



The Viscardi Center Mentoring Initiative (VCMI)

The Viscardi Center has developed a new mentorship program that empowers youth with disabilities to lead more fulfilling lives and reach their full potential through high-quality one-on-one mentoring.

Mentors and mentees are matched based on their likes, hobbies, and personality traits. Mentorship pairs are intended to be meaningful relationships that will provide a multitude of benefits including personal growth, higher self-esteem, appreciation for diversity, community involvement, and improved communication skills.

The Viscardi Center will enhance the program through ongoing mentor training and structured, enjoyable activities.

Who Can Participate?

Youth/Mentees	Mentors
Must... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify with having a disability • be between 11 to 17 years of age • have a learning disability, ADHD, or disability resulting from criminal involvement/victimization • live within Long Island or NYC's Five Boroughs 	Must... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be at least 18 years of age or older • be able to commit to meeting with mentee for 4 – 6 hours per month for at least one year • have means to travel to meet with mentee • undergo background and reference checks • participate in monthly training sessions

What Do Matches Do?

Our matches commit to having weekly contact by phone or email and meeting at least four to six hours a month for at least one year. Participants and parents/guardians of the mentees will be required to complete evaluations of their experiences.

Each relationship is unique and all activities depend on the interests of the participants. Some examples include: visiting museums, attending sports games, cooking, and completing art projects.

Matches can also work on goals during their time together, depending on the needs of the youth. Some examples include: writing a résumé, learning to self-advocate, learning to navigate the MBTA, and practicing soft skills.

Examples of How Mentors Can Empower Mentees to Set – and Achieve – SMART Goals

Goal Area	SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Framed) Goal
Community Involvement	Mentee will join at least one new program or club through school or in the community, and will attend meetings for the next three months.
Education & Employment	Mentee will improve their score in English class by one grade level (C to B) at the end of the semester.
Healthy Relationships	Over the next three months, mentee will sit with a new person at lunch at least once/week.
Self-Esteem	Mentee will keep a journal and write one positive comment about his or herself every day (daily affirmations) for the next month.

For more information, please contact: Michelle Licata at mlicata@viscardicenter.org or 516.465.1415.

Founded by Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr., who served as disability advisor to eight U.S. presidents and became one of the world's leading advocates, The Viscardi Center educates, employs and empowers children and adults with disabilities. It provides Kindergarten through High School education, school-to-work transition services, vocational training, career counseling and placement, adapted driver education, assistive technology and workforce diversification assistance to children, adolescents and adults with disabilities, and businesses. For more information, visit viscardicenter.org.