



March 12, 2020

MEMO from the Staff and Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas

Dear Volunteers, Families and Friends,

As we all learn and understand more about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), here is some guidance on navigating your match during this time:

Bigs and Littles/ Mentors and Mentees in our Community-Based Mentoring Program can continue to meet based on the discretion of the child's family and the volunteer. If you have any questions or need ideas for safe match meeting activities or advice on how to talk to your Littles about the concern surrounding the Coronavirus, please reach out to Director of Program Services, Kasham Laine at [210-225-6322](tel:210-225-6322) ex 125 or at klaine@bigmentor.org, or to a Volunteer Manager or Parent/Youth Manager or other program staff person.

All of our workplace partners and schools are taking the necessary precautions to keep all the youth we serve safe. At this time, workplace groups will be meeting unless you hear otherwise from your Facilitator or other BBBS staff. Our staff will keep all involved parties informed as we receive updates.

We advise a 2-pronged approach when communicating with kids about this situation: 1. careful, caring conversation and, 2. shared decision-making:

Talking about it

Being accurate and honest, and remaining calm and reassuring, go hand-in-hand. If your child/Little wants to talk about what they're hearing or experiencing, these resources may help:

- [COVID-19 Virus Fact Sheet](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention PDF)
- [Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus](#) (includes video)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): How To Talk to Your Child](#) (includes audio)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention PDF)

Spending time together

In planning outings, you should consider these things:

- Location: Where will you be? Hanging out at one's home may be a better choice than a public venue.
- Health: Is everyone well? Pressing pause on outings if someone's sick or concerned about coronavirus is okay. This time can be used to bond through text, FaceTime, etc. instead.
- Comfort: Is everyone comfortable with plans?

Exercise Caution

The safety of our Littles, Families and Bigs is of the utmost importance to us. If you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with COVID-19, please contact us immediately. At that point we will work through specific plans for matches.

All matches are advised **not to meet** if any party has:

- Recently traveled to a high or medium risk area
- Come in contact with anyone with the disease
- Shows signs of any illness

As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments please be sure to:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover any coughs or sneezes
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds and more frequently
- Stay home if you are sick
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces

As the situation around coronavirus evolves, we may send future communications with additional recommendations. For now, we encourage you to follow all best practices for limiting exposure to and spread of COVID-19.

Please do not hesitate to reach out by phone, email or text if you'd like to talk through specific question.