Mentors, Role Models, and Coaches, Oh My!
It’s really important for students to find an advocate — somebody that they can go to, not just for advice, but to be heard.

These advocates could be:

A role model. This person is looked to by others as an example to be imitated. It may be a person that your child knows or it could even be a celebrity. This person could have could be either a positive or negative influence on your child. Finding someone with a strong character and positive values to share can have a huge effect on your teen’s outlook and actions.

A coach. When we think of a coach, we often think of sports, and athletic coaches can be great advocates. A coach can also be someone who looks a student’s work and gives advice on how to improve.

A mentor. A mentor is a trustworthy, supportive adult or older student who is available to answer your teen’s questions and to provide encouragement and guidance. Mentors listen, care, and engage. They share their wisdom and help your child develop a personal vision for the future. Mentors can also act as a role model and give support in reaching your teen’s full potential.

Some schools and organizations have mentoring programs that connect your child to adults or peers, but your teen may also look up to a family member, teacher, employer, or older student who might make a good mentor.

Sources: BigFuture & Career Guidance Washington

Did You Know?

Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs and 27 percent less likely to start drinking.

Source: Mentoring.org
MYTH: Mentoring is just a fun activity, but it has no real effect on students.

REALITY: Youth who had a mentor are more likely to:

- Aspire to enroll in and graduate from college.
- Participate regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- Hold a leadership position in a club, sports team, school council, or other group.
- Volunteer regularly in their communities.

Source: NationalMentoringMonth.org

January:

- BigFuture: The Scoop: What’s a Mentor and How Do I Get One?
- Career Guidance WA
- Mentoring.org: The Value of Mentoring
  - http://www.mentoring.org/about_mentor/value_of_mentoring
- NationalMentoringMonth.org: The Mentoring Effect

Student Checklist
Find out if your school offers a mentoring program.
Pursue extracurricular activities (such as sports, performing arts, volunteer work, or other activities) that interest you.

Family Checklist
Find out if there are local mentoring opportunities at school or in your community. Encourage your child to take part in mentoring programs, whether they include peer or adult mentors.

Know who your child is spending time with and take advantage of opportunities to meet your child’s friends and their parents at school or community events.

Visit readysetgrad.org to learn more and access resources to help your child make a plan.