**Effective Strategies
for Providing Quality
Youth Mentoring in
Schools and Communities**

The ABCs of

School-Based
Mentoring

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The

ABCs of School-

Effective Strategies for Providing Quality

Based Mentoring

Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities

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About the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities Series

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Recent years have seen youth mentoring expand from a relatively small youth intervention (usually for youth from single-parent homes) to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions.

While almost any child can benefit from the magic of mentoring, those who design and implement mentoring programs also need guidance and support. Running an effective mentoring program is not easy, and there are many nuances and programmatic details that can have a big impact on outcomes for youth. Recent mentoring research even indicates that a short-lived, less-than-positive mentoring relationship (a hallmark of programs that are not well designed) can actually have a negative impact on participating youth. Mentoring is very much worth doing, but it is imperative that programs implement proven, research-based best practices if they are to achieve their desired outcomes. That's where this series of publications can help.

The Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, sponsored by the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, is designed to give practitioners a set of tools and ideas that they can use to build quality mentoring programs. Each title in the series is based on research (primarily from the esteemed Public/Private Ventures) and observed best practices from the field of mentoring, resulting in a collection of proven strategies, techniques, and program structures. Revised and updated by the National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, each book in this series provides insight into a critical area of mentor program development:

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring—This title offers a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of successful youth mentoring programs. Originally designed for a community-based model, its advice and planning tools can be adapted for use in other settings.

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual—Much of the success of a mentoring program is dependent on the structure and consistency of service delivery, and this guide provides advice and a customizable template for creating an operations manual for a local mentoring program.

Training New Mentors—All mentors need thorough training if they are to possess the skills, attitudes, and activity ideas needed to effectively mentor a young person. This guide provides ready-to-use training modules for your program.

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring—This guide explores the nuances of building a program in a school setting.

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors—This resource is written directly for mentors, providing them with 10 simple rules for being a successful mentor and quotes from actual volunteers and youth on what they have learned from the mentoring experience.

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs—Mentoring programs must plan effectively for their sustainability if they are to provide services for the long run in their community. This guide explores key planning and fundraising strategies specifically for youth mentoring programs.

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The Hamilton Fish Institute and the National Mentoring Center hope that the guides in this series help you and your program's stakeholders design effective, sustainable mentoring services that can bring positive direction and change to the young people you serve.

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Contents

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I'm more a brother or a friend, I guess, than a parent or anything. That's the way I try to act and be with him. I don't want him to think—and I don't think he does—that I'm like a teacher or a parent or something. . . . I don't want him to be uncomfortable, like I'm going to be there always looking over his shoulder and always there to report him for things he does wrong and that he tells me. I just want to be there as his friend to help him out.

"

—Mentor, Minneapolis

Introduction

The program director and I used to talk about what was wrong with the world, and we always used to say that if somebody could just hold these kids' hands sometimes—not drag them along, but just walk along with them—maybe a lot of them would find their way.

— Mentor, Washington, D.C.

Both research and common sense leave little doubt that youth need caring and consistent relationships with adults in order to navigate their way through adolescence and beyond. For many youth, however, there is no adult who is naturally available to provide this kind of support. To fill this void, there has been an increase in formal mentoring programs, most prominently in community-based settings. These community-based programs have shown the ability to improve youth behaviors and attitudes. Evaluation results provide clear evidence that involvement in consistent, long-term, well-supervised relationships with adults can yield a wide range of tangible benefits for youth, including improved grades and family relationships and decreased alcohol and drug use (Sipe, 1996; Tierney & Grossman, 2000).

Given these positive outcomes for youth, and the enormous number of young people who might benefit from the support of a caring adult, youth-serving organizations are eager to implement new mentoring programs or expand their current ones. To complement the traditional community-based model—where mentors and youth decide where and when they will meet—organizations are increasingly looking to school-based programs as a strategy for spreading the impact of mentoring.

The following material provides practical information for youth-serving organizations that want to implement a new school-based mentoring program or strengthen an existing one. Drawing on recent research and promising practices developed by organizations around the country, this guide leads readers through the process of planning and imple-

menting a quality school-based mentoring program. It also includes worksheets to help guide planning, sample forms that programs can adapt and use, and a list of additional resources.

This guide is designed primarily for mentoring organizations who wish to partner with a school or school district to provide adult-youth mentoring services on campus. Much of the content addresses how to structure roles and responsibilities for each party and how to structure services so that the partnership functions effectively. The content can also be adapted by:

- Schools or districts that wish to design and staff their own stand-alone mentoring programs.

- Programs that wish to implement an older student–younger student model, as much of the research that has informed this guide examined peer mentoring models in school settings, in addition to the more traditional adult-youth structure.

Building on New School-Based Mentoring Research

Researchers are learning more about what constitutes an effective school-based mentoring program and by analyzing successful program structures and outcomes, they are clarifying the best practices and promising approaches that other mentoring programs can adopt. The advice provided in this guide has been greatly enhanced by the research findings provided in Public/Private Venture's 2007 report *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*. This research report studied 10 Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) school-based mentoring programs to find out what techniques they were using to produce successful results, while also examining the challenges and barriers they faced in implementing services and fully achieving program goals.

The full research report, a must-read for anyone planning a new school-based mentoring program, is available for download from the P/PV Web site at: http://www.ppv.org

What Is School-Based Mentoring?

School-based mentoring is defined by many program features that contrast it to community-based mentoring models. Among the key elements frequently found in school-based mentoring programs:

1. **The program operates on the school campus.** Whether the result of a school-community partnership or developed as a stand-alone school service, school-based mentoring programs are usually housed at the school site, with adults and youth meeting in various campus locations and the program making use of school facilities and administrative space.

2. **Mentoring relationships meet for the duration of the school year.** However, there is compelling recent evidence that programs should make every effort to extend mentoring relationships throughout the summer months and across grades to improve the outcomes for youth (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007). More information about the value of multi-year school-based mentoring follows in the "Planning a School-Based Mentoring Program" section of this guide.

3. **Youth are referred by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.** While some programs do allow parents to request a mentor, most school-based programs are built around the concept of school personnel initiating youth participation in the program.

4. **School-based mentoring is not simply a tutoring program, nor is it as unstructured as community-based mentoring.** Most school-based programs reside somewhere in between these two models. Mentoring matches are encouraged to view the development of a trusting, mutually satisfying relationship as the primary goal of their time spent together. However, because of the campus setting and the inherent connection to academics and the school itself, these matches are more structured than those typically found in purely community-based models. Restricted to the campus setting, matches are encouraged to engage in some structured activities, often around classroom- or homework-related topics.

What Are the Benefits of a School-Based Mentoring Model?

There are many compelling reasons for schools and mentoring organizations to partner in developing a school-based mentoring model:

1. **Engaging volunteers and youth who might not be involved with mentoring otherwise.** In one study, about half of school-based mentors reported they would not have considered community-based mentoring opportunities (Herrera, 2004). Because school-based programs require a shorter and less intensive time commitment than traditional community-based programs, they can attract categories of volunteers—such as corporate employees, college students, and military personnel—with limited amounts of free time. Because the mentor-student meetings take place in the relative security of schools, the programs are also attractive to older adults and others who may be concerned about having to spend time with a youth out in the community. Additionally, programs that adopt a peer mentoring model are able to involve older youth as mentors. Because of greater ability to monitor and guide matches, school-based programs may be a better fit for high school-aged mentors. Because of these differences, school-based mentoring can easily expand the volunteer pool of a community-based program.

    These programs also reach youth who might be underserved by the traditional community model, which places an emphasis on long-term relationship development and intensive role modeling. School-based mentoring, with its on-campus location and blend of academic activities and friendship, can perhaps best serve youth who simply need some extra attention and support at school. The fact that teachers and school staff, not parents, refer youth to the program also contributes to school-based mentoring's ability to reach youth who may not be served in traditional community-based models.

    Both school- and community-based models have inherent value, and the presence of one does not reduce the need for the other. As one prominent research report put it, "different children and communities have different needs that neither option can fully address alone . . . using both strategies is likely the best way for programs and funders to reach a wide, diverse group of youth and volunteers" (Herrera et al., 2007).

2. **School-based mentoring can be operated at a fairly low cost.** Because most school-based mentoring programs make use of school facilities and resources, they can be operated at

fairly low cost. One research report found an average program cost of $1,000 per youth served, with $900 of that being budgeted by the program and $100 coming in the form of donated goods and services from the school and others. These costs per youth were slightly lower than the community-based mentoring model offered by the same agencies (Herrera et al., 2007).

3. There is compelling evidence that **school-based mentoring produces many positive outcomes for youth**. Recent research into school-based mentoring outcomes indicates that these programs can:

   - Improve academic performance, in general, with significant improvements demonstrated in the subjects of science and written and oral language

   - Improve the quality of class work

   - Increase the number of homework and in-class assignments turned in

   - Reduce serious school infractions, such as disciplinary referrals, fighting, and suspensions

   - Increase students' perceptions of scholastic competence

   - Reduce skipping classes

This research also indicates that youth participating in school-based mentoring programs are more likely than non-mentored peers to report having a non-parental adult who "they look up to and talk to about personal problems, who cares about what happens to them and influences the choices they make" (Herrera et al., 2007).

Additional research into school-based mentoring outcomes found that mentored students developed more positive attitudes toward school, were more likely to trust their teachers, and developed higher levels of self-confidence and a greater ability to express their feelings (Curtis & Hansen-Schwoebel, 1999; Karcher, 2005; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002).

Programs that use older (typically high school) youth as mentors also have the added benefit of producing positive outcomes for those students as well, although current research is unclear on the types or degrees of outcomes peer mentors might receive.

What Are the Drawbacks of a School-Based Mentoring Model?

While school-based mentoring has many tangible outcomes, there are some aspects of this model that program planners need to consider:

1. **School-based mentoring may have little impact on out-of-school-time issues.** The most recent research on the school-based model found no impact on such non-school-related issues as drug or alcohol use, stealing and other misconduct outside of school, self-worth, and relationships with parents and peers (Herrera et al., 2007). However, earlier, non-experimental evaluations of school-based programs have found evidence of positive benefits in some out-of-school areas, such as increased self-esteem and connectedness to parents (Karcher, 2005). While future research may demonstrate a connection between school-based mentoring and out-of-school behaviors, for now practitioners should note that the primary benefits appear to be in the school-related areas described above.

2. **School-based mentoring programs, on average, do not produce relationships with the same closeness and quality as community-based programs.** With restricted activity options, gaps in meeting times during the summer and holiday breaks, and a potential lack of private space for matches to meet in, school-based programs may not be able to build the types of close, mutual relationships that community-based mentoring programs can produce. Researchers have long pointed to relationship closeness and duration as key predictors of mentoring outcomes, and the on-campus structure of school-based programs may simply not provide sufficient adult-youth time together or a wide enough variety of activities to achieve the level of relationship closeness found in successful community-based programs.

   Additionally, the use of high school students as mentors in school-based programs indicates that some youth may not receive the purely adult role modeling and guidance seen in typical community-based programs. So, while school-based mentoring produces many positive outcomes, on average, it may not provide the same type or intensity of support found in other mentoring models.

3. **School-based mentoring programs often struggle to find their proper place in the school environment.** It can be difficult for school-based mentoring programs to foster the understanding and level of commitment required to operate a

successful program at the school site. Oftentimes, school-based programs are incorrectly perceived as a tutoring service, whose goal is to boost grades or provide narrow academic support. On-campus programs may also have difficulty garnering the support of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel who view the program as one more item to add to their already full list of responsibilities. It can also be difficult for school-based programs to find ongoing funding for the program within the context of shrinking school budgets and extreme competition for funds.

Existing mentoring programs looking to partner with schools must create a deep sense of commitment and understanding about the goals, scope, and implementation of services among all school stakeholders. More details about creating this understanding follow in the next section of this guide.

In spite of some inherent challenges, school-based mentoring is an innovative supplement to the traditional learning that takes place in schools, providing potentially underserved students with another avenue through which they might feel more confident about their schoolwork, improve their attitudes and commitment to learning, and develop more fully as a person. The rest of this guide explores how to develop a school-based mentoring program and the many components that can lead to successful youth outcomes.

"

The main thing at first was just gaining trust—that trust that she would confide to me. That was important first. I had to let her know that no matter what, she could tell me anything and I'd believe her and trust her and I'd support her. I think that's what these kids need. . . . I think it just takes a long time to build up a trust.

"

—Mentor, Columbus, Ohio

Planning a School-Based Mentoring Program

You have to build relationships first. You can't just walk into people's offices and tell them what to do.

— Program Director, San Antonio, Texas

There are several key steps to developing a successful school-based mentoring program. While every school and community is unique, there are some common elements of program planning that will position a new program for long-term success:

Get Buy-in at the Highest Levels of School Leadership

The success of any on-campus program rests on the commitment and leadership of the principal and other administrators. These individuals are instrumental in securing funds and facilities for the program and for getting the support of teachers, counselors, coaches, and other staff members who will help implement or enhance the services provided. It might also be useful to get the backing of leadership at the district or school cluster level, especially if the program is to be replicated if proven successful.

You may also seek the specific support of school councils (which sometimes have management responsibility over a school site) and any parent groups that have a strong influence in decision making.

You can win the support of these key parties by:

- **Finding a "champion."** During your early meetings at the district level or with individual schools, identify a key supporter—

someone respected in the schools—who will help promote the program to other school personnel. In some cases, your champion might also collaborate in planning the mentoring project.

■ **Showing how your program will help achieve existing educational objectives.** In forming any partnership, you want to focus first on your partner's interests. Before approaching the school district or an individual school, identify the ways your mentoring program can contribute to existing educational plans or priorities. Use research findings to demonstrate the effects that mentoring can have on student attendance, attitudes, behavior, and grades.

■ **Bringing other community partners to the table.** Determine if any local businesses or service organizations have an Adopt-a-School program and are looking for someone to help them get their program focused and implemented. They can help build momentum for the program—and provide an immediate source of potential mentors.

■ **Being alert to potential "turf" issues.** As you plan the program, these could include conflicting work styles and different "languages" or professional jargon that interferes with good communication. There may also be turf concerns about program operations, such as the use of space in the school and use of equipment like copying machines and computers. There could also be potential turf issues with other outside programs that are operating in the school. Thus, it is important to find out what other programs are in the school so you can communicate with their staff early and avoid problems.

Once you get initial buy-in from your school's key groups, you should form an advisory committee or other oversight group that can plan the initial goals, structure, and implementation of the program, as well as provide guidance for the long term. This group should be composed of the principal (or other designated administrators), staff from the mentoring agency, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and representatives from any community and business partners. This diverse group will ensure that all stakeholders are represented when key decisions are made about the program and can provide valuable support when maintaining, expanding, or replicating the program over time.

See the following page for additional tips on forming and maintaining effective partnerships with schools. Worksheet #1, on page 12, can help mentoring programs prepare to approach a school about a potential new partnership.

Special Considerations for Working With Schools

You want your program—and your mentors—to be a strong and positive presence in the school. Accomplishing this requires an ongoing process of building and maintaining support from the school. There are two underlying guidelines to always keep in mind: schools require a lot of structure in order to accomplish their mission of educating children and youth, and they are always short on resources.

Organizations that have experience working with schools recommend the following practices for strengthening your partnership and your program's role in the school:

1. **Know the school culture, policies, and procedures.** Respect teachers' time constraints and need for structure and order. Develop a mentoring schedule that fits into the school-day structure. And obtain feedback from teachers and other school personnel early and often so you can make any necessary adjustments.

2. **Be sure your mentors are aware of, and sensitive to, the school culture.** Mentors should understand the procedures for using school property, honor the dress code, and understand whether, when, and how to access teachers. They should also know if there are any "unwritten rules" governing the space where they are meeting with the student. If, for example, they are meeting in an empty classroom, what are the teacher's "rules" about using any equipment or materials in the room?

3. **Understand that school staff and administrators may have had negative experiences with previous outside programs.** At times, well-meaning groups and individuals approach schools with the intention of working with them, and then fail to follow through with, or fall short of, their original commitment. That, in turn, is likely to influence a school's attitude toward your mentoring program, and you may meet with resistance from some staff and administrators until your program has proven its reliability and value.

4. **Be aware of the existence of other outside programs in the school.** Be sure your mentoring program complements rather than duplicates existing programming. Being aware of and, where possible, collaborating with existing school-based programs makes it easier to integrate your program into the school and is likely to enhance your value.

5. **Provide a staff presence from your program at the school as often as your resources allow.** The person from your organization who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program might be called a program administrator, coordinator, supervisor, or case manager. Whoever it is, that person should be a regular presence in the school, including during times when teachers are free to have informal conversations.

6. **Remember that the program requires three-way communication among your organization, the school, and the mentor.** Be sure there is ongoing communication between your organization and the school. And have a clear system in place for notifying the mentor if the youth is not in school on a scheduled meeting date, for notifying the youth if the mentor has to miss a meeting, and for keeping the mentor informed about anything taking place at the school that she or he should know about. Be sure to provide the mentor with a school calendar.

7. **Address and resolve problems as soon as they arise.** As you work together to resolve problems, recognize and respect the validity of the school's experiences and points of view.

8. **Remember that partnerships between organizations often depend on particular individuals within each organization.** This is particularly true with schools, where a change in principals might require rebuilding the partnership. If the principal leaves, it is essential for you and the school liaison to meet with the new principal and talk about what the mentoring program has accomplished and what benefits the school has derived from it.

And, finally, review all evaluation findings with the school. Work together to use the findings to strengthen the program—and be sure to celebrate your achievements.

Opening the School Door

1. Who among your staff, board members, funders, volunteers, and current institutional partners has connections that could help provide access to the school district or individual schools?

2. Do any local businesses have an Adopt-a-School program? If so, could they help provide access to a school (and also become an immediate source of potential mentors)?

3. What are the current educational priorities and plans of the school district or school you are approaching?

4. How can you "sell" your proposed mentoring program to the school district or individual school? For example, what national research findings will you use to demonstrate the effects that school-based mentoring can have on student attendance, attitudes, behavior, and grades? What can you describe about your particular program to help school personnel understand its value?

5. How will you get buy-in from each of these key school-related groups:

   - The school district board or office of the superintendent

   - Principals

   - Counselors

   - Teachers

   - School councils and parent groups

Determine the Scope and Structure of the Program

Many factors need to be considered in designing a school-based mentoring program. A partnership between a mentoring program and a school site or district can be staffed and implemented in an infinite variety of ways. The following questions can help you clarify several important program parameters and develop services that meet the needs of mentors, youth, and the school as a whole. Additional advice on the development of these program components follows in the next section of this guide.

- **What are the student needs and accompanying program goals?** All good in-school programming is designed to meet specific identified youth needs. Your planning team should determine the specific student issues that the mentoring services will hope to address. Teachers and parents will likely have many issues that they hope the program can address, but these needs can also be determined by doing a simple student survey or by directly involving representative youth in the designing of the program.

  Your program goals should always be grounded in research about what school-based mentoring programs can reasonably be expected to address. The goals should be achievable and measurable (but keep in mind that some goals, such as "improved self-esteem," are difficult to measure). Examples of common school-based mentoring program goals include:

  – Improved academic performance (usually defined through grades or standard test scores)
  – Improved feelings of scholastic competence and confidence
  – Improved relations with peers, teachers, and other school personnel
  – Increased attendance and class participation
  – Improved homework completion
  – Increased access to other school resources (such as the library or computer lab)
  – Reductions in classroom disruptions, fighting, and other negative school behavior
  – Increased exploration of, or acceptance to, secondary education opportunities
  – Improved job placement or career exploration

You may want to develop a logic model, a visual representation of the needs, activities, and outcomes of the program. Logic models can be instrumental in designing subsequent evaluations of the program and for explaining the goals, objectives, and youth outcomes of your program to a funding source. (The companion book in the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, *Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring: A Guidebook for Program Development*, has more detailed information on developing a logic model during early program planning.)

Regardless of the specific goals your program settles on, make sure that program structures and activities are designed with them in mind. Setting clear goals will also help you identify any special training your mentors should receive. As mentioned above, begin thinking about program evaluation at this stage—ultimately, you will be asked to provide evidence that your program is successfully addressing your identified needs.

- **Who will serve as mentors?** If your program has identified specific business or service organization partners, many of your mentor recruitment concerns may already be addressed. If you will be recruiting mentors from the general community, you will need to actively market the program to potential volunteers. And if you adopt a peer mentoring model using older students as mentors, there will be many considerations to making that arrangement work in practice. Regardless of which option you choose, making early decisions about who will mentor can help with designing the rest of the program.

- **How will students be referred?** Most school-based mentoring programs use teachers, counselors, or other school personnel with frequent student contact for this task. These individuals are likely aware of their students' special needs and characteristics. They can provide key information when determining the type of mentor a youth might work well with and approaches that may address their particular academic or personal needs.

- **What will be the initial size and scope of the program?** With any new program, it is always a good idea to start small and build gradually. While mentoring seems like an uncomplicated concept, mentoring programs need to develop a strong infrastructure to support the adult-youth relationships. In addition to the time it may take to build trust with the school, it requires time to develop and implement effective procedures for

recruiting, screening, training, and matching mentors, and for monitoring and supporting the matches once the mentors and students have begun to meet.

Allow yourself a pilot year to solidify the partnership, build your program infrastructure, and learn from your successes and mistakes. As you formalize your plans, address these questions:

– How many mentors will you match with students during the first year of the program?

– Will you recruit students from only one or two grades, or from all grades in the school?

– When during the school year will the matches begin?

– Will you continue to provide new mentors during the school year as teachers identify additional students who could benefit from one-to-one adult support?

– What is the minimum commitment you will expect mentors to make to the program?

– How will you encourage mentors to return to the program and meet with their mentees during the following school year?

– What will happen when older students move on to their next school? Will their mentors follow them across grades and school locations? Or will those matches end? (This may have a strong impact on the grades you initially decide to recruit from.)

Set a reasonable, achievable number of matches for your pilot year and don't promise more than you will be able to deliver.

■ **When and where will matches meet? And what will they do together?** Most school-based programs opt to have matches meet either during lunch breaks or after school, although some programs have been able to try other models based on flexible student schedules. Choose a meeting time that works with the structure of the school day.

Location can be a big factor in determining when matches meet. You may find that you do not have adequate meeting space until after school, or you may determine that matches can meet best in unused parts of the school during regular hours.

You will also need to determine what matches will do together and the overall approach you want your mentors to take. As

mentioned previously, most school-based mentoring programs provide some form of structured activities designed to address the stated goals of the program. For example, a program whose goal is to improve student homework completion might set aside time for matches to work on assignments (provided that this activity does not get in the way of the pair forming a strong, trusting, and enjoyable mentoring relationship—always a concern for programs with an academic focus). It might also provide time for mentors to talk with teachers about classroom content and available resources that can help the student complete the work. It may even provide extra access to the library or computer lab or provide special training for mentors on techniques for getting students back on track during a frustrating homework assignment.

This is just one example of how program goals should drive activities mentors and mentees do together. Just remember: *the primary intervention that mentoring provides is the relationship itself.* The other activities that your matches engage in only matter within the context of the relationship they are forming. That bond is what will help determine the level of impact the program has.

■ **What facilities or supplemental services are available?** Even if you have a primary location for matches to meet, there are still many other resources on a school campus that may be valuable to a mentoring program. Many school-based mentoring programs also provide access to a separate tutoring program so that the mentors can spend more time on relationship building and less time on specific academic performance issues. Even if you do not have access to a dedicated tutoring program, determine if any of these facilities and resources could be helpful in meeting your program goals:

School library	Cafeteria
Computer labs	Auditorium
Gymnasium/fields/playgrounds	Art classrooms or
Student clubs and groups	"shop" areas

Recent research has shown a link between adequate access to school resources and matches' levels of closeness and their likelihood to continue across multiple school years, so make sure that your matches have access to the tools they'll need to both do work and have fun.

■ **What funding is needed to start and maintain the program?** Schools, like mentoring organizations, operate on extremely tight budgets. Generally, a school's contribution to

a program will be in the form of in-kind donations, such as space for mentor-student meetings and materials and equipment to use during the meetings. The school might also be able to budget small amounts of money for events, such as mentor recognition ceremonies, or for staff, such as a school liaison. Make sure that everyone involved with your partnership has a good understanding of the financial resources it will take to keep the program going over time. Nothing sours school-community collaboration more than programs that go through a start-up phase only to shut down when the reality of program expenses becomes apparent over time. So plan for your program's sustainable future from the beginning.

■ **What is the program's timeline for implementation?**
Ideally, school-based mentoring programs will be making matches between students and mentors as early in the school year as possible. Not surprisingly, recent research indicates that school-based mentoring relationships find more success the longer they are matched and spending time together (Herrera et

The Importance of a Multi-Year Model

The recent P/PV research report *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study* reaches many important conclusions about keeping school-based mentoring relationships going not only over the summer months, but across school years as well.

P/PV's research found that the summer break negated many of the positive outcomes that teacher and youth reported at the end of the first year of mentoring. Matches that did stay in contact over the summer, usually through e-mail, letters, or agency-sponsored events, reported having stronger relationships and were more likely to continue into the following school year.

This new research also found that "Littles" whose formal participation in the mentoring program ended after one year retained none of their positive school-based impacts in the following year.

These research findings suggest that it is critical for school-based mentoring programs to a) find ways for matches to stay in contact over the summer months, and b) continue as many matches as possible from one year to the next. To truly facilitate long-term outcomes, programs should explore forming partnerships with mentoring programs serving the schools that feed into their own, as well as any schools that their youth may graduate into. Ideally, these partnerships will allow mentors and youth to keep meeting even if the youth begins attending another school. This is especially critical around the middle school years, when youth may attend three different schools in the course of four years, depending on how the district has structured those grades.

The ability to extend a program's reach across grades and school sites is a critical component in achieving positive outcomes for youth. Programs should make every effort to keep their matches together through the gaps and school changes inherent in this mentoring model.

al., 2007). This means that new programs should begin mentor recruitment over the summer months so that volunteers are ready when students start being referred in the fall. The summer months also become an ideal time to staff the program, develop any curriculum or activity resources, and solidify program policies and procedures.

Determine Roles and Responsibilities

Once you have answered the previous "big picture" questions, it's time to solidify the partnership between the mentoring program and the school by specifying roles and responsibilities.

- **Who are the key staff members responsible for the mentoring program?** Most school-based mentoring programs are staffed by a combination of representatives from the mentoring agency and specific school personnel. While the mentoring agency might have primary responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the mentoring program, it is also important to have at least one person from the school who serves as a liaison. This helps ensure that lines of communication remain open between the mentoring agency and the school and helps promote buy-in from other school personnel.

  Depending upon the amount of time she or he can devote to the mentoring program, the school liaison might also be responsible for, or help with, a number of important tasks. These could include mentor and student recruitment, providing the school orientation to new mentors, promoting the program to teachers, and participating in decisions about matching individual mentors and youth. (See Worksheet #3 at the end of this section for a fuller list of responsibilities.) During your initial discussions with the school, you might be able to identify someone who could be the liaison. It should be someone who has been at the school for a few years, knows the students and has positive relationships with them, and is not too overwhelmed by other duties. A school counselor or other student support staff is often an ideal candidate.

- **What is the role of the principal and teachers?** It is essential to have the support of the school principal, although his or her role will likely be limited to such activities as encouraging teachers to refer students, explaining the program to parents, and speaking at mentor orientation sessions and recognition events.

Teachers, however, have a key role to play, although you must be careful to respect their workloads and inflexible daily schedules. In school-based mentoring programs, teachers generally:

– Refer students

– Assist with support and supervision by communicating to the mentor and to the program the youth's perceptions of the match and progress made, and by letting the program know if the match is meeting inconsistently or if there are other problems

– Participate in program evaluation, often by completing a questionnaire at the end of the school year about changes in the student who has been mentored

A teacher might also participate in deciding which available mentor would be best matched with a particular student.

■ **What are the various legal and liability issues?** Be sure your planning team discusses potential liability issues and agree on how you are going to share responsibility. Issues to examine include screening mentors, confidentiality, student safety, and mentor safety. Agree on the insurance coverage and limits each partner should have and the procedures that will be used for reporting and tracking any incidents. Make sure than any program policies that you develop are in alignment with school or district policies.

■ **How will you evaluate the program?** How will you measure the accomplishments of your program and the effectiveness of the mentoring relationships? How will you identify whether you have met the goals you have set? You will want to look at your program both on an ongoing basis and at the end of the school year to see if you have met your objectives. Evaluation tasks can take a lot of staff time and energy—an often overlooked aspect of these partnerships and one with many roles and responsibilities that will need clarification.

Your planning team should agree on what you want to measure. Examples include:

– The number of mentors who were matched with students

– The length of the matches

– Match activities and use of school resources

– Student, mentor, parent, and teacher satisfaction

– Outcomes for students (revisit those initial program goals!)

You should also agree on how you will collect the information (for example, surveys, focus groups, mentor sign-in logs at the school, student report cards, school records).

Some of the data will be important for funders, but they will also be important for communities or organizations where you want to generate support and recruit additional mentors. Your evaluation findings should also provide information that helps you recognize your strengths and build on them, and identify areas where you need to improve your efforts.

■ **What is the role of parents in the program? And who coordinates their involvement?** Many school-based mentoring programs do not have a role for parents beyond providing permission for their children to participate. Others build in some communication or feedback between mentors and parents, usually coordinated through the school liaison. As your program starts up, you will need to develop a form that parents sign to give permission for their children to have a mentor, as well as procedures for communicating with a parent who hesitates to sign the form. The same assurances you have given school personnel about the qualifications of mentors in your programs are important to parents, too.

At the beginning of the school year, the school can inform all parents about the program by including a description in the school newsletter or other materials that parents receive, placing a flyer on a bulletin board near the school office, or having brochures (created by your organization and endorsed by the principal) available for parents to pick up when they are at the school. Having this information should help parents buy into the program. However, it also creates a risk that parents will request mentors for their children—and these might not be the particular students you are targeting or the ones teachers would ideally refer. Thus, you might want to also provide contact information for local community-based mentoring programs, referring parents to those programs if they request mentors that the school cannot provide.

Finally, be certain to create accurate translations, if necessary, for informational materials and permission forms parents receive.

■ **What are the roles of other program partners?** If you have partnered with a business or service organization to provide men-

tors, you should get their commitments in writing. If you have partners who will be supplying in-kind goods or services, make sure they are clear about what they need to provide and when. If participating students will be provided access to other school resources or even community programs to supplement their mentoring relationships and activities, make sure the roles and responsibilities of those other service providers are clear as well.

Write It Down!

Develop a memorandum of agreement that clearly defines the goals of the program and describes the roles and responsibilities of the mentoring agency, the school, and any other program partners. Oral agreements can be misunderstood when they are made, and they are easily reinterpreted later by one partner or the other. A written agreement helps ensure that all partners have clear expectations. These agreements can be especially helpful when key staff depart, ensuring that partners have a plan in place to keep up their end of the agreement.

Worksheets #2 and #3 can help your planning team answer some of the key planning and partnership questions raised in this section. A sample memorandum of agreement can be found in the Sample Forms section of this guide.

Partnership Goals, Roles, and Responsibilities

1. What are the goals of the school-based mentoring program?

2. What will be the initial size of the program?

3. Who are the key staff members responsible for the mentoring program? (See Worksheet #3 on the next page for help in identifying specific responsibilities of key staff members.)

4. What is the role of teachers?

5. What is the role of the principal?

6. What legal and liability issues do you need to explore?

7. What financial agreements need to be made between your organization and the school?

8. What procedures will be used to inform parents about the program?

9. How will you evaluate the program?

10. Have your organization and the school developed and signed a memorandum of agreement?

Responsibilities of the Program Coordinator and School Liaison

Who in your organization has day-to-day responsibility for the school-based mentoring program? (That person might be called a program administrator or coordinator, or a case manager.) What staff member at the school acts as the program liaison? Who is responsible for what tasks? Which responsibilities will be shared?

Responsibility	Program Coordinator	School Liaison
Informs school staff about mentoring program and referral process		
Provides referral forms to school staff		
Arranges for space in school where mentor and student meet		
Works with teacher to identify best times for student to meet with mentor during the school day		
Accepts written referral of students from teachers		
Decides on the mentor-student match		
Sends parental permission form; handles any problems with its return		
Arranges first meeting between mentor and student		
Is present at first mentor-student meeting		
Has ongoing contact with mentor, student, teacher, and perhaps parent		
Recruits potential mentors		
Screens potential mentors		
Provides orientation to mentors		
Provides orientation to mentees		
Trains mentors		
Keeps track of mentor hours and performs other ongoing data collection		
Handles year-end data collection		
Responsible for mentor recognition		
Other:		

"
You have to be the type of person that's not going to be discouraged. You want to throw in the towel so often, especially when you feel like you're not getting through. The kids are so used to people not sticking around that they figure, well, this is just another one.
"

—Mentor, Philadelphia

Section II.

Mentor Program Basics

Michael could have been having the worst day in the world and Martin [his mentor] could walk in and his posture would change and his attitude would change. He would be like that for a few days. And there is that pride that this person comes to see me. . . It's a big boost to the kid's social standing; the other kids respect them more.

— Teacher, Tulsa, Oklahoma

This section details some of the program elements that your planning team will need to develop. These elements, in one form or another, are found in all school-based mentoring programs. Your team will want to develop formal policies and procedures so that each of these program tasks is well managed.

Student Referral

As you define the goals for your mentoring program, you most likely will also identify the kinds of students who will be asked to participate. The following questions can help you plan the process of recruiting and preparing those students:

- **What are the criteria for selection?** For example, will the program target students who have behavior problems? Are underachievers? Are new arrivals in this country and are having difficulty getting comfortable? All of the above?

- **Who will make the referrals?** Generally, teachers or counselors recommend students for the program. The school must then send a permission letter home to the parents or guardians.

- **How will students be introduced to the idea of having a mentor?** Who will talk to them? What will they be told about the mentor's role? Having a mentor is rarely a stigma for ele-

mentary-age children—in fact, it often gives them instant status in the classroom—but could be perceived as a stigma by some older youth.

■ What ground rules must the students (and their parents) follow? The ground rules have to be clear—when meetings will occur; where they will occur; whom the student can contact if there is difficulty in the mentoring relationship; rules on gift-giving (none? limited?) and asking for money (absolutely never); whether the mentor and mentee may exchange telephone numbers and addresses (many programs do not allow this because of potential intrusions on the mentor's time and the effect on screening requirements and potential liability issues).

The school will want to decide whether to hold a brief orientation session for groups of students who have been matched with mentors to talk about expectations and ground rules, or whether the teacher or school liaison will meet with students individually for this purpose. The Sample Forms section includes teacher referral forms, mentee profile sheets, and a sample permission letter.

Mentor Recruitment

Recruiting mentors is an ongoing challenge for most mentoring programs. In most communities, there is increased competition for volunteers—and especially for people who possess both the available time and the kinds of personal characteristics that are required of mentors. There are no easy solutions for dealing with the challenge of recruiting sufficient numbers of qualified mentors, but the following strategies can improve your chances of success:

■ **Identify features of school-based mentoring that may have particular appeal to volunteers.** All mentoring programs offer volunteers an opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child or youth, to learn new skills, and to have fun. But school-based programs have particular characteristics that can make them especially appealing to some volunteers. School-based mentoring programs, in general:

– Require less time from mentors, especially in terms of the length of each mentoring session

– Are highly structured, with regularly scheduled meeting times for each mentor and student.

– Have meetings that all take place during the daytime and in the relative safety of the school.

– Have fewer meetings during the summer and other school vacations.

If you are going to be using older students (for example, from your local high school) as mentors, there are other recruitment themes you can use:

– Volunteer experience for their college applications

– The opportunity to help a student get through the tough times they may have experienced

– A chance to leave their own campus during the school day

– The ability to give back to a school that helped them get where they are today

■ **Identify your recruitment targets.** Programs have found that these characteristics of school-based programs can help them attract volunteers who do not feel comfortable about serving as a mentor in a community-based program, or do not have the available time to make the commitment that community-based programs require. These groups of potential mentors include:

– Older adults, who may be concerned about their safety in community-based programs

– Employees, whose businesses might offer one hour a week free time or flex time so they can mentor students in a nearby school

– Military personnel, who generally do not have the available time required by community-based programs (although if they are frequently deployed, they may not be a good fit for a multi-year commitment)

– College students, who typically do not have large blocks of free time and may not be available for in-person meetings over the summer

As mentioned previously, many school-based programs are recruiting older youth to serve as mentors. Many states or school districts now have service learning requirements for graduation, and serving as a mentor may be one particularly rewarding way that students can fulfill these requirements. Note, though, that high school students who serve as mentors will probably need some additional training, or different training, than adult mentors, and they will also require additional match supervision and support.

■ **Identify recruitment strategies.** The general strategies for recruiting mentors range from the uncomplicated and cost-free to the more complex and relatively expensive. They include word of mouth; information tables at community events; presentations to community groups, organizations, and businesses; recruitment meals, such as potluck dinners or breakfasts that include presentations about your program; print materials, such as posters and brochures; articles or press releases in local and community newspapers or organizational newsletters; and paid advertisements in the media, or radio and television public-service announcements.

Recruiting for school-based programs provides an opportunity to target your approaches to the particular groups of people who are most likely to be attracted to the features of place-based mentoring. The sidebar on page 29 shows several considerations for recruiting these individuals. Wherever you decide to focus your recruitment efforts, remember that building relationships is a key factor in developing effective linkages with organizations that can provide help. Whether those organizations are senior centers, corporations, unions, or colleges, the process of developing trust requires patience and persistence.

■ **Develop compelling recruitment messages.** It is a good idea to develop a consistent, but adaptable, recruitment message you can use to "sell" your program both to organizations that can help you with recruiting and to the potential mentors themselves. Consider the following questions as you think about how you can appeal to your audiences:

– Why do people volunteer to become mentors?

– What characteristics of school-based mentoring programs might further motivate people to volunteer?

– What is it about your program's mission, goals, and population of participants that would motivate people to volunteer for your specific program? If your program is established and you've conducted an evaluation, what successes has your program had to date that can convince people it is worth their time?

While your message will be consistent, you will also want to adapt it so it strikes a particularly responsive chord among people in the specific group you are targeting for recruitment. Older adults, for example, might be concerned about spending time out doing activities in the community, and you would want to

Recruiting for School-Based Programs

Requiring volunteers to come on campus for their meetings with youth can create some unique recruitment challenges. Potential volunteers may be reluctant to volunteer at a school site because:

- They may feel uncomfortable around young people—especially middle and high school ages. It might be helpful to have a few representative youth join you during recruitment presentations.

- They're wary of coming on campus—Middle and high school campuses can be large, chaotic, intimidating environments. Volunteers need to "sign in" and wear identification. You can ease some of the fears about the school environment itself by having recruitment presentations on campus and offering a brief tour of the facilities.

- They have concerns about teachers and other staff—Volunteers need to know that they are welcome on campus and that teachers value having them around to help. Principals and teachers can emphasize this during recruitment presentations. Go over what the on-campus volunteer experience looks like (where one goes, the activities they do with youth, the expectations around academic help, resources that matches can access) so that volunteers know what type of help they will be providing and who they will work with on site.

- They have negative attitudes about school itself—School was not a positive experience for everyone, and some potential volunteers may be reluctant to go back to that setting. Put them at ease by explaining that this school time will be different, that their role and purpose for being there will make this a positive experience. The following questions can help potential volunteers explore their attitudes and prior experience with schools:

  - What memories do I associate with schools and learning?

  - What made me more or less successful in school? As a learner in general?

  - What are my current experiences with schools and learning?

  - What are my experiences working and interacting with children?

  - What are my beliefs about education and schools?

  - What beliefs or characteristics do I hold that will help or hinder me in my service?

By answering these and similar questions, your potential volunteers will begin to see some of the attitudes and biases that might affect their desire to get involved. These questions can also surface positive memories that might be helpful to recruitment. For example, thinking about the one teacher who took time to give them special help and support can be an inspiration to someone looking for a reason to give back and help others.

emphasize the place-based nature of school mentoring programs. Some people might believe they can't afford to become a mentor because they think they would be expected to buy gifts for their student, and you would want to note your program's ground rules about gift giving. Other people might think they need particular skills, and you would want to describe the mentor's role and the training all volunteers receive.

When you meet with corporate community relations managers to enlist their support in recruiting from a business, be sure to talk about the benefits that corporations report they gain from having their employees serve as volunteers in the community. These include improving a company's public image, improving employee teamwork, and increasing employee morale and job satisfaction (Points of Light Foundation, 1999).

- **Provide good customer service.** As you recruit, be sure your program is ready to respond to the people who are interested enough to contact you for more information or to apply to become mentors. While that point seems obvious, programs, at times, set up unintentional barriers that discourage the very people they are trying to recruit. Every contact with the public leaves an impression about your program. Having a good recruitment message and getting it out to the right places are not enough. Your program has to be sure that it appears friendly and inviting to the people it is recruiting—like any successful "business," it must provide good customer service.

Your program should always be prepared to respond to inquiries from potential mentors, even during periods when you may not be actively recruiting. Have someone on your staff who is responsible for responding to initial telephone inquiries, and develop guidelines for the staff member to follow. (These guidelines could include asking the caller how she or he heard about the program so you can track which of your recruitment strategies are working.) Have materials ready to mail to people who call. These could include materials about your program and its goals, a mentor job description, an explanation of your screening process, and an application form. Finally, be ready to follow up. If a caller completes and returns the application, be prepared to take the next steps.

Participant Screening

The purpose of the mentor screening process is to separate safe and committed applicants from those who would not be successful mentors. Within the context of that large purpose, each program's screening policy for mentors needs to be appropriate for the program's goals, characteristics of the youth it serves, and other program features.

Your screening tools should include a written application; a face-to-face interview; references from friends, co-workers, and/or an employer; and criminal records and child abuse registry checks. These tools will allow you to screen for safety and for suitability, and also help you develop a profile of the applicant's interests and strengths that you can use for making decisions about matching the applicant (if he or she becomes a mentor) with a student.

Screening for safety

To protect youth from risk, and to protect the organization from liability, each program must develop a process for screening potential mentors to be sure they are safe. Establish screening requirements based upon your program design and youth's exposure to risks. Most important, determine whether your school-based mentoring program is likely to ever include contact outside school—this will affect your screening policy. If all contact between the mentor and student will take place at the school, screening for safety can be somewhat less intensive than for community-based programs. In particular, you will not need to do a driver's license check or make a home visit.

The process of screening for safety should include:

- A criminal history records check and child abuse registry check

- Checking references

- A personal interview

In addition, you are responsible for learning whether there are any state, local, or school district requirements concerning safety checks for volunteers who work with children or youth. Some states, for example, require fingerprint-based criminal records check, and a number of school districts require tuberculin tests.

Safety:
Who Will You Screen Out?

Develop a list of disqualifying offenses. Ask: "Given the program's goals, the youth it serves, and the settings where the mentor-mentee meetings take place, what offenses would disqualify someone from being a mentor?" Also identify mitigating circumstances to be taken into account. For example, you might include "drug convictions" as a disqualifying offense. But if an applicant was convicted 10 years ago, at the age of 17, for possession of marijuana and has no later criminal record, then his age at the time of conviction and the absence of later convictions could be mitigating circumstances because it is reasonable to expect the behavior will not recur.

Note, however, that youth-serving organizations generally agree that anyone who has ever been convicted of a violent crime should be permanently barred from being in a volunteer role where there is substantial contact with children or youth. "Violence" includes sexually exploitive behavior. In addition, your state, locality, or school district may have regulations that automatically bar people who have been convicted of particular crimes.

Screening for suitability

Your program might want to identify specific "suitability" criteria for mentors that are directly related to the program's goals and the characteristics of the youth it serves. However, there are three essential qualities that all mentors, in all programs, need to possess in order to establish the kind of trusting relationship that can make a difference in a youth's life:

1. They need available **time.** While all applicants believe they have the time to mentor, one purpose of the screening process is to make sure they are being realistic. However enthusiastic they may be about mentoring, if they are too busy to maintain the meeting schedule there is potential damage to the youth, who could feel abandoned by yet another adult. In fact, recent research indicates that youth who have weak school-based mentoring relationships may actually show declines in several of the areas programs are hoping to address compared to non-mentored peers. So only accept mentors who can put in the time it takes to build a strong, lasting relationship.

2. They have to be **dependable.** A second key quality that mentors should possess is dependability. In fact, they need to be both physically present and emotionally dependable. Early in the relationship, a youth is likely to test his or her mentor in order to discover whether the mentor is just another adult who fails to come through. The mentor has to pass this test by regularly showing up for meetings, despite whatever obstacles the youth may create. In addition, mentors need to be emotionally dependable. They need to maintain their interest in the youth and his or her well-being over a period of time. During the screening process, you will want to learn whether applicants have a history of following through on their commitments, or whether they are people who become excited about something and then lose interest and fade away.

3. They need to have a **developmental attitude** toward youth. Do applicants see their role as "fixing the youth's problems" or as helping the youth to grow? During the screening process, it is important to gain an understanding of applicants' sense of a mentor's role and their expectations for the relationship. Applicants who seem controlling or judgmental, or who expect to transform the youth's life and believe they will see a rapid

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Suitability:
Who Will You Screen Out?

As you go through the process of screening for suitability, be alert to applicants who:

- Don't have enough time, or have work schedules or other responsibilities that may make it difficult for them to show up reliably at the assigned meeting times

- Seem to have a history of not following through on commitments

- Seem to be volunteering because they think it will help their status in the workplace

- Believe they can transform the student

- Hold rigid opinions and do not seem open to new ideas

- Seem too concerned about what a mentee can do for them, or want to be a mentor so they can work out problems from their own past

These people should be offered other, non-mentoring volunteer opportunities with your program or screened out entirely. In some cases, people with a "fix-the-youth" attitude might make good tutors, and you could refer them to a tutoring program at the school.

improvement in behavior, are likely to have great difficulty developing a meaningful relationship with the youth. Youth will walk away from the relationship because the mentor will become just another adult telling them how to be and what to do. Or the mentors themselves will become frustrated because they see no magical results, and they will give up on the relationship.

The written application, face-to-face interview, and reference checks should, together, enable you to assess an applicant's suitability. (The Forms section includes a sample application and suggested interview questions for both adult and high school mentors.) Throughout the process, be sure that applicants have clear expectations. While describing the potential benefits of mentoring, also be straightforward about the potential challenges. Otherwise, if mentors later run into problems, they will be more likely to drop out.

Participant Training

Being a mentor might feel like a natural role for some people, but mentoring is not always easy. It requires time and patience to develop a trusting relationship with a youth. Training is essential to help all mentors succeed in their role. In fact, a commitment to participate in training should be required of applicants during the screening process.

Most school-based mentoring programs offer mentors both an initial orientation and a full set of training activities designed to give them the skills they will need to be successful developing a relationship with their mentee:

Orientation sessions

One area in which mentors need to be prepared concerns the school itself. New mentors should receive an orientation to the school, at the school. Here is one possible agenda:

1. **Introduce school faculty and staff.** This includes the school liaison (explain her/his role), principal, counselor, key teachers, and the school secretary.

2. **Have the principal or district superintendent talk about the importance of the mentoring program to the school.** As part of this presentation, the principal can describe the school's educational philosophy, its expectations of students, and any special instructional programs in the school, such as an elementary school's approach to teaching reading.

3. **Provide practical information about the school.** This includes the daily schedule (when the bells ring), school holidays, where to park, the layout of the building, the options for places where mentors can meet with students, where to eat lunch, how to use school telephones, and which restrooms are for adults.

4. **Describe any school procedures and rules that apply to mentors.** For example, how do mentors access equipment (such as computers or basketballs) or materials (such as paper, colored markers, books) that they want to use with their mentee during a meeting? Is there a log where they should sign in when they come to meet with their mentee and sign out when they leave? Are they supposed to wear a name tag when they are in the building?

5. **Describe procedures for communicating with the school.** When are teachers available to talk with mentors? Whom do mentors contact if they have to miss a meeting with their mentee? (Someone at the mentoring program? Someone at the school?) Who will contact the mentor if the mentee is absent from school on the day of a scheduled meeting?

6. **Describe the program's ground rules.** Examples of possible ground rules include: all mentor-youth meetings take place at the school; gift giving is only allowed on special occasions, such as birthdays, and no gift can cost more than $10; mentors are held to strict standards of confidentiality.

7. **Take mentors on a guided tour of the building.** Have students lead the tour.

8. **Have the group reassemble in a space where they can enjoy food and informal conversation.** While you will have allowed plenty of time throughout the orientation for questions and answers, this is an opportunity for mentors to ask questions more informally.

Be sure to give written materials to the mentors that include the major points of what has been presented during the orientation.

Formal mentor training

Like anyone stepping into a new job role, mentors will be more likely to succeed if they participate in useful training sessions. Recent research found that training (both initial and ongoing) of school-based mentors was associated with subsequent mentoring relationship closeness (Herrera et al., 2007).

Additional Resource

The companion guide *Training New Mentors* in the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series provides ready-to-use training activities that cover many of the topics mentioned here. That guide also contains listings of other training curricula you can adapt.

There are some areas in which all programs should provide training for their mentors, although the specific content of those trainings will vary depending upon the characteristics of the youth a program serves, characteristics of their mentors, and program goals. These areas include both **information** mentors need to acquire and **skills** they should develop. They include:

1. **Mentors' responsibilities to the youth and to the agency.** This includes clarifying the purposes of mentoring in your program (providing friendship, obviously, but beyond that, what are the specific developmental goals the program is trying to achieve?); legal and liability considerations and their practical implications (for example, are mentors allowed to give students their phone numbers? Do all meetings take place on school grounds with no exceptions? What should a mentor do if the mentee reveals child abuse?); confidentiality issues; other ground rules; and information about how relationships will be supervised and supported.

2. **Information about the youth who participate in the program.** This includes information about developmental characteristics of children and youth who are the age of your program participants; the kinds of issues, in general, students at the school have to deal with (such as family violence, peer pressure, drugs and violence in the community); the ways those problems can manifest themselves in students' behavior and attitudes; and the kinds of strengths the students have.

3. **Mentors' roles and expectations.** While your program might carefully screen out potential mentors who have a "fix-the-youth" mentality, it is still important for all new mentors to spend time thinking about and articulating their roles and expectations for the relationship. New mentors should also be introduced to principles of positive youth development—building on students' strengths rather than "fixing" their problems—so they can see their own role in this larger context.

4. **Building relationships.** This includes practical advice on how to start the relationship; exploring the kinds of approaches that will help them build trust with the youth; and activities the mentor and student can do together. See the *Building Relationships* book in this series for sample activities.

5. **Communication skills.** "Listening" is the single most important skill a mentor can possess. Programs should provide all their mentors with training in listening skills and other aspects of effective communication, including being nonjudgmental.

In addition to these areas, there may be particular skills that mentors in your program should develop. For example, if the mentees are elementary-age children and mentors will spend some of their time reading aloud with them, you might want to arrange for a reading specialist to provide training in this skill.

And, finally, during the application and screening process, ask potential mentors what their concerns are about being effective and what training would be useful for them.

If programs provide two, two-hour training sessions for their mentors before they begin to meet with youth they should be able to cover the information and skills included in these topics. These trainings could be facilitated by program staff or co-facilitated by staff and a current or former mentor. If you have recruited mentors from a particular business, you might be able to hold the training sessions during lunch time at the business location. Similarly, if you have recruited from a military base, senior center, or college, the sessions could be held in those locations.

Ongoing training

While you do not want to make too many additional demands on mentors' time, it is a good idea to have several training sessions during the school year. These can also function as "support groups" where mentors share their successes and help one another with problems they may be facing. While the topics of these trainings will vary from program to program, they might include:

- Diversity and cultural sensitivity

- Skills for setting limits with their mentee

- Problem-solving skills

- Conflict resolution

- Strategies for dealing with issues that might arise with their mentee's family

Preparing Youth and Parents

Your program may decide to also provide an orientation for participating youth, and perhaps even their parents or guardians. As with mentors, young people and parents also bring a lot of apprehension and concerns to a mentoring relationship. An orientation session for these groups can:

- Clarify the role of a mentor and the type of support they will provide

- Create enthusiasm among youth participants as to what they may be able to achieve with the help of a mentor

- Calm parental fears about how the mentor will provide guidance to their child

- Clarify program ground rules around issues such as out-of-program contact and gift giving

- Provide a few simple tips for getting the mentoring relationships off to a good start

As with mentor training, this information should be presented before the young person is matched and involved in a mentoring relationship.

- Child abuse, including neglect

- Teen sexual activity and pregnancy

- Alcohol and other drug issues

- Domestic violence

As the school year approaches its end, mentors who will not be continuing with their student during the following year should also receive training in closing the relationship.

Making Matches

A thoughtful matching process will increase the chances that the mentor and student will develop a strong and fruitful relationship. While matching is more an art than a science and will always rely, to an extent, on instinct, the process should include these steps:

1. **Decide on match criteria.** There are no "right" criteria for matching mentors with students—they will differ among programs, based on program goals and characteristics of the youth the program is serving. However, these are some points to consider:

   - Matching by shared interests (to the extent possible) helps the relationship get off to a good start. You should get a profile of the mentor's interests, skills, and strengths during the application process; you can similarly have the teacher or student complete a profile of the student's interests, needs, and strengths.

   - Some programs have strong feelings about cross-race matching, but research has found that mentors and youth in cross-race matches develop equally strong relationships as those in same-race matches. Race does not seem to make a difference (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002).

   - Many school-based programs use cross-gender matches, which are rare in community-based programs. Since there are typically more female than male mentors, cross-gender matching means more male students can have a mentor. (Minority males generally are the majority of youth on waiting lists in community-based programs.)

2. **Determine who will make the decisions about matching students and mentors.** Will it be the program coordinator or case manager? The school liaison? The teacher who referred the student? Or will it be a shared responsibility? In making decisions about a match, focus first on the interests and needs of the particular student, and then take into account the mentor's skills, interests, and preferences. The youth, after all, are the people at the center of your program.

3. **Remember to take school logistics into account when making decisions about matching.** Logistics may determine when during the school week a student is able to meet with a mentor; the mentor then must be available to be at the school at that particular time.

Some programs do not decide on the matches themselves. Instead, they hold a "get-acquainted" event for all potential mentors and mentees and allow "natural" pairings to take place.

The following worksheets can help your program make key decisions about the recruitment and screening of mentors, participant training, and making sound matches.

Recruiting Mentors

1. How many new mentors do you ideally want to recruit? How many can you realistically plan to recruit? By what date?

2. What groups are you targeting for recruitment (for example, older adults, corporate employees, college students)?

3. What strategies will you use to reach those audiences?

4. What is your recruitment message? How will you adapt it to each of the groups you are targeting for recruitment?

5. What steps has your organization taken so it is ready to provide good "customer service" to people who respond to your recruitment efforts?

Screening Mentors and Matching Them With Youth

1. What tools will you use in your screening process? (For example, a written application? A face-to-face interview? A criminal records check?)

2. What are your eligibility criteria for mentors? Why is each of these criteria important?

3. What are your criteria for deciding on the match between a mentor and a student? Why is each of these criteria important?

4. How will you gather information about the mentor and student that you need for deciding on a match?

5. Who is responsible for making the match decisions?

Training Mentors

1. What information do your mentors need to acquire? What skills should they be developing?

2. How much training will you require for new mentors? What topics will it address?

3. When will trainings take place? Before the mentor and youth first meet? Early in their relationship?

4. Will you provide ongoing training opportunities for mentors during the school year? What topics will the trainings address?

Match Supervision and Support

The adult-youth relationships created through programmatically arranged matches are, in a sense, both natural and unnatural. Being a mentor—a friend, listener, role model, supporter—comes naturally to many adults at work, in their extended families, or in their communities. But mentoring in a programmatically created relationship may require from adults some additional skills and inner resources.

Youth who are matched with mentors typically are facing many challenges in their lives, and they may have a realistic distrust of adults. Especially early in the relationship, the youth may be unresponsive—not showing up for meetings, barely talking—sending a message that seems to mean the mentor is unimportant. Even when mentors are able to help the relationship past this early stage, the youth may often continue to seem uncommunicative.

In addition, there is always at least some social distance between the mentor and youth. There are age differences; and in many cases, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences, as well. Mentors have to be able to respect these differences and resist the temptation to impose their own values. Their goal is not to transform youth, but to help them grow: to help them discover their strengths and develop self-confidence, to help them feel they have a place in the world and a meaningful future.

A program's role in helping this happen by no means ends once the mentor and youth begin to meet. In fact, active supervision and support from program staff are essential for helping the mentor-youth relationships develop and grow.

Supervising matches

To facilitate the success of matches, programs will want to set up a regular schedule of contacts between staff members and mentors, students, and teachers. (Teacher check-ins may be most relevant for elementary age mentees, who spend all day with one teacher, although programs serving middle and high school youth may also wish to check in with particular teachers, especially those who refer students to the program.)

While the frequency of these contacts is likely to vary from program to program, depending upon available resources, it is a good idea to check in with each mentor and student once a month, and with the teacher at least once every three months. High school students who are men-

tors require additional monitoring and supervision.

The mentoring agency, rather than the school, should have primary responsibility for this supervision. One advantage of school-based programs is the relative ease of arranging face-to-face conversations with key match participants because program staff can meet with them in the school. In addition to these more formal conversations, your school liaison can also monitor the relationships by informally checking in with teachers and students to learn what is going well and whether any problems are developing.

The first goal of match supervision is to make sure the mentor and student are actually meeting. In school-based programs, you can easily keep track of how frequently each pair is meeting by having a log book at the school where mentors sign in. The second goal of monitoring is to learn if the mentor-student relationships are developing and to help mentors, students, and teachers resolve any problems that may be arising. To help with this second goal, be sure your log book has space where mentors can write notes to you about what is working and any challenges they are facing.

Checking in: What You Can Ask

In order to support and monitor the relationship, it is important to check in with mentors and students once a month and with teachers or other school staff at least once every three months.

These check-ins should take place more frequently during the first few months of the match, when problems are most likely to occur. These regularly scheduled check-ins allow you to see if the mentor-student relationship is developing and if there are any problems, or potential problems, that need to be addressed. These are among the questions you could ask to collect that information:

The mentor

- What have you and the student been doing during your weekly meetings?
- What would you like to change about the visits or activities?
- How well do think you're communicating with each other?
- Do you feel that the student is responding to the friendship?
- How do you think the student is doing in school, home life, relationship with parent, siblings, peers?
- What changes do you perceive in the child, both positive and negative?
- Are you satisfied with how things are going?
- How are things going with the teacher and other school staff?
- Is there any training you think would be helpful for you?
- Is there anything else we should be aware of?

The student

- How often do you see your mentor?
- What do the two of you do together?
- Do you like talking to your mentor?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the visits?

Teachers

- What do you think of the student's weekly activities with the mentor?
- How would you like to see the activities change?
- How do you think the student feels about the mentor?
- How is the student doing in school?
- Have you observed any positive or negative changes in the student?
- Is there anything else we should be aware of?

Common issues

Programs have found that the following issues are among the most frequent problems in school-based mentoring relationships:

■ **Mentors are getting conflicting messages from the program and the teacher.** During mentor orientation and training, programs stress "friendship" as the basis of the mentor-student relationship. But some teachers may push the mentor to primarily serve as a tutor.

Possible solutions: 1) Have a brief orientation session for teachers so they understand the program, the reasons why it is friendship based, and why mentors might occasionally do some tutoring but it should not be their primary activity. Ideally, the orientation can be held during teacher's preservice time before the school year begins. 2) During training, work with mentors to develop strategies for dealing with this situation if it arises. 3) Provide mentors with ideas for activities they can do with their mentee instead of tutoring.

■ **The mentor is not meeting with the student every week.** The first responsibility of every mentor is to meet consistently with the mentee. Children and youth in mentoring relationships are often precisely the same young people who have suffered because of the lack of a consistent adult in their lives. Inconsistent mentors will not be able to earn the student's trust and build a relationship. Showing up for each meeting is particularly important in school-based programs because of the scheduling and time constraints; a missed meeting cannot be rescheduled.

Possible solutions: 1) Find out why the mentor is missing meetings: Lack of interest? Feeling discouraged with a perceived lack of progress in the relationship? Feeling overwhelmed by the student's problems? Then ask what additional training or support would be helpful for the mentor. 2) If the planned time of meetings has become difficult because of a change in the mentor's schedule, work with the mentor, student, and teacher to arrange a different time for the mentor and student to meet. 3) Recognize that the match may have to be closed, and try to identify a reliable mentor with whom the student can be rematched.

■ **The student is missing meetings because of absenteeism from school.** Evaluations of school-based mentoring

programs suggest that even students with significant absentee-ism are likely to attend school on the day they are scheduled to meet with their mentor. However, some students may frequently be absent on meeting days, and this becomes discouraging to the mentor and reduces the opportunity to form a strong rela-tionship.

Possible solution: Meet with school staff to identify whether there are particular days of the week when the student is most likely to be absent and particular days when he or she is more likely to be in school. Then find out if the mentor can change the day of the meeting. Also, try to determine whether the child might be purposefully missing school on days when the match is scheduled to meet. This may be the youth's way of indicating that there are problems in the relationship.

- **The mentor feels frustrated by a perceived lack of impact on the mentee.** All volunteers want to know that their time and effort is making a difference. Mentors in school-based programs may feel particularly discouraged if they believe they are not having an impact on their mentees' school perfor-mance, including grades and behavior.

  Possible solutions: 1) During mentor training, emphasize that positive change in the youth will probably not happen sud-denly. It takes time to develop the kind of trusting relationship that ultimately brings about change. 2) During regular check-ins with mentors, be sure to provide feedback by describing com-ments the mentee and teacher have made about the mentor's positive effects.

- **The mentor wants permission to meet with the mentee for a special activity away from the school.** Each program will have developed its own policy regarding off-site activities. Many school-based programs allow meetings to take place only on site; this makes screening and liability issues less complex. Some programs allow field trips for groups of mentors and mentees, as long as parents/guardians sign a permission slip for each trip. A few programs do allow some off-site mentor and student meetings, but those programs must use the same com-prehensive screening process as community-based mentoring programs.

  Possible solution: Let the mentor know that he or she must adhere to the program's policy, which should have been writ-ten into the agreement the mentor signed during the appli-

cation process. Strongly encourage the school to rigorously support the policy as well. If the mentor feels strongly that out-of-school activities would benefit the match, explore the possibilities of transitioning to a community-based match (either through your program, if it offers that model, or another agency).

■ **The teacher or student complains that the student is missing lunch, recess, or essential classwork to meet with the mentor.** It is best to avoid this problem by taking schedules and logistics into account as you are making the match decision. However, even if you were careful to do this, the student's schedule might have changed and created a problem.

Possible solution: Find out from the teacher and student what will work best, and see if the mentor can meet at that time. You may need to do some negotiating to help solve this problem.

■ **The teacher seems unsupportive or resistant.** This is a major problem, discouraging even the most dedicated mentor.

Possible solution: Find out why the teacher is unsupportive, and then do whatever is necessary to build support. Talk with the teacher about the purpose, structure, and goals of your program. If required, act as a mediator between the teacher and the mentor.

Supporting mentors

Checking in regularly to learn about the relationship and help with problem solving is one way that programs support their mentors. To help mentors succeed, and to help you retain mentors, you can also:

■ Hold regular, optional support groups for mentors (although not too frequent, perhaps bimonthly) so they can discuss their problems and successes. If you have a number of mentors from one location—a business, a senior center, a military base, or a college—hold the meetings at that location, perhaps during lunchtime.

■ Have trainings during the school year on information or skills the mentors have expressed interest in acquiring.

■ Provide ongoing positive reinforcement. Do whatever you can to show mentors what they are accomplishing, including conveying positive feedback from the student, teacher, or student's parent/guardian.

In addition, there are many ways to recognize mentors for their contributions. You can publish a monthly or bimonthly newsletter that includes profiles of mentors and mentees and describes students' progress and accomplishments. (This is also good publicity for your program and something you can send to donors.) You can hold formal "appreciation dinners," potluck dinners, or picnics. You can privately recognize mentors' efforts by phoning or sending a note. However, it is important to remember that different volunteers like or do not like recognition. Some feel unappreciated without it. Others find it embarrassing. Get to know your mentors individually and develop a sense of what they would welcome.

Worksheet #7, on page 50, can help your team determine how matches will be supervised and supported.

The End of the School Year and Match Closure

In many school-based mentoring programs, relationships have a defined length based on the program model: several semesters, the nine months of the school year, or until a student graduates to their next school. As noted many times throughout this guide, recent research suggests that, ideally, as many matches as possible will begin to meet again the following school year. For multi-year programs, develop strategies for keeping the match alive during the summer, when the mentor and youth are not meeting regularly in person.

Programs have developed a variety of strategies to help mentors and students keep in touch during the summer, even when they do not actually speak with each other. For example, the mentor can:

- Give the student three or four addressed and stamped envelopes (or postcards) and ask him or her to write a note or letter periodically during the summer. School-based programs usually discourage the use of e-mail because of liability concerns and the potential for out-of-program contact, but this is an option if the program has some ability to monitor the correspondence.

- Give the student a small notebook and ask him or her to write down thoughts and feelings to share when they meet in the fall.

- Exchange photos with the student to serve as a reminder when you are not there.

■ Give the student a small pocket calendar and mark off the weeks until school reopens and you will see each other again.

Some programs work out more direct methods of contact during the summer break. Regular phone contact, possibly using the mentor's workplace number to maintain some privacy, can be helpful. A group picnic partway through summer for mentors, students, and students' families offers a way to bring mentors and mentees together in a supervised setting. Groups outings also provide an opportunity for mentors to meet their mentee's parents, something that may be a rare occurrence for a school-based volunteer. Other programs establish regular activities or maintain a supervised space that allows matches to continue to meet. Be sure to explore liability issues before using any of these strategies and obtain additional parent/guardian permissions for any new activities.

Whatever methods your program uses to keep matches alive over the summer months, recent research indicates that communicating monthly (or even biweekly, if possible) can be very effective in sustaining the relationship into the following year (Herrera et al., 2007).

Closing relationships

Even if your program is making a concerted effort to extend matches through the summer months and into the following year, you can expect that a number of your matches will end when the school year comes to a close. P/PV's recent study of 10 BBBS school-based mentoring programs found that only half of the youth in the programs they studied carried their match over into the following year. This high attrition rate is mostly the result of youth changing schools (transitioning to high school, for example) or youth moving from the area.

Mentors should receive training in approaches for closing the relationship, and program administrators and school personnel should be prepared to cope with students' feelings of rejection when the mentoring relationship ends. Programs have found that the following strategies can help close the relationship in as positive a way as possible. The mentor can:

■ Let the student know a few weeks ahead of time when their last meeting will take place, and spend some time discussing how that will feel for them.

■ Perhaps do a special activity together during the last meeting, give a small gift to the student (if the program allows it), or exchange photographs.

- During the final meeting, talk about how enjoyable the relationship has been. Tell the student about his or her great qualities (for example, creativity, sense of humor, hard work, and perseverance). Mentors can let the student know how those qualities and strengths will help throughout life.

- Encourage the student to talk next year to a teacher, counselor, or school liaison if he or she wants to have a new mentor.

However carefully the relationship is closed, the process is still likely to be difficult. Students who are recommended for mentoring have often lost significant adults in their lives, and the end of the mentoring relationship may feel like an additional loss. Do what you can to make them feel positive about their mentoring experience and find new supports moving forward.

WORKSHEET #7
Supervising the Matches

1. Who will have primary responsibility for supervising the matches?

2. How will the supervisor make sure the pair is meeting?

3. How often will the supervisor check in with the mentor, the student, and teachers (or other school staff)? Will the supervisor also check in with the student's parent or guardian? Will the contacts be face-to-face or by telephone?

4. What questions will the supervisor ask to assess the progress of the match?

5. What steps will the program take to make sure that mentors and students feel comfortable initiating contact with the supervisor or school liaison if they feel they are having a problem?

6. How will you decide if a match needs to be closed before the end of the school year? What process will you use for closing it?

Program Evaluation

Conducting a full program evaluation is a topic that is outside the scope of this particular publication. The companion guide in the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, *Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring: A Guidebook for Program Development*, provides more detail about designing and implementing an evaluation. But there are several simple things to remember when conducting a meaningful evaluation for a school-based mentoring program:

- **Plan thoroughly for data collection.** Even simple evaluations can collect a lot of data. Make sure that you have a database or other system for compiling key data. It is especially important that data are collected in a manner that allows for meaningful analysis (for example, letter grades can be especially difficult to note changes in unless they are numerically coded). Data collection and entry can also eat up a lot of staff time, so make sure that you plan ahead to give those entering data the time they need. Some evaluation data might reside with program partners, so make sure that any roles and responsibilities for gathering or reporting data you need is spelled out in your memoranda of agreement.

- **Build your evaluation around your program goals and logic model**. As mentioned in the previous section, your evaluation should always focus on the logic model you have created and the program goals you are trying to achieve. And remember that the nuances of how you achieve your outcomes are very important. You may find that, overall, you are achieving your program goals, but that particular mentor approaches or specific activities are leading to even greater outcomes for some participants. You cannot build on these successful nuances if your evaluation cannot identify them.

- **Measure program processes in addition to outcomes.** Your program procedures are the steps that lead to your outcomes, and any good evaluation also examines the efficacy of how you do things like volunteer recruitment, mentor training, the activities you provide matches, supervision procedures, and the lines of communication between mentors, teachers, and others.

- **Plan to make improvements based on what you find.** The best programs use evaluation results to improve what they

do over time, correcting mistakes and building on those subtle nuances that are producing positive results.

- **Use your evaluation results in your program marketing.** Even if your program is initially struggling to have the overall impact it desired, every evaluation has positives in it that can be used to promote the program moving forward. Focus on data like mentor satisfaction, teacher perceptions, and youth feedback that can put a positive spin on the program's activities and the experience of participating. And if your evaluation does show that you are making a difference, those positive outcomes should be built into every piece of recruitment and marketing media you produce.

Conclusion

We hope this guide has been a useful tool in planning or improving your school-based mentoring program. There are many other useful resources that can assist with your planning listed in the References and Additional Reading sections that follow. We have also provided a selection of sample forms that your program can adapt as you build your program structures. Just remember that no program is ever perfect—the key to finding success with school-based mentoring is to strive for continuous improvement based on your own evaluations and emerging research into the best practices of similar programs.

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Sample Forms

The following sample forms can assist your program in developing your own, bringing consistency and focus to many of your program procedures. Two companion books in the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, *Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual* and *Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring: A Guidebook for Program Development*, contain many more sample forms that can easily be adapted for use in a school-based mentoring program.

Memorandum of Understanding

We are looking forward to a partnership with your school. This agreement between [name of your organization] *and* [name of school] *specifies the expectations of the partnership. The partnership is in effect from* [date] *to* [date].

Partnership Goals

[Name of your organization] and [name of school] agree to work together to:

-
-

Roles and Responsibilities

[Name of your organization] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

[Name of school] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

Finances and Liability

[Name of your organization] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

[Name of school] agrees to:

-
-
-
-

Evaluation

We agree to use these criteria to identify whether the partnership is achieving its goals:

-
-
-

[Name of your organization] will:

-
-

[Name of school] will:

-
-

Communication

We commit to open and regular communications:

[Fill in details]

- [Who—name or job title—in each organization will be primarily responsible for the ongo-ing communication?]
- [How, and how often, will the communication take place?]

_____   _____
Your organization (signature and date)   School (signature and date)

Volunteer Application
(Adult and High School Mentors)

Full Name _____ Date _____

Gender _____ Race _____ Birth date _____

Social Security Number _____

Permanent Address   Street, Apt. _____

         City_____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number_____

Job Title _____ Employer _____

Can you be contacted at work?   ☐ Yes ☐ No   Business hours _____

Length of Employment (with current employer) _____

Education Completed: High School _____ College _____ Other (explain) _____

What motivated you to participate in the _____ Mentoring
Program? _____

_____

_____

Can you meet with a child once a week during the school year?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do you have a preference as to: *If yes, state preference:*

    the grade level of your mentee?   ☐ Yes ☐ No   _____

    the race of a mentee?   ☐ Yes ☐ No   _____

    the gender of your mentee?   ☐ Yes ☐ No   _____

Would you be willing to work with a differently challenged child?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

What do you like to do during your leisure time? _____

_____

To what service or social groups do you belong?_____

_____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   If yes, please explain: _____

_____

Do you object to the agency running a criminal background check on you?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Please list <u>three references</u> who have known you for more than one year. Print complete names, addresses, telephone numbers, and relationship for three people you authorize us to contact who would evaluate your qualifications as a volunteer. *Do not include more than one family member.*

1) Name _____

   Mailing Address/Zip Code _____

   Phone Number _____ Relationship to you _____

2) Name _____

   Mailing Address/Zip Code _____

   Phone Number _____ Relationship to you _____

3) Name _____

   Mailing Address/Zip Code _____

   Phone Number _____ Relationship to you _____

Mentor Agreement

As a volunteer for the _____ Mentoring Program, I agree to the following:

- To attend a training session before beginning
- To be on time for scheduled meetings
- To notify the agency or school office if I am unable to keep my weekly meeting
- To engage in the relationship with an open mind
- To accept assistance from my mentee's teacher
- To keep discussions with my mentee confidential
- To ask for assistance when I need help with my mentee
- To notify the agency of changes in my employment, address, and phone number

Signature _____

Sample form adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1999.

Volunteer Interview Form
(Adult Mentors)

1. Why do you wish to be a mentor?

2. Please describe yourself.

3. What are your strengths?

4. What are your weaknesses?

5. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

6. What do you like to do in your spare time?

7. Describe yourself as a child.

8. What are your experiences with children that will assist you in mentoring?

9. Describe your educational background (schools, degrees).

10. Describe your employment history (current and previous jobs, titles, and brief description of responsibilities).

11. Are you participating in the program with the full support of your employer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime, misdemeanor, or felony? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Public Welfare for child abuse or neglect?
      ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, explain:

14. What special qualities are you looking for in a mentee?
      ☐ Personality   ☐ Race   ☐ Intellect   ☐ Age   ☐ Other

15. For females: Would you consider a cross-gender match? ☐ Yes ☐ No

16. How would you feel about a child who is:
      ☐ living in poverty ☐ abused ☐ loud ☐ obese ☐ hyperactive ☐ has poor hygiene

17. If you could recommend one book for a young person to read, what would that be?

18. Current & past participation in community activities (esp. youth-related)

19. Preferable days: 1st choice: 2nd choice:
      Any limitations:

20. Any other comments?

High School Mentor Interview Form

Mentor Name: _____   Date: _____

Grade Level: _____

Introductory Observations

How did you hear about the program?

Why do you want to be a mentor?

Why would you make a good mentor?

What do you expect to gain from the experience?

Any fears or concerns about the relationship?

Present Circumstances

Recent major life changes?

Family History

Where were you born and raised?

How would you describe your relationship with your parents?

Father:

Mother:

How do you get along with your siblings?

Life Experiences

Best experience?

Worst experience?

Self-Description

What do you feel are your strengths?

Your limitations?

Interests, hobbies, activities, recreation:

Personal goals:

Have you experimented with drugs or alcohol?

Social Life/Support Network/Self as Mentor

What do you do to socialize?

What qualities do you feel constitute a good friendship?

What makes you angry? How do you express anger?

Extracurricular activities:

Are you employed anywhere?

How do you see your role as a mentor?

Sample form adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1999.

Teacher/Counselor Referral Form

Student Name: _____   Age: _____

School: _____   Grade: _____

Requested by: _____
                    Name of teacher/support staff

Reason for referral:

Describe child's family:

Describe the student. Include both strengths and weaknesses:

Describe successful strategies useful with this student:

Medical concerns of which mentor should be aware, e.g., allergies:

Preferred times for mentor to visit:

_____
Sample form adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1999.

Parent Permission Letter

(place program contact information here)

Dear Parent,

Your child has been chosen to participate in the _____ Program offered through his/her school. In the program, your child will be matched with an adult volunteer mentor (or older student volunteer mentor, depending on your program) who will meet with him/her on the school grounds. The volunteer will act as an adult role model and source of friendship and encouragement, especially around academic goals and personal development. The activities between your child and the mentor will be closely monitored and structured by the Case Manager in charge of the relationship. The school feels that your child will greatly benefit from having another positive role model in his/her life and hopes that the relationship will lead to increased academic performance, self-esteem, and emotional development.

The mentors that have volunteered for our program have been thoroughly screened and investigated by the school. We respect your role as a parent and will provide every opportunity for you to meet with the mentor and be involved in the development of the relationship between the mentor and your child.

As your child goes through the program, his/her teachers will monitor academic performance. All information gathered about the effect of the relationship on your child's school performance is strictly for the purposes of evaluating the program and will be kept confidential.

We feel that these caring adult (or youth, depending on your program) volunteers will be making an excellent contribution to the quality of education in our school. If you would like your child to participate in the program, talk about it with him/her. If he/she is comfortable with the idea of having a mentor, please grant your permission by signing below. One of our Case Managers will soon be in contact with you about your child's new mentor.

Thank you for your time. We hope this program will be of great benefit to everyone involved.

Sincerely,

School Principal

I give permission for my child, _____ , to participate in the mentoring program at his/her school. I understand the nature and rules of the school's mentoring efforts and reserve the right to withdraw from the program at any time.

_____   _____
(parent/guardian)   (date)

Sample form developed by National Mentoring Center, 1999.

Mentee Profile Sheet

Name _____

Home Address: _____

City _____ State:_____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____

☐ Male ☐ Female   Ethnicity:_____

School:_____ Grade: _____

School phone: _____

Parents/Guardians

Parent/Guardian phone:_____

Emergency contact: _____

Emergency phone: _____

Hobbies/Interests

_____

_____

_____

Career Interests

_____

_____

_____

Academic Profile

Subjects needing help in:

☐ Reading   ☐ Science   ☐ Foreign Language   ☐ ESL   ☐ Social Studies
☐ Composition   ☐ Math   ☐ Physical Education   Other: _____

Grade Point Average/Recent test scores: _____

_____

_____

Other academic issues (attendance, discipline problems, etc.): _____

_____

_____

Match Criteria

Times available for meeting with mentor:

Mon. a.m.	Tue. a.m.	Wed. a.m.	Thurs. a.m.	Fri. a.m.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Mon. p.m.	Tue. p.m.	Wed. p.m.	Thurs. p.m.	Fri. p.m.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Desired mentor characteristics: _____

_____

_____

Other obligations (employment, family, religious, etc.): _____

_____

_____

Sample form developed by National Mentoring Center, 1999.

Volunteer Ground Rules
(School-Based Mentoring Program)

1. I understand that seeing my mentee consistently is one of the most important things I can do as a Mentor; therefore, I will see my Little one hour per week.

2. I understand that all contact with my mentee is restricted to school grounds.

3. I understand that the relationship between my mentee and me is a one-to-one relationship.

4. I understand that I might be privy to personal information about my mentee and family members which I will keep confidential.

5. I will maintain regular contact with the Mentoring Coordinator by responding to calls and letters.

6. If a problem arises in my match relationship, or if my place of employment, residences, or telephone number changes, I will notify the Mentoring Coordinator immediately.

7. I understand that I will be asked to participate in a program evaluation.

8. I will adhere to school procedure for match visits, including verifying my mentee's attendance on match visit days and contacting the school counselor if I am unable to meet with my mentee.

Mentor Signature:_____   Date:_____

Mentoring Coordinator: _____   Date:_____

Although our focus is on the mentee, please, remember that the staff at the _____ mentoring program is also here for you, our volunteers. Please, do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns, no matter how small they may seem to you.

Sample form adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1999.

Match Profile and Plan

Client's Name: _____   Mentor's Name: _____

School: _____   Counselor: _____

Match Date: _____   Mentoring Coordinator: _____

Meeting Times:

    Fall semester _____

    Winter semester _____

    Spring semester _____

Summary of Student's Interests/Preferences:

Summary of Mentor's Interests/Preferences:

Common Interests/Preferences:

Summary of Mentor's Skills, Strengths, and Resources To Assist Student:

Additional Comments:

Outcomes for Child:

☐ Self-Confidence ☐ Social Competence ☐ Caring Other: _____

Assets To Be Developed:

☐ Self-confidence

☐ School attendance

☐ Shows trust toward you

☐ Able to express feelings

☐ Uses school resources

☐ Respects other cultures

☐ Can make decisions

☐ Uses community resources

☐ Relationship with family

☐ Has personal interests or hobbies

☐ School performance

☐ Relationships with other adults

☐ Sense of the future

☐ Able to avoid substance abuse

☐ Able to avoid early parenting

Strategies for Match (conversations, opportunities, activities):

Success Indicators:

Sample form adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1999.

References

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Additional Reading and Resources

From the Hamilton Fish Institute Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series (available online at: http://www.hamfish.org)**:**

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring: A Guidebook for Program Development

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual

Training New Mentors

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs

From Public/Private Ventures:

Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study
http://www.ppv.org

School-Based Mentoring: A Closer Look
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/180_publication.pdf

Mentoring School-Age Children: Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/34_publication.pdf

Contemporary Issues in Mentoring
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/37_publication.pdf

School-Based Mentoring: A First Look Into Its Potential
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/35_publication.pdf

Select titles from the Mentoring Resource Center (a project of the NMC):

Making the Grade: A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement into Mentoring Programs and Relationships
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/making_the_grade.pdf

The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Screening and Background Checks
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/screening.pdf

Going the Distance: A Guide to Building Lasting Relationships in Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/going_the_distance.pdf

Preparing Participants for Mentoring: The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Initial Training of Volunteers, Youth, and Parents
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/training.pdf

Effective Mentor Recruitment: Getting Organized, Getting Results
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/recruitment.pdf

Ongoing Training for Mentors: 12 Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ongoing_training.pdf

Building a Sustainable Mentoring Program: A Framework for Resource Development Planning
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/sustainability.pdf

Guide to Mentoring for Parents and Guardians
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/parent_handbook.doc

Marketing Toolkit for Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/toolkit/

The Guide to Key Mentoring Research
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ws2_supplement1.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions About Conducting Research and Evaluation
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ws2_supplement2.pdf

Additional Mentoring Resource Center resources on school-based mentoring can be downloaded at: http://www.edmentoring.org/publications.html.

Other guides and research reports on school-based mentoring:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (1999). *School-based mentoring: Elementary lessons*. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Creative Mentoring. (2001). *Elements of effective mentoring: A mentor training manual for the in-school volunteer mentor*. Wilmington, DE: Author.

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> **I think I affect Randy. But I think I also affect the teachers and the principal. . . . Now, seeing Randy around more in the office and seeing that he's making an effort, and knowing that we have this relationship, I feel that [the principal's] attitude toward Randy —it's softer. I think the teachers and the staff see him a little bit differently and react differently to him when I'm around, or since I've been around.**

—Mentor, Jacksonville, Florida

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