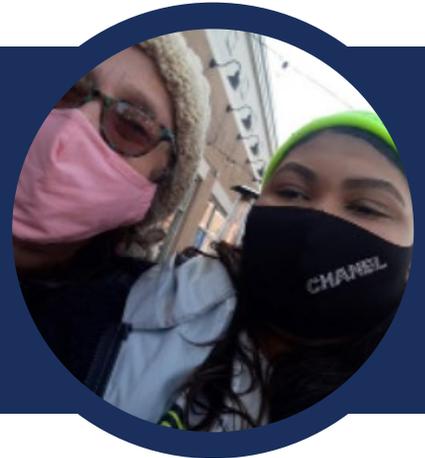


# Bring an Open Heart, and We'll Take Care of the Rest

Through our full-time Mentoring Support specialists, ongoing trainings, happy hours, award ceremonies, and much more, our mentors always know that they will be prepared, supported, and appreciated. BEST Kids provides each mentor with 1:1, individualized support, as well as monthly group training opportunities. These trainings assist mentors in building positive and meaningful relationships with their mentees. BEST Kids will set you up for success so that you can help ensure the success of your mentee. If you think you won't make a difference, you're wrong. If you're nervous that you don't know how to mentor, don't worry – everyone feels that way. That's where BEST Kids can help. We simply need local adults with love and courage in their hearts. Working with you, we can help make today's foster care kids tomorrow's leaders, parents, and mentors.

## Marie & Jacqueline

Marie and Jacqueline have been matched for six years and four months – and are still thriving. This is Jacqueline's last year in foster care, and they are cherishing every moment of the time they spend together. They faced many challenges but the biggest was getting Jacqueline into college. It was always her goal, and she's achieved it! Through countless efforts, FAFSA agreed to help pay for school and purchased her books for the semester. Marie and Jacqueline are in constant communication and are closer than ever.



## HELP TAKES MANY FORMS

Every contribution, in every form, helps give a local foster kid a better chance at beating the odds. Whether that's money, resources, or your time, it all makes a life-changing difference.

### Short Term

We love events! We're an organization driven by shared connections. We're always excited to get together and create opportunities for other Mentors and Mentees to do fun things as a group here in the greater DC area. Recent events have included: Art of the Matter, our Superhero 5K and Fun Run, and the Family Winter Celebration. Throughout the year, BEST Kids is putting on all different types of events. Making that happen takes volunteers; whatever your time and support you can offer we'll find a way to put it to good use. Outside of events we're equally excited to accept any help you can offer in the administration of our services and operations.

### Long Term

Become a mentor and help change the course of a child's life for the better. By cultivating a long-term relationship based on consistency, trust, and quality time, mentors help to build social and emotional wellness, develop life skills, and expand the world view of their mentee.

### Donate

As a small, local nonprofit agency, we rely on the financial support of the community to provide the best mentoring program we can. Whether through sponsoring an event, providing a grant, or an individual donation, it will all greatly impact our youth. Check out our donor page to learn how you can financially support BEST Kids.

### Speaker's Bureau

*[Placeholder for BEST Kids content given their vision]*