



Mentoring–A Proven Delinquency Prevention Strategy

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In the past decade, mentoring programs for disadvantaged children and adolescents have received serious attention as a promising approach to enriching children's lives, addressing their need for positive adult contact, and providing oneon-one support and advocacy for those who need it. Mentoring is also recognized as an excellent way to use volunteers to address the problems created by poverty (Freedman, 1992).

Through a mentoring relationship, adult volunteers and participating youth make a significant commitment of time and energy to develop relationships devoted to personal, academic, or career development and social, athletic, or artistic growth (Becker, 1994). Programs historically have been based in churches, colleges, communities, courts, or schools and have focused on careers or hobbies.

The child mentoring movement had its roots in the late 19th century with "friendly visitors" who would serve as role models for children of the poor. In 1904 Ernest K. Coulter founded a new movement that used "big brothers" to reach out to children who were in need of socialization, firm guidance, and connection with positive adult role models. The resulting program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BB/BS) of America, continues to operate today as the largest mentoring organization of its kind. BB/BS programs across the Nation provide screening and training to volunteer mentors and carefully match the mentors with "little brothers" and "little sisters" in need of guidance. Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) performed an 18-month experimental evaluation of eight BB/BS mentoring programs that considered social activities, academic performance, attitudes and behaviors, relationships with



From the Administrator

All children need caring adults in their lives, and mentoring is one way to fill this need for at-risk children. The special bond of commitment fostered by the mutual respect inherent in effective mentoring can be the tie that binds a young person to a better future.

OJJDP's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) is designed to reduce delinquency and improve school attendance for at-risk youth. Mentoring is also one component of our SafeFutures initiative, which assists communities to combat delinquency by developing a full range of coordinated services. In addition to JUMP and SafeFutures, OJJDP supports mentoring efforts in individual States through our Formula Grants Program funding.

With nearly a century of experience, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America is probably the best known mentoring program in the United States. The extensive evaluation of this pioneer program by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), described in this Bulletin, provides new insights that merit our attention.

The P/PV evaluation and OJJDP's 2-year experience with JUMP suggest that strengthening the role of mentoring as a component of youth programming may pay handsome dividends in improved school performance and reduced antisocial behavior, including alcohol and other drug abuse.

Shay Bilchik Administrator family and friends, self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment. The study found that mentored youth were less likely to engage in drug or alcohol use, resort to violence, or skip school. In addition, mentored youth were more likely to improve their grades and their relationships with family and friends.

The Federal Role

The Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) is a Federal program administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). As supported by JUMP, mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a pair of unrelated individuals, one adult and one juvenile, which takes place on a regular basis over an extended period of time. It is almost always characterized by a "special bond of mutual commitment" and "an emotional character of respect, loyalty, and identification" (Hamilton, 1990). Although mentoring also is a popular concept for success in the corporate world, this Bulletin focuses on the mentoring of children by adults.

JUMP is designed to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation, improve academic performance, and reduce school dropout rates. To achieve these purposes, JUMP brings together caring, responsible adults and at-risk young people in need of positive role models.

In the 1992 Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinguency Prevention Act of 1974, Congress added Part G-Mentoring. This was done in recognition of mentoring's potential as a tool for addressing two critical concerns in regard to America's children-poor school performance and delinquent activity. Senator Frank Lautenberg and Congressman William Goodling were the primary sponsors of this new provision. In Part G, Congress also recognized the importance of school collaboration in mentoring programs, whether as a primary source or as a partner with other public or private nonprofit entities.

To date Congress has made \$19 million available to fund JUMP: \$4 million each year in fiscal years (FY's) 1994, 1995, and 1996 and \$7 million in FY 1997. OJJDP funded 41 separate mentoring programs under the JUMP umbrella with FY 1994 and 1995 funding. JUMP awards for FY 1996 and FY 1997 will be announced in spring 1997.



While adhering to the basic requirements of JUMP, the grantees are using a variety of program designs. Mentors are law enforcement and fire department personnel, college students, senior citizens, Federal employees, businessmen, and other private citizens. The young people are of all races and range in age from 5 to 20. Some are incarcerated or on probation, some are in school, and some are dropouts. Some programs emphasize tutoring and academic assistance, while others stress vocational counseling and training. In its first year (July 1995 to July 1996), JUMP was involved in attempting to keep more than 2,000 at-risk young people in 25 States in school and off the streets through one-to-one mentoring.

Additional FY 1995 funding for mentoring was provided through OJJDP's SafeFutures initiative, which operates in six sites (Boston, Massachusetts; Contra Costa County, California; Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, Harlem, Montana; Imperial County, California; Seattle, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri). The SafeFutures program assists these communities in developing a coordinated continuum of care to reduce youth violence and delinquency. Mentoring is a component of this coordinated effort in each of the SafeFutures sites.

In addition to the funding for JUMP and SafeFutures grantees, OJJDP supports mentoring programs through its Formula Grants program to the States. In FY 1995, for example, Formula Grants funds in 28 States supported 91 programs that included mentoring as part or all of the program.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BB/BS) of America

BB/BS is a federation of more than 500 agencies that serve children and adolescents. Its mission is to make a difference in the lives of young people, primarily through a professionally supported oneto-one relationship with a caring adult, and to assist them in reaching their highest potential as they grow into responsible men and women by providing committed volunteers, national leadership, and standards of excellence. The organization's current goals include increasing the number of children served; improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of services to children; and achieving a greater racial and ethnic diversity among volunteers and staff. BB/BS volunteer mentors come from all walks of life, but they share the goal of being a caring adult who can make a difference in the life of a child.

For more than 90 years, the BB/BS program has paired unrelated adult volunteers with youth from single-parent households. BB/BS does not seek to ameliorate specific problems but to provide support to all aspects of young people's lives. The volunteer mentor and the youth make a substantial time commitment, meeting for about 4 hours, two to four times a month, for at least 1 year.

Developmentally appropriate activities shared by the mentor and the young person may include taking walks; attending a play, movie, school activity, or sporting event; playing catch; visiting the library; washing the car; grocery shopping; watching television; or just sharing thoughts and ideas about life. Such activities enhance communication skills, develop relationship skills, and support positive decisionmaking.

The BB/BS mentor relationships between mentors and youth are achieved through professional staff and national operating standards that provide a level of uniformity in recruitment, screening, matching, and supervision of volunteers and youth. BB/BS agencies provide orientation for volunteers, parents, and youth to assist the individuals in determining if involvement in the program is appropriate for them. Opportunities to participate in volunteer education and development programs such as relationship building, communication skills, values clarification, child development, and problem solving are available to local affiliates.

Supervision includes contact with all parties within the first 2 weeks following a match. BB/BS maintains monthly contact with the volunteer and parent or child for the first year. In addition, inperson or telephone contact is maintained quarterly between case managers and both the volunteer and the parent, guardian, and/or child for the duration of the match. Although its standards are reinforced through national training, national and regional conferences, and periodic agency evaluations, BB/BS is not monolithic. Individual agencies adhere to national guidelines, but they customize their programs to fit the circumstances in their area.

Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) Evaluation of Big Brothers/Big Sisters

At the same time that Congress was considering Federal support for juvenile mentoring programs, P/PV was beginning a carefully designed evaluation of BB/BS mentoring programs (Tierney and Grossman, 1995). OJJDP followed the progress of this 18-month experimental evaluation closely, believing that the results would confirm the generally accepted proposition that mentoring benefits at-risk youth and would support further national expansion of this activity.

P/PV chose eight local BB/BS agencies for the study, using two criteria: large caseload (to ensure an adequate number of youth for the research sample) and geographic diversity. The sites selected were in Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Phoenix, Arizona; Rochester, New York; San Antonio, Texas; and Wichita, Kansas.

The young people in the study were between 10 and 16 years old (with 93 percent between 10 and 14). Slightly more than 60 percent were boys, and more than 50 percent were minority group members (of those, about 70 percent were African American). Almost all lived with one parent (usually the mother), the rest with a guardian or relatives. Many were from low-income households, and a significant number came from households with a history of either family violence or substance abuse. For the study, youth were randomly assigned to be immediately eligible for a mentor or put on a waiting list.¹

The goal of the research was to determine whether a one-to-one mentoring experience made a tangible difference in the lives of these young people. The researchers considered six broad areas that mentoring might affect: antisocial activities, academic performance, attitudes and behaviors, relationships with family, relationships with friends, self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment. The findings presented below were based on selfreported data obtained from baseline and followup interviews or from forms completed by agency staff.

The overall findings, summarized in the table, are positive. The most noteworthy results are these:

- Mentored youth were 46 percent less likely than controls to initiate drug use during the study period. An even stronger effect was found for minority Little Brothers and Little Sisters, who were 70 percent less likely to initiate drug use than similar minority youth.
- Mentored youth were 27 percent less likely than were controls to initiate alcohol use during the study period, and minority Little Sisters were only about one-half as likely to initiate alcohol use.
- Mentored youth were almost one-third less likely than were controls to hit someone.
- Mentored youth skipped half as many days of school as control youth, felt more competent about doing

How Youth Benefit From Big Brothers/Big Sisters Relative to Similar Nonprogram Youth 18 Months After Applying

Outcome	Change
Antisocial Activities	
Initiating Drug Use	-45.8%
Initiating Alcohol Use	-27.4%
Number of Times Hit Someone	-31.7%
Academic Outcomes	
Grades	3.0%
Scholastic Competence	4.3%
Skipped Class	-36.7%
Skipped Day of School	-52.2%
Family Relationships	
Summary Measure of Quality of the Relationship	2.1%
Trust	2.7%
Lying to Parent	-36.6%
Peer Relationships	
Emotional Support	2.3%

Note: All impacts in this table are statistically significant at least at a 90 percent level of confidence.

¹ For ease of presentation, we will refer to the group that was immediately eligible for a mentor as "mentored youth" or "Little Brothers and Little Sisters," even though this group includes some youth (22 percent) who were never matched. The wait-listed youth are called the "control" youth.

schoolwork, skipped fewer classes, and showed modest gains in their grade point averages. These gains were strongest among Little Sisters, particularly minority Little Sisters.

- The quality of their relationships with their parents was better for mentored youth than for controls at the end of the study period, primarily due to a higher level of trust between parent and child. This effect was strongest for white Little Brothers.
- Mentored youth, especially minority Little Brothers, had improved relationships with their peers.

P/PV did not find statistically significant improvements in self-concept or the number of social and cultural activities in which Little Brothers and Little Sisters participated.

P/PV concluded that the research presented clear and encouraging evidence that mentoring programs can create and support caring relationships between adults and youth, resulting in a wide range of tangible benefits. It was the researchers' judgment that the successes they observed are unlikely without both the relationship with the mentor and the support from the BB/BS program.

The study did not find evidence that any mentoring programming will work but that programs that facilitate the specific types of relationships observed in BB/BS work well. The researchers noted the following about the relationships between Little Brothers and Little Sisters and their Big Brothers and Big Sisters:

- They had a high level of contact, typically meeting three times per month for 4 hours per meeting. Many had additional contact by telephone.
- The relationships were built using an approach that defines the mentor as a friend, not a teacher or preacher. The mentor's role is to support the young person in his or her various endeavors, not explicitly to change the youth's behavior or character.

The study lists the following elements as prerequisites for an effective mentoring program:

- Thorough volunteer screening that weeds out adults who are unlikely to keep their time commitment or who might pose a safety risk to youth.
- Mentor training that includes communication and limit-setting skills, tips on relationship-building, and recommen-



dations on the best way to interact with a young person.

- Procedures that take into account the preferences of the youth, their families, and volunteers and that use a professional case manager to determine which volunteer would work best with each youth.
- Intensive supervision and support of each match by a case manager who has frequent contact with the parent or guardian, volunteer, and youth and who provides assistance as difficulties arise.

One of the strongest conclusions of the P/PV study is the importance of providing mentors with support in building trust and developing positive relationships with youth. Many of the relationships between the volunteers and youth would have faltered and dissolved if they had not been nurtured by BB/BS's caseworkers. Thus to be effective, mentoring programs should provide an infrastructure that fosters and supports the development of effective relationships.

Over 8 years, P/PV studied numerous mentoring programs other than BB/BS. The extent to which these mentoring programs included standardized procedures in the areas of screening, orientation, training, match supervision and support, matching practices, and regular meeting times varied tremendously. Some programs included virtually none of these elements, while others were highly structured. The researchers identified three of these areas as vitally important to the success of any mentoring program: screening, orientation and training, and support and supervision.

The screening process provides programs with an opportunity to select adults who are most likely to be successful as mentors by looking for individuals who already understand that a mentor's primary role is to develop a friendship with the youth. Orientation and prematch training provide important opportunities to ensure that youth and their mentors share a common understanding of the adult's role in these programmatically created relationships and to help mentors develop realistic expectations of what they can accomplish. Ongoing staff supervision and support of matches is critical to ensuring that mentors and youth meet regularly over a substantial period of time and develop positive relationships.

It is interesting to note that matching did not turn out to be one of the most critical elements. None of the objective factors (e.g., age, race, and gender) that staff take into account when making a match correlate very strongly with the frequency of meetings, length of the match, or its effectiveness. Programs may prefer to make same-race matches, and parents and youth sometimes prefer a mentor of the same race. Programs should continue to honor these preferences and make same-race matches whenever possible. At the same time, it is clear that youth who wait a long time for a same-race mentor are in most cases only delaying the benefits that a mentor of any race can provide.

There are two obstacles to replication of effective mentoring programs: the limited number of adults available to serve as mentors and the scarcity of organizational resources necessary to carry out a successful program. The researchers report that between 5 million and 15 million children could benefit from being matched with a mentor; the organization matches only about 75,000 youth in a year. Even with the multitude of smaller mentoring programs around the country, it seems reasonable to conclude that at best just a small percentage of young people are benefiting from mentoring.

In regard to organizational resources, the study notes that effective programs require agencies that take substantial care in recruiting, screening, matching, and supporting volunteers. Paid caseworkers carry out these critical functions for BB/BS at a program cost of approximately \$1,000 per year per match.

OJJDP and the P/PV Results

The P/PV evaluation, plus its 2 years of experience with JUMP, led OJJDP to modify the project design guidelines in its 1996 JUMP solicitation to reflect the latest knowledge about what works-and does not work-in mentoring. Based on the P/PV study, OJJDP expanded the guideline on mentor support and training, emphasizing that the program coordinator should have frequent contact with parents or guardians, volunteers, and vouth and should provide assistance when requested or as problems arise. This guideline also specifies the type of training mentors should receive. From its JUMP experience, OJJDP inserted a guideline on the role of the mentor, added a caution about time limitations that may interfere with the effectiveness of college undergraduate or graduate students as mentors, suggested that parents should have a say in the selection of mentors, called for screening mechanisms to weed out volunteers who will not keep their commitments, and established minimum expectations for the time mentors should spend with youth (1 hour per week for at least 1 year).

Evaluation of JUMP

OJJDP is required by Congress to submit a report regarding the success and effectiveness of JUMP initiatives 120 days after their termination. Evaluations are critical to ensuring that mentoring programs operate as designed and meet their goals in terms of both the process and the impact on youth.

To prepare for the timely initiation of evaluation activities once the grantee is chosen for the national evaluation, OJJDP directed its management evaluation contractor, Caliber Associates, to design an evaluation and prepare for initial data collection. The JUMP evaluation will be accomplished through a partnership among the grantees, OJJDP, and the JUMP evaluation grantee. Caliber produced a workbook containing an overview of the JUMP initiative and the national evaluation that defined the roles of OJJDP, the evaluator, and JUMP grantees. Caliber also pilot tested grantee administration of data collection instruments and conducted followup interviews of participating grantees. Once the grantee for the evaluation is selected, Caliber also will help coordinate the transition to the evaluation grantee. Selection of the evaluation grantee is expected to take place in spring 1997.

Although formal evaluations have not yet been implemented, the mentoring programs funded under JUMP appear to be making a difference in the lives of many young people. The preliminary accomplishments of a few of the OJJDP-funded mentoring programs are highlighted below.

The Big Brothers/Big Sisters of southwest Idaho have made 41 matches of atrisk youth and mentors in this JUMP project. According to parents and teachers familiar with the program, 30 percent of the youth who participated in the program showed improvement in their school attendance, 30 percent showed academic improvement, 35 percent showed improvement in their general behavior, and 48 percent increased the frequency of appropriate interactions with peers. For example, a female being raised by her father was matched to a female volunteer and, after the match, scored higher in measures of grades, selfsatisfaction, self-esteem, positive attitude toward others, and pride in appearance.

Project Caring Connections in New York City provides 30 youth with caring relationships with adult mentors from corporations and the community. As an integral part of the Liberty Partnerships Program, it offers a comprehensive range of services from academic enrichment to cultural experiences to a safe environment in which young people can learn social skills. During afterschool hours, Project Caring Connections mentors work with students one-toone or in a group to provide academic support, job shadowing (going to the mentor's workplace), and social and cultural enrichment. Through the program, at-risk students may gain exposure to publishing, theater, law, art, government, and business and also do community service. This past vear. some youth were able to serve as panelists on a cable news show and discuss crime in their communities, curfews, and the importance of staying in school.

Big Sisters of Colorado, in Denver, matched 59 girls, mostly Hispanic, with mentors. Program activities funded by OJJDP included a Life Choices program to develop decisionmaking and academic skills; recreation, community service, and challenge course activities; a pregnancyprevention program; and mentor visits to the girls' schools. None of these girls have become pregnant or had problems with alcohol or drugs since their involvement in the program.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Pensacola, Florida, is a JUMP initiative in which 26 youth from single-parent families who are at risk for juvenile delinguency, teen pregnancy, truancy, and dropping out of school are being mentored by legal professionals, members of the military, corporate employees, and others. The youth are actively encouraged to stay in school and meet the goals in their individualized case plans. All have had increased exposure to athletic, recreational, and cultural activities, and many have demonstrated improved social and academic skills. The program has also engaged youth in a 3-day Kids N Kops police mini-academy. This innovative program provides mentoring and training by police officers and educates youth about the dangers of drugs, guns, and gangs while strengthening the relationship between police and at-risk youth.

The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative in Ohio matched 136 youth and volunteers in its first year in JUMP. Mentors include doctors, dentists, lawyers, judges, teachers, chemists, police officers, nurses, waiters, postal clerks, travel agents, and college students. Some special activities were a trip to New York City, visits to college campuses, a community bowl-athon, job shadowing, and participation in a school beautification project. The project reports that 99 of the 136 young people have improved academically and 102 have improved socially.

The RESCUE Youth mentoring program in Los Angeles, California, was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, to rescue youth ages 12 to 14 at the earliest signs of at-risk behavior. The district attorney's staff match the students with volunteer firefighter mentors in an effort to address truancy. juvenile delinquency, and potentially serious criminal behavior. Through this JUMP initiative, mentors worked with 140 youth on their communication and conflict resolution skills and provided training in fire prevention and first aid.

The JUMP projects offer many success stories, including the following examples. One student, who began the 1995–96 school year as a repeat first grader,



ended the year with straight A's with the help of her mentor. In another instance, a male student being raised by his father alone showed a twofold increase in his grades and in measures of self-esteem after being matched with a female mentor. It is expected that the JUMP evaluation will document a significant number of similar positive outcomes.

Summary

The research conducted by P/PV—and the preliminary reports from JUMP—provide powerful evidence that youth can be positively influenced by adults who care. More important, these positive relationships do not have to be left to chance but can be created through structured mentoring programs.

The P/PV research, however, has even broader implications for social policy than just encouraging the spread of mentoring-namely, that practitioners and policymakers should take a new approach to serving youth. For the past 30 years, society's attention and resources were directed predominantly at teenagers' problems, as evidenced by programs focusing on issues such as dropping out of school, truancy, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy. With only small gains to show, the public and politicians alike have concluded, probably prematurely, that youth, even those as young as 14, are too old to be helped.

The BB/BS results suggest that, where its youth policy is concerned, society's focus has been too narrow. What is desperately needed is a more positive approach that meets the basic needs of youth, especially those living in high-risk neighborhoods, for nurturing and supportive adults, positive things to do after school and on weekends, and volunteer and work opportunities that develop skills, foster learning, and instill a sense of civic responsibility. If society focuses on these basic developmental needs, youth will mature responsibly, avoid many negative behaviors, and become more resilient in the face of inevitable setbacks.

P/PV's evaluation of BB/BS suggests that strengthening this aspect of youth programming is likely to be more effective in producing responsible young adults than the traditional approach to youth policy, which has attempted to prevent specific problems or to correct problems that have already arisen. These traditional elements will still be needed, but they should complement and support the basic developmental needs addressed by mentoring programs.

The BB/BS mentoring program did not provide tutoring and antidrug counseling—it simply provided adult friendship on a regular and intensive basis. Yet it achieved improvements in school performance and reductions in antisocial behavior. The findings thus provide a direction for building and strengthening one approach to delinquency prevention.

Dealing with the problems of juvenile delinquency, creating more positive opportunities for our youth, and helping them find strong and positive adult role models in their lives are among the societal goals that can be achieved in part through the implementation of sound mentoring programs. While many children are being served by these efforts already, hundreds of thousands more could also benefit from the special bond of mentoring before serious problems develop.

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For Further Information

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

 Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America is the oldest and largest mentoring program in the country. Questions about their program can be directed to:

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America 230 North 13th Street Philadelphia, PA 19107 215–567–7000 215–567–0394 (Fax) Internet: http://www.bbbsa.org

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse

 OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse can provide additional information on mentoring programs and other juvenile justice issues. The Clearinghouse provides OJJDP publications and other information via the Internet, fax, and other electronic media. It has a document collection and data base of more



than 30,000 juvenile justice titles, one of the most comprehensive juvenile justice holdings in the world. To access this information, contact the Clearinghouse at any of the following numbers and addresses:

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse P.O. Box 6000 Rockville, MD 20849–6000 800–638–8736 301–251–5212 (Fax) Internet: http://www.ncjrs.org/ ojjhome.htm E-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

Public/Private Ventures

 P/PV is a nonprofit corporation with expertise in policy development, research, technical assistance, and products for school-to-work initiatives.
P/PV's mission is to help organizations improve their initiatives to help young people. To contact P/PV, write or call:

Public/Private Ventures 2005 Market Street Suite 900 Philadelphia, PA 19103 215–557–4400 215–557–4469 (Fax)

One to One/National Mentoring Partnership

♦ One to One/National Mentoring Partnership is dedicated to transforming mentoring from a scattered coalition of small programs to a national movement reaching millions of children in need. The National Mentoring Partnership has helped to form more than 25,000 mentoring relationships and has secured commitments from business and community leaders to recruit more than 300,000 new mentors for youth across the country. For more information, contact:

One to One/National Mentoring Partnership 2801 M Street NW. Washington, DC 20007 202–338–3844 202–338–1642 (Fax)

YMCA of the USA

YMCA's are community based and operate independently of the national office. They can therefore design programs to meet specific community needs. Mentoring programs are offered at 144 YMCA's, and programs targeted to at-risk youth are offered at 628 YMCA's. For information or to locate local programs, contact:

YMCA of the USA 101 North Wacker Drive Chicago, IL 60606 312–977–0031 312–977–9063 (Fax) Internet: http://www.ymca.net

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