

TAC: Social Mentor

The Ability Center (TAC) mentors provide support, encouragement and real world advice to mentees (ages 10-18). Mentoring creates a trusting and helpful relationship between two people. Mentors assist with the navigation and problem solving of daily life activities based on personal experiences. They serve as role models who will occasionally push mentees to go outside their comfort zone, teach life skills, provide resources, help gain confidence and independence, and encourage the development of relationships with their peers.

Mentor Requirements:

- Have a disability that is primarily physical
- Mentor-in-training: 18 years old or a senior in high school
- Mentor: 19 years old or graduated from high school
- Maintain confidentiality with any shared information between mentors and mentees
- Commit to attending 1-2 events a month with the mentees (2-4 hours/month)
- Complete and pass a background check

As a mentor, you will:

- Support the mission and goals of TAC
- Follow the same guidelines and procedures as TAC staff members
- Get to know your mentee
- Be positive, patient and dependable
- Be consistent, but flexible
- Encourage, praise and compliment
- Be an active listener
- Give concrete explanations
- Be fair, straight, honest and sincere
- Ask for opinions and participation in decision-making.
- Share your knowledge rather than giving advice
- Be enthusiastic – it's contagious
- Use mistakes as learning experiences
- Tell your mentee about yourself, especially memories from your youth at that age
- Be open to what your mentee can teach you
- Honor your commitment and have fun

As a mentor, you will not:

- Expect to have instant rapport with your mentee
- Tell them what to do (instead, you should suggest, invite, encourage)
- Share personal problems unless it is to explain your current disposition (e.g. tired or irritable)
- Make promises you can't keep
- Be afraid to admit that you do not know an answer or that you have made a mistake instead, find the correct answer and learn together. It helps the mentee to see that you are learning too
- Interpret a lack of enthusiasm as a personal rejection or reaction to you
- Violate confidences, with the single exception of crisis intervention situations

(Adapted from "Disability:IN Mentorship Best Practices")

This is a volunteer position.

If you are interested in participating in the TAC: Social program as a mentor, please contact Becky Diamond at becky@tacwi.org.