

BREAKDOWN OF FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

853

Number of DC children in foster care system in 2016

15.8

Median number of months a child spends in foster care in DC

99%

of children who enter the system because of maltreatment

25%

of foster children that become incarcerated within 2 years of aging out

UPTO 60%

of victims of commercial sex exploitation have been in foster care

UPTO 50%

of foster youth become homeless within two years of aging out

WHY MENTORING WORKS

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



HOW TO BECOME A BEST KIDS MENTOR

Volunteers are required to do the following:

- Complete an online application, background clearance process, and a pre-service training
- Commit to be a mentor for a minimum of one year
- Spend 10 hours per month with your mentee, including weekly contact and a monthly Peer Group activity
- Have access to a reliable car
- Willingness to invest in a mentee, and build an awesome friendship

If you are interested in becoming a BEST Kids mentor, please visit us at www.bestkids.org



BEST Kids

Mentoring Youth in Foster Care

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MISSION

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

HISTORY OF BEST KIDS

BEST Kids was founded in 2001 by Todd Leibbrand, a local volunteer who saw the tremendous need for a positive adult role model in the lives of DC-area youth in foster care.

Beginning with 10 matches in 2005, BEST Kids has grown to serve over 150 youth each year. This growth has been in cooperation with DC's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) who supports BEST Kids by referring youth directly to the program and provides funding to support our mentoring matches.



PHILOSOPHY OF BEST KIDS

EARLY INTERVENTION

BEST Kids serves children as young as 6 years old and continues programming through age 21.

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

BEST Kids commits to sustaining a mentor in each program participant's life for as long as necessary. Long-term relationships allow for matches to establish consistency, trust, and positive outcomes for both the mentor and mentee.

ONGOING MENTOR TRAINING AND SUPPORT

BEST Kids provides each mentor with one-on-one, individualized support, as well as monthly group training opportunities. These trainings assist mentors in building positive and meaningful relationships with their mentees.

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

BEST Kid's staff works closely with caregivers, social workers, teachers, and others to ensure that the needs of each child are met. Mentors work collaboratively with staff to create the best experience for their mentees.

INTENSIVE EVALUATION

BEST Kids conducts regular evaluations with all program participants to ensure that every match is achieving positive outcomes. Each match also works toward agreed-upon goals together so that the mentee is able to work towards achieving individually relevant outcomes.

ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING

Community-based mentoring allows for each match to explore the community and new activities in order to broaden their world-views, as well as increase their exposure to new opportunities for growth.

PEER GROUPS

BEST Kids mentors and mentees gather for monthly age-appropriate activities aimed at building social skills and exposing youth to new experiences, and building confidence in the skills and aptitudes of each child.

MATCHING

BEST Kids works to thoughtfully match mentors and mentees based on the following areas: personality and common interests, age-appropriateness, geographical proximity, and scheduling compatibility. BEST Kids values each mentor's input throughout the matching process.