

The Friendship Mentor Project

The Friendship Mentor Project is built on an international model. The project is financially supported by the Icelandic Children's Welfare Fund. It started in autumn 2001 as a collaborative effort between the University of Iceland, the Iceland University of Education and two primary schools in Reykjavik.

The core of the Friendship Mentor Project is that university students/upper secondary school students provide support and encouragement to primary school children. Emphasis is laid on mutual gain and that children and young people become acquainted and learn about each others' circumstances.

University and upper secondary school students gain an opportunity to be models for primary school children and a positive force in their life while the children get an opportunity to form a bond with a mature adult who is outside the family.

Parents make a formal application for their child on a special application form that their child brings home for them. However, it must be expected that not all applications will be successful. All participants, children and mentors, are interviewed by the supervisor of the project.

The cooperation between children and mentors occurs in consultation with parents. The role of the mentor is **not** to be a qualified person in a given sphere, e.g. teacher or psychologist, but rather the role revolves around creating trust and support as well as being a good model for the child. The time spent together by a child and mentor does not have to be thought out in detail and planned as the time spent together is more important. Many things can be done, including swimming, skating bowling or going on walks; doing craftwork, baking/cooking, playing games; chatting; going to concerts or the cinema; visiting museums or sports centres, the Inter-Cultural Centre, a library or café – it doesn't matter, as long as the interests of the child are discussed and the bond is strengthened.

Further information can be found at

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