



MENTOR ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Pairing STEM professionals with youth is an exciting prospect, but it can be prone to problems such as awkward silences, disinterested youth, and even classroom management issues. Preparing your mentors for success before their meeting with youth can help avoid these issues or at least leave them prepared to navigate them should they arise.

Must haves for your mentor orientation:

- » Introduce your project and the participants that mentors will interact with: other mentors, teachers, logistics coordinator, and other project team members.
- » Describe the youth they will be mentoring in terms of age, grade level, and any relevant information that may help mentors connect to youth (English language learners, a portion of the population are from immigrant families, etc.).
- » Provide details about the work youth are doing. If you are holding the training in person, consider having mentors try out an activity or explore the materials.
- » Share the goals for the youth-mentor experiences. Perhaps each meeting has a different goal or overall goal for the mentoring experience.
- » Outline the structure and flow of youth-mentor meetings. Provide a picture of what they will be doing throughout the experience.
- » Detail what mentors need to prepare in advance of their youth meeting. Do they need to put together some photos or slides to share? Do they need to bring any materials?
- » Guide mentors to create a brief introduction that concisely conveys their STEM journey and expertise and is devoid of jargon, acronyms, or other inaccessible terminology.
- » Provide tips for engaging with youth, including how to ask open-ended questions and how to provide opportunities for shy individuals to speak up. Stress that they should not force youth to engage before they feel comfortable.
- » Include a group activity, such as brainstorming questions to ask youth or how to handle awkward silences. A tool like Jamboard works great for virtual brainstorming. Getting the mentors talking will help them visualize and prepare for their time with youth.