



Leander
Independent School District



Student Mentor Program

Handbook



Thank you for being a hero...

Joining the Leander ISD **HEROES** Student Mentor Program is a rewarding, challenging, and exciting experience. The **HEROES** program is designed to encourage business and community volunteers to become involved in students' lives to help students reach their full potential.

Our **HEROES** have

*Hearts for
Encouraging
Respect
Optimism
Enthusiasm &
Self-Confidence*

Our **HEROES** are mature, caring community members who like and respect children and young adults. **HEROES** believe that all students are capable of academic and personal accomplishment, and are genuinely concerned about helping youth.

HEROES provide a positive, responsible role model for students who otherwise may not have many. Your willingness to give your time to help the students in Leander ISD is sincerely appreciated.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program Program Description

Leander ISD's **HEROES** Student Mentor Program is a safe, one-on-one, school-based initiative encompassing grades K-12. Mentors must be approved LISD volunteers who have received training and are carefully matched with a student. Students are identified by LISD school counselors, trained and must have a signed parental approval form on file. Once matched, a HEROES volunteer meets with the student for 30 minutes each week on the school campus during the normal school hours.

HEROES are role models who have a **Heart** for **Encouraging Respect, Optimism, Enthusiasm** and **Self-Confidence** within students, while providing guidance and support to cultivate personal, social and academic development.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program Overview

The Need for HEROES

School-aged youth need caring and consistent relationships with adults in order to be successful in school and beyond. However, there are many young people lacking adults in their lives who are willing or able to provide the support necessary to help them reach their full potential.

Why Students May Need a HERO:

Students may need a HERO for reasons including: failing grades, poor attendance, low self-esteem, poor social skills/peer relationships, adjusting to a new environment or need a positive role model. These students may need help developing problem-solving skills, improving academic performance, meeting short-term and long-term goals, improving his or her self-image, dealing with peer pressure, making healthy relationships with adults and peers, making positive choices.

Leander ISD has many students who would benefit from a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult other than their teachers. Students can benefit from a consistent, long-term relationship, which provides guidance and support as they are faced with various challenges during their school career. Mentors are an invaluable resource from the community to start addressing this need. Mentors can help students improve academic performance and character development to support success in life.

What the Research Shows:

A study conducted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America looked at five school-based mentoring programs. The teachers reported:

- 64% of the students developed more positive attitudes toward school.
- 58% achieved higher grades in social studies, languages, and math.
- 60% improved relationships with adults, and 56% improved relationships with peers.
- 55% were better able to express their feelings.
- 64% developed higher self-confidence.
- 62% were more likely to trust their teachers.

School-based mentoring provides the help most students need to assure their academic and personal growth.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program Process

HEROES

- Complete Application
- Complete Training

Community Relations Department

- Complete Background Check
- Notify HEROES Coordinator when process is complete
- Provide support for HEROES and Coordinators

Campus Coordinator

- Identify Student
- Collect Parent Permission from Student
- Match Student and HEROES Volunteer
- Contact HEROES Volunteer regarding first meeting
- Greet HEROES Volunteer
- Act as liaison for HEROES Volunteer and Student
- Provide support for HEROES Volunteer and Student

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program Guidelines

In order to participate in the LISD Student Mentoring Program, **HEROES** must follow these guidelines at all times:

HEROES are required to:

- Complete an application and criminal background check and attend an initial mentor training conducted by LISD school officials.
- Participate in the LISD **HEROES** Student Mentoring Program for the duration of the school year.
- Sign in and out of the school on the Mentor Sign-In Sheet and wear a mentor name tag.
- Contact the Campus Mentor Coordinator if they are unable to keep their appointment.
- Contact the District or Campus Mentor Coordinator with concerns or questions.

30-Minute Weekly Meetings: Meetings between the mentor and mentee are to take place on school grounds in designated mentoring areas — library, cafeteria, classroom — during school hours. All meetings must take place in rooms with open doors or in sight of school personnel.

Discipline: Mentors are not responsible for disciplining students. If you are concerned about a student's behavior or their behavior becomes unacceptable, please contact the campus staff.

Incentives: Mentors are discouraged from giving their students gifts as incentives. Students should strive to be self-motivated. Examples of appropriate incentives are smiles, words of encouragement, and birthday cards.

Confidentiality: **All academic and personal information you are told concerning your student is strictly confidential, and sharing that information with others is a violation of the law.** Student records are not available to the mentors due to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Additionally, parents have to give permission before the school can supply the mentor the home address or phone number of the student. The mentor can decide whether or not to provide the mentee with his/her address and phone number. **The law requires you to report any information your student might share with you in regards to homicide, suicide, physical/emotional abuse, or any illegal activity.** Report and document this information to the Campus Mentor Coordinator or principal, and then he/she will assist you with the next step. Do not promise a student that you will keep this information.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Qualities and Responsibilities

As **HEROES with Hearts for Encouraging Respect, Optimism, Enthusiasm & Self-Confidence**, here are some important things to keep in mind.

- When you are on campus, dress appropriately.
- Do not meet with/interact with students other than the student you have been assigned to.
- Mentors are discouraged from giving gifts and/or purchasing lunch for any student.
- Never direct students to unscreened resources.
- Never give medication to any student.
- Do not transport the mentee in their personal vehicle.
- Be cautious about physical contact with all students, such as nudging, hugging, pushing, hitting, etc.
- Refrain from speaking negatively about parents/guardians/teachers or people in authority.

LISD's HEROES are expected to meet with their student for a minimum of 30 minutes each week on school grounds throughout the school year. HEROES volunteers should be prepared for the mentoring relationship to last several years.

When meeting with the student, HEROES should focus on the student's strengths and not on "fixing" the student's problems. Help the student recognize barriers and opportunities and seek out solutions and always respect the student's right to make his or her own choices in life. HEROES should be aware of their limitations and recognize that they cannot change the student's circumstances.

HEROES should be flexible and non-judgmental. HEROES should respect their student's religious beliefs and never impose his or her personal beliefs on the student.

HEROES should be positive, optimistic individuals who exercise patience when interacting with students. They should reinforce the student's successes. Like all LISD Volunteers, HEROES should not criticize school procedures or personnel in front of the student.

Qualities of Effective HEROES

Preparedness - Mentors are prepared to be a friend to a young person and demonstrate consistent, dependable, trustworthy, accepting, honest, and respectful behaviors.

Integrity - Mentors consistently act in ways that are ethical, earning the respect and trust of their mentees and supporting community partners.

Commitment - Mentors are steadfast in their commitment to the policies and procedures of the guiding organization.

Knowledge Builder - Mentors actively seek out shared opportunities that enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their mentees.

Inclusive Attitude - Mentors value the diverse racial, economic, cultural, and religious traits of their mentees.

Maintain Confidentiality - Mentors act in the best interest of the mentoring organization and ensure confidentiality, taking care to protect against inadvertent disclosure.

Accountability - Mentors make regular contact with the mentoring organization and ensure effective mentoring practices.

Appropriate - Mentors refrain from profanity, criticism of school faculty or staff, inappropriate physical contact, violations of law or school code of conduct.

Eligibility - Mentors authorize the completion of required background checks to cover criminal history, personal interviews and other forms of screening as deemed appropriate.

Service to Community - Mentors maintain a steady presence in the lives of youth and in community efforts, and strive to encourage others toward participation in volunteer efforts.

Source: Governor's Mentoring Initiative,
Texas Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

The Phases of Mentoring

The mentoring relationship typically goes through multiple stages that include developing rapport and building trust, setting and reaching goals, navigating rough spots, and eventually closing the relationship.

Phase 1: Developing Rapport and Building Trust

The “getting to know you” phase is the most critical phase of the relationship and may take weeks or even months. It is especially critical in this stage to be both predictable and consistent. If you schedule an appointment, keep it.

Things to expect and work on during Phase 1 include:

Testing

Young people generally do not trust adults. As a result, they use testing as a coping or defense mechanism to determine whether they can trust you. They will test to see if you really care about them. The student might test the mentor by not showing up to a scheduled meeting to see how the mentor will react.

Establish confidentiality

During the first stage of the relationship, it's important to establish confidentiality with our young person. This helps develop trust. The mentor should let the mentee know that whatever he or she wants to share with the mentor will remain confidential, as long as (and it's important to stress this point) what the young person tells the mentors is not going to harm the young person or someone else. It's helpful to stress this up front, within the first few meetings with the mentee. That way, later down the road, if a mentor needs to break the confidence because the information the mentee shared was going to harm him or her or someone else, the young person will not feel betrayed.

Goal Setting (transitions to Phase 2)

It's helpful during Phase 1 to take the time to set at least one achievable goal together for the relationship. What do the two of you want to get out of this relationship? It's also good to help your mentee set personal goals. Young people often do not learn how to set goals, and this will provide them with the opportunity to set goals and work toward achieving them.

Keep in mind...

- *A mentor is a positive role model. Demonstrate responsibility, care and concern.*
- *Diversity is a two-way street. Share your culture. Don't be afraid of differences.*
- *Poverty has its own culture. Be understanding and nonjudgmental.*
- *It takes time to get to know someone.*
- *Plan activities that will fill the allotted time. Ask your mentee what he or she would like to do.*
- *Be flexible.*
- *Your mentee may be shy. Be patient.*
- *Your mentee may initially be unresponsive.*
- *You may be tested. Demonstrate your dependability.*
- *Remain patiently committed.*
- *Building trust requires work.*
- *Don't force discussions about personal issues. Young people need privacy.*
- *Communication styles can vary from culture to culture*
- *Parents are important. Respect your mentee's parents.*
- *Be yourself.*

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The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

The Phases of Mentoring

Phase 2: Setting and Reaching Goals

Once the “testing” is over, the rocky part of the relationship usually ends and the young person becomes more committed. At times, however, odd behaviors may appear, usually if the youth is under stress. not the mentor and the youth should identify and work toward some short-term goals.

Keep in mind...

- *Mentoring is not just about friendship. Remember you are the adult.*
- *Many young people lack focus. Provide explicit direction.*
- *Your commitment to the goals may be tested. Be consistent and predictable.*
- *Many young people lack life skills. Look for teachable moments.*
- *Successful mentoring relationships are Always be open to suggestions.*
- *Realize your limitations.*
- *Enjoyable time is a valuable part of the relationship. Try to achieve balance.*
- *Your student may not be aware of career possibilities. Help broaden his or her horizons.*
- *Some students may not know how to explore career options. Help open doors.*
- *Determine your student's post-high school plans or interest in college. Your student may be unaware of the processes involved. Help your student plan his or her application.*

Setting goals

Once the trust and rapport has been established, base your relationship around clearly defined goals.

- Involve your student in setting goals. Your mentee's goals must be his or her own.
- Ask your student to make a commitment with you to carry out the goal through a handshake or written agreement. The student must be committed to his or her goal or it will never be achieved.
- Try articulating a long-term goal before determining a short-term goal that can be immediately achieved by your student.
- Set goals that are realistic but challenging (if it's too difficult, the student may become frustrated and give up, but if it's too easy there is little incentive to achieve it).
- Set goals that are specific and measurable and agree on a deadline. Assess progress and pitfalls weekly.
- Celebrate or problem-solve the results.
- Reassess or affirm the values of the goals set.
- Consider encouraging your student to record the goals in a journal or notebook.

If the student fails to meet the goals

- the goal may have been too difficult for the student to achieve
- The goal may have been developed without active involvement and commitment of the student.
- The student may be fearful of achieving a goal. Many at-risk lack self-confidence and become accustomed to making poor choices, with reinforce their negative self-image.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

The Phases of Mentoring

Phase 3: Navigating Rough Spots

- Children care about an adult's opinions. Children often worry that they are disliked or not respected by adults. Even though children may occasionally seem nonchalant in attitude, your opinion is always important. Understand your influence as an adult. Recognize that your mentee looks to you for guidance. Always take his or her concerns seriously.
- Children need validation. While their problems may seem trivial, recognize that they are very real to your mentee. Establish productive communication. If he or she is upset, don't trivialize his or her feelings. Ask him or her to tell you how he or she feels, then listen. Be sure to establish eye contact. Don't interrupt, and keep an open mind.
- Many children have difficulty succinctly expressing their innermost feelings. Their emotions can be like a maze, and it may take them time to understand and unravel all that they are feeling. Help your mentee clarify his or her feelings. Repeat back what he or her tells you. Ask questions to help him or her clarify what he or she means while he or she talks. But always pay attention, and stay focused.
- A mentor has a unique role. Mentors are not parents, principals or another, similar authority figure. The trust between a mentor and mentee is built on that premise. Established trust will move your mentee to confide in you. Do not breach your mentee's confidence unless absolutely necessary. If there ever comes a time when you feel a breach is unavoidable, first inform your mentee of your plans to talk with someone outside.
- All relationships have problems. Changes in your mentee's life can affect his or her behavior around you. Don't expect perfection. The majority of problems is not severe, and can be easily overcome. Just stay levelheaded and calm. Be sure to use communication tools to get to the heart of an issue.
- Occasionally, a mentee will have a serious problem. Though this arises infrequently, you may be asked to help his or her with problems for which you are not qualified. Recognize your limitations and do not exceed them. You are not a psychologist, psychiatrist, drug counselor or social-worker. Instead, connect your mentee with qualified, experienced specialists if the need arises.

Keep in mind...

- *Understand your influence as an adult. Teens care about adults opinions.*
- *You have a unique role.*
- *Confront inappropriate behavior directly, but with care.*
- *Young people need validation. Establish productive communication.*
- *Some young people have a hard time expressing their feelings.*
- *All relationships have problems. Don't expect perfection.*
- *Your student may have a serious problem. Recognize your limitations.*
- *Your student may have problems at home, at school, at work or with family or friends. Assess the source of the conflict, but remember your role.*
- *If your student has problems with criminal activity, pregnancy, drug use, suicidal impulses or abuse, contact the Campus Mentor Coordinator.*

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

The Phases of Mentoring

Phase 4: Closing the Relationship

The mentoring relationship will inevitably end in its present form. This end may be planned or be abrupt. How a relationship ends is key to how both the mentor and the student think about and value their experience together.

The following steps can help close the relationship in a as positive way as possible.

When the termination is planned

Mentors should

- Alert their student in advance of the closure of the relationship
- Encourage your student to verbalize his or her feelings about the change in the relationship.
- Set the example. Be honest, candid and supportive regardless of the reason for the termination, but talk about your thoughts and feelings for the student and your feelings about ending the relationship as you know it.
- The reason(s) for the departure should be discussed with the student by the mentor first and reinforced by the campus mentor coordinator and the student.
- Monitor your own feelings, such as sadness, guilt, relief, etc.
- Help students grow from the process; reassure them about what they have learned and are capable of.
- Plan a special “fun” activity together during the last meeting, or exchange photographs.
- During the final meeting, talk about how enjoyable the relationship has been for you. Recall the student’s progresses and strengths. Tell your students about his or her great qualities. Let the student know how those qualities and strengths will help them throughout his or her life.
- Reassure the student of your confidence in him or her. Discuss positive actions and directions for the future.

When the termination is premature

- Notify the campus or mentor coordinator as soon as possible.
- Communicate their intentions for leaving. This should be done in person. The student or mentor may ask the campus coordinator to be present for this meeting.

Keep in mind...

- *The student must not be allowed to feel that the meetings ended because of something he or she did was wrong.*
- *They can understand schedule changes, illness, moving, and so on, but just as with a friend, they cannot understand the disappearance of a mentor without explanation.*
- *Don’t make promises you may not keep--including that you will keep in touch.*
- *Students who are recommended for mentoring have often lost significant adults in their lives, and the end of the mentoring relationship may feel like an additional loss.*

Measure of Success

By the time the life-cycle of your mentoring relationship is drawing to a close, your mentee may realize, for the first time, that he or she:

- Has potential
- Is confident and self-assured.
- Values education and the learning process.
- Is a capable young person.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Meeting with your Student

The First Meeting

Discuss expectations. Introduce yourself and tell a little about your background. Give a brief description of the program and check for your student's understanding and feelings about the program. Discuss where, when, and how long you will be meeting with your student.

Discuss confidentiality. Clarify that you will keep private what your student tells you, unless you are told something that involves past, present, or potential harm to him/herself or others. This type of information must be reported to the Campus Mentor Coordinator. Do not promise that you will keep this information confidential. Parents can also request to know what is discussed. To explain this to your student, you could say: *"I am not going to discuss what we say to each other with other people. But, if you ever tell me about something dangerous to you or someone else, then I will have to tell the Campus Coordinator about it. This is because I care about you and have to make sure you and others are safe."*

Encourage your student to respond. Ask your student if he or she has any questions or concerns about the program. If your student is unresponsive at first, do not take it personally. It may take some time for your relationship to develop.

Get to know your student and have fun. In the beginning of your relationship, it is critical to take things slow. Use some of the suggested activities to get to know your student when spending time together. You can start by having your student take you on a tour of the school. It is important to have fun and start developing your relationship.

Choosing Activities

Successful matches are youth-driven. Be open to suggestions by your mentee. When youth are involved in the decision-making, they feel more connected to the activities and the mentoring relationship. Try to achieve some balance in the relationship through fun and enjoyable activities. This is vital to the match.

Playing. If it appears that your student would rather play every time you are together than pursuing other activities, just remember that it is not the location nor the amount of time you spend together that is important as long as you are doing something that you both enjoy. While you may think play is wasting time, please remember its value.

Celebrating Accomplishments

Encourage your mentee each time you are together. Identify and acknowledge your student's strengths. If your mentee is not successful in an endeavor, help him or her to understand that there are many ways in which he or she has been successful. It is important to tell your mentee you are proud of him or her.

Ways to Spend an Hour

Relationship Building (5 minutes)

- Shake hands
- Make eye-contact.
- Compliment him or her
- Ask your mentee to share with you. *"Tell me two good things that have happened to you since the last time we met..."*

Communicate (45 minutes)

- Talk about something of interest to the student.
- Review his or her goals.
- Teach skills suggested by teachers using provided material.
- Strengthen problem-solving skills.

Set Goals (5 minutes)

- Assist in setting goals. Develop two goals you wish to accomplish during the next week and record them in your journal.

Close (5 minutes)

- Verbalize. Ask your mentee what he or she would like to do at the next meeting.
- Tell him or her that you are looking forward to it.
- End with a positive note. Shake hands and say you are confident he or she will have a great week.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Meeting With Your Student

Some of the following activities may be useful in helping to develop a good relationship between you and your student.

For Elementary Students

- Tell stories about your childhood and school experiences.
- Share pictures and stories about your families, pets, etc.
- Play games or work on a puzzle.
- Write stories or poems together.
- Draw pictures together of your houses, families, etc.
- Discuss your favorite sports or teams.
- Make a collage using magazines, construction paper, scissors, & glue.
- Play board games such as chess or checkers.
- Read a book to each other.
- Go to the library together.
- Eat lunch or breakfast together.
- Work on the computer at school.
- Build a model airplane or car.
- Discuss your favorite hobbies and bring examples if possible.
- Shoot hoops, throw a football or baseball, or play Frisbee.
- Make greeting, get well, or holiday cards for other people.
- Read magazines or the newspapers.
- Discuss future plans-what do you want to do when you grow up?
- Listen, listen, listen.

For Middle and High School Students

- Learn to set goals.
- Keep "Things To Do" list.
- Read the same book and share your thoughts about it.
- Read newspaper articles and discuss.
- Watch a TV show and talk about it – reality versus fiction.
- Check homework.
- Give academic assistance when asked.
- Write letters to student during vacation.
- Read and discuss books on job finding, interviewing, self-confidence.
- Research colleges and universities.
- Share hobbies/interests.
- Talk about families.
- Remember special occasions (cards).
- Problem-solve together.
- Design and do a project together.
- Eat lunch together.
- Work on the computer at school.
- Listen, listen, listen.

Activities and Listening Skills

Children need an encouraging listener to help them develop positive beliefs about their self-worth. At the beginning of your mentoring relationship, you need to strive to be a good listener.

Listen Attentively.

This begins with displaying open and inviting body language. As you interact with your student: Don't cross your arms, lean too far back, or look away very often from your student's face. Do sit with an open, calm posture at the same level as your student. Laugh with your student and keep an interested facial expression in what he/she is saying or doing.

Ask Inviting Questions.

Asking questions shows that you are interested in learning more about your student and what he/she is doing. However, there are some ways of asking questions that are better than others.

Some hints include:

Limit your number of questions: Too many questions can make a person feel uncomfortable. This can cause a student to wonder why you want to know so much and what you will do with the information.

Avoid "Why" questions: Questions that begin with "Why" can cause a person to become defensive. It may sound as if you are accusing your student of something.

Use "What" or "How" questions: The most inviting questions usually begin with "What" or "How." Some examples include: What is your favorite book? How would you change school if you could? What do you like to do with your friends?

Summarize Content and Feeling.

To help strengthen your relationship with your student, occasionally say something that summarizes what the child said or did. This sends the message that you are interested in what the child is saying or doing.

When you notice an emotion in your student, identify a word that describes that feeling. Then, add this word to the summarization of the content. This shows that you are interested in his/her feelings.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Meeting With Your Student

Often young people struggle with making good, rational decisions. HEROES Mentors should refrain from giving advice to mentees and focus on helping the student work through his or her problems on his or her own.

Giving Advice

When a mentor gives advice:

- The student is passive and possibly resistant.
- The student does not learn.
- Mentors can impose their own solutions on the student's problems.
- The student's self-esteem is not encouraged.

Student Solving Problem

When a mentor helps the student solve his or her own problem:

- The student is invested.
- The solution belongs to the student.
- Lines of communication are open.
- The student learns.
- The student's self-esteem is fostered.

Helping a Student Problem-Solve

When a mentor helps the student solve his or her own problem:

- Avoid ordering, preaching.
- Ask inviting questions -- use "what" or "how", while avoiding "why."
- Encourage the student to learn how to problem-solve:
 - Describe the problem.
 - Brainstorm options to solve the problem.
 - List advantages and disadvantages to each option.
 - Select an option based on the advantages and disadvantages.

Asking Quality Questions

Useful Questions to Clarify Outcomes

- What do you really want in this situation?
- What is important about this outcome to you?
- What are all the ways you can go about getting what you want?
- Who/what can you use as resources to get what you want?
- Who do you know that has already achieved this outcome, and how did they do it?
- Is this outcome possible to achieve?
- Can the outcome be initiated and sustained by you?
- Is this outcome consistent with who you are?
- Considering what it will take and the possible consequences, is the outcome worth doing?

Questions that Elicit Values, Needs and Wants

- What is important about achieving this particular outcome?
- How will you know that you have achieved your outcome? What will you see, hear, feel or experience to know
 - that you have achieved your outcome?
- If you get what you want, what will this do for you?

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

100 Activities to do With Your Mentee

Play games
Play catch
Hang out and talk
Shoot some hoops
Read a book together
Write a story together
Create artwork together
Have a picnic
Fly a kite
Listen to music each of you enjoys
Play cards
Take photographs together
Do homework (only occasionally)
Go to the library
Talk about your career
Talk about the future
Listen
Work on a puzzle
Write a poem together
Talk about your favorite sport
Eat lunch together
Build a model airplane or car
Play Frisbee
Read the newspaper together
Play Chess
Make greeting cards together
Make a scrapbook together
Write letters to a soldier
Tell stories about your childhood
Read books on interviewing
Research colleges and universities
Share hobbies
Talk about your family
Do a crossword puzzle
Color
Set New Year's resolutions
Talk about your first job
Talk about news or current events
Share a talent or teach a skill
Talk about plaiming a budget
Talk about what it takes to succeed
Take a walk
Swing together
Make a craft
Talk about your pets
Talk about career interests
Share your favorite subject in school
Make a list of your favorite things
Talk about places you've traveled
Talk about places you want to visit

Learn something new together
Teach each other a song
Plan an imaginary trip together
Research a different culture
Learn about a foreign country
Talk about college
Practice writing thank you notes
Share your culture and background
Play Monopoly
Exchange favorite recipes
Carve a pumpkin
Play Hangman
Share your dreams
Plan a random act of kindness
Play with Legos
Play with Play-doh
Eat breakfast together
Talk about bullying
Play tic-tac-toe
Keep a journal
Talk about study habits
Make a collage
Learn 10 words in a foreign language
Do a Sudoku
Make a collage
Talk about your favorite foods
Create art you can wear
Blow bubbles
Play hopscotch
Play Scrabble
Talk about money
Talk about eating healthy
Play a musical instrument
Talk about good manners
Role play
Play checkers
Teach a skill
Do a word fmd
Throw a football
Take a tour ofthe school
Make finger puppets
Have a tea party
Read a comic book
Play Jacks
Read the funny pages
Tell a story
String beads together
Research a historical event
Practice spelling words
Plan a dream vacation

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Stages of Growth and Development: Ages 5 - Adolescent

AGE 5

- Is close-mouthed at home about school activities.
- Has short bursts of energy.
- Changes from one activity to another with ease.
- Has vague concepts of time.
- Is not fearful.
- Asks many questions about how things work.
- Enjoys cutting, pasting.

AGE 6

- Wants and needs to be first, to be loved best.
- to be praised most and to win.
- Does a good deal of tattling.
- Is very domineering and bossy.
- Is interested in simple games.
- Carries on long conversations.
- Is restless, overactive, and exuberant.
- Usually likes his/her teacher.

AGE 7

- Does not respond promptly.
- May forget easily.
- Fights with playmates.
- Is interested in magic, puzzles, and collecting
- Is concerned about being good.
- Complains and sulks.
- Is easier to discipline, sensitive to praise.

AGE 8

- Enjoys jokes and riddles.
- Attention span is improving.
- Is alert, friendly and interested in people
- Sometimes careless, noisy and argumentative'
- Feelings easily hurt by careless remarks.
- Understand time and money concepts.
- Likes team games.
- Needs frequent reminders about responsibilities.
- Is sensitive to criticism.
- In need of adult praise and encouragement.

AGE 9

- Has increased independence.
- Has increasing self-motivation.
- Resents interruptions.
- Has strong sense of right and wrong.
- Is competitive in work and play and is afraid of failure.,
- Is more interested in talking and listening than in working

AGE 10

- Is relaxed, casual, and alert.
- Has a strong sense of justice.
- Needs schedules.
- Truly enjoys friends.
- Is in one of the happiest ages.
- Loves the outdoors.

Pre-Adolescent

- Awkward, lazy, and restless because of rapid and uneven growth.
- Very antagonistic and teasing toward the opposite sex.
- Often over-critical, rebellious, and uncooperative.
- In need of a sense of humor from adults.
- Turned off by nagging, condemnation, and being talked down to.
- In need of a feeling of belonging and acceptance.

Adolescent

- Often going to extremes, emotional instability, and know-it-alls.
- Showing a step toward adulthood by asserting independence.
- In need of acceptance by peer group. In need of adult guidance that is kindly and does not threaten freedom.
- Seeking both dependence and independence.
- In need of provision of a constructive recreation, possibly a "worthy cause".

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Digger Deeper: Building Self-Esteem

It is important to be able to recognize the signs and behaviors of students possessing high and low self-esteem. The following list and activities may be helpful in recognizing and working to improve a student's self-esteem.

High Self-Esteem Students

Active curious about surroundings, makes wide variety of contacts.

Makes friends easily, talks and laughs.

Has a sense of humor, is a good sport, can laugh at themselves.

Asks questions, defines problems.

Willing to take risks in the classroom. Contributes to discussions and is able to stand for what they think.

Takes modest pride in own contributions, is not overbearing, and does not cheat.

Works and plays well with others.

Usually happy, confident, does not complain for cannot be had.

Low Self-Esteem Students

Mildly passive, tends to avoid new experiences, has limited contacts.

Shy, bashful, quiet and withdrawn.

Tends to be overly serious, hyper-sensitive, afraid to be laughed at.

Avoids getting to the problem.

Unsure, backs down easily, often asks: "Do you think this is right?"

Aggressively asserts own ability and contributions, finds it difficult to share.

Overly competitive.

Usually gloomy and fearful, worries as a matter of course, complains a lot.

Activities to Build Self-Esteem

- Never do for a student what he or she can do for himself or herself.
- Be aware of appropriate expectations at various age levels.
- Demonstrate the willingness to accept mistakes in self and others.
- Use encouraging language - focus on improvements more than accomplishments.
- Realize that self-confidence varies within the individual's areas of life.
- Demonstrate self-confidence.
- Use positive self-talk.
- Share stories about times when someone gave each of you confidence.
- Think of a way you and your mentee could work together and help another person feel more capable.
- Each of you share what you think is your best characteristic and why.
- Share stories with your mentee about times when an adult made you feel special. How did it affect you?

The HEROES Student Mentor Program Digging Deeper: Bullying Prevention

Take Action Against Bullying

What is bullying?

TEC §37.0832 - "Bullying" means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related-activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that: 1.) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or 2.) is sufficiently severe, persistent and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described in the definition of "bullying" is considered bullying if the conduct: 1.) exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and 2.) interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school. This definition applies to student-on-student behavior only.

What bullying is not:

Bullying is *not* a fact of life. It is *not* a phase children have to go through. Likewise, it is *not* just "a part of growing up," "kids being kids" or an "unavoidable part of life." Bullying should not be dismissed nor tolerated. Bullying is not indicated when the issues are surrounding conduct by an adult toward a student. Contact the human resources department or campus administrators for guidance on how to handle the alleged adult misconduct.

Types of bullying:

Bullying can take on many different forms. It can be *physical* (hitting or pushing), *social relational* (spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships) or *verbal* (name calling or taunting). *Cyberbullying* (using the Internet or mobile phones to harm others) is considered a form of verbal bullying.



How do I know if a student is being bullied?

While every child is different, some common warning signs that a student is being bullied include when he or she -

- Is unhappy, downhearted, depressed or has mood swings with anger or irritation.
- Experiences a sudden drop in grades/Lacks interest in school, is afraid to go or refuses to go.
- Withdraws from family or school activities/Stops talking about peers and everyday activities.
- Comes home with torn or missing clothes or keeps losing things or has injuries inconsistent with the explanation.
- Experiences stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, is unable to sleep or sleeps too much.

How do I know if a student is being a bully?

Some warning signs that a student is a bully toward another student are when he or she -

- Feels contempt for another human being and is intolerant towards differences.
- Is often hot tempered, impulsive, aggressive, nasty, spiteful, and/or oppositional.
- Has a marked need to dominate or manipulate others/Is good at talking his or her way out of situations.
- Finds it difficult to fit in with rules.

What if my child is being bullied?

LISD has a strong policy prohibiting bullying. You need to:

- Report bullying to your child's assistant principal who will then investigate the situation.
- If counseling resources are needed because your child is a bully, victim or bystander - please contact your child's school counselor or notify an assistant principal.
- Visit www.leanderisd.org for more information about LISD's safe schools program.

How to help...

If a student you know is being bullied:

- **Listen to him or her.** Tell him or her, "I hear you; I am here for you; I believe you; It is not your fault. It takes courage to tell me. Thank you."
- **Talk about what happened and what he or she can do if it happens again** (turn around and walk away, tell a teacher or another trusted adult, or be in a group for more protection).
- **Help the student become "bully proof."** Bullies often pick on students who are shy, looking down, have poor posture who appear to have low self-esteem or low self-confidence. Help the student stand up straight, look people in the eye, smile, stay calm and talk in a confident voice. Training for the bystanders is crucial in helping to stop bullying of students who are unable to speak up for themselves.

How to help...

If you witness a student being a bully:

When you witness bullying, immediately address the behavior.

Report the incident to your child's counselor or assistant principal.

- At home, follow through with discipline consequences - *let them know that the behavior is not okay.*
- Teach empathy, acceptance and tolerance.

Help is available...

If your child needs someone to talk to:

LISD is now offering Talk About It®, an anonymous communication service that allows students to reach out to trusted faculty members through online communication and text messaging to solve issues related to bullying, violence and depression. It is available to all LISD students in fourth - 12th grade.

Facts about bullying...

- Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm. It can be a life changing event.
- School is the place where the majority of bullying occurs. About 40-70% of bullying takes place during breaks in the schoolyard, in corridors, or in secluded places such as the bathroom. (USDHHS)
- Bullying is a form of abuse, harassment and violence.
- Bullying happens more frequently than is reported. Often it is not reported because the victim is afraid no one will believe them, they think they will get blamed, or they believe the bully will retaliate.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Digging Deeper: Talk About It®

Talk About It® allows faculty to meet students where they are – online and with text messaging – to help solve issues. By reducing the stigma of communicating with trusted adults, the service allows students to open up and break the ‘code of silence’.

How it Works

Students access the service from any Internet connected computer, or from their cell phone via text messaging. School websites will have the Talk About It® logo and a link to access the system.

They choose to communicate anonymously or non-anonymously and then select a topic. Trained staff members then get an alert and the service provides a means for dialogue with the student. It provides the opportunity for students to solve issues related to bullying, violence, depression, and more – at the point of inception rather than after it is too late.

The Talk About It system provides anonymity to the student and his or her name isn't immediately available to the campus staff member who receives the message; however, if a message indicates that a student's or students' health or safety is potentially in danger, we maintain the right to identify the student(s) involved and to notify the proper authorities, if necessary. We will follow our current process on parent notification when appropriate.

Top 10 Issues Students are Talking About:

- Bullying
- Stress
- Family Problems
- Depression
- Fighting
- Peer Pressure
- Drugs
- Cutting/Self-Injury
- Cheating on Schoolwork
- Sexual Harassment

Identity Revelation

School administrators, teachers, law enforcement officials and counselors may request the identity of a student if the student's message contains:

- A threat to their own life
- A threat to the life of another
- A threat to harm the building

If a student abuses the system more than twice, the student's account will be blocked and they can no longer use the system.

Questions?

Contact

Student Support Services 512-570-0153

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Digging Deeper: The 40 Developmental Assets (ages 5-9)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

External Assets	Support	<p>1. Family Support—Family continues to be a consistent provider of love and support for the child’s unique physical and emotional needs.</p> <p>2. Positive Family Communication—Parent(s) and child communicate openly, respectfully, and frequently, with child receiving praise for her or his efforts and accomplishments.</p> <p>3. Other Adult Relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s), with the child sometimes experiencing relationships with a non-parent adult.</p> <p>4. Caring Neighborhood—Parent(s) and child experience friendly neighbors who affirm and support the child’s growth and sense of belonging.</p> <p>5. Caring School Climate—Child experiences warm, welcoming relationships with teachers, caregivers, and peers at school.</p> <p>6. Parent Involvement in Schooling—Parent(s) talk about the importance of education and are actively involved in the child’s school success.</p>	
	Empowerment	<p>7. Community Values Children—Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.</p> <p>8. Children as Resources—Child contributes to family decisions and has opportunities to participate in positive community events.</p> <p>9. Service to Others—Child has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.</p> <p>10. Safety—Parents and community adults ensure the child’s safety while keeping in mind her or his increasing independence.</p>	
	Boundaries & Expectations	<p>11. Family Boundaries—The family maintains supervision of the child, has reasonable guidelines for behavior, and always knows where the child is.</p> <p>12. School Boundaries—Schools have clear, consistent rules and consequences and use a positive approach to discipline.</p> <p>13. Neighborhood Boundaries—Neighbors and friends’ parents help monitor the child’s behavior and provide feedback to the parent(s).</p> <p>14. Adult Role Models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.</p> <p>15. Positive Peer Influence—Parent(s) monitor the child’s friends and encourage spending time with those who set good examples.</p>	
	Constructive Use of Time	<p>16. High Expectations—Parent(s), teachers, and other influential adults encourage the child to do her or his best in all tasks and celebrate their successes.</p> <p>17. Creative Activities—Child participates weekly in music, dance, or other form of artistic expression outside of school.</p> <p>18. Child Programs—Child participates weekly in at least one sport, club, or organization within the school or community.</p> <p>19. Religious Community—Child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.</p> <p>20. Time at Home—Child spends time at home playing and doing positive activities with the family.</p>	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<p>21. Achievement Motivation—Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.</p> <p>22. Learning Engagement—Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.</p> <p>23. Homework—With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.</p> <p>24. Bonding to School—Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.</p> <p>25. Reading for Pleasure—Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.</p>
		Positive Values	<p>26. Caring—Parent(s) help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.</p> <p>27. Equality and Social Justice—Parent(s) encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.</p> <p>28. Integrity—Parent(s) help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.</p> <p>29. Honesty—Parent(s) encourage child’s development in recognizing and telling the truth.</p> <p>30. Responsibility—Parent(s) encourage child to accept and take responsibility for her or his actions at school and at home.</p> <p>31. Self-Regulation—Parents encourage child’s growth in regulating her or his own emotions and behaviors and in understanding the importance of healthy habits and choices.</p>
		Social Competencies	<p>32. Planning and Decision Making—Parent(s) help child think through and plan school and play activities.</p> <p>33. Interpersonal Competence—Child seeks to build friendships and is learning about self-control.</p> <p>34. Cultural Competence—Child continues to learn about her or his own cultural identity and is encouraged to interact positively with children of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>35. Resistance Skills—Child is learning to recognize risky or dangerous situations and is able to seek help from trusted adults.</p> <p>36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution—Child continues learning to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language.</p>
		Positive Identity	<p>37. Personal Power—Child has a growing sense of having influence over some of the things that happen in her or his life.</p> <p>38. Self-Esteem—Child likes herself or himself and feels valued by others.</p> <p>39. Sense of Purpose—Child welcomes new experiences and imagines what he or she might do or be in the future.</p> <p>40. Positive View of Personal Future—Child has a growing curiosity about the world and finding her or his place in it.</p>

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Digging Deeper: The 40 Developmental Assets (ages 8-12)

External Assets	Support	<p>1. Family support—Family time provides high levels of love and support.</p> <p>2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).</p> <p>3. Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).</p> <p>4. Caring neighborhood—Child experiences caring neighbors.</p> <p>5. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.</p> <p>6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.</p>
	Empowerment	<p>7. Community values youth—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.</p> <p>8. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.</p> <p>9. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.</p> <p>10. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.</p>
	Boundaries & Expectations	<p>11. Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.</p> <p>12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.</p> <p>13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.</p> <p>14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as non-family adults, model positive, responsible behavior.</p> <p>15. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.</p>
	Constructive Use of Time	<p>16. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.</p> <p>17. Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.</p> <p>18. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children..</p> <p>19. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.</p> <p>20. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.</p>

Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<p>21. Achievement Motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.</p> <p>22. Learning Engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.</p> <p>23. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time.</p> <p>24. Bonding to school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.</p> <p>25. Reading for Pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.</p>
	Positive Values	<p>26. Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.</p> <p>27. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.</p> <p>28. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.</p> <p>29. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.</p> <p>30. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.</p>
	Social Competencies	<p>31. Healthy Lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.</p> <p>32. Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.</p> <p>33. Interpersonal Competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.</p> <p>34. Cultural Competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.</p> <p>35. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.</p>
	Positive Identity	<p>36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</p> <p>37. Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.</p> <p>38. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.</p> <p>39. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.</p> <p>40. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.</p>

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Digging Deeper: The 40 Developmental Assets (ages 12-18)

External Assets	Support	1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
		2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
		3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
		4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
		5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	Empowerment	6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
		7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
		8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
		9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
	Boundaries & Expectations	10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.
		11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
		12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
		13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
		14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
		15. Positive peer Influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	Constructive Use of Time	16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
		17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
		18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
		19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
		20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
		22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
		23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
		24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.
		25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
	Positive Values	26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.
		27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
		28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
		29. Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
		30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
		31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
	Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
		33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
		34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
		35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
		36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
		38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
		39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
		40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Reporting Child Abuse

Responsibility

According to the Texas Family Code, Chapter 261, anyone having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect **MUST** report the case immediately (within 48 hours) to a state or local law enforcement agency or the Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS).

It is your legal obligation to report child abuse to the DFPS. Reporting suspected child abuse to your principal, school counselor or superintendent will **NOT** satisfy your obligation under this law.

A disclosure. If you are the first person the child tells about sexual abuse, your testimony as "outcry witness" may be especially important in future legal proceedings. What you say the child to you is not considered hearsay but is admissible evidence in a trial involving a sexual offense against a child. This exception applies only to the first person the child approaches.

Your legal protection. Your report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in "good faith" and "without malice." DFPS has a toll-free, 24-hour Family Violence Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.

Definitions

Abuse. Child abuse is an act or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical, mental or emotional health and development. Child abuse may take the form of physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, physical neglect, medical neglect, or inadequate supervision.

Neglect. A child's parent, guardian, or conservator is responsible for either directly providing safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care, and supervision for the child, or arranging to have someone else provide these needs. Neglect, as defined by the Family Code, Chapter 261, is failure to meet this responsibility.

Response, Attitude & Actions. Regardless of your relationship to the abused child your responses, attitudes, and actions can be critical to his or her overall experience and eventual healing. Without attempting to investigate or intervene inappropriately, you can help. Your first responsibility when you recognize abuse of any kind is to report your suspicions. But your words and actions at the time of the discovery or disclosure can be the first step toward opening the channels of communication and healing.

If you have reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected DO report your reasonable suspicions. DON'T try to investigate and **DON'T** confront the abuser.

Ask about what happened

Ask open ended, non-judgmental questions using appropriate vocabulary. Repeat back what the child tells you in his or her own words to make sure you understand. Don't pressure the child to talk.

Document what you see and here

Write down anything the child said, using his or her words. Your notes should be a record of the facts and, as far as possible, should not contain judgments or conclusions.

Respect the child's trust

Be careful not to communicate skepticism about what the child is saying. Do not express shock or blame, but also do not minimize or try to excuse the abuser's behavior. If the child does not wish to answer a particular question or be questioned further, respect the child's wishes. Let the child know you are available to talk and listen any time. Do not promise the child that you will keep the abuse a secret. Tell the child that some things cannot be secrets because "we have to get help." Tell the child what you plan to do next, while reassuring him or her that that was the right thing to do. While it may be a good idea to reassure the child, depending on the circumstances, you should not promise protection that you cannot deliver. If the child needs immediate protection, make sure this concern is communicated promptly to the investigating authorities.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Reporting Child Abuse

Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse or neglect often takes place in the well—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family. There are four major types of child maltreatment. Although any of the forms may be found separately, they often occur together.

Each State is responsible for establishing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that meet Federal minimum standards. Most include the following:

- **Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse** is physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.
- **Sexual abuse** is any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution for the production of pornographic materials.
- **Emotional abuse** is any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats, and rejection.

Why Does Child Abuse Occur?

Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race, and family income level. However, research has identified many factors relating to the child, family, community, and society that are associated with an increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Studies also have shown that when multiple risk factors are present, the risk is greater.

At greater risk are young mothers and fathers unprepared for the responsibilities of raising a child; overwhelmed single parents with little support; and families placed under stress by poverty, divorce, or a child's disability. Some families are stressed by worries about foreclosures, employment, health, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, or other problems. Some are simply unaware of how to care of their children's basic needs. These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs.

Consequences of Abuse

Child maltreatment is a traumatic experience, and the impact on survivors can be profound. Traumatic events, whether isolated (e.g., a single incident of sexual abuse) or ongoing (e.g., chronic emotional abuse or neglect) overwhelm children's ability to cope and elicit powerful physical and emotional responses. These responses continue even when the danger has passed, often until treatment is received.

Traumatic events may impair a child's ability to trust others, sense of their personal safety, and effectiveness in navigating life changes. Research shows that child maltreatment, like other trauma, is associated with adverse health and mental health outcomes in children and families, and those negative effects can last a lifetime.

The trauma of child abuse or neglect has been associated with increased risk of:

- Depression and suicide attempts
- Substance abuse
- Developmental disabilities and learning problems
- Social problems with other children and with adults
- Teen pregnancy
- Lack of success in school
- Domestic violence
- Chronic illness, including heart disease, cancer, and chronic lung disease, among others

In addition to the impact on the child and family, child abuse and neglect affects the community as a whole—including medical and mental health, law enforcement, judicial, public social services, and non-profit agencies—as they respond to incidents and support victims.

The **HEROES** Student Mentor Program

Reporting Child Abuse

What are the warning signs?

The first step in helping or getting help for an abused or neglected child is to identify symptoms of abuse.

The table below lists some symptoms of the four major types of child maltreatment. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should consider the possibility of maltreatment.

Maltreatment Type	Symptoms
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs of malnutrition• Poor hygiene• Unattended physical or medical problems
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained bruises, burns or welts• Child appears frightened or a parent or caregiver
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in an anal or genital area• Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, or others• Age-inappropriate knowledge of sex
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extremes in behavior, ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive• Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development

What are the warning signs?

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The table below lists some symptoms of the four major types of child maltreatment. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should consider the possibility of maltreatment.

If you think a child is being mistreated, take immediate action.

It is your legal obligation to report child abuse to the DFPS. Reporting suspected child abuse to your principal, school counselor or superintendent will NOT satisfy your obligation under this law. Your report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in “good faith” and “without malice.”

DFPS has a toll-free, 24-hour Family Violence Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.

When you make a report, you will be asked for specific information, such as:

- The child’s name and location
- The name and relationship (if known) of the person you believe is abusing the child
- What you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect.
- The names of any other people who might know about the abuse
- Your name and phone number (voluntary)