

boost

Parenting advice & support

Boost provides support, motivation, encouragement, and advice to parents as they take steps towards creating a more stable and positive environment in which their children can thrive. Our Boost Family Mentors help families to achieve the parenting goals they have identified through an initial assessment with a Family and Volunteer Supervisor.

Could you be a Boost Family Mentor?

- Do you have 3 hours a week to give to a family for a 4-6-month period?
- Do you have experience with children? This could be through work or volunteering, having younger siblings, or raising your own children.
- Are you an empathetic, non-judgmental, and friendly person, who can offer guidance in a non-patronizing and respectful way?
- Are you resilient to setbacks, and open to trying new ideas? Can you share that mindset with parents who need help to build their self-esteem?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions, then we would love to hear from you!

Typical areas in which parents need support to achieve their goals are:

- Developing family routines, e.g., bedtime, morning, mealtimes.
- Setting boundaries around behaviour and effectively maintaining those boundaries.
- Developing a support network, contacting local baby/toddler groups, or joining parenting classes.
- Developing the parents own selfesteem.

Register now to volunteer as a Boost Family Mentor

Email: volunteers@connectionsupport.org.uk

Phone: 07999 118080

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Charity no. 1049740

www.connectionsupport.org.uk



Family Mentor Recruitment and Training

Following a show of interest to volunteer with Boost as a Family Mentor this is the typical process that will follow:

- You will be asked to complete a short application form, or you can send us your cv if you prefer outlining relevant experience in life or work.
- Our volunteer recruitment team will arrange to speak with you over the phone and answer any questions you may have.
- We will apply for an enhanced DBS check for you.
- You provide two-character references.
- You will complete 6-8 hours of online training over a 2-3-week period.

Then you let us know your availability and we will match you with a family for 4-6 months, where you will provide weekly sessions with a commitment of time of 2-3 hours per week.

We will ask that you record brief notes following any interactions with your family, this can be done from your smart phone using the Huddle App.

You have access to Connection Support's [Volunteer Handbook](#).

Further training

Throughout the year, you will be invited along to various information and training workshops.

Our Family and Volunteer supervisors will always be on hand to support you as you become part of our volunteering family, where you will be making a real difference to the lives of parents and children in Buckinghamshire.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be a parent myself to be a volunteer?

No, you do not need to have your own children to be a Boost Family Mentor. However, you have some understanding of the way children behave and communicate. Maybe you are an Aunt or an Uncle, have worked in a school or nursery, or have done a different volunteering role where you worked with children or families?

Do I need any previous training or qualifications?

No previous training or qualifications are necessary for this role.

What parenting styles do Boost encourage?

Boost encourage families to adopt an authoritative parenting style. This is where parents use a warm and nurturing approach, in conjunction with putting clear expectations and boundaries in place.

What sort of support and advice will I be giving to families?

Each family is different, a Family and Volunteer Supervisor will meet with the family to establish up to 3 goals that the volunteer will then help the family to achieve.

What are these goals?

- Support families to enhance their skills, knowledge, and resilience.
- Supporting parents to build self-esteem and confidence in their parenting role, increasing parental wellbeing
- Connect families to local services and support, building supportive social networks.
- Support parents to identify children's needs and how to meet those e.g. healthy meals, GP and dental appointments/creating routines.
- Provide guidance, advice and support for parents and carers to enable children to learn necessary skills to build their own resilience, stay safe and access learning opportunities and education.

What are the common areas in which parents need support to achieve their goals?

- Developing family routines, e.g. bedtime, morning, mealtimes.
- Setting boundaries around behaviour and effectively maintaining those boundaries.
- Developing a support network, contacting local baby/toddler groups or joining parenting classes.
- Developing the parents own self esteem. From being a listening ear to giving them gentle encouragement as they work towards their family goals.

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Who are the families I will be working with?

Families we work with can be very different from one another. Sometimes either the children or the parents have additional needs. Sometimes there is one area in which the family needs support. Sometimes parents simply need a bit of help 'finding their feet' and a more holistic approach is needed.

What age children will I be working with?

Boost work to support the parents of children aged 11 and under. Where a child has special needs, the support is available up until the age of 18. Of course, families you are placed with could be made up of any number of children spanning new-born to 18+.

What if I don't know how to help the family I am matched with?

Some families do need support with a specific challenge, such as a disability in the family. The family and volunteer supervisors will consider the strengths of each volunteer when they propose a match. If you feel you are not equipped to help the family you are matched with, you can choose to decline that family. Your Supervisor will always be on hand to help. We run various training sessions throughout the year, so there is plenty of opportunity to deepen and widen your skills.

What if the family and I don't get along?

It honestly doesn't happen very often, generally our volunteers and family's bond quickly and work together to achieve the families' goals. If you did have any problems with your family, then your volunteer and family supervisor will talk this through with you. If necessary, the match would be closed early, and an alternative volunteer/ family found.

I am not 'tech savvy' can I still do it?

You will need either a smartphone or a laptop/computer to allow you to record some brief notes following each session with your family- these can be done quickly and simply using the Huddle App. Additionally you will need to do some 'online training' to get started. Ongoing training and support are currently being delivered over video conferencing using Microsoft Teams. There will always be someone who can offer you some friendly support if you need help getting set up.

What I am unwell or on holiday one week and I cannot see my family?

We do expect you to be committed to supporting your family for their weekly sessions, for the duration of the placement (4-6months). However, it is important to us that your personal life is not adversely impacted by your volunteering. It is fine if on occasion you need to take a week out. Often placements will either pause or use video calling during school holidays. You will let your supervisor know if you need an extended period away, so they can then factor this into volunteer/family match planning.

Will I meet other volunteers?

Yes. We have regular social and training events throughout the year.

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Can I keep in touch with the family after the placement has ended?

We understand that volunteers and families often form a close bond, and that this bond is integral to the success of the placement. However, we do recommend that volunteers maintain professional boundaries and keep their contact with the families to the timeframe given at the start of the match.

What sort of further training can I access?

There will be opportunities throughout the year to attend various workshops and training sessions.

Will this volunteer role help me to access work?

Hands on experience is always valuable when applying for a new role. We are always happy to give our volunteers a reference if they are applying for a new job. The skills and experience you gain with us can be useful in a variety of careers. If there is a specific job role or career you are working towards it is best to discuss this when you speak to our Volunteer Coordinators, to enable you to get everything you hope to from volunteering with us.

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