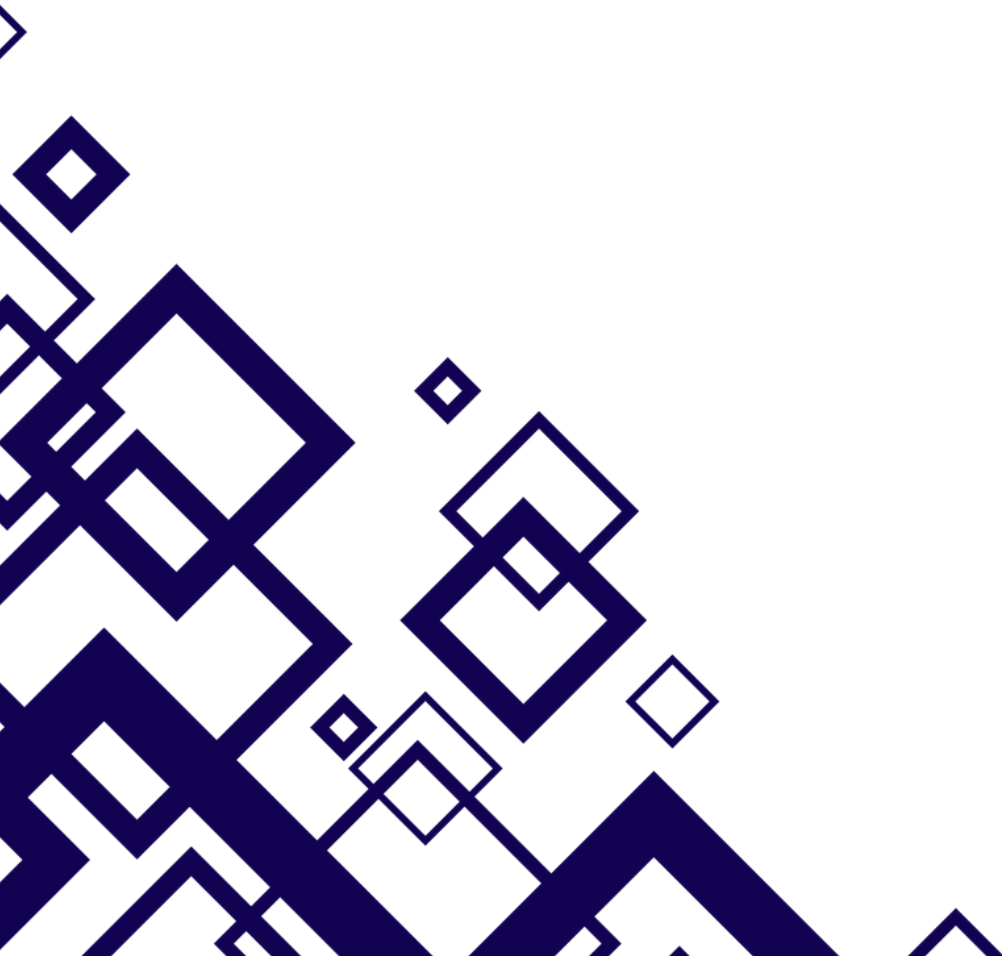




PROVIDENCE CRISTO REY

STRATEGIES

FOR BUILDING A PRODUCTIVE
RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MENTEE



Career Mentor Strategies Guide

The following section of this guide provides detailed strategies for building a productive relationship with your mentee, conducting first-day activities, managing daily interactions, and helping your mentee grow into a confident, career-ready young adult.

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Building a strong relationship with a high school student takes patience, clarity, and support. These strategies help create a trusting, productive, and age-appropriate mentoring experience:

Strategy	Ask	Share
Start with Rapport: Begin by learning about your mentee's interests, personality, and comfort level. Understand that this may be their first time in a workplace, so keeping conversations light and supportive is key.	"What's something you enjoy doing outside of school?"	A hobby or interest from your own high school experience.
Be Consistent: High school students benefit from routine and clear structure. Be on time, stick to your commitments, and provide regular, predictable check-ins.	"Let's plan to check in every day at the same time so we stay connected."	Strategies you use to help you show up each day.
Set Clear Expectations: Discuss basic workplace behavior, communication norms, and how you'll work together. Be explicit, as many students are unfamiliar with professional environments.	"What would help you feel confident and supported during your time here?"	"Here's how I'll support you—and what I'll expect from you."
Encourage Two-Way Communication: Invite students to ask questions and remind them that it's okay not to know	"If anything is ever unclear, I want you to feel comfortable asking. There are no bad questions here."	How you speak up in different work settings (i.e., what you say in a meeting with your boss,

everything. Create a safe space where their voice matters.		what you say as you lead a team/task, etc.)
Celebrate Small Wins: Recognize things like arriving on time, staying focused, completing a task, or asking a great question. Encouragement builds confidence.	“You did a great job staying focused today—that’s a key skill in any job.”	
Offer Constructive Feedback: Use positive language and specific examples. Focus on how they can improve, and reassure them that learning from mistakes is part of growth.	“One thing I noticed was... Here’s how we could improve it next time.”	Normalize feedback for personal and professional growth.
Model Professionalism: Demonstrate respect, punctuality, and workplace etiquette in every interaction. Let your actions set a positive example.	“Here’s how I prepare for meetings so I feel organized. Want to try this strategy too?”	A time where you or someone know you was either professional or unprofessional and what happened.
Practice Patience and Empathy: Remember that students are still developing maturity, time management, and social-emotional skills. Stay calm and supportive as they learn.	“Everyone learns at a different pace. I’m here to help you figure it out step by step.”	About a time when you were learning something new or doing something for the first time.

Promote Self-Reflection: Help them think about what went well, what was challenging, and what they might try next time. This builds self-awareness.	“What’s one thing you’re proud of from today? What’s one thing you’d like to do better next week?”	Something you are proud of from your day and one thing you would like to do better next week.
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Preparing for your Student Worker

How to Be Successful with Your Mentee on the First Day

- **Welcome Them Warmly:** Share your name, role, and one career you were curious about when you were their age. Then ask the student to do the same. Provide a tour of the workplace, if applicable.
- **Set Expectations:** Clearly communicate your role and what they can expect from the experience.
- **Learn About Them:** Ask about their interests, goals, and any prior work or volunteer experience.
- **Review Basic Logistics:** Go over schedules, dress code, communication preferences, and key contacts.
- **Assign a Meaningful Task:** Provide a simple, purposeful activity to help them get started and feel involved.
- **Encourage Questions:** Let them know it’s okay not to know everything and that asking questions is a strength.
- **Establish a Check-In Routine:** Discuss how often you’ll touch base, where your workplace is located and how they can reach out if they need help.
- **End-of-Day Reflections and Wrap-Up:** Ending each day with a brief, thoughtful conversation helps reinforce learning, build confidence, and strengthen the mentor-mentee relationship. This time gives students the opportunity to process their experiences and ask questions while also allowing mentors to provide encouragement and guidance.

Suggested Wrap-Up Routine:

1. Check-In Conversation
 - Ask open-ended questions:

- “What did you learn today?”
 - “What was the most interesting part of your day?”
 - “Was there anything that surprised or confused you?”
 - “What would you like to try or learn more about tomorrow?”
- 2. Celebrate Successes
 - Acknowledge progress or effort: “You did a great job staying focused during that task” or “You asked a thoughtful question in the meeting today.”
- 3. Offer Feedback
 - Gently offer 1–2 suggestions for improvement using supportive language: “Next time, let’s work on staying more organized before a task. I can show you how I do it.”
- 4. Preview Next Week
 - Share what to expect the next week to reduce anxiety and increase readiness: “Next week you’ll help with our morning meeting. I’ll show you what to prepare before we start.”
- 5. End on a Positive Note
 - Leave students with an encouraging statement: “You’re learning a lot—keep showing up with curiosity!”

Activities and Engagement Ideas

The first month is crucial for setting the tone and helping your mentee feel welcomed, comfortable, and motivated. Activities should be age-appropriate, engaging, and designed to build rapport and encourage curiosity.:

1. **Name Game Icebreaker**
 - Ask the student to share their name, school, favorite subject, and a fun fact about themselves. Start by sharing your own to model the activity.
2. **Draw Your Dream Job**
 - Provide paper and markers.
 - Prompt: “Draw what you imagine your dream job would look like. It doesn't have to be perfect—just your idea!”
 - After drawing, ask them to describe what they created and why.
 - Mentor Follow-Up: Relate aspects of their drawing to real-world careers or tasks in your workplace.
3. **Would You Rather – Career Edition**
 - Ask light “would you rather” questions such as:
 - “Would you rather work indoors or outdoors?”

- “Would you rather work in a hospital or a courtroom?”
 - “Would you rather work with people or with technology?”
 - Ask: “Why did you choose that?”
 - Mentor Follow-Up: Share how the current workplace compares or what the student can expect in their role.
4. **Skill Match Game** The Skill Match Game is a simple, mentor-led activity that helps students recognize how their everyday experiences—both in and out of school—connect to real workplace skills. Many students may not realize that their hobbies, school projects, or responsibilities at home have already helped them build valuable abilities.
- **Start the Conversation**
Say something like: “Many of the things you do at home, school, or with friends already show that you have skills employers value.”
 - “Which of these skills do you think you’re good at? Which one would you like to work on?”
 - **Review the Skills Together**
Use the chart below to guide the discussion.
 - **Share Examples**
Ask the student to describe things they’ve done and help match them to the skills on the chart. “Here’s where you’ll use those skills in your work with us.”

Experience-to-Skill Chart

Student Experience	Matched Workplace/CWS Benchmark Skill
Played on a team (sports, games, clubs)	Teamwork
Helped a sibling or cared for a pet	Self-initiative
Gave a class presentation	Communication
Solved a tough math or science problem	Problem Solving
Balanced school and after-school activities	Time Management /Complex Reasoning
Led a group project or club	Advocacy
Created art, wrote stories or designed something	Creativity
Used apps, websites or video tools	Technical Skills

Moved schools	Adaptability
Volunteered or stuck with a tough task	Persistence

5. Teamwork Puzzle Activity

- Bring a simple team-based activity like a mini puzzle or Lego set.
- Collaborate to complete it, and talk about how you communicated or solved problems.
- Debrief with questions like: “What helped us work well together?” and “What would we do differently next time?”

6. Workplace Tour with Scavenger Hunt

- Give students a checklist of things to find or observe during the tour (e.g., meeting room, printer, kitchen, safety signs).
- This turns the tour into an active, engaging experience.

7. Job Shadowing

- Corporate partners and primary career mentors are encouraged to expose their student worker to as many corporate experiences as possible. To help with this, often partners pair each student with another employee in the company who can serve as an additional mentor to the student.
- Job shadowing is a great opportunity for the student to see the various departments within the organization. Once the scholar has a grasp of the basic job duties in one department, it can be very beneficial to assign them to work in another area to gain additional experience and get a better understanding of the company.

These activities break the ice, build trust, and allow mentors to begin shaping the mentee’s understanding of professional expectations in a fun, age-appropriate way.

Workplace Task Ideas for High School Students

Many high school students are new to professional environments and may need clear guidance on what tasks they can support. The key is to provide age-appropriate, skill-building opportunities that expose students to real workplace operations while keeping their safety, supervision needs, and learning goals in mind.

Mentors are encouraged to assign meaningful tasks that align with their student's ability level and allow for gradual skill development over time. Start with simple responsibilities and increase complexity as the student gains confidence and competence.

Tips for Designing Student Tasks

- **Start small.** Introduce one new responsibility at a time to avoid overwhelming students.
- **Make it meaningful.** Provide context for students to understand how their work supports the team's goals.
- **Check for understanding.** Ask students to repeat instructions back before starting.
- **Provide feedback.** Acknowledge effort and offer tips for improvement as they go.
- **Include variety.** Rotate between tasks that are hands-on, observational, or computer-based.
- **Encourage questions.** Let students know it's okay to ask for help or clarification.

Suggested Entry-Level Tasks

These tasks are ideal for students with limited prior experience:

- Organizing supplies or inventory
- Preparing meeting materials (e.g., folders, name tags, handouts)
- Data entry or spreadsheet updates with clear instructions
- Assembling packets or kits
- Filing or alphabetizing documents
- Delivering internal mail or messages with supervision
- Setting up conference rooms or event spaces
- Greeting guests or shadowing at a reception desk
- Running simple errands within the building (with supervision)

- Assisting with basic digital tasks (e.g., scanning, uploading files)

Suggested Intermediate-Level Tasks

Once a student has demonstrated professionalism, responsibility, and attention to detail, they may be ready for more complex or collaborative tasks, such as:

- Drafting or editing internal communications (e.g., newsletter blurbs)
- Supporting social media posts or marketing projects (with review)
- Conducting research for a team project or presentation
- Participating in team meetings as a note-taker or observer
- Shadowing a staff member in their daily routine
- Helping onboard other interns by sharing tips or leading a tour
- Creating or updating visual displays or bulletin boards
- Interviewing employees to learn about different roles and summarizing what they learn