

Getting Started with your Student(s)

A strong tutor-student relationship is essential to a quality learning experience for both parties. Starting off on the right foot makes a good partnership more possible. It will take time to establish trust, but openness, dependability, sensitivity, and effectiveness on your part will lead you there.

Here are a few tips...

High expectations It is important to hold high expectations for ALL students, regardless of your historical perceptions (i.e. children of illiterate parents can't learn as well because no one reads to them at home). Research shows that teacher/volunteer expectations are a great predictor of student success.

Expect Respect It is important that all students treat their peers and adults with respect. Not only is it important that you feel comfortable, but the way the student interacts with you impacts how they interact with others. If you are unsure whether a student's attitude or behavior are appropriate and respectful, or if you need some advice on how to address a particular student, speak with the teacher or volunteer coordinator.

Learn About Each Other Spend some time in the beginning getting to know the student, especially if you will be working with them on an ongoing basis. Using something written like the "Getting to know each other" worksheet or the Name Game included in this packet can be a helpful way to break the ice.

Setting Rules Agreeing on a couple of general rules for your time together is a good idea for creating some structure and staying focused. Some examples are:

- 1) Use our time for learning.
- 2) Respect each other; treat each other well.

You may need to remind the student frequently in the beginning. Get help from the volunteer coordinator or the child's classroom teacher if the child does not respond to your reminders and behavior is interfering with learning. Sometimes a behavior contract can be useful for both of you to sign and refer to.

Keep Good Boundaries For your sake and the sake of the student it is important that you are conscious of the relationship that is forming with your student. Kids will often feel attached to their tutors, especially those they work with on a regular basis. It is important to remember that your role is more teacher than friend.

For example, don't let kids sit on your lap or hang on you. Also the conversations you have and the information you share about your life needs to be appropriate for a teacher-student relationship.

Sometimes your work with a student can cause stress or tax your emotions. It's a good idea to talk with someone about these experiences so that your work as a tutor can be a positive experience.

When talking to another person about your work with a particular student, be it stressful or positive, it is important to honor the confidentiality of the student.

Student Feelings-Remember that children referred for tutoring may be experiencing conflicting emotions about entering into the tutoring partnership. While they may look forward to the attention the one-to-one relationship provides, they may not have a positive view of needing extra help. You shouldn't expect a negative or fearful attitude, but neither should you be surprised to encounter one. It's likely that students referred for tutoring will lack confidence in their academic abilities; one of the things it will be critical for you to establish right away is **your** confidence in them.

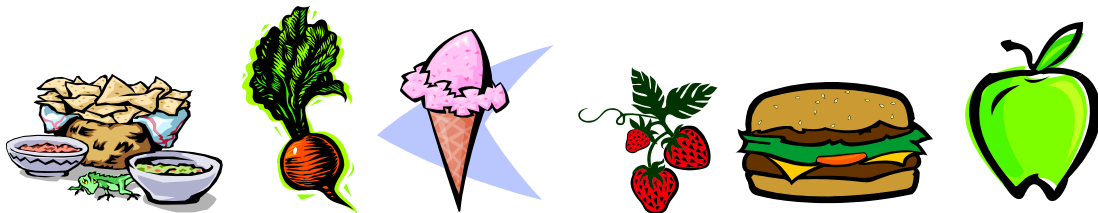
Getting to Know You Activities

To help you in getting to know your student, here are a few getting-to-know you activities. Use these as printed here, modify them to suit your needs, or use them as springboards for your own ideas.

Name Game Ice Breaker

Write the student's name in large letters down the side of a piece of paper. Ask the student to name foods s/he likes that start with each of the letters of the name. As items are listed, write them down, using the letters in the student's name as the beginning of each food.

Tortilla Chips
Radishes
Ice Cream
Strawberries
Hamburgers
Apples



You might do the same exercise with your name. Have a discussion about when you each last ate these foods.

Getting to know each other

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

1. Do you have any brothers or sisters? What are they like? _____

2. Tell me about some of your friends. _____

3. What do you like to do with your friends? _____

4. What is your favorite thing to do? _____

5. Do you like to read? What do you like to read about? _____

6. Tell me about a favorite teacher. _____

7. What is your favorite subject? _____

8. What would you like me to help you with? _____

9. Who helps you with your homework? _____

10. What is your favorite food? Color? Music? TV Show? _____

11. What is your favorite holiday and why?
