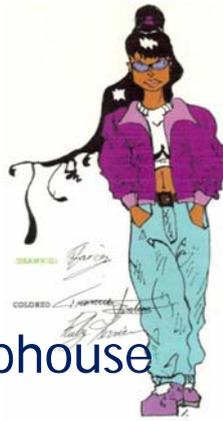


Being a mentor in a Computer Clubhouse



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About this Handbook



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Welcome to the Computer Clubhouse! As a Clubhouse mentor, you are joining a unique community of young people and adults who create, invent, and explore together using the latest in computer technology. Think of this manual as a guidebook that you can stick in your back pocket, pulling it out when you get stuck, have a question, or need an idea. As you read through this handbook, and as you begin to spend time at the Clubhouse, remember there is no formula for being a mentor, no “computer person” mold to fit into. As a mentor, the only requirement is that you bring your own curiosity, interest, and commitment to contribute to the learning experience of young people at the Clubhouse.

Inside this handbook you will find background information on the Clubhouse, specifics on the role of the mentor, information on working with young people, and nuts and bolts information such as Clubhouse programs and policies. The handbook is designed to complement, not replace, the mentor orientation, discussions with staff and other mentors, as well as your own process of observing and familiarizing yourself with the inner workings of the Clubhouse. Because this handbook is designed to be used by all Clubhouses, specific information pertaining to the Clubhouse where you are mentoring will be provided by the Clubhouse manager.



What the Clubhouse is

A Computer Clubhouse is a model after-school learning environment where young people explore their own interests and become confident learners through the use of technology. Although each Computer Clubhouse is different-- depending on its geographical location, members, mentors, and staff-- every Clubhouse is designed as a “drop-in” environment where young people have complete access to computer technology and resources to help them gain technological fluency. Computer Clubhouses are staffed by a Clubhouse manager, as well as volunteer mentors who provide technical support, encouragement, and guidance to Clubhouse members.

The guiding principles of each Computer Clubhouse are to:

- Support learning through design experiences.
- Help youth build on their own interests.
- Create a sense of community, where young people work together with support and inspiration from adult mentors.
- Create an environment of respect and trust.
- Offer resources and opportunities to those with limited access to technology at home or at school.
- Create a learning environment where young people develop technological fluency.

Each Clubhouse has a unique population of members who are diverse in age, background, interests, and previous technology experience. Depending on the particular Clubhouse, the eligibility and membership processes may be different. However, the general goal of each Clubhouse is to offer resources and opportunities to those who would otherwise not have access to them either at home or in school.

Members find the Clubhouse in a variety of ways: by word of mouth, by accompanying a friend, or by coming with a youth group or after-school program and then returning on their own. Some come to work on specific projects or to explore new software programs and places on the web, others to hang out, see friends, check-in, or talk with a mentor. In these ways, the Computer Clubhouse truly functions as a clubhouse.

A Clubhouse mentor is anyone with a curiosity and interest in learning more about technology and working with young people. Mentors, like the members, are diverse in age, background, interests, and previous technological experience. Current mentors include: students, artists, educators, graphic designers, administrators, software developers, previous Clubhouse members, and parents. Mentors find the Clubhouse in much the same ways members do- through word of mouth, university programs, current mentors, or community networks. Mentors generally do the following:

- Orient and welcome new members
- Work one-on-one with members
- Offer specific guidance or workshops in areas of expertise
- Organize special projects
- Provide general help
- Support Clubhouse members in thinking about career/college plans



Looking Back, Looking Forward: Clubhouse History

The “Flagship” Clubhouse, originally housed on the ground floor of The Computer Museum in Boston, was established in 1993. The Computer Museum (now part of Boston’s Museum of Science) and the MIT Media Laboratory collaborated to create a learning space where under-served youth could use the latest computer technology to develop their own projects. This joint effort turned out to be an enormous success. Today, the “Flagship” Clubhouse hosts over 4500 visits a year from young people from all over Boston. Funding for the Computer Clubhouse program comes from corporations, private foundations, and individuals who support the Clubhouse mission and activities.

The idea of starting Clubhouses in other communities grew out of the initial success of the Computer Clubhouse at The Computer Museum. Although this Clubhouse is in high demand with young people and community groups, transportation to the Clubhouse and space constraints have limited the number of young people who can be served. In addition, other communities around the Boston area--and around the world--began expressing interest in establishing Clubhouses of their own, utilizing the experience and lessons of the “Flagship”

Clubhouse. Out of this set of needs and opportunities came the idea of establishing satellite Clubhouses. Recently, The Intel Computer Clubhouse Network was established to open one hundred more Clubhouses at locations around the world over the course of five years.

Although each Clubhouse has unique features and is tailored to meet the needs of the local community, each Clubhouse shares the following mission:

Clubhouse Mission

- Young people (particularly from under-served communities) will become fluent with new technologies, enabling them to develop skills that will be useful in their future careers and, more generally, their lives.
- Youth will be inspired to become self-motivated, confident, and capable learners.
- Educators and community leaders will have a new vision of how technological tools can support learning and community development.



A Day in the Life of the Clubhouse: The Mission in Action

It is 4:00 p.m. on Thursday at the “Flagship” Computer Clubhouse in Boston. The Clubhouse is busy. A few members sit around the long green table in the middle of the room, talking and eating. Every computer is in use. Some members are working on scanning images, others are experimenting in the music studio; a few people stand near the printer anxiously waiting for their printed images. The room is filled with motion, music, and laughter.

At a computer off to the side of the room, Marco, 17, works on creating a new image for his webpage. He leans in close to the screen, his elbows on the table, while he creates a collage of photographs using Adobe Photoshop. Nearby, Alexia, 10, works on creating an Easter card for her mother using Printshop Deluxe. She calls to her friend Alicia to look at her creation. Alicia, who is working in Microsoft Word to insert photographs into her written homework assignment, interrupts her work to appreciate Alexia’s effort. Jenny, a freshman at MIT, stands nearby, looks at people’s projects and asks questions. Her interest in young people and computers led her to the Clubhouse.

Mike sits near the window that overlooks the skyline of Boston. He continues to build his Web page. He manipulates a photograph of James Bond in Photoshop. Mike first came to the Clubhouse a year ago with a school group; later he returned with friends. As he works, he plays reggae music from a CD in his computer. Jose, 14, sits next to him and animates a dancing figure using Lifeforms software.

In the back of the room, Eric, 17, works with Lucy, who has been a mentor for several years. Lucy, who is experienced using Director, works with Eric to create an animation from the comic book characters he has created. They work together, sharing a computer: Lucy offers an idea, Eric moves the mouse. Earlier in the day, while Lucy was working on her own animation project in Director, several members watched her work, looking over her shoulder and asking: “Hey, how are you doing that?”

In a corner crowded with containers of Legos, several members sit and construct cars and creatures. Later, they will attach “Crickets”--programmable, miniature, computer devices--to make their creations move. At a table nearby, Bob, a student at Brandeis University who has been mentoring for 9 months, works with Chris on programming in C++. Chris comes to the Clubhouse specifically to work on programming. Hilda, a mentor who previously worked for many years in computer programming, talks to Paul, a 14-year-old peer mentor, about the upcoming Clubhouse Council meeting.

Allan stands near the door of the Clubhouse talking with Josuf, who is leaving for the day. He laughs when Josuf shows him the image he has created with his face on the body of King Kong. Before Josuf leaves, Allan says: "Hey, I'm glad you were here. I'll see you next week."

At 5:00, Marlon, the Clubhouse manager, makes a last call for printing. He stands near the printers and talks with members: "Hey man, what's up? What are you working on?" In the music studio, a few members continue to experiment with Rock, Rap 'n' Roll. The drumbeat is loud, escaping from the glassed-in music studio. "I just need five more minutes," Alex tells Marlon. "I'm almost finished." Members reluctantly close desktop folders and begin packing up. "Time flies when you're here," Alex says as he slings his backpack over his shoulder.



The Clubhouse Educational Approach

The Computer Clubhouse was established as a learning space where young people could come voluntarily to work on projects based on their own interests. The Clubhouse provides young people with the resources, space, materials, and tools to become designers and creators--not just passive consumers--of technology. By utilizing resources at the Clubhouse and developing projects in the areas of art and animation, web design, music and sound, electronic publishing, computer-controlled devices, and three-dimensional design, members get the opportunity to experience for themselves what it is like to be an architect, engineer, composer, artist, journalist, scientific researcher, or computer programmer (For more information on these specific program areas see "Sparks")

Current educational research guides all activities at the Clubhouse. Research shows that young people learn most effectively when they are engaged in designing and creating projects that have personal meaning to them, rather than memorizing facts or learning isolated skills out of context. The Clubhouse fosters a learner-centered, informal educational approach that encourages participants to discover their interests and apply their own ideas.

The Clubhouse educational approach is also based on research that shows the importance of interpersonal relationships and community in the learning process, particularly for adolescents. Peers as well as adults wield a great deal of influence on young people both inside and outside of school. In the Clubhouse, members interact with other young people and adults who are enthusiastic about learning and are interested and invested in their work and in being a part of the Clubhouse.

The Role of the Mentor

Understanding Mentoring at the Clubhouse



Wearing Different Hats

Each day at the Clubhouse is different. The rhythm of the day will depend on the needs, interests, personalities, and ages of the members present, all of which contribute to a varied and ever-changing environment. As a mentor, you will find that on some days you may have time to work one-on-one with a member, while on other days you may work with a small group on a project. Some days you may even have time to work on creating something yourself; at other times, you may be needed to welcome and orient a new member.

Although mentors wear many different hats--guide, resource, role model, active participant, consultant, or catalyst--the primary goal of a Clubhouse mentor is to guide and support, rather than direct or teach, Clubhouse members. Some of these roles are described on the next page.



A Balancing Act

As with any new environment, the Computer Clubhouse may take some getting used to. It may be hard to know when to step in, or when to step back. Part of the role of a mentor is that of an observer: watching members, figuring out where they are developmentally and what they need, is the best way to contribute to learn how to contribute to their experience. For some members this may mean offering help, for others stepping back and letting them work on their own. All members need to know you are available for conversation, help and support, and that you care they are at the Clubhouse.

Part of the mentor balancing act is being aware of the complexity of your role as both a guide and a friend to Clubhouse members. Mentors do not substitute for parents or peers, nor are they trained social workers. If a Clubhouse mentor recognizes a situation in which a member needs support beyond what the mentor personally feels qualified to provide, the Clubhouse manager should be informed so the member can be assisted in obtaining the resources s/he needs.



Mentor Roles

- **Guide:** Offer encouragement and resource ideas when members are navigating new terrain; make yourself available for questions and conversation. Give support through encouragement, information and interest.
- **Resource:** Your experience, interest, and enthusiasm make you an invaluable resource. Your role as a resource will take different forms. You might explain how to use the scanner, where to find magazines, how to take a photograph with the Quickcam, or offer to help in a specific area in which you have expertise, such as web design. You might also find yourself serving as a resource for ideas about new projects and options for current projects.
- **Role model:** As you work on your own projects and work one-on-one with Clubhouse members, demonstrate ways to solve problems, maintain a positive and supportive attitude, and show your own interest in learning. Share information about your academic or professional careers with members: let members and mentors know what you are doing when you are not at the Clubhouse.
- **Active Participant:** Engage in your own learning as a mentor, whether through collaborating on a project, investigating and learning from the work of members, or creating something yourself.
- **Catalyst:** Get a member excited about a project idea or a new possibility. Plant a seed, challenge members to think about doing something they never thought was possible. Engage in a project with a member. Encourage a member to think about animating a character they have created.



Getting Started as a Mentor

Each mentor approaches working with young people with a different style. The following are suggestions for how to get started during your first days as a mentor

- Attend the new mentor orientation and get a tour of the physical space.
- Explore all the software and hardware available.
- Visit the Clubhouse website.
- Observe members working on projects- ask them to show you what they are working on.
- Think about what you are interested in and what your skills are.
- Try to come to the Clubhouse when it opens so you have time to use a computer before the Clubhouse gets crowded.
- Talk to current mentors, watch how they work with members, and ask lots of questions. Find out others' interests so you can match up members and mentors.
- Attend mentor training workshops.
- Familiarize yourself with the neighborhood surrounding the Clubhouse and available local resources.
- Use the educational activities handbook to get ideas of the types of projects and activities that have been done previously.
- Make sure you understand the Mentor Agreement.

In addition, you might find it helpful, especially during your first days as a mentor, to take a few minutes at the end of your mentoring time to write down the names of the members with whom you worked, what you did, and any lingering questions you might have. This will help you remember names and keep track of the young people you meet.



Additional Roles Mentors Can Play

The following ideas are additional examples of more specific ways to become involved as a mentor. It's a good idea to consult with the Clubhouse manager about existing special projects in the Clubhouse, about additional roles you can play, and any project ideas you have in mind.

- **Work with members and mentors on a Clubhouse newsletter:**
Engage clubhouse members and mentors in contributing to a newsletter which showcases current projects, activities, members, and events at the Clubhouse. Help members create a newsletter on the web.
- **Contribute to the Clubhouse to College/Clubhouse to Career (C2C) Program:**
Help Clubhouse members use their technical skills to gain valuable job experience or academic opportunities. For example, bring a Clubhouse member to your work or school or help them think about their life goals and how to achieve them. (see Appendix for more specific C2C program information.)
- **Recruit mentors:** Work with the Clubhouse manager to recruit new mentors. Reach out to potential mentors in your work, school or home community.
- **Help with technical systems**
Offer technical expertise in setting up new Clubhouse programs or troubleshooting existing technical problems.
- **Offer a workshop:** Do you have experience with designing a webpage or with Photoshop? Give an impromptu workshop for Clubhouse members or mentors, or

schedule a workshop in any area in which you have expertise. It's a good idea, however, to take time to get comfortable with the environment and space, and then ask the Clubhouse manager what the needs are for a workshop and appropriate timing. Recognize that workshops are held only in response to requests by members; learning is generally more informal at the Clubhouse.

- Encourage members and mentors to contribute their work to the Clubhouse website and to the on-line art gallery, or to hang on the Clubhouse walls.

- Find websites that may inspire creative ideas: For example, one mentor located a website where members could enter their address and create a computer-generated map of their neighborhood to add to a homepage.

- Develop themes for group projects or "Containers"

Some members like to participate in group projects or themes. For example, at the "Flagship" Computer Clubhouse, a New Year's theme of "Celebration" unified and motivated the creative efforts of Clubhouse members to create writing, animation, and art for the Clubhouse First Night Web Page.

- Develop new project ideas: Organize a project that connects members from various satellite Clubhouses around a specific theme or project. Expand the virtual Clubhouse community. Bring in art supplies, such as modeling clay, and work with members to create clay figures that can be videotaped or photographed and then animated on the computer. Bring in other art mediums to encourage experimentation: not all projects have to be technology-based.



Tips from Mentors

The following ideas have been compiled by current Clubhouse mentors and staff based on what they feel are important qualities for a successful mentor. During your first days as a mentor, give yourself plenty of time to observe the Clubhouse, talk to members and mentors, and get a feel for this unique atmosphere. It takes time to get a sense for how the Clubhouse works and to build relationships with members and other mentors. These relationships are what your role as a mentor is all about.

- “Be yourself” As a mentor you should work with members in a way that is comfortable for you. This could mean actively engaging members in projects, or standing back and waiting for a member to ask for help or guidance.
- “Be reliable and consistent” The more consistent you are, the more Clubhouse members will trust you and start to call on you for help and conversation. Members should know when to count on you coming. Your absence will be noticed!
- “Be an active participant, you are not here to be a textbook” Engage in your own learning while you are mentoring, collaborate on projects, ask questions, and experiment.
- “Give off energy” Show your excitement about what members are doing, and your interest in learning from their work. Share your own excitement and engagement in your ideas, and your work at the Clubhouse.
- “Go with the flow” Be prepared for the unexpected! Bring ideas for what you would like to do, but be prepared to go with the flow of this changing environment.
- “Be patient” Everyone learns in different ways, yourself included. Be patient with your own learning and with the learning process of fellow mentors and Clubhouse members. Sometimes being patient means stepping in to help, or stepping back to let a member work to solve a problem him or herself.
- “Be open minded to kids from different backgrounds” Clubhouse mentors and members come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Take the time to get to know each mentor and member individually.
- “Be innovative and creative” Don’t be afraid to share your ideas, give advice, and be a resource for creative ideas and new knowledge. This might mean showing a member a new tool in Photoshop, challenging them to try something new, or taking on something new yourself.
- “Be approachable” It is important for members to know that you are available for questions. If a computer becomes available and you have a chance to work on your own projects, make sure that you are still open to the members around you. Invite a member to take a look at what you are doing, ask a member for advice on your project; make sure people know who you are and that you are there to help and to talk.



Support for Mentors

As a mentor you support the learning experience of Clubhouse members. Given this, you must also support your own learning and seek support as you feel the need. Make sure you:

- Attend the mentor orientation.
- Attend training workshops.
- Get to know other mentors and share experiences working with members.
- Use the staff when you need more information and support in working with a young person.
- Spend time watching other mentors work with members.
- Raise a topic of concern or interest for discussion with other mentors and staff, and use e-mail to keep the dialogue going.

FAQ’s- Frequently Asked Questions about the Role of a Mentor



Do I have to teach kids?

No. The environment of the Clubhouse closely resembles a relaxed work space rather than a classroom, in that all of the participants are working on projects. In

this setting, a mentor is more like a “guide” rather than a “teacher,” helping out only when necessary. You might find yourself learning a lot from members.



What do I have to know about Computers?

While it is helpful for you to know the basics of how to use a personal computer, there are many opportunities for beginners to learn about computers at the Clubhouse. For example, use the expertise of other mentors and members, use written materials or on-line help to learn a new program, or attend an evening training workshop.



I feel like I’m standing around a lot. What should I do?

As a mentor, you may find that you are not busy every second. It’s okay to stand around and observe, as long as you are available and open to member questions and conversations. Some days you might find yourself without a free minute; on other days it might feel like no one needs you. If this occurs, use the time to expand your own learning. If there is a computer available, you might investigate a new software program, look at member projects, or work on your own webpage. Slower times at the Clubhouse are good times to get to know members and mentors and to learn more about the unique pace and atmosphere of the Clubhouse.



Can I work on my own projects?

Yes. If there are available computers, it is great for members to learn from watching you work on your own project. By working on your own projects you contribute creative energy to the Clubhouse. However, knowing when to work on your own projects is a delicate balance. As a mentor you need to be available to members for questions and guidance, and you also need to make sure that members have computers available to use for their work.



I keep seeing kids just downloading images from the web and printing multiple copies. Should I do something?

Many Clubhouse members gain familiarity with computers and different processes through repeating basic activities such as downloading and printing. It may be fine for a member to do this as they get adjusted to the Clubhouse and the creative opportunities. Think about gradually introducing the members to other options, such as changing an image in Photoshop and adding their own creative flair. Plant the seeds of new possibilities without insisting that the member stop what she or he is working on. If you feel that a member is printing excessive numbers of prints, always remind them of the Clubhouse printing policy, and if need be, ask a staff member to intervene.

Working with Young People

An Overview



What is important in working with all young people

As a mentor, you are at the Clubhouse to guide and support the learning and experience of Clubhouse members. This support will take different forms, depending on you and the members with whom you work. There is no formula for working with young people, just as there is no formula for being a mentor. Clubhouse members are diverse in age, technological experience, and background. The following information on working with young people will hopefully give you some general ideas to help you in your process of understanding Clubhouse members and developing your own style of mentoring. Depending on the Clubhouse site, you may encounter members who range in age from 6 to 18. The “Flagship” Computer Clubhouse, for example, is open to members aged 10 to 18 years. The Clubhouse at the Boys and Girls Club in Roxbury is open to members 6 to 18, with certain times for 6 to 12 year olds, and certain times for 13 to 18 year olds.

Each Clubhouse member you work with is going to be at a very different developmental level. However, at the Clubhouse you will find that technological experience does not necessarily follow developmental lines: there may be a 10-year-old member who is an expert programmer, and a 17 year old who has never used a mouse. Age can affect a young person’s attention span for projects and activities. Younger members may have less attention for sustained projects, while older members have more attention for projects that span several weeks or longer. However, because the opposite could also be true, consider each young person individually.



Mentors on Working with Young People

Although there is no formula for working with young people, the following ideas contributed by current mentors may be useful.

- Figure out what interests you and what you can share with a member. Experiment with the Clubhouse resources, work on your own project, and then share your ideas and excitement with members. One of the best ways to be a role model is to share your own engagement in working with tools, people, and ideas.

- Make every member feel that they are important and respected. Each member should feel welcome and a part of the Clubhouse. Learn the names of members and greet them by name when they walk through the door. Show your interest in the projects that members are working on and in their presence at the Clubhouse. Respect all members for who they are and where they are developmentally. Avoid preconceptions regarding who a member is, their capabilities, and their cultural background. The Clubhouse is a place where all members should feel welcome and supported.
- Be consistent not only in your own attendance at the Clubhouse but in making sure that you treat all members fairly and equally.
- Help kids discover new opportunities and possibilities. Show a member a new tool or a program that they may not be familiar with. You might want to ask questions such as: "Have you tried this?" or "Do you know about this?"
- Work with members individually. Recognize that each person has different learning and communication styles. Take time to get to know the members, their interests, and the way in which they feel most comfortable interacting. For some it may be through conversation, others through working on a project or showing you what they are doing. Although you may find yourself engaged with an individual member, try not to give the impression that you have a favorite member. Be open to having others participate.
- Listen. As adults we often don't take the time to really listen to the ideas and thoughts of young people. Take the time; you might find you learn amazing things.
- Be patient, especially when showing someone how to do something that you may know very well. Each member will go through a very different learning process and will take different amounts of time to learn something new. Be patient if a member spends a great deal of time surfing the web, or playing Sim City. Experimenting with pre-existing programs is a way some members become comfortable with technology and the Clubhouse environment.
- Always remain positive even in the face of member negativity. If a member is critical of a Clubhouse policy or specific changes, help them find a way to talk about this frustration or try to present the other side of the story. You might suggest that a member air their criticism at the next Clubhouse Council meeting or discuss their concern with the Clubhouse manager.
- Show your interest and excitement, observe and ask questions.
- Get to know kids and let them get to know you. Don't be afraid to engage a member in conversation, ask questions, or offer to share something you know. However, understand that it will take time for members to begin to feel comfortable with you.



Different Kinds of Members and What They Need

One of the challenges of being a mentor is figuring out how to work with each individual member. Some members need more structure and guidance to help them feel comfortable; others focus completely on a project, occasionally calling a mentor to ask a question. The following are general profiles on the different kinds of members you may encounter and some ways to think about designing your mentoring approach:



Regulars

These are members who come to the Clubhouse almost daily or several times a week. Make sure that you continue to support the regular member. Sometimes, due to group visits or a busy afternoon, it may be easy to overlook the members who are a familiar part of the Clubhouse landscape. However, it is important to convey to these members that they are the backbone of the Clubhouse and that their continued presence is welcome.



Occasional Members

Although the participation of these members is sporadic, make it clear to them that they are welcome and a part of the Clubhouse whenever they come. It may be useful to talk to the member and explore what the member does when they are not at the Clubhouse. You may learn that they are involved in a school play, on the track team, or perhaps having difficulty with school.



The Expert Member

The expert member appears not to need any help or guidance or appears bored with the existing opportunities. Make sure you observe what they are doing, engage them, see if you can show them how to go a step farther with a project or a program. Convey to them that you want to learn from them too. Ask the expert member to help you work with less experienced members or ask the member for advice on your own project. Find ways to help the member feel important and challenged.



Younger members

Younger members, especially those who are new to the Clubhouse, may need more support than older members. Many younger members come to the Clubhouse with a group or relative. Make younger members feel welcome and help them understand the opportunities and resources at the Clubhouse. At some Clubhouses, such as the Roxbury Boys and Girls Club where younger members come at a separate time than the older members, it may be easier to spot and support the younger members. As with all Clubhouse members, make the younger member feel comfortable at the Clubhouse.



Girls

There is evidence, both from national studies and attendance statistics at the “Flagship” Computer Clubhouse that girls are less likely to be involved in computer technology than boys. Therefore, think about providing additional support to girls at your Clubhouse. Although many of the suggestions below apply to both genders, it may be useful to keep the following suggestions and ideas in mind when working with girls.

- Girls like working on group projects
- Give girls specific roles to play and jobs to do such as mentoring other girls
- Help girls make a connection with a female mentor
- Help girls build on their own interests
- Solicit feedback from girls on why they come-their input and participation-will help them feel a part of the community



New Members

The first visit of any young person to the Clubhouse is a crucial time because it sets the tone for the member’s future experiences at the Clubhouse. The first visit allows the young person to see what’s possible at the Clubhouse and decide if he or she wants to become a member. Help staff identify new members or visitors. Even if the young person arrives with a friend and appears to know

exactly what's going on, introduce yourself, answer any questions, and give him or her a membership application.

Help first time visitors define their interests and embark on a project that is feasible within the amount of time they expect to have. The key to an engaging project is finding a theme or subject that is of interest. Ask new members about their interests. It is often a great experience for new members to complete something during their first visit so that they can leave with a sense of satisfaction.

Once a young person has become a Clubhouse member, it is important that the mentor help the new member understand the following:

- The physical layout of the Clubhouse
- Available software programs
- Sign-in procedure.
- Who the staff, mentors, and members are
- Current group projects
- The basic operations of the computer (how to open a file, etc.)
- How to make a desktop folder for completed work or projects in progress
- How to begin a realistic project
- Who to ask for help or guidance
- The Clubhouse Guidelines



The Member Who Speaks English as a Second Language

At times you may encounter members with whom there is a language barrier. If you have communication difficulty, enlist the help of a Clubhouse member who speaks the same language, or develop creative ways to use technology to help you communicate. Be sure to try to communicate with all members.



The Member Who Needs Additional Support

Some members may be particularly in need of professional support. If you notice a change in behavior or attitude and think a member may need help of any kind, be sure to talk to a staff member directly. Remember that the role of the mentor is that of a trusted guide and friend, not that of a counselor.

FAQ's about Working with Young People



How do I handle discipline?

The Clubhouse is a unique environment where both mentor and member participation is voluntary. Because most people are at the Clubhouse because they want to be, the environment has few disciplinary problems. However, in instances when the spirit of the Clubhouse is violated, a Clubhouse member should be reminded of the Clubhouse rules, and in some cases the Clubhouse manager may need to step in. As a mentor, your role is to help maintain an environment where all members and mentors feel safe and respected. Familiarize yourself with the Clubhouse Guidelines. If you see a member who is not following the guidelines, or is doing something that makes you uncomfortable, be sure to tell him or her or speak to the Clubhouse manager. If you do talk to a member individually, be sure to pull him or her aside, rather than talking to him or her in the middle of the Clubhouse. If the member has violated the spirit of the Clubhouse, explain why his or her actions made you

uncomfortable or were inappropriate for the Clubhouse- an open dialogue is the best way to overcome behavioral issues.

Remember, there are different job descriptions for the mentor and the Clubhouse manager. The role of the mentor is not to be a disciplinarian, but rather to help create an environment where everyone feels comfortable to pursue their own projects, be themselves, and have a feeling of belonging at the Clubhouse. Remember the Clubhouse staff is available to support you, to make disciplinary decisions, and to remind members of the Clubhouse Guidelines.



What do I do if I feel a computer Clubhouse Member is having difficulty at home or at school?

If you think a member may need help of any kind, be sure to talk to a staff member. The Clubhouse staff member can direct the member to appropriate community resources. It is important for you to remember that the role of the mentor is that of a trusted guide and friend, not that of a counselor.



A Final Note but not The Final Word

This manual is a work in progress. It can be strengthened by your experiences, feedback, and ideas. Let the manager of your Clubhouse know if you feel additions are needed to this Mentor Handbook. Your contributions will help future mentors at the Clubhouse.

The best final word on mentoring is summed up by a mentor at the “Flagship” Computer Clubhouse:

“Just relax and enjoy the whole enchilada of experience at the Clubhouse. And keep an awareness of how much we (mentors and kids) are in the same boat when it comes to learning about what computers are good for. Be aware of how it feels to YOU to be learning something that is new, and often, intimidating. Learn to experiment as easily as the kids do. ”

With this in mind, enjoy mentoring at the Clubhouse. It is a unique chance to learn, experiment, and to create meaningful relationships with young people.



Resources

Talk to your Clubhouse Coordinator about resources that may exist at your Clubhouse. In addition, consider looking at the document Sparks, which is available at your Clubhouse.

In addition to the Clubhouse web site (www.computerclubhouse.org), the Museum of Science web site (www.mos.org) or the Intel web site (www.intel.com/education/icc/index.htm) may have relevant information.

An information on specific resources for working with girls and technology is kept at the flagship Computer Clubhouse at the Museum of Science in Boston. In addition, the following articles that speak specifically about technology and girls may also be useful:

Sanders, Jo: *Lifting the Barriers: 600 Tested Strategies That Really Work to Increase Girl's Participation in Science, Mathematics and Computers*. City University of New York Graduate Center: New York, 1994

Lazarus, W. & Lipper, L. (September, 1994) America's children and the information superhighway. The Children's Partnership, 1460 4th Street, Suite 306, Santa Monica, CA 90401.

Wheeler, K.A. (1993) How schools can stop shortchanging girls (and boys): Gender-equity strategies. Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8259

Tanaka, Jennifer: "No Boys Allowed: Focus on Technology." Newsweek, October 28, 1996, pg.-82-83

Cobb, Nathan. "Welcome to the Girl Wide Web. " The Boston Globe. August 13, 1996.

Mann, Judy, "Bridging the Gender Gap: How Girl's Learn," The Difference: Growing up Female in America, Warner Books, 1994.

Morse, Susan, "Why Girls Don't Like Computer Games," AAUW Outlook, Winter, 1995

