

MENTORING

You may be asked to help a child who needs some individual attention. A child who has been absent or who is having difficulty with a particular problem will benefit greatly from your special help. Children need this kind of help most often in reading and math, but it could be in any subject. The following guidelines may help you in your first mentoring experience:

- First, don't be hesitant about refusing the assignment if you feel you don't understand the material well enough to help the child. The teacher will understand and will find another area in which you can help.
- Get specific directions about the assignment from the teacher.
- Find a quiet place in or out of the room where the two of you can talk quietly without disturbing the rest of the class.
- Establish a one-to-one relationship with the child by talking first for a minute about the child himself.
- Find out exactly where the child is in his work by asking him to explain to you some of the work that has preceded this assignment.
- Let the child work out as much as he can on his own. Provide encouragement, but don't step in too soon.
- Rather than giving him the answer when he asks, direct his thinking so he can discover the answer himself (i.e. student asks, "How can I subtract 63c from just \$1.00?"; volunteer replies, "Well, how many cents are in one dollar?" or student asks "When did Columbus discover America?"; volunteer replies, "Does your social studies book have an index? Perhaps you could find the information if you look under 'Columbus.'").

Using these methods takes more time than giving the child the answer, but don't feel you need to hurry. It is essential that the child understand what he/she is doing before going further.

DO'S AND DON'TS

What A Mentor Does:

- Praises and compliments.
- Tries to make the student feel pleased with himself.
- Tries to understand how the student feels.
- Expresses concern and acts interested in the student.
- Observes school rules.
- Is friendly and concerned.
- Shows consideration of teachers' time.

What A Mentor Avoids:

- Berating or belittling.
- Criticizing the teacher.
- Missing any scheduled sessions unless ill.
- Allowing sessions to frequently run overtime.
- Allowing the student to disturb others.
- Interrupting the teachers' class time unnecessarily.