

Mentoring A Significant Return on a Small Investment

Consider This:

- In Columbus, 90 percent of the students in a tutoring and mentoring program, Book Buddies, were at or above grade level in literacy skills at the end of the school year, after starting the year with reading skills below grade level.
- In Indianapolis, 80 percent of the first class of graduates from the Starfish Initiative mentoring program enrolled in college.
- In Terre Haute, a mentoring initiative started by the Vigo County School Corporation helped raise the high school graduation rate of African American students from 48 percent to 85 percent in four years.
- In Westville, 100 percent of seniors participating in the Success Through Education/Talent Search program graduated from high school, and 77 percent of those students enrolled in college. The program works with low-income students who would be the first in their families to go to college.

A national study indicates that youth involved in formal, high-quality relationships with adult mentors skip half as many days of school as their peers. They are also:⁵

- 46% less likely to initiate drug use
- 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use
- 32% less likely to hit someone

Mentoring Works!

As the results above show, mentoring can positively influence youth. Research indicates that mentoring relationships are most successful when they are close, consistent, and enduring.¹ Mentoring programs are also more likely to succeed if they are driven by the needs and interests of youth, rather than the expectations of adult volunteers.²

Futhermore, the social benefits are impressive. Mentored youth attend school more regularly, have better attitudes and behaviors at school, and are more likely to pursue post-secondary education.³ In addition, youth-serving organizations that support mentoring initiatives estimate a return on investment of more than \$2 for every \$1 spent on program resources.⁴

¹ Rhodes, J.E. and D. L. DuBois. (2006). Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement. Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away. XX (III).

² Jekielek, S. M., K. A. Moore, E. C. Hair and H. J. Scarupa. (2002). Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development. Child Trends Research Brief. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2002_02_01_RB_Mentoring.pdf

³ Jekielek, S. M., K. A. Moore, E. C. Hair and H. J. Scarupa. (2002). Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development. Child Trends Research Brief. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2002_02_01_RB_Mentoring.pdf

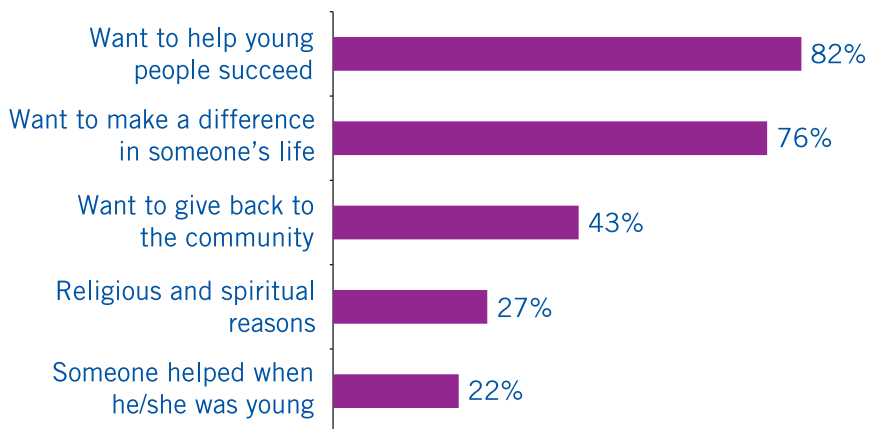
⁴ Wilder Research. (2007). Analyzing the Social Return on Investments in Youth Mentoring Programs: A framework for Minnesota. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoringworks.org/A_Social_Return_on_Investment_for_Mentoring.html

⁵ Tierney, J., J. Grossman and N. Resch. (2000). Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications.asp>

The Need Is Great

While studies and testimonials show that mentoring works and the number of American adults engaged in formal one-on-one mentoring relationships is increasing, programs still need more volunteers.⁶ Of the almost 17.6 million young Americans who need or want mentoring, only 2.5 million participate in formal one-on-one mentoring programs.⁷ In an informal survey of Indiana mentoring agencies, 96.4 percent said that their programs could accommodate more volunteers; nearly 90 percent also expressed a great need for funding to increase their capacity to serve.⁸

WHY PEOPLE MENTOR



AND WHY THEY DON'T

Adults who choose not to mentor cite a variety of reasons, including:

- they don't have time
- they don't know how to start
- they've never been asked
- they don't know what they have to offer
- they aren't sure what mentors do

Source: Mentor.org. (2005). *Mentoring in America 2005: A snapshot of the current state of mentoring*. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_523.pdf

Best Practices

The best mentoring programs are well structured with clear expectations for both mentors and mentees, focus on goals, and provide ongoing support for volunteers.⁹ Three important factors for successful mentoring relationships are spending time together in shared activities, trust, and role modeling.¹⁰ Because the length of a mentoring relationship has an impact on outcomes, it is important for all involved parties (organizations, mentors, mentees, and parents) to strive to keep matches together.¹¹

Here's what we know about quality adult-youth mentoring relationships:

- Mentors should involve the youth in selecting activities and these activities should be youth-focused.¹²
- Leisurely activities, shared over many months, establish the trust that is the foundation of the mentoring relationship.¹³
- Regular attendance is essential; absent mentors or short relationships may do more harm than good.¹⁴

⁶ Mentor.org. (2005). *Mentoring in America 2005: A snapshot of the current state of mentoring*. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_523.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A Better Hour: Indiana's Statewide Mentoring Initiative. (2008). Power Point Presentation. Indiana Youth Institute.

⁹ Jean Rhodes. (2008). *Improving Youth Mentoring Interventions Through Research-based Practice*. American Journal of Community Psychology. 41.

¹⁰ Liang, B., R. Spencer, D. Brogan, and M. Corral. (2008). *Mentoring relationships from early adolescence through emerging adulthood: A qualitative analysis*. Journal of Vocational Behavior. 72.

¹¹ Mentor.org. (2005). *Mentoring in America 2005: A snapshot of the current state of mentoring*. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_523.pdf

¹² Mentoring Resource Center. (2005). *Avoiding Early Match Termination*. Mentoring Fact Sheet #18. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from <http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet18.pdf>

¹³ Liang, B., R. Spencer, D. Brogan, and M. Corral. (2008). *Mentoring relationships from early adolescence through emerging adulthood: A qualitative analysis*. Journal of Vocational Behavior. 72.

¹⁴ Jekielek, S. M., K. A. Moore, E. C. Hair and H. J. Scarupa. (2002). *Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development*. Child Trends Research Brief. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2002_02_01_RB_Mentoring.pdf

TIPS FOR TRADITIONAL (ONE-ON-ONE) MENTORING PROGRAMS FROM THE EXPERTS AT MENTOR.ORG

- Budget for unexpected materials and activities
- Assess the young person's needs and screen mentees
- Institute mentor screening that is thorough, rigorous, intense, and documented
- Hold mandatory mentor training six to eight weeks into the mentoring relationship
- Define and reinforce ground rules clearly
- Provide ongoing supervision and support of the match

Remember: the goal with traditional mentoring is to achieve a close bond between a young person and an adult.

Training

The best way to ensure that a mentoring relationship will be successful is to carefully screen, train, and support the mentee and the mentor.¹⁵

Training for mentors should cover the following four areas:¹⁶

- how to establish a positive relationship with the mentee
- how to help young people develop life skills
- how to access social services in the mentee's community as well as required safety reporting
- how to better understand multicultural issues, as well as issues currently affecting youth

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

For a limited criminal history check within the state of Indiana (requires name only), go to:

- <http://www.in.gov/ai/appfiles/isp-lch/>

For a complete criminal history check that covers all states (requires fingerprints), go to:

- <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjisd/fprequest.htm>

TIPS FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN MENTORING PROGRAMS

Not only does mentoring have a positive effect on children, mentoring relationships have been shown to improve parental relationships.¹⁷ Below are some guidelines and ground rules for parents whose children have a mentor:

- Participation in mentoring should not be used as a reward or punishment¹⁸
- The mentor's role is to be a companion to the mentee, so don't ask him/her to provide transportation, buy presents, or other similar activities
- Don't discuss your child with the mentor when your child is in the room
- Help your child be considerate of the mentor¹⁹

¹⁵ Mentor.org. (2002). Keeping Matches Together. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoring.org/access_research/research_corner/

¹⁶ Mentor.org. How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice. Retrieved on October 24, 2008, from http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_413.pdf

¹⁷ Tierney, J., J. Grossman and N. Resch. (2000). Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications.asp>; Jekielek, S. M., K. A. Moore, E. C. Hair and H. J. Scarupa. (2002). Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development. Child Trends Research Brief. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2002_02_01_RB_Mentoring.pdf

¹⁸ Mentoring Resource Center. (2005). Involving Parents in Mentoring Programs. Mentoring Fact Sheet #6. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from <http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet6.pdf>

¹⁹ Mentor.org. Retrieved October 24, 2008, from www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_589.doc

GO TO WWW.MENTORING.ORG

The National Mentoring Institute offers a variety of products and services at www.mentoring.org. Here are just a few of the resources available:

- *Elements of Effective Practice* – provides research and field-tested guidelines on how to run safe and effective mentoring programs, available for download at www.mentoring.org/elements
- *Online Training* – self-guided training for both mentors and mentees, available at www.mentoring.org/mentor_training
- *Mentor Resources* – available at www.mentoring.org/mentors/support_for_mentors/

Indiana Youth Institute Resources

- *IYI Weekly Update*
- *Kids Count in Indiana Data Book* and online database
- *Virginia Beall Ball Library*
- *Youth Service Help Line*
- *Free custom research*
- *Regional trainings*
- *Professional Development Grants*
- *Kids Count in Indiana Conference*
- *Statewide assistance*

For more information go to www.iyi.org or call 1-800-343-7060.



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