

INVOLVE

engage

AN ABBREVIATED GUIDE TO MENTORING YOUTH

1. Build a relationship with the new youth member by spending informal time together, such as over lunch or at social events. This will allow you to get to know and feel comfortable with each other. Mentoring works best when it's not just about work.
2. Make sure that young people have been given a thorough orientation. They need to understand both the organization and their personal obligations on the job. Arrange for ongoing trainings to build their skills or their understanding of their work group's function.
3. Make sure young people know about and attend every meeting. This may entail making a reminder phone call or sending an e-mail.
4. Before the first board meeting the youth member will attend, spend time together. Initiate a relationship with your youth member's parents/guardians.
5. If possible, meet with the youth member before each meeting to prepare. This can be done a few days prior to the meeting or immediately before. It is also fine to prepare them over the phone.
6. Support and encourage young people to participate during meetings. Ask them what they think about a particular issue or suggest that they bring up ideas or observations they have mentioned to you before. The more specific your questions, the more likely your youth member will feel comfortable answering them.
7. Debrief with your youth member after meetings whenever possible. Discuss highlights, ideas and concerns.
8. Help young people follow up on the commitments they make during meetings. Help them locate information they need or organize their materials and thoughts.



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**BUILDING
THROUGH YOUTH INVOLVEMENT**

9. Help young people get onto committees. Once they are on committees, help involve them in the work of that group.

10. Get into it! Mentoring can be fulfilling and not just a list of responsibilities. Even if it gets tough, stick with it. When you are facing challenges, remember the reason you are doing it—you really care about the success of young people on your board.

Adapted from Jones, Kathryn, ed., *14 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making* (Somerville: Youth on Board, 1999), pp. 183-184.