

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Chapter Subjects:

- Welcome
- The History of Mentoring
- Benefits of Mentoring

Dear Mentor,

Thank you for your interest in mentoring a young person. Powerful things happen when an experienced person shows interest in and helps another individual grow and develop. Actually, when mentoring is done well, all parties benefit. It has been found that the rewards that mentors gain are sometimes as substantial as those for their mentees!

REACH Georgia was established to serve as one of five key strategies of the Complete College Georgia initiative. We are excited that you have chosen to play a role in such an important initiative. Because of you, a REACH Scholar will aspire to attend college, graduate and create a life of independence.

This manual was designed to serve as a resource for you during the mentoring relationship so we hope that you will find it useful.

Thank you again for becoming a volunteer Mentor. Without you we would not be able to serve our young people.

Sincerely,

<<REACH Georgia School System>>



The History of Mentoring

The first record of mentoring comes from Homer's classic work, The Odyssey. In this epic tale, the adventurer Odysseus is about to depart on a 10-year journey and he leaves his son Telemachus with a servant named Mentor. In the absence of the father, Mentor's role was to guide and inspire Telemachus, the young prince, as he prepared himself for his future task as the ruler of Ithaca.

Throughout the ages, the term "Mentor" has been used to describe individuals who provide the time and care to form a relationship with a less experienced person. The focus of the match is always on "the other," and mentors are concerned about the growth and the development of the Mentee (Mentees). Mentors are also described as individuals who go "above and beyond" in trying to help their Mentee.

Most dictionaries describe a Mentor as "a wise and trusted friend."

Mentee Benefits:

- Better attendance
- Better attitudes toward school
- Less likely to initiate drug and alcohol use
- Felt more competent about their ability to do well in school
- Received slightly higher grades
- Reported more positive relationships with friends and parents
- Improved academic performance
- More likely to participate in college preparatory activities
- More likely to attend college immediately after high school graduation
- Remained longer in college

Child Trends states:
"Overall, young people who are the most disadvantaged or at-risk seem to benefit the most from mentoring."



Mentor Benefits:

- Enhancement of communication and leadership skills
- Understanding that mentoring may help to create a positive lifelong outcome for a young person
- Enjoying the rewards inherent in a caring relationship
- Experiencing the personal satisfaction that is obtained through the act of giving
- Investing in the future
- Expand Professional Development network
- Gain Fresh perspectives through interaction
- Staying in touch with emerging issues
- Opportunity to reflect on own practices