

The Positive Effects of Mentoring

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Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis



Who is MENTOR?

- MENTOR is the largest mentoring advocacy group in the world
- MENTOR is dedicated to delivering the latest research, policy recommendations, and tools and resources to mentoring organizations nationally
- MENTOR works with Mentoring Partnerships (MP) around the country, serving more than 4,600 programs nationwide
- MENTOR is headquartered in Alexandria, VA





Mentoring as a Dropout Prevention Strategy

Who needs Mentors?

According to US Census Figures there are 35.2 million kids aged 10-18 in the United States

- 1 out of 4 children live with only one parent
- 1 out of 10 is born to teen parents
- 1 out of 5 lives in poverty
- 1 out of 10 will not finish high school



Who needs Mentors?

MENTOR estimates that 15 million kids
(almost half of our nation's young people)
could greatly benefit from high-quality, formal
mentoring





Mentoring as a Dropout Prevention Strategy

What the Research Says

Mentoring helps improve school connectedness and motivation:

- Mentored youth have more positive attitudes towards school and teachers
- Mentored youth feel more competent in completing their school work, leading to better grades
- School-based mentoring improves peer relations and connectedness to school community





Mentoring as a Dropout Prevention Strategy

What the Research Says

Mentoring helps reduce the rate of absenteeism:

- Youth who participate in mentoring programs have less unexcused absences
- Evaluations of mentoring programs indicate that both one-to-one and group mentoring result in better school attendance





Mentoring as a Dropout Prevention Strategy

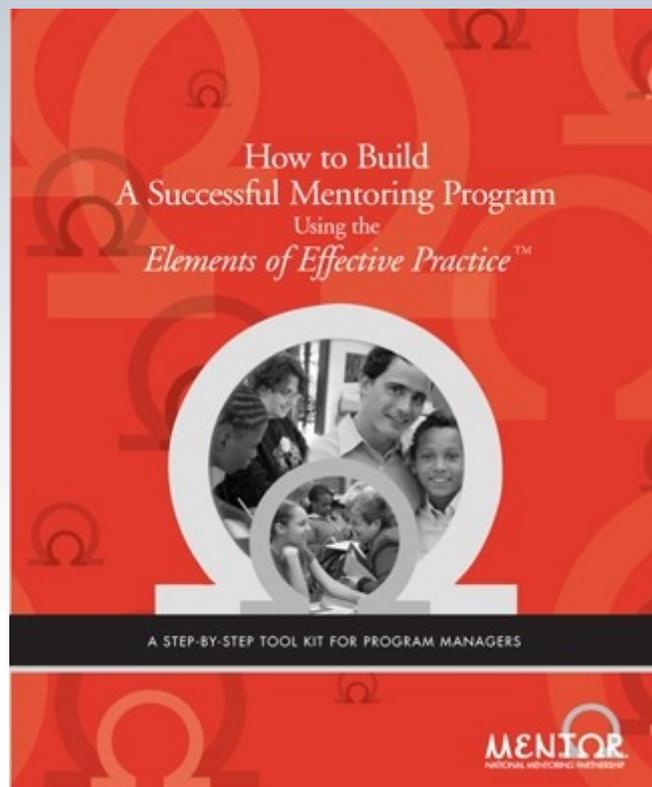
What the Research Says

Mentoring helps improve relationships with parents/guardians:

- Mentored youth show improved relationships and communication with their families⁶
- Mentored youth experience strengthened parental relationships and increased self-worth



“How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the *Elements of Effective Practice*”



The companion Tool Kit for the *Elements* (with CD):

- Explains why the *Elements* are essential for high-quality, effective mentoring
- Discusses each component of the *Elements* in-depth



Program Design and Planning

- Define the Who, What, Where, and When
- Plan Key Strategies:
 - Management and Staffing Plan
 - Financial Plan
 - Implementation Plan
 - Evaluation Plan



Program Management

- Advisory Group
- Develop Systems for:
 - Monitoring policies and procedures
 - Managing program activity
 - Diversifying funding streams
 - Enhancing staff skills
 - Marketing the program and recognizing participants
- Advocacy



Program Operations

The Core “How-To”

- Recruitment plan for mentors/mentees
- Screening for mentors/mentees
- Orientation for mentors, mentees, parents
- Training for mentors and mentees
- Matching strategy (pre-established criteria)
- Facilitate Meetings—Activities
- Ongoing Support and Supervision
- Recognize Participants (Recognition & Retention)
- Closure (exit interview, re-matching)



Mentor Recruitment

A well designed recruitment plans includes:

- Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits
- Targeted outreach based on mentee needs
- Identifies a sufficient number of potential mentors to facilitate the process of finding the right match for mentees
- Volunteer opps beyond mentoring (events, admin.)



Screening

Careful screening improves the quality of your mentors and helps ensure the safety of youth involved in your program, while also managing your organization's level of risk and liability.

Suggested Components:

- Written Application
- Fingerprint Criminal Background Checks and Related Checks
- Character Reference Checks
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Participation in Pre-Match Training



Orientation

For mentors, mentees and parents

- Presents an overview of the mentoring program
- Introduces the responsibilities and the level of commitment expected of each participant
- Provides written program materials explaining program policies and procedures
- Mentor/Mentee matching process and contract
- Mentor roles and responsibilities
- Confidentiality and child abuse reporting



Training

- Information on establishing and maintaining meaningful mentor/ mentee relationships
- Helps mentors/mentees develop communication skills, understand youth issues, circumstances and culture
- Teaches mentors to identify/build upon strengths of the student, provide support and acknowledge accomplishments





Monitoring and Ongoing Support

- Procedures/tracking system for monitoring pairs
- Written policies/procedures
- Periodic progress checks of mentor/mentee activities and relationship (i.e. monthly reporting)
- Ongoing training and support sessions for mentees and mentors



Closure

- No-fault termination policy
- Termination policy and procedures
- Feedback process for mentors and mentees
- Documentation
- Recognition





Program Evaluation

Guides you in analyzing your program to ensure it is safe, effective and meeting established goals:

- Develop a Plan to Measure
 - Program Process
 - Expected Outcomes
- Reflect on Evaluation Findings to:
 - Refine Program Design
 - Report to Key Stakeholders



Program Evaluation

Tracking Information:

- Number of youth mentored
- Number of mentors
- Frequency, duration and total hours of the mentoring relationship
- Retention of mentors/mentees
- Specific youth performance and achievement outcomes, i.e. demographic data, grades, test scores, attendance, self esteem, etc.



Mentoring Children of Prisoners: Caregiver's Choice Project

- Legislative history of Mentoring Children of Prisoners program
- Understanding the need
- Caregiver's Choice Voucher Initiative
- Bringing Caregiver's Choice to your community



Legislative History

- Unique voucher initiative that issues vouchers to caregivers in the name of a child with an incarcerated parent
- Vouchers are worth up to \$1,000 and support a year-long one-to-one match relationship
- Initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a demonstration project and administered by MENTOR
- Caregiver's Choice is designed to provide mentors to children between the ages of 4 and 18 with a parent in a federal or state prison
- Participating program providers must meet quality mentoring services standards including the use of FBI fingerprint criminal background checks for volunteer mentors



Understanding the Need

- The number of children *under age 18* with a mother in prison *more than doubled since 1991*
- The majority of prisoners reported having a minor child, a quarter of which were age 4 or younger
- More than a third of minor children will reach age 18 while their parent is incarcerated
- Incarcerated parents of minor children are most likely to be age 25-34

(Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children/BJA/August 2008)





Reflection

“After taking a course on children of prisoners I included a math problem that asked children to calculate the distance that “John” would travel to visit his Mom in prison going 45 miles an hour for eight hours. Four children in my class spoke up about having an incarcerated parent during that lesson and I had no idea that I had any children with parents in prison in my class.”

- 3rd grade teacher, Pennsylvania

(The Prevention Researcher, Vol. 13, #2, April 2006)



For Mentoring Program Providers

- Providers must meet quality standards in mentoring and working with families of the incarcerated
- Providers are trained on the opportunities and challenges specific to mentoring children with incarcerated parents
- Providers are also trained on the use and application of MentorPRO® Basic, the online data tracking system required for Caregiver's Choice



For Caregivers

- Caregivers receive lists of approved mentoring programs in their area and a voucher for their child
- Caregivers select a provider and take the voucher to the program where the child will be matched with a mentor
- Caregivers are provided additional information and guidance by the provider if necessary



Benefits for Caregivers / Parents

- Offers quality mentoring for your child with peace of mind.
- Allows flexibility in choice, mentoring program type and venue.
- Ensures eligible children a caring mentor to offer:
 - ✓ Encouragement on homework and school
 - ✓ New experiences
 - ✓ An objective ear and support



Benefits for Mentoring Programs

- New funding allows programs to serve more eligible children
- Access to federal dollars without large grant sizes and burdensome grant reporting
- Experience in serving children of prisoners, allowing greater competitiveness in applying for future HHS Mentoring Children of Prisoners grants or other grant funds
- Flexibility in participation levels, allowing for enrollment of as many or as few children to best meet capacity





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