

# 20 Ideas to Use When Mentoring Young Skaters

Adapted from “100 IDEAS TO USE WHEN MENTORING YOUTH: Activities and Conversations to Help Your Mentees Excel” by Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D. Jean Ann Walth, B.A. Carlo Walth, B.A., M.Div.

1. Introduce young skaters to your friends and other skaters – foster connections.
2. Play games together.
3. Give younger skaters your full attention during the time you are with them.
4. Ask skaters about their favorite music or hobbies outside of skating.
5. Play your favorite song and share information about yourself as well.
6. Think of ways to uplift your mentee: offer a compliment or a smile, praise them in front of others (but don't overdo it).

## Sample Praises to Give Youth

**General:** Comment on a **general ability** or **trait**.

*You're a generous person.*  
*You're quite a writer!*  
*You're an exceptional friend.*

**Outcome:** Comment on something he/she **did** or **produced**.

*What you said to your brother was very encouraging.*  
*Your short story has a great plot and intriguing characters.*  
*The way you hugged your mom must have made her feel good.*

**Behavior:** Comment on the **specific behaviors** or **actions** performed.

*I liked the way you stopped to listen to him, then looked right into his eyes, and said 'You can do it! Your tone was really sincere, and you didn't let him play it down.*

7. Ask skaters what they would like to learn or how they would like to spend their time. Ask her about her goals in skating or other areas of life. Encourage her to use her voice.
8. Encourage skaters to try something new. This might be a new activity or doing something new and brave in their life.
9. Give them support while they are exploring new activities and credit for their effort.
10. Help a mentee with her homework.
11. Discuss life skills such as money and budgeting, time management, growing up, friendships/relationships, and staying healthy and balanced. Share an honest story about how you navigated a specific challenge.
12. Take pictures together – it will make them feel special.

13. Don't take phone calls and texts while you are with your mentee.
14. Communicate your boundaries ("Please don't hang on me." "Please don't jump on my back."  
"Please give me privacy while I'm on the ice, in a lesson, etc.")
15. Ask skaters who their friends are and what they like to do with them.
16. Ask mentees about any pets they might have.
17. Share a small token that is meaningful. Examples are favorite quotes or sayings, good luck messages, a small notebook to collect thoughts, and special treats.
18. Come up with some "What If ..." questions for discussion at one of your sessions. What if you saw someone steal something at the store? Your friends offered you drugs? A classmate wanted to cheat off your paper?
19. Talk to them about using social media – especially navigating pitfalls and limiting use. Set a good example.
20. Make eye contact and show your mentee respect – even if they are little.