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# Community- versus School-Based Mentoring Matches: Do Mentees' Parents Differ in Family Risk, Perceived Support or Reasons for a Mentor?

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Community- versus School-Based Mentoring Matches:  
Do Mentees' Parents Differ in Family Risk, Perceived Support or Reasons for a Mentor?

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for degree of  
Master of Arts in Psychology

by

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## Abstract

This study explores whether the parents or guardians of youth participating in community-based (CBM) and school-based (SBM) mentoring programs differ in their level of family stress, economic adversity and perceived social and community support. Participants were 131 parents of youth in either CBM (n = 79) or SBM (n = 52) programs sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBS-Canada). Parents completed an online survey that assessed demographic characteristics and involvement in BBBS-C programs. Additional measures assessed family stress, economic adversity, perceived support (interpersonal, community), and reasons for wanting a mentor. Parents of youth in CBM matches were less likely to be married and had fewer adults but more children in the home relative to parents of youth in SBM matches. As expected, CBM parents reported greater pursuit of a BBBS mentor and were more involved with BBBS mentors and program staff than SBM parents. CBM and SBM parents did not differ significantly on reports of family stress, economic adversity, or perceived support. For CBM parents, a top reason for wanting a mentor was the desire for their children to have new experiences; for SBM parents, top reasons included seeking academic support for their children and because one of their children had a disability. Discussed are the research and practice implications of these findings.

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## Community- versus School-Based Mentoring Matches:

### Do Mentees' Parents Differ in Family Risk and Perceived Support?

Formal youth mentoring programs can differ widely in terms of parental involvement. In community-based mentoring (CBM) programs, parents actively enroll their child and interact periodically with program staff and mentors; in school-based mentoring (SBM) programs, school staff typically initiate youth enrollment and parents have limited contact with program staff or mentors. Variability in program-related structures suggest the possibility that parents who participate in CBM versus SBM programs will differ on important variables such as their reasons for wanting a mentor and the family circumstances that prompted enrolling their child in a formal mentoring program. Presently, there are no published studies examining parental help-seeking in the context of youth mentoring programs. In this study, I examined differences in the characteristics of parents/guardians who have youth enrolled in either CBM or SBM matches. At issue is whether these two programs are likely serving different populations with differing needs and motivations.

### **Mentoring**

Traditionally, *mentoring* has been defined as a preventative intervention in which supportive relationships between youth and non-parental adults are used to reduce youths' risk for negative outcomes or promote their positive development (Cavell & Elledge, 2013; Rhodes, 2002, 2005). Formal youth mentoring typically occurs in the context of an organization that facilitates and monitors the mentoring relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS-America), perhaps the most well known and most researched youth mentoring organization, is also recognized as using best practices in youth mentoring (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper 2002; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). Mentoring programs sponsored

by BBBS-America are required to use recommended program practices regarding mentor *recruitment* (mentee and parent or guardian recruitment), *screening* of mentors and mentees, *training* of mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents, *matching and initiating* mentoring relationships, *monitoring and supporting*, and *match closure* (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter, & Tai, 2015).

### **CBM and SBM Program Practices**

Most BBBS-America programs fall into one of two types: community-based mentoring (CBM) or school-based mentoring (SBM). Both CBM programs and SBM programs use the elements of effective practice, but it is recognized that these programs often differ in how these practices are implemented (Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton, & Pepper, 2000). CBM programs are traditionally conducted through community agencies that match pre-qualified and trained adult mentors with youth enrolled by parents or other caregivers (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007). Herrera and colleagues (2000) identified other factors common to CBM programs: mentor-mentee matches often have shared interests and thus collaboratively identify activities to engage in during their visits. Also, agency staff maintain regular contact with parents of youth in CBM matches throughout the mentoring relationship (Herrera et al., 2007). CBM mentors are predominantly Caucasian adults, young to middle aged, who commit to mentoring for at least one year and to visiting their mentee several times a month (Herrera et al., 2000).

SBM programs are implemented in school settings and school staff are the person primarily responsible for referring children for mentoring (Herrera & Karcher, 2014; Herrera et al., 2007). SBM is typically limited to the school year, mentors generally visit once per week during or just after the school day, and programs typically focus on promoting academic

achievement or peer acceptance (Herrera & Karcher, 2014; Herrera et al., 2000, 2007). The demographics of SBM mentors are often more diverse than those of CBM mentors and mentors tend to be high school and college students (Herrera et al., 2000; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

### **CBM and SBM Outcomes**

Much of the research examining the outcomes of youth mentoring has focused on mentoring matches sponsored by BBBS-America. Tierney et al., (2000) conducted a randomized control trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of BBBS-America's CBM program over a period of 18 months. Results suggested that youth matched with a mentor were less likely to engage in drug/alcohol use or physical violence towards someone else (Tierney et al., 2000). Researchers also found that the youth showed positive gains in academic performance, school attendance, and relationships with parents and peers (Tierney et al., 2000).

A similar impact study examined BBBS-America's SBM program (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Fledmna, McMaken, & Jucovy, 2007). Results at end of the school year suggested that mentored youth improved across several academic domains (performance, quality of work, number of assignments turned in, school behavior, school attendance); however, outcomes related to "out-of-school" domains (drug/alcohol use, misconduct outside of school, relationships with parents & peers, and self-esteem) did not improve (Herrera et al., 2007). Importantly, when youth were assessed the following fall, significant program effects were lost except for school attendance (Herrera et al., 2007). Results from this study were disappointing but in line with findings from other large-scale studies of SBM, including one (Bernstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009) cited by the U. S. Department of Education when it cut funding for its Student Mentoring Program (Boyle, 2009; see also Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). Wheeler, Dubois, and Keller (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of three large scale SBM studies and



concluded that there was evidence showing small to modest effects in six domains: “support from non-familial adults ( $d = 0.12$ ) peer support ( $d = 0.07$ ) perceptions of scholastic efficacy ( $d = 0.10$ ) school related misconduct ( $d = 0.11$ ) absenteeism ( $d = 0.07$ ) and truancy ( $d = 0.18$ )” (p. 1). Wheeler and colleagues (2010) attributed these effect sizes as modest based on Dubois et al (2002) findings which suggested that SBM programs demonstrated small but meaningful moderate effects at the  $d = 0.11$  level.

Rarely have researchers conducted studies that directly compared outcomes for youth in CBM and SBM programs, and available studies have generally embedded one or both mentoring programs within a larger, multi-component intervention (e.g., Cavell, Elledge, Malcolm, Faith, & Hughes, 2009). Herrera et al., (2000) compared the degree to which CBM and SBM matches differed in relationship quality and which program practices contribute to those differences. Despite the many differences between CBM and SBM programs, Herrera and colleagues found that around ninety percent of mentors and youth who participated in both programs developed “fairly close and supportive relationships” (p. 7).

Meta-analytic studies that test whether program setting moderates youth outcomes are also useful when comparing outcomes for youth in CBM versus SBM matches. For example, Dubois et al., (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 55 studies and found that youth in formal mentoring programs showed small effects on outcome variables when compared to youth who did not participate and that the benefits were evident across five domains: emotional/psychological ( $d = 0.10$ ), problem/high-risk behavior ( $d = 0.21$ ), social competence ( $d = 0.15$ ), academic/educational ( $d = 0.11$ ), and career/employment ( $d = 0.22$ ). However, there was no evidence that setting (e.g., community, school, workplace, other) significantly moderated youth outcomes. In 2011, Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine conducted a

follow-up meta-analysis of 73 studies. Similar findings were revealed, with little evidence that outcomes from mentoring programs improved over those reported in previous studies. Effect sizes from the second meta-analysis ranged from  $d = 0.15$  to  $0.22$  for the outcome variables included in the first meta-analysis with the exception of career/employment due to the literature search only identifying two studies that examined that outcome variable (Dubois et al., 2011). And once again, the setting in which mentoring occurred did not significantly moderate youth outcomes, which may be due to low power associated with the studies included in the meta-analysis.

In sum, current evidence suggests that mentoring programs have the potential to improve youth outcomes regardless of the type of program, although there is some question about whether SBM programs can yield outcomes comparable to those found in CBM programs.

### **Parents' Role in Youth Mentoring**

Researchers and program practitioners tend to frame mentoring solely on the basis of the relationship between mentor and youth. Researchers have rarely studied parents' role in the process of mentoring. This may be due to mentoring traditionally being framed as a deficit model in which parents are viewed as detrimental to the youth. Traditionally, mentors were viewed as a means to promote healthy youth development for children who lack a positive parental role model and therefore parents have not been a focus of research (Miller, 2007; Styles & Morrow, 1992). Taylor and Porcellini (2013) argued against viewing parents of mentored youth as inadequate and described three different methods by which mentoring program can enhance family involvement. *Youth and Family Mentoring* programs provide mentoring to the entire family by assisting the family in accessing resources and providing them support (Taylor & Porcellini, 2013). *Youth Only Mentoring plus Skill Building for Families* programs provide

mentoring to children only but engage families by aiming to enhance parents' skills. *Youth Only Mentoring plus Family Activities* programs involve mentoring for children while engaging with family members in organized activities (Taylor & Porcellini, 2013). Similarly, Keller (2005) offered a systemic view of mentoring that drew from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological model. Keller argued that caregivers are a potentially integral influence in the mentoring process, suggesting that parents play an important role in "facilitating and maintaining the mentor-mentee relationship" (Keller, p. 177). This assertion is actually supported by findings from DuBois et al.,'s (2002) earlier meta-analysis, but DuBois et al., (2011) did not find evidence that parental involvement moderated youth outcomes. In 2011, Dubois and colleagues assessed "stakeholder involvement (youth, parent, mentors, and/or community members" and "parental outreach and support" as potential moderators of program effectiveness (p. 64). The researchers noted that there were several (less than 10) moderating variables that could not be analyzed due to a limited number of studies that examined that variable (Dubois et al., 2011).

In one of the few studies to directly examine parents' role in mentoring, Spencer, Basualado-Delmenico, and Lewis (2011) conducted a qualitative study exploring parents' roles, expectations, and motivations vis-à-vis their children's mentoring relationships. The researchers identified several themes for each domain of parental involvement. Different roles filled by parents were labelled "Collaborators, Coaches, and Mediators" (p. 55), with parents often filling two of the three roles at a time and with a tendency to change roles during the course of the mentoring relationship. *Collaborator* parents were those who "took an active role engaging in mentoring relationship," whereas *coaches* were those parents who coached mentors perceived as lacking experience. *Mediator* parents took an active role in addressing conflicts within the mentoring relationship in order to protect children's interests. Spencer and colleagues (2011)

found that parents' motivations for mentoring include a desire for mentors to be a positive role model and confidant, to offer experiences different from those already available, and to provide opportunities with the potential to broaden how children see themselves and their future. Parents varied in their specific expectations: Some simply hoped for open communication with the mentor, some expected to have a personal connection with the mentor, and others expected the mentor "to become an active participant in family activities and special events" (p. 53).

Spencer and Basulado-Delmenico (2014) followed up with a focus group study to explore how mentoring agencies endeavor to engage parents. The researchers identified three types of methods used by agencies to engage parents: *Involving*, *Engaging*, and *Collaborating*. *Involving* consisted of mentoring agencies attempting to foster communication with parents by contacting them by phone or email, hosting events, and providing parents with community resources. *Engaging* involved reducing the number of staff members with whom parents interacted, conducting home visits, providing community resources, and facilitating parent support groups. Finally, *collaborating* was represented by agencies attempting to establish a relationship that connected parents, mentees, mentors and agency staff in order to improve communication among key stakeholders.

Kaye and Smith (2014) conducted the only study comparing outcomes for mentored youth who participated in a program promoting parent engagement (PEM Model) with youth in a traditional mentoring program. The researchers hypothesized that by specifically promoting parental involvement, youth would show greater effects on outcome measures than those in traditional mentoring programs. Results indicated no significant differences in youth outcomes across the two types of programs, which the authors attributed to a limited sample size and low

completion rates for outcome assessments. Parents in the PEM group did view positively the increased parental involvement in mentoring.

### **Parental Involvement in CBM versus SBM**

As noted previously, CBM programs and SBM programs can share the use of effective program practices (e.g., screening, training) but differ in how these practices are implemented (Herrera et al., 2000). There is little research on how differences in the use of these practices affects program outcomes, but some researchers have suggested that referral and enrollment practices used by CBM programs create unintentional barriers to youth mentoring (Herrera & Karcher, 2014; Herrera et al., 2007). Presumably, if parents are unaware of formal mentoring programs, if they fail to see a need for mentoring, or if they are unable or unwilling to enroll their child, then youth are unlikely to participate in the more traditional CBM programs. On the other hand, youth who participate in SBM programs are typically referred by teachers or other school staff, which creates mentoring opportunities for students with more diverse needs and from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Parents' level of engagement in mentoring and their contact with mentors or agency staff also differ for CBM versus SBM: In CBM, parents often interact with mentors to schedule visits or to plan activities and program staff have regular contact with parents as a way to monitor the status and quality of mentoring matches (Herrera et al., 2000).

### **Why do Parents Seek Help Generally for Their Children?**

Despite evidence to suggest that parents of mentored youth vary in their motivations, expectations, and roles (Herrera et al., 2007; Spencer et al., 2011), there is virtually no research examining parental help-seeking in the context of youth mentoring programs. Herrera et al., (2007) noted important differences in parents' involvement in CBM versus SBM programs, as

well as potential differences in the kinds of youth and families served by these programs. However, researchers have yet to consider whether parents of youth in CBM versus SBM matches differ in areas that could affect children's access to and benefit from mentoring.

This question could be especially important given the requirement that parents actively enroll their child in CBM while playing a much more passive role in their child's enrollment in SBM. It is interesting to consider whether discrepancies in enrollment processes lead to significant differences in these two groups of parents. Currently, there are no published studies that describe why parents seek a mentoring program for their child, which could be useful in learning about the kinds of parents whose children are in CBM matches. But what of parents of youth in SBM matches? Does their more passive role signal something distinctive about them and their life circumstances or their capacity to seek support for their children?

In contrast to the lack of research specific to youth mentoring, there is extensive research on parental help-seeking for their children in the context of medical, mental health, and academic services. The Health Beliefs Model, developed by social psychologists in the 1950s is one of the most well-known models used to describe an individual's "health behavior" which includes; "the desire to avoid illness (or if ill, to get well) and the belief that a specific health action will prevent (or ameliorate) illness" (Janz & Becker, p. 2). Despite the Health Beliefs Model being one of the most recognized help-seeking models throughout the medical research literature it fails to specifically recognize the unique nature of how children and adolescents access health resources. Other researchers have developed The Parental Service Utilization Framework and Gateway Provider Model that are more applicable to the processes that parents engaged in when seeking services for their children.

## **Models to Understand Parents' Help-Seeking Behaviors**

The Parental Service Utilization Framework draws on Pescosolido's (1991) Network-Episode Model (NEM) in order to explore how parents, seek to access mental health services for their children (Costello, Pescosolido, Angold & Burns, 1998). This model is unique in the sense that it recognizes that children do not have the capacity or legal rights to access services themselves and therefore rely on parents to connect them to services. The model suggests that children's dependence on their parents impacts their ability to access services independently and therefore the process of accessing services for a child is much different than for adults (Costello et al., 1998). The model suggests that in order for a child to access services the following process usually occurs: "child expresses emotional or behavioral problems; caregivers or other adults identify these problems and see them as indicative of need; social network members offer suggestions for coping; and network members actively facilitate or delay services use" (Costello et al., p. 62).

Stiffman, Pescosolido, and Cabassa (2004) suggested an alternative model known as the Gateway Provider Model, which suggests that youth typically access services by coming into contact with an individual known as the "gateway provider" who recognizes a problem and then refers them to the appropriate services (p. 189). The researchers suggested that gateway providers can be professionals (teachers, physicians, mental health specialists, juvenile justice) or "informal (family or friends)" providers who interact with youth (Stiffman et al., 2004). The researchers also suggested that gateway providers are potentially more effective in identifying problems and making referrals when they were aware of community resources and when they have access to brief, valid screening measures (Stiffman et al., 2004).

Consistent across both models are recognition that in order for parents to access services they must first identify that a problem is occurring, acknowledge a need for services, and then seek the appropriate service to address their concern. How do these models inform our understanding of parent help-seeking in youth mentoring? Given that formal mentoring programs are generally conceptualized as prevention based (Cavell & Elledge, 2013), these models could be a poor fit if targeted youth are not displaying problematic behaviors or significant symptomology; however, researchers and practitioners may consider risk factors as a potential means to identify children that would benefit from participation in different types of mentoring programs. These models inform how parents' role in the enrollment process could lead to differences between parents of youth in CBM versus SBM matches.

The Parental Service Utilization Framework closely aligns with processes involving parents of CBM programs because in order to access services a parent must first identify a problem and then seek services to address the problem (Costello et al., 1998). These processes are consistent with Herrera and colleagues (2007) findings that suggest parents of CBM youth must actively seek and enroll their children in order for them to participate in a mentoring program. Conversely, the Gateway Provider model developed by Stiffman and colleagues (2004) more closely aligns with processes that occur for youth enrolled in SBM programs. As Herrera and colleagues (2007) suggested, youth who participate in SBM programs are frequently referred by school staff and parents are only passively involved in the process at the point of providing consent.

### **Parent Help-Seeking and Youth Mentoring**

When applied to youth mentoring, models of parent help-seeking suggest that researchers should attend to the life circumstances that influence parents' decision and efforts to enroll youth



in a formal mentoring program. *Risk factors* have been defined as “correlates shown to precede an outcome” and these can be “genetic, environmental, social, and biological” in nature (Kraemer, Stice, Kazdin, Offord, & Kupfer p. 848). Mentoring research has established that youth identified as at-risk are likely to benefit from formal mentoring programs (Dubois et al., 2002; Rhodes, 1994). Three such factors are family risk, social support, and community support, which are aligned with Costello and colleagues (1998) theory that “individual, family, community, and school factors play a part in getting children into, or keeping them out of, mental health care” (p. 166).

*Family risk.* Although the youth mentoring literature has not investigated how risk factors may impact a parent’s likelihood of seeking or enrolling their child in a mentoring program, other researchers have evaluated how familial risk factors can influence parents’ likelihood of seeking services. This body of research literature is somewhat mixed due to numerous conflicting findings on whether greater familial risk is associated with increased or decreased likelihood of seeking services. For example, some studies have suggested that in families with more risk factors parents are less likely to seek services because they lack necessary resources or motivation (Thompson, Lindsey, English, Hawley, Lambert, & Browne, 2007). Other studies have found that familial risk is associated with an increased likelihood that parents would seek services for their children (Logan & King, 2001). It is possible that discrepancies in this research literature are due to the assessment of different risk factors, populations, and services.

*Social support.* Social support is defined as “including not only advice and emotional support from others, but also practical (or instrumental) support” (Thompson et al., p. 59). Traditionally, mentoring researchers have focused on youths’ social support needs based on the notion that mentored youth have parents who are not able to provide adequate support (Miller,

2007; Styles & Morrow, 1992). Researchers in other fields, however, have investigated how parents' level of social support can impact their likelihood of seeking services for their children. This body of research literature has also resulted in mixed findings. Some researchers have suggested that increased parental support may lead parents to be more likely to access services (Thompson et al., 2007), whereas, other researchers find that parents with low levels of social support are more likely to access services for their children (Birkel & Reppucci, 1983; Nanninga, Jansen, Knorth, & Reijneveld, 2015).

*Community support.* Daro and colleagues suggested that characteristics of the community can impact the likelihood of parents seeking services for their children (2007). Daro and colleagues suggested that undesirable community characteristics decrease parents' willingness to access voluntary community services. The researchers hypothesized that despite available community resources, parents were unable to access those services due to having to overcome significant barriers (Daro et al., 2007).

### **The Current Study**

In this study, I examined differences between parents with a child in a BBBS CBM match and those with a child in a BBBS SBM match. Based on key differences in how these programs are structured (e.g., recruitment of mentees, parent involvement), I assumed that CBM parents would be more proactive pursuing BBBS mentoring and would endorse being more involved with mentors than SBM parents. Based on that assumption, as well as previous research on parental involvement in youth mentoring and parent help-seeking behavior more generally, I made the following hypotheses.

*Parents' experiences with and involvement in BBBS mentoring.* Given critical differences in how CBM and SBM programs are structured with respect to parental involvement, I expected

CBM parents to report being more actively engaged with BBBS program staff and mentors than SBM parents.

*Family risk.* Previous research has been mixed about whether families with higher levels of risk are more likely to seek out physical or mental health services. Some studies have identified that families with more risk factors are less likely to seek services (Thompson, Lindsey, English, Hawley, Lambert, & Browne, 2007); whereas, other studies have found that familial risk is associated with an increased likelihood that parents would seek services for their children (Logan & King, 2001). Herrera and colleagues (2007) also noted that in SBM programs children are usually referred by school staff with little input from parents. Thus, in keeping with the Gateway Provider Model (Stiffman et al., 2004) and the notion that greater risk will lead to help-seeking through the assistance of others, I hypothesized that parents of youth enrolled in SBM programs would report higher levels of family risk than parents of youth in CBM programs.

*Social support.* Previous research has also been mixed on whether parents with high levels of social support will be more likely to seek services for their children (Thompson et al., 2007) in comparison to parents who have low social support (Birkel & Reppucci, 1983; Nanninga, Jansen, Knorth, & Reijnveld, 2015). Both the Parental Utilization Framework (1991) and the Gateway Provider Model (2004) suggest that parent-help-seeking involves recognizing and overcoming multiple barriers. As such, parents with higher levels of social support should find it easier to engage in the process of actively enrolling their youth in formal mentoring programs. Thus, I hypothesized that parents of youth in CBM programs would report higher levels of social support than parents of youth in SBM programs.

*Community support.* Daro and colleagues (2007) study suggested that undesirable community characteristics decreased the likelihood of individuals' ability to access services. Based on this work, as well as the previously mentioned models of parental help-seeking, I hypothesized that parents of youth in CBM would report higher levels of community support compared to parents of youth in SBM programs.

*Reasons for wanting a mentor.* The role of parents in BBBS mentoring is very different for CBM versus SBM matches. CBM requires active initiation and periodic engagement by parents, whereas parents are relatively passive in SBM matches, especially when initiated by school staff. However, these programmatic differences are separate from parents' reasons for enrolling their child in a formal mentoring program. As such, and because there is limited research examining parents' motivations regarding mentoring, I made no *a priori* hypotheses about differences in parents' reasons for wanting a mentor for their child.

## **Method**

### **Procedures**

Data for this study were gathered as part of a larger study examining parents' perceptions of formal and informal mentoring relationships for their children. Parents/guardians of youth enrolled in either CBM and SBM programs were recruited by several agencies within Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Canada (BBBS-Canada). Parents were sent an email link to a consent form and a one-time, online survey. Consent was obtained prior to completing the online survey. All participants received a \$30 (CAD) gift card for participating. The study protocol was approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) and secondary data analysis was approved by the University of Arkansas' IRB for the current study.

## Participants

Completing the online survey were 131 parents of youth enrolled in either community-based ( $n = 79$ ) or school-based ( $n = 52$ ) BBBS-Canada mentoring programs. Table 1 presents demographic characteristics for the 131 parents included in these analyses. Most participants identified as Caucasian mothers (Caucasian = 74.8%, Female = 93.1%). Participants' marital status was fairly evenly distributed with about one third endorsing being never married (30.5%), married/common-law (32.1%), or divorced/separated/widowed (37.4%) and the majority of parents were employed (69.5%). Over three-fourths of participants reported completing some college (26.0%) or completing college (55.7%) and a little less than half of the participants reported annual income less than \$40,000 annually (48.1%).

## Measures

In addition to questions about demographics (age, gender, race, income, marital status, adults in the home, number of children in home, and their ages), parents were asked about their experiences and involvement with BBBS mentors and asked to rate perceived levels of family stress, economic adversity, social support, and community support (see appendix for measures).

**Parents' experiences with BBBS mentoring.** Parents were asked questions about their current and previous experiences with BBBS. Questions examined how many of their children were currently or previously matched with a BBBS mentor, the length of time since their children had been matched for the first time, how long they waited for their children to be matched, how many of their children had more than one mentor, and parents identify the highest number of mentors their children had been matched with while participating in BBBS.

**Parents' involvement in BBBS mentoring.** Parents were also asked a series of questions about how involved they were with BBBS mentoring. Parents were asked to rate the

extent to which they actively pursued finding a BBBS mentor for their child (1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Very little*, 3 = *Somewhat*, 4 = *To a great extent*). Parents were also asked to select how involved they have been with their children's BBBS mentor from a list of nine options that included "*not at all involved*," "*I have spoken to my children's mentor*," and "*I have spoken to staff from BBBS about my children and their mentor*."

**Family risk.** Family risk was assessed using items from the Risk Assessment Measure, a 31- item inventory developed by Herrera, Dubois, and Grossman (2013). This study only used items from the Economic Adversity (6 items) and Family Stress categories (10 items). Items excluded from the Herrera et al., (2013) Risk Assessment Measure included items that assessed a youth peer difficulties, academic challenges, problem behaviors, and mental health concerns. This 16-item measure asks parents/guardians to respond Yes or No based on whether the statement is true for one or more of their children. Sample items include "*In the last 12 months, my family has experienced times when we had difficulty paying our bills*." and "*In the last 5 years, my children have lived with a foster parent*." Because items from the original risk inventory were scored Yes or No, Hererra and colleagues (2013) did not calculate an estimate of internal consistency. Herrera et al., (2013) also reported that challenges faced by mentors and reasons matches ended differed as a function of youth's risk profile. Measures of family stress and economic adversity were computed by summing the number of items endorsed "yes" for both scales. Because items on the adapted measure of Family Risk are dichotomous questions (yes/no) the Kuder Richardson-20 (KR-20) method was used to compute internal consistency. The first step of the KR-20 reliability analysis requires a computation of Cronbach's alpha, which indicated that the internal reliability of economic adversity ( $\alpha = 0.56$ ), family stress ( $\alpha = 0.42$ ). Statistically, internal consistency at these levels may be considered weak; however, as

discussed in Raviv, Taussig, Culhane, and Garrido (2010) measures of cumulative risk (total number of risk factors endorsed) are better predictors of outcomes than measurement of a single risk factor and therefore summing risk factors across domains of family stress and economic adversity is a better predictor of outcomes in those domains despite analyses suggesting the items have low internal consistency.

**Interpersonal support evaluation list-12 (ISEL-12).** The ISEL-12, developed by Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, and Hoberman (1985) was used to assess parents' perceived level of interpersonal support at the time of the survey completion. The measure consists of twelve items that are rated on a four-point Likert type scale (1 = *Definitely false*, 2 = *Probably false*, 3 = *Probably true*, 4 = *Definitely true*). Cohen et al., (1985) reported that internal reliability of the measure for the general population ranged from  $\alpha = .88$  to  $\alpha = .90$ . The researchers also tested the measures' validity by computing correlations between the ISEL and other previously developed social support measures. For the general population sample, there was a .30 correlation between the ISEL and the Moos Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1981), as well as, a .31 correlation with the Partner Adjustment Scale (Mermelstein, Lichtenstein, & McIntyre, 1983). The items on the ISEL-12 were summed and averaged in the data set in order to compute a measure of interpersonal support for each participant. Cronbach alpha was computed for the study sample and indicated that the measure was had strong reliability ( $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Brief sense of community scale (BSCS).** The BSCS, developed by Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2008), was used to assess parents' perceived levels of community support. This eight-item scale assesses individuals' Sense of Community (SOC), which is based on McMillian and Chavis' (1986) multidimensional theory. The measure includes items that cover the following

domains: needs fulfillment, group membership, influence, and shared emotional connection. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree or disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). Peterson, Speer, and McMillian (2008) reported an internal reliability of the measure of ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). These researchers also examined the measures' validity by conducting confirmatory factor analysis of the items to determine whether the measure represented the constructs proposed by McMillian and Chavis' (1986) multidimensional theory of SOC. Results supported the construct validity of the measure, with factor loadings between the items and the proposed SOC domains ranging from 0.75 to 0.97. provided a good fit to the data. Peterson et al., (2008) reported that there was a good model fit for the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, such that "Goodness-of-Fit Index, Tucker-Lewis Index , and Comparative Fit Index were all above 0.90" (p. 67). The items on the BSCS were summed and averaged to compute the scale for the measure. Cronbach's alpha was computed ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ) and indicated that the internal reliability of the measure was adequate for this specific sample of participants.

**Parents' reasons for wanting a mentor.** Parents were asked to identify their "top 3 reasons for wanting a mentor" for their children from among 12 options. Among the reasons presented were "*To be a positive role model in their life*"; "*To help my children academically*"; "*One of my children has a physical disability or a mental illness*"; and "*My children's father (or mother) is not in their life.*" Parents could also endorse the option of "other", which allowed parents to offer their own reasons. Parents ranked their top three reasons for wanting a mentor and these rankings were used to assess the frequency with which any reason was endorsed by parents.



## Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for key variables for the total sample. Initial analyses examined demographic differences and parents' experiences with and involvement in BBBS mentoring. I then examined whether the two groups of parents differed on family stress, economic adversity, perceived support, and reasons for wanting a mentor.

### **Do CBM & SBM Parents Differ in their Demographic Characteristics?**

Before examining differences between CBM and SBM parents I first collapsed across low frequency categories for several demographic variables. Table 2 descriptive statistics for the total sample and for the two groups of parents.

I tested for demographic differences using a series of *t*-tests, chi-square tests, and an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Results revealed a significant difference between groups for marital status,  $\chi^2(1) = 10.154, p = .001$ , such that CBM parents were more likely to be single (78.4%) than SBM parents (51.9%). The groups were also significantly different in terms of how many adults were living in their home,  $\chi^2(1) = 18.17, p < .001$ , such that CBM parents were more likely to have only one adult in the home (77.2%), whereas, only 40.4% of SBM parents reported only one adult in the home. The groups were also significantly different in terms of how many children were living in the home,  $t(129) = -2.26, p = 0.03$ , such that SBM parents reported having more children in the home than CBM parents. The groups were not significantly different on all other demographic variables (see Table 3).

### **Do CBM & SBM Parents Differ in their Experiences with and Involvement in BBBS Mentoring?**

**Did parents report different experiences with BBBS?** Table 4 and 5 present descriptive statistics of variables related to parental experiences with the BBBS match process,

the extent to which parents pursued a BBBS mentor, and their involvement with BBBS mentors; Table 6 presents the same descriptive statistics collapsed across low frequency categories. Variables included, the length of time since they first enrolled their children in a BBBS program, the amount of time they wait for their children to be matched, whether their child was mentored by the same mentor, the number of mentors their children had been matched with and the highest number of mentors their child had throughout mentoring, and their current match status. I ran a series of independent samples *t*-tests and chi-square tests to examine whether the two groups of parents reported different experiences with BBBS mentoring. The analyses indicated that the two groups of parents did not differ in how long they waited for their children to be matched, whether children were mentored by multiple mentors, and the number of mentors with which children have been matched (see Table 7-8).

**How much did parents pursue a BBBS mentor?** An independent samples *t*-test was used to examine whether CBM and SBM parents differed significantly in relation to how actively they pursued finding a BBBS mentor for their child. As shown in Table 7, there was a significant difference between groups,  $t(129) = 5.084$ ,  $p < .001$ , such that CBM parents ( $M = 2.11$ ) rated actively pursuing BBBS mentors higher than SBM parents ( $M = 1.29$ ).

**Involvement with BBBS mentoring.** Chi-square analyses were used to examine differences between the two groups of parents' levels of involvement with BBBS mentors (see Table 9). Results indicated CBM parents reported being significantly more involved with BBBS mentoring in several ways. CBM parents were significantly more likely to talk to their children about what they do with their mentor,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.015$ ,  $p = .045$ ; speak with their children's mentors  $\chi^2(1) = 63.361$ ,  $p < .001$ ; gotten to know their children's mentors,  $\chi^2(1) = 58.524$ ,  $p < .001$ ; have regular contact with their children's mentors,  $\chi^2(1) = 63.361$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and have

spoken to staff from BBBS about my children and their mentor,  $\chi^2(1) = 54.877, p < .001$  than SBM parents. SBM parents were more likely to report that they were not involved.

### **Do CBM and SBM Parents Differ in Perceptions of Risk & Support?**

Prior to running a series of ANCOVAs, I checked my data for potential violations of the assumptions underlying ANCOVA. Tests of normality (skewness/kurtosis) revealed that measures of family stress, economic adversity, and perceived interpersonal and community support violated the normality assumption (Table 10). The Shapiro-Wilks test of normality revealed that a significant violation of the normality assumption for the family stress ( $F_{(2, 131)} = 0.83, p < .001$ ) and economic risk ( $F_{(2, 130)} = 0.91, p < .001$ ) variables. The distribution of residuals also violated the normality assumption, and both log and square root transformations were used in an effort to fix correct for non-normality (See Table 10). Despite log transformations, Shapiro-Wilks tests of normality were still significant for both family stress ( $F_{(2, 131)} = 0.91, p < .001$ ) and economic adversity ( $F_{(2, 130)} = 0.85, p < .001$ ). Similar results were found after square root transformations: Shapiro's Wilk tests of normality were significant for family stress ( $F_{(2, 131)} = 0.92, p < .001$ ) and economic adversity ( $F_{(2, 130)} = 0.86, p < .001$ ). Given the non-normal distribution of these variables, relevant findings should be interpreted with caution. Scores for perceived interpersonal and community support also violated the normality assumption; however, a square root transformation was able to correct for this violation in normality. The homogeneity of regression slopes assumption was checked by using a Levene's test, which indicated that the family stress scale violated the assumption ( $F_{(1, 128)} = 7.88, p = .006$ ); however, tests of homogeneity for other variables were non-significant: economic adversity  $F_{(1, 128)} = 1.25, p = .267$ , interpersonal support  $F_{(1, 126)} = .095, p = .758$ , and community support  $F_{(1, 126)} = .069, p = .793$ ). Table 11 reports descriptive statistics for perceived family stress, economic adversity,

social support, and community support by group. Table 12 presents intercorrelations among measures of income, education, family risk and perceived support. Income was significantly negatively correlated with family stress and economic adversity; education was not significantly correlated to any of the outcome variables. As expected, measures of family risk were significantly and positively correlated with each other, as were measures of perceived support. Measures of family risk were significantly and negatively related to perceived interpersonal and community support.

Before comparing the two groups of parents, I first examined whether parents' demographic characteristics were significantly related to measures of family risk or perceived support (see Tables 13-17).

**Family stress.** There was also a statistically significant difference between marital status predicting family stress,  $F_{(1,129)} = 19.08, p < .001$ , such that parents who were single ( $M = 2.09$ ) reported higher levels of family stress than parents who were married ( $M = 1.07$ ).

**Economic adversity.** There was also a statistically significant difference between marital status predicting economic adversity  $F_{(1,129)} = 7.70, p = .006$ , such that parents who were single ( $M = 1.42$ ) reported higher levels of economic adversity than parents were married ( $M = 0.76$ ). Lastly, there was statistically significant difference between employment and economic adversity,  $F_{(2,127)} = 20.30, p < .001$ , such that parents who were unemployed ( $M = 2.58$ ) reported the highest level of economic adversity, in comparison to parents who did not work ( $M = 1.62$ ) due to various circumstances (e.g., homemakers, students), and parents who were employed ( $M = 0.82$ ).

**Interpersonal and community support.** Parents' demographic variables did not predict perceived interpersonal (Table 16) or community support (Table 17).

### **Do CBM & SBM Parents Differ in Perceived Risk and Support?**

Given previous analyses indicating that parents' income level was significantly related to measures of family risk and economic adversity (see Table 12), I ran a series of ANCOVAs while controlling for income.

**Family stress.** The main effect of match type (CBM vs. SBM) was not significant,  $F_{(1,125)} = 0.64, p = 0.42$ ) for family stress.

**Economic adversity.** Results revealed that there was also a non-significant main effect for match type on economic adversity,  $F_{(1,125)} = 3.02, p = 0.09$ .

**Perceived interpersonal and community support.** There were no main effects for match type on parents' ratings of interpersonal ( $F_{(1,125)} = 2.00, p = 0.16$ ) or community support ( $F_{(1,125)} = 0.14, p = 0.71$ ).

### **Do CBM & SBM Parents Differ in their Reasons for Wanting a Mentor?**

Table 18 presents, by group, parents' rankings of their top three reasons for wanting a mentor for their child. CBM parents selected "to be a positive role model in their life" most often (47.2%) as their top reason for wanting a mentor for their child. CBM parents also selected this reason most often (29.2%) as their second reason for wanting a mentor. Selected most often as their third reason for wanting a mentor was "because their father or mother is not in their life" (23.2%). SBM parents selected most often (48.1%) "to help my children socially and emotionally" as their top reason, followed by "To be a positive role model in my child's life" (25.0%) and "I wanted my children to have an adult friend they can talk to about things in their life as their third reason (23.5%), respectively. Table 19 presents percentages for both groups of parents top three reasons for seeking a mentor for their child. I used Chi-square analyses to compare the two groups of parents on the frequency with which they endorsed any reason as one

of their top three. Results indicated significant differences on 3 of the 12 response options (see Table 20). SBM parents were significantly more likely to endorse “To help my child academically”,  $\chi^2(1) = 12.166, p < .001$ , and “One of my children has a physical disability or a mental illness”,  $\chi^2(1) = 9.223, p = .002$ , than CBM parents. CBM parents were significantly more likely than SBM parents to endorse “I wanted someone who could take my children places and show them things that I couldn’t”,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.17, p = 0.01$ .

### **Discussion**

There is little research that directly compares processes and outcomes for CBM and SBM formal mentoring programs. This is particularly true for parents’ involvement in these programs and their motives for wanting to enroll their children in a formal mentoring match. In this study, I investigated the characteristics of parents whose children participated in a CBM or SBM program sponsored by BBBS-Canada. At issue is whether these two programs are possibly serving different families.

In general, my findings indicated that parents of youth in CBM matches, compared to parents of youth in SBM matches, are different on key demographic variables (e.g., marital status), but not perceived risk or support. CBM parents were also more fully engaged in BBBS mentoring, and saw mentoring as a way to give their child experiences they could not provide. SBM parents, in general, were less actively involved in BBBS mentoring and saw mentoring as a way to provide their child with needed academic support. In other respects, there were few differences between these two groups of parents, including their perceptions of stress and support. Below I discuss specific comparisons between CBM and SBM parents.

### **Do CBM and SBM Parents Differ Demographically?**

I made no *a priori* hypotheses about how these two groups of parents might differ in terms of demographics. In fact, there was considerable overlap in the demographic characteristics of these two groups of parents. Most were Caucasian mothers who completed some college or finished college. There were, however, a few key differences between CBM and SBM parents: CBM parents were less likely to be married and tended to have fewer adults in their homes. Historically, BBBS mentoring programs has tended to serve children from single-household families based on the notion that youth who lacked positive adult role models are most in need of a mentor (Styles & Morrow, 1992). Researchers have examined the relation between parents' marital status and youth mentoring outcomes (Dubois et al., 2002; 2011), but this is the first study to examine whether parents' marital status was linked to differential program enrollment.

### **Do CBM and SBM Parents Differ in their Experience and Involvement with BBBS?**

Unexpectedly, CBM and SBM parents did not differ in their experiences with BBBS mentoring agencies throughout the match process. Both groups of parents reported having similar experiences in regard to how long they waited for their children to be matched, how many mentors their children have had throughout mentoring, and the number of children they reported were either currently or previously matched with BBBS mentors. In contrast, the two groups of parents differed in how much they pursued the BBBS mentoring agency and how involved they are with their children's mentors. These findings are not surprising in consideration of the differences between CBM (Herrea et al., 2007; 2000) and SBM (Herrera & Karcher, 2014; Herrera et al., 2007; 2000) program practices, which involve parents in different ways. Results indicated CBM parents were more likely to pursue BBBS mentoring programs and be more involved with BBBS mentors in comparison to SBM parents. CBM parents also

endorsed having different experiences with BBBS mentors, which included talking to and feeling like they knew their children's mentors. In regards to BBBS program staff, CBM parents also reported having more contact with staff members than SBM parents.

### **Do CBM and SBM Parents Differ on Perceived Risk and Support?**

Contrary to my hypotheses, I did not find evidence that SBM parents reported greater family stress, economic adversity, or less perceived support than CBM parents. Regarding the findings that CBM and SBM parents reported similar levels family stress and economic adversity my findings were inconsistent with Herrera and colleagues (2000) speculation that SBM programs, given a reliance on referrals from school staff, could potentially identify youth who were more disadvantaged and at greater risk than those served by CBM programs. CBM and SBM parents actually reported similar levels family stress and economic adversity, which may reflect that both groups of youth experience similar stressors and therefore their parent seek out mentoring services or they are referred by a school staff member, which is consistent with both help-seeking models (Costello et al., 1998; Stiffman et al., 2004). Findings related to CBM and SBM parents reporting similar social and community support might be due to both groups of parents' being a part of families and communities in which they feel supported, but perhaps they feel as though their children do not have the support they need for various reasons. This is consistent with both help-seeking models, which suggest that parents or gateway providers identify resources for children when someone perceives a child is in need or could benefit from such a source (Costello et al., 1998; Stiffman et al., 2004).

### **Do CBM and SBM Parents Differ in Reasons for Wanting a Mentor for their Child?**

Overall, parents of both groups identified their top three reasons for wanting a mentor for their child similarly. CBM and SBM parents endorsed wanting mentors for their children so they



could have a positive role model, for emotional and social support, and/or because their children's other parent was not in their life. Despite parents endorsing similar reasons overall, CBM parents most often saw mentors as a positive role model and as someone who can support children when their father or mother is not in their life. In contrast, SBM parents endorsed saw mentors as a resource for helping their child "socially and emotionally." This pattern of findings is not surprising in light of the fact that CBM parents were also more likely to be single compared to SBM parents. CBM parents were also more likely to select as one of their top three reasons wanting someone who could take their children places and show them things. Spencer and colleagues' (2011) qualitative study also revealed that parents of youth in CBM programs hoped their child would engage in experiences that they could not provide. These findings also likely reflect key differences in the extent to which CBM and SBM matches engage in various social activities (Herrera et al., 2011). SBM parents, on the other hand, were more likely to want a mentor to help their children with academics or because their child had a physical disability or a mental illness, which is also consistent with the tendency for SBM programs to have an academic focus and to serve youth experiencing difficulties in school (Herrera et al., 2011).

These findings begin to shed light on possible similarities and differences between parents of youth in CBM and SBM programs. CBM and SBM parents appear to have similar reasons for wanting a mentor and when differences exist they are line with program structures. That is, CBM parents were more likely to view having a mentor for their children as a way for them to have new experiences, which fits with the focus of CBM matches that meet outside of the school context. Because SBM programs are restricted to the school context, there are limits to the kinds of new experiences or opportunities children will have with their SBM mentor. CBM parents were also more likely to seek mentors because a mother or father was not in the home,

which is not surprising in light of the fact that CBM parents were less likely to be married than SBM parents. Parents of youth in SBM programs, on the other hand, endorsed as reasons for wanting a mentor someone to help their child academically or because their child had a physical disability or mental health problem. Context again, plays an important role in interpreting this finding given that SBM programs take place in the school setting. As described by the Gateway Keeper Model (Stiffman et al., 1992) it makes sense that parents enrolling their children in a SBM program might be interested in improving their children's academic performance and supporting their children if they had a physical disability or mental health issue, which is likely based on a referral made by school staff.

### **Limitations**

The current study had several limitations. First, data were collected using a cross-sectional design that limits conclusions that can be drawn about the temporal or casual relations among parents' reasons for wanting a mentor, level of risk or support, and program type. The relatively small sample ( $n = 131$ ) in this study represented those CBM and SBM parents who responded to an emailed invitation; therefore, it is impossible to know whether this sample of parents is representative of all parents of youth participating in these programs. Data used for this study were limited to self-report answers to a series of close-ended questions, which makes it difficult to know whether the measures accurately captured each construct. Measures used to assess parents' reasons for wanting a mentor or their level of perceived family risk were relatively new and untested, which limits the conclusions one can draw from these data. Lastly, data was only collected from parents, so there is no way to link reports of risk and support to their children's mentoring experiences. Another limitation to the current study is that the data were collected in Canada and therefore may be difficult to generalize to other Big Brothers Big

Sisters Programs in America. Further research is needed to explore whether the current study's findings are replicable in other populations given the data were collected from a small subset ( $n = 131$ ) of parents with youth participating in BBB-Canada mentoring programs. It may be that these findings are only applicable to a small group of participants and collecting data from a larger more diverse population would yield different results.

### **Implications & Future Directions**

I found evidence that parents of youth in CBM and SBM matches are quite similar but also have some differences, and these findings have potential implications for both research and practice. From a practice standpoint, mentoring programs would likely benefit from knowing that CBM and SBM parents are unlikely to present with dramatically different backgrounds, levels of risk, and perceptions of support. However, it would be important for program staff to recognize that these parents might have very different reasons for wanting a mentor for their child. These differences could shape how mentoring agencies tailor their outreach efforts to reach particular groups of families. The current findings could also lead to better services for families already engaged in mentoring. For example, if parents who enroll their child in CBM matches are more likely to be single and have no co-parent, then this could shape the kinds of services and support offered to these parents. Perhaps program staff can inquire about other children in the home who might need a mentor or advise mentors about ways to connect with and support their mentees' parents. There might also be benefit in education mentors about the challenges faced by single parents trying to raise multiple children on their own.

My findings also support the value of further research on parents who enroll their children in formal mentoring programs. Ideally, future research would investigate parents' motivations to seek out mentoring services prior to enrolling their children. It would be

beneficial to know how parents became aware of mentoring programs in their community (e.g., from a teacher, friend, or relative) and the factors that influenced them to pursue a mentor for their child (e.g., having their own mentor, hearing from a relative or friend). Other parental characteristics worth examining include urban versus rural residence, cultural background, years of parenting, as well as their children's ages and personality traits. It is hypothesized that these characteristics could influence the decision to enroll in a CBM program or accept an SBM mentor for their child. For example, it is possible parents from different cultural backgrounds could have differing views or beliefs about seeking the support of youth serving agencies and the notion of their children spending time with an adult outside of their family or community system. Currently, there are very few studies that have examined parents' role in youth mentoring with the exception of Spencer and colleagues' qualitative studies (2014; 2011). Furthermore, there are currently no published studies that have examined factors that influence parents' decision to seek mentoring services. It would also be beneficial to examine children's role in the process of seeking and enrolling in a formal mentoring program. In this study, all data were based on parents' report and I did not assess children's desire to be mentored or their role in the decision-making process. It would be interesting to know if and how children might influence parents' efforts to participate in a formal mentoring program.

Finally, the current findings could have potential implications for parents' role in seeking informal mentors (supportive non-parental adults from youths' pre-existing social networks) for their children (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2013). For example, I found that CBM and SBM parents reported similar levels of support from family, friends, and their community despite a tendency for CBM parents to be single and to live with more children but fewer adults in the home than SBM parents. How might these findings inform research on children's relationships with

informal mentors? Perhaps parents who face many challenges but see ample support in their community can benefit from education about the benefits of informal mentoring relationships in addition to the merits of formal mentoring. Research has shown that a large proportion of youth identify being connected with informal mentors (Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005a; 2005b; Hagler, Raposa, & Rhodes, 2017) and researchers have begun to empirically examine the benefits of these relationships. Several studies have shown that informal mentoring relationships typically last longer (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2013; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005) and it is theorized the duration of these relationships is due to children strengthening their connections with existing adults in their support system (Dubois & Zimmerman, 2005a). Youth connected with informal mentors have also demonstrated improvements across academic, psychological, and physical health domains, as well as, shown reductions in problematic behaviors (Hurd & Zimmerman 2010; Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005b). Dubois & Silverthorn (2005a) suggested the mechanism that contributes to improvements in youth functioning is because children are strengthening their connections with non-familial professionals (e.g., school teachers, counselors, coaches) who have expertise in different areas. The researchers speculated that the informal mentors' expertise allows them to provide education and experiences to the children that may consequently change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005a). Despite research showing benefits of informal mentoring relationships there have been few studies to exam how these relationships are formed (Hagler, Raposa, & Rhodes, 2017). Future studies should explore ways to facilitate parents' efforts to seek potential informal mentors within their community or extended family system.

## **Conclusion**

Formal mentoring programs have long been established as an avenue to connect at-risk youth with non-parental adults in an effort to improve overall functioning and outcomes (Cavell & Elledge, 2013; Rhodes, 2002, 2005). There have been numerous studies examining the extent to which mentoring programs improve youth outcomes across different domains (Dubois et al., 2002, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010). Far more limited are studies that examine parents' motivations and roles in the mentoring process, including the process of choosing to enroll their child in a formal mentoring program. The current study was a beginning examination of whether parents of youth in CBM and SBM programs differ in ways that could affect mentoring program practices. Findings from this study reveal considerable similarity in these two groups of caregivers but also key differences in their reasons for wanting a mentor for their child. There is clear need for further research on parents' motivations and expectations for both formal and informal mentoring relationships as a means of promoting children's health and development.

## Tables

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participating Parents/Caregivers*

Variable		All parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age		40.24	7.59	41.27	7.11	38.69	8.09
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender							
	Male	9	6.9%	4	5.1%	5	9.6%
	Female	122	93.1%	75	94.9%	47	90.4%
Race							
	Caucasian	98	74.8%	55	69.6%	43	82.7%
	Non-Caucasian	29	22.8%	21	26.6%	8	15.4%
	Missing	4	3.1%	3	3.8%	1	1.9%
Marital status							
	Never married	40	30.5%	29	36.7%	11	21.2%
	Married or common law	42	32.1%	17	21.5%	25	48.1%
	Divorced/separated/widowed	49	37.4%	33	41.8%	16	30.8%
Employment							
	Full-Time	68	51.9%	42	53.2%	26	50%
	Part-Time	23	17.6%	12	15.2%	11	21.2%
	Out of work & looking	9	6.9%	6	7.6%	3	5.8%
	Out of work, but not looking	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Unable to work	12	9.2%	10	12.7%	2	3.8%
	Homemaker	20	15.3%	10	12.7%	10	19.2%
	Student	5	3.8%	4	5.1%	1	1.9%
	Retired	2	1.5%	0	0%	2	3.8%
Income							
	<\$10,000	9	6.9%	8	10.1%	1	1.9%
	\$10,000-\$39,000	56	42.7%	34	43.0%	22	42.3%
	\$40,000-\$59,000	34	26.0%	19	24.1%	15	28.8%
	>\$60,000	29	22.1%	16	20.3%	13	25.0%
	Missing	3	2.3%	2	2.5%	1	1.9%
Education							
	Some secondary school	12	9.2%	8	10.1%	4	7.7%
	Completed secondary school	12	9.2%	6	7.6%	6	11.5%
	Some college	34	26.0%	23	29.1%	11	21.2%
	Completed college	73	55.7%	42	53.2%	31	59.6%

Table 1 (Cont.)

Variable	All parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Adults in home						
Biological mother	122	93.1%	76	96.2%	46	88.5%
Biological father	27	20.6%	12	15.2%	15	28.8%
Grandmother	10	7.6%	6	7.6%	4	7.7%
Grandfather	4	3.1%	0	0%	4	7.7%
Step mother	2	1.5%	0	0%	2	3.8%
Step father	16	12.2%	5	6.3%	11	21.2%
Adoptive mother	2	1.5%	1	1.3%	1	1.9%
Adoptive father	3	2.3%	2	2.5%	1	1.9%
Foster mother	2	1.5%	2	2.5%	0	0%
Foster father	1	.8%	1	1.3%	0	0%
Other	9	6.9%	6	7.6%	3	5.8%
Number of children						
1	39	29.8%	29	36.7%	10	19.2%
2	50	38.2%	29	36.7%	21	40.4%
3	22	16.8%	11	13.9%	11	21.2%
4	11	8.4%	5	6.3%	6	11.5%
5	3	2.3%	1	1.3%	2	3.8%
6	3	2.3%	2	2.5%	1	1.9%
7	2	1.5%	1	1.3%	1	1.9%
8	1	.8%	1	1.3%	0	0%



Table 2

*Demographic Statistics of Participating Parents/Caregivers (Collapsed Across Groups)*

Variable	All parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	40.24	7.59	41.27	7.11	38.69	8.09
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender						
Male	9	6.9%	4	5.1%	5	9.6%
Female	122	93.1%	75	94.9%	47	90.4%
Race						
Caucasian	98	74.8%	55	69.6%	43	82.7%
Non-Caucasian	29	22.8%	21	26.6%	8	15.4%
Marital status						
Not married	89	67.9%	62	78.4%	27	51.9%
Married	42	32.1%	17	21.5%	25	40.1%
Employment						
Employed	91	69.5%	54	68.4%	37	71.2%
Unemployed	19	14.5%	15	19.0%	4	7.7%
Other	21	16.0%	10	12.7%	11	21.2%
Adults in home						
One adult	82	62.6%	61	77.2%	21	40.4%
2 or more adults	49	37.4%	18	22.8%	31	59.6%
Number of children						
1 child	39	29.8%	29	36.7%	10	19.2%
2 children	50	38.2%	29	36.7%	21	40.4%
3 or more children	42	32.1%	21	26.6%	21	40.4%

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 3

*Independent Samples T-Tests, & Chi-Square Tests of Demographic Differences Between Two Groups of Parents*

Variable	CBM Parents		SBM Parents		<i>t(df)</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Age	41.27	7.10	38.69	8.09	<i>t</i> (129)= 1.92
# of Children	0.90	0.79	1.21	0.75	<i>t</i> (129) = -2.26*
Income	1.56	0.94	1.78	0.86	<i>t</i> (126) -1.38
Education	2.25	0.98	2.33	0.96	<i>t</i> (129) = -0.42
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	$\chi^2$
Gender					1.14
Male	4	5.1%	5	9.6%	
Female	75	94.9%	47	90.4%	
Race					2.47
Caucasian	55	69.6%	43	82.7%	
Non- Caucasian	21	26.6%	8	15.4%	
Marital status					10.15**
Single	62	78.4%	27	51.9%	
Married	17	21.5%	25	40.1%	
Employment					4.21
Employed	54	68.4%	37	71.2%	
Unemployed	15	19.0%	4	7.7%	
Other	10	12.7%	11	21.2%	
Adults in home					18.17**
One adult	61	77.2%	21	40.4%	
2 or more adults	18	22.8%	31	59.6%	

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level; \*\* Significant at the .01 level

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics of Parental Experiences with BBBS*

Variable	All parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Length of time since first enrolled in BBBS (months)	30.45	28.04	36.20	31.16	21.55	19.53
Longest time mentored by the same mentor? (months)	21.69	23.86	28.61	27.50	11.18	10.39
Longest time you waited for a mentor? (months)	12.38	16.00	14.99	15.53	7.60	15.93
Extent you actively pursued BBBS?	1.79	0.99	2.11	0.91	1.29	0.92

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics of Parental Experiences with BBBS Mentors Continued*

	All Parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM Parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM Parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
<b>More than one mentor</b>							
0	92	70.2%	56	70.9%	36	69.2%	
1	28	21.4%	17	21.5%	11	21.2%	
2	5	3.8%	2	2.5%	3	5.8%	
3	2	1.5%	2	2.5%	0	0%	
Missing	4	3.1%	2	2.5%	2	3.8%	
<b>Highest # of mentors</b>							
0	7	5.3%	3	3.8%	4	7.7%	
1	85	64.9%	53	67.1%	32	61.5%	
2	28	21.4%	16	20.3%	12	23.1%	
3	7	5.3%	4	5.1%	3	5.8%	
4	1	.8%	1	1.3%	0	0%	
Missing	3	2.3%	2	2.5%	1	1.9%	
<b>Currently matched</b>							
0	5	3.8%	1	1.3%	4	7.7%	
1	107	81.7%	64	81%	43	82.7%	
2	18	13.7%	13	16.5%	5	9.6%	
3	1	0.8%	1	1.3%	0	0%	
<b>Previously matched</b>							
0	107	81.7%	63	79.7%	44	84.6%	
1	16	12.2%	10	12.7%	6	11.5%	
2	2	1.5%	1	1.3%	1	1.9%	
3	1	0.8%	1	1.3%	0	0%	
Missing	5	3.8%	4	5.1%	1	1.9%	
<b>Involvement</b>							
Not involved	4	3.1%	0	0%	4	7.7%	
Paperwork	119	90.8%	74	93.7%	45	86.5%	
Talk to child	119	90.8%	75	94.9%	44	84.6%	
Talk to mentor	88	67.2%	74	93.7%	14	26.9%	
Know mentor	69	52.7%	63	79.7%	6	11.5%	
Regular contact	65	49.6%	63	79.7%	2	3.8%	
Contact teacher	55	42.0%	28	35.4%	27	51.9%	
BBBS staff	81	61.8%	69	87.3%	12	23.1%	
Other	5	3.8%	4	5.1%	1	1.9%	

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics of Parental Experiences with BBBS (Collapsed Across Groups)*

		All Parents ( <i>n</i> = 131)		CBM Parents ( <i>n</i> = 79)		SBM Parents ( <i>n</i> = 52)	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Number of mentors							
	Only 1 mentor	96	73.3%	58	73.4%	38	73.1%
	> 1 mentor	35	26.7%	21	26.5%	14	26.9%
Highest # of mentors							
	Never matched	10	7.6%	5	6.3%	5	9.6%
	1 mentor	85	64.9%	53	67.1%	32	61.5%
	2 or more mentors	36	27.5%	21	26.6%	15	28.8%
Match status							
	Currently matched	126	96.2%	78	98.7%	48	92.3%
	Never matched	5	3.8%	1	1.3%	4	7.7%

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 7

*Independent Samples T-Tests of Experiences with BBBS Mentors Between the Two Groups of Parents*

Variable	CBM Parents		SBM Parents		<i>t</i> (129)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Length of time since first enrolled in BBBS (months)	3.39	3.23	2.49	3.09	1.58
Longest time mentored by same mentor (months)	3.34	3.24	2.54	2.84	1.42
Longest time you waited for a mentor (months)	2.68	2.76	1.60	1.73	2.30
Extent you actively pursued BBBS	2.11	0.91	1.29	0.92	5.08**

*Note.* \*\* Significant at the .01 level

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 8

*Chi-Square tests of BBBS Mentor Experiences Between Two Groups of Parents*

Variable	<u>CBM Parents</u>		<u>SBM Parents</u>		$\chi^2$
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Number of mentors					0.00
1 Mentor	58	73.4%	38	73.1%	
> 1 Mentor	21	26.5%	14	26.9%	
Highest # of mentors					0.17
1 Mentor	53	71.6%	32	68.1%	
2 or more mentors	21	28.4%	15	31.9%	
Match status					3.53
Never matched	1	1.3%	4	7.7%	
Currently matched	78	98.7%	48	92.3%	

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 9

*Chi-Square tests of Differences Between Parents' Level of Involvement with BBBS Mentor*

Variable	<u>CBM Parents</u>		<u>SBM Parents</u>		$\chi^2$
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Not involved	0	0.0%	4	7.7%	6.27*
Paperwork	74	93.7%	45	86.5%	1.91
Talk to child	75	94.9%	44	84.6%	4.01
Talk to mentor	74	93.7%	14	26.9%	63.36**
Know mentor	63	79.7%	6	11.5%	58.52**
Regular contact	63	79.7%	2	3.8%	72.27**
Contact teacher	28	35.4%	27	51.9%	3.50
BBBS staff	69	87.3%	12	23.1%	54.88**
Other	4	5.1%	1	1.9%	.842

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level; \*\* Significant at the .01 level

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 10

*Normality statistics of Family Risk, Social Support, and Community Support for Total Sample*

Variable	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			<i>Statistic</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>SE</i>
Family stress	1.76(1.33)	1.77	0.71	0.21	0.06	0.42
Log transformation family stress	0.39(0.22)	0.05	-0.31	0.21	-0.59	0.21
Square root transformation family stress	1.61(0.40)	0.16	0.20	0.21	-0.55	0.42
Economic adversity	1.21(1.30)	1.69	1.05	0.21	0.59	0.42
Log transformation economic adversity	0.27(0.25)	0.06	0.23	0.21	-1.21	0.42
Square root transformation economic adversity	1.43(0.42)	0.17	0.60	0.21	-0.58	0.42
Social support	3.05(0.72)	0.52	-0.68	0.21	-0.12	0.42
Square root transformation social support	3.63(0.25)	0.06	-0.36	0.21	-0.69	0.42
Community support	3.38(0.71)	0.51	-0.63	0.21	0.93	0.42
Square root transformation community support	4.40(0.05)	0.22	-0.11	0.21	0.67	0.42

Table 11

*Means and Standard Deviations for Ratings of Family Stress, Economic Adversity, Social Support, and Community Support by Group*

Variable	<u>CBM parents</u>		<u>SBM parents</u>	
	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )
Family stress	1.87	1.30	1.60	1.38
Economic adversity	1.42	1.43	0.88	1.00
Interpersonal support	3.60	0.26	3.67	0.24
Community support	4.39	0.22	4.41	0.21

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 12

*Bivariate Correlations among Outcome Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Income	--	0.07	-0.30**	-0.56**	0.14	0.09
2. Education	--	--	-0.09	-0.07	0.04	0.10
3. Family stress	--	--	--	.32**	-0.20*	-0.25**
4. Economic adversity	--	--	--	--	-0.30**	-0.30**
5. Interpersonal support	--	--	--	--	--	0.36**
6. Community support	--	--	---	--	--	--

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level; \*\* Significant at the .01 level

Table 13

*Independent Samples T-tests of Demographic Differences on Family Stress*

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>t(df)</i>
Gender	Male	9	1.79(1.33)	0.75(129)
	Female	122	1.44(1.42)	
Race	Caucasian	98	1.76(1.29)	0.11(125)
	Non-Caucasian	29	1.72(1.53)	
Marital status	Single	89	2.09(1.24)	4.37(129)**
	Married	42	1.07(1.26)	
Number of adults in home	One adult	82	1.91(1.28)	1.70(129)
	> 1 adult	49	1.51(1.39)	

*Note.* \*\* Significant at the .01 level



Table 14

*Independent Samples T-tests of Demographic Differences on Economic Adversity*

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>t(df)</i>
Gender	Male	9	1.24(1.31)	1.03(128)
	Female	122	.78(.972)	
Race	Caucasian	98	1.76(1.29)	0.11(125)
	Non-Caucasian	29	1.72(1.53)	
Marital status	Single	89	1.42(1.36)	2.77(128)*
	Married	42	0.76(1.03)	
Number of adults in home	One adult	82	1.37(1.42)	1.83(128)
	> 1 adult	49	.94(1.02)	

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level

Table 15

*Independent Samples T-Tests of Demographic Differences on Interpersonal Support*

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>t(df)</i>
Gender	Male	9	3.55(0.27)	0.96(129)
	Female	122	3.63(0.25)	
Race	Caucasian	98	3.62(0.25)	-0.35(125)
	Non-Caucasian	29	3.64(0.27)	
Marital status	Single	89	3.60(0.25)	-1.27(129)
	Married	42	3.67(0.25)	
Number of adults in home	One adult	82	3.61(0.25)	-1.25(129)
	> 1 adult	49	3.66(0.25)	

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level

Table 16

*Independent Samples T-Tests of Demographic Differences on Community Support*

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>t(df)</i>
Gender	Male	9	4.40(.22)	0.35(129)
	Female	122	4.37 (.14)	
Race	Caucasian	98	4.38(.23)	-1.69(125)
	Non-Caucasian	29	4.46(.19)	
Marital status	Single	89	4.39(.21)	-0.29(129)
	Married	42	4.41(.25)	
Number of adults in home	One adult	82	4.41(.21)	0.80(129)
	> 1 adult	49	4.38(.24)	

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level

Table 17

*ANOVAs of Employment on Dependent Variables*

Variable		<i>N</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Family stress	Unemployed	19	2.21(1.13)
	Employed	91	1.62(1.32)
	Other	21	2.00(1.45)
Economic adversity	Unemployed	19	2.58(1.22)
	Employed	91	0.82(1.05)
	Other	21	1.162(1.43)
Interpersonal support	Unemployed	19	3.52(0.22)
	Employed	91	3.66(0.24)
	Other	21	3.58(0.31)
Community support	Unemployed	19	4.33(0.20)
	Employed	91	4.42(0.21)
	Other	21	4.37(0.26)

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level

Table 18

*Percentages for Parents' Top 3 Rankings of Reasons for Seeking a Mentor by Group*

<u>CBM Parents</u>			
<i>Reason</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>
Role Model	47.2%	29.2%	5.8%
Academics	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%
Social/emotional	13.9%	26.4%	15.9%
Parent was mentored	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Child with a disability	2.8%	5.6%	1.4%
No father/mother	26.4%	11.1%	23.2%
Parent lacks time	1.4%	4.2%	4.3%
Parent health issues	0.0%	1.4%	4.3%
Meet other adults	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%
Do new things	1.4%	4.2%	13.0%
Adult friend	5.6%	11.1%	21.7%
Help guide child	0.0%	1.4%	8.7%
<u>SBM Parents</u>			
<i>Reason</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>
Role model	23.1%	25.0%	13.7%
Academics	5.8%	9.6%	11.8%
Social/emotional	48.1%	17.3%	9.8%
Parent was mentored	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Child with a disability	3.8%	23.1%	2.0%
No father/mother	13.5%	5.8%	11.8%
Parent lacks time	0.0%	3.8%	5.9%
Parent health issues	0.0%	0.0%	0%
Meet other adults	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%
Do new things	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Adult Friend	3.8%	7.7%	23.5%
Help guide child	0.0%	5.8%	11.8%

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 19

*Percentages for Parents' Top Three Reasons for Seeking a Mentor by Group*

<u>CBM Parents</u>		
<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>%</i>
1	To be a positive role model in their life	74.7%
2	To help my child socially or emotionally	37.9%
3	My children's father (or mother) is not in their life	30.4%
4	I wanted my children to have an adult friend to talk to	29.1%
5	I wanted someone who could take my children places and show them things	15.2%
6	I wanted an extra pair of eyes/hands in guiding my child's development	8.9%
7	I don't have time to be as actively involved with them as I would like	7.6%
8	One of my children has a physical disability or mental health illness	6.3%
9	I have health-related issues that make it hard for me to be there for my child	5.1%
10	To help my children academically	2.5%
11	I wanted my children to get to know other adults	2.5%
12	I was mentored when I was a child and had a positive experience	0%
<u>SBM Parents</u>		
<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>%</i>
1	To be a positive role model in their life	61.5%
2	I wanted my children to have an adult friend to talk to	30.8%
3	To help my child socially or emotionally	26.9%
4	One of my children has a physical disability or mental health illness	25.0%
5	To help my children academically	21.2%
6	My children's father (or mother) is not in their life	17.3%
7	I wanted an extra pair of eyes/hands in guiding my child's development	17.3%
8	I don't have time to be as actively involved with them as I would like	9.6%
9	I wanted my children to get to know other adults	3.8%
10	I wanted someone who could take my children places and show them things	1.9%
11	I was mentored when I was a child and had a positive experience	1.9%
12	I have health-related issues that make it hard for me to be there for my child	0%

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

Table 20

*Chi-Square Tests of Differences Between Parents' Reasons for Seeking a Mentor*

Variable	<u>CBM Parents</u>		<u>SBM Parents</u>		$\chi^2$
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Role Model	59	74.7%	32	61.5%	2.56
Academics	2	2.5%	11	21.2%	12.17**
Social/Emotional	30	38.0%	14	26.9%	1.71
Parent Mentored	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1.53
Child with a disability	5	6.3%	13	25%	9.23**
No father/mother	24	30.4%	9	17.3%	2.84
Parent lacks time	6	7.6%	5	9.6%	.166
Parent health issues	4	5.1%	0	0.0%	2.72
Meet other adults	2	2.5%	2	3.8%	0.18
Do new things	12	15.2%	1	1.9%	6.18*
Adult friend	23	29.1%	16	30.8%	0.04
Help guide child	23	29.1%	16	30.8%	0.04

*Note.* \*Significant at the .05 level; \*\* Significant at the .01 level

*Note.* CBM = Community Based Mentoring and SBM = School Based Mentoring.

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## Appendix




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 Office of Research and Compliance  
 Institutional Review Board

July 21, 2017

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Tim Cavell  
Juventino Hernandez-Rodriguez  
Meredith Sourk

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 17-06-772

Protocol Title: *The Godparent Project: Parents' Role in Seeking Informal Mentors for their Children*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 07/20/2017 Expiration Date: 07/19/2018

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 161 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

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If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

## Measures

**Below are a few questions about you and your family.**

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Transgender
3. With which of the following do you identify? (Check all that apply)
  - a. Caucasian
  - b. African Canadian
  - c. Aboriginal
  - d. Asian
  - e. Hispanic Canadian
  - f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your current marital status?
  - a. Married/Common- law
  - b. Divorced/Separated/Widowed
  - c. Never Married
5. What is your highest level of education?
  - a. Some Secondary School
  - b. Completed Secondary School
  - c. Some College or University
  - d. Completed College or University
6. What is your employment status at this time? (check all that apply)
  - a. Employed for wages (full-time)
  - b. Employed for wages (part-time)
  - c. Out of work and looking for work
  - d. Out of work but not looking for work
  - e. Unable to work
  - f. A homemaker
  - g. A student
  - h. Retired
7. Which of the following people, including yourself, *currently reside* in your home and provide caretaking for your child(ren)? (Check all that apply)
  - a. Biological mother
  - b. Biological father
  - c. Grandmother
  - d. Grandfather
  - e. Step mother
  - f. Step father
  - g. Adoptive mother
  - h. Adoptive father
  - i. Foster mother
  - j. Foster father
  - k. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your annual household income?
  - a. < \$10,000
  - b. \$10,000 - \$39,999
  - c. \$40,000 - \$59,999
  - d.  $\geq$ \$60,000
9. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What are their ages? Check all that apply. [options 0 – 30]

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Mentoring Experiences**

Below are a few questions about your children and their involvement with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). Note that “mentoring match” means meeting regularly with a mentor.

1. Do you have a child currently matched with a mentor in the BBBS *In School Mentoring* program (They meet only at school)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you have a child currently matched with a mentor in the BBBS community-based mentoring program (They meet away from school and outside of school hours)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. How many of your children have ever been enrolled in any type of BBBS mentoring program (in school mentoring or community-based mentoring)? \_\_\_\_
4. How many of your children have ever been enrolled in a *different, non-BBBS* mentoring program? \_\_\_\_
5. How many of your children are *currently* matched with a BBBS mentor? \_\_\_\_
6. How many of your children *were* previously matched with a BBBS mentor but are no longer mentored? \_\_\_\_
7. How long ago was the very first time you enrolled one of your children in a BBBS program? \_\_\_\_\_years \_\_\_\_\_months
8. What’s the longest time that any one of your children were mentored by the same BBBS mentor? \_\_\_\_\_years \_\_\_\_\_months
9. What is the longest time that any of your children waited to be matched with a BBBS mentor? \_\_\_\_\_years \_\_\_\_\_months
10. How many of your children have had more than one BBBS mentor? \_\_\_\_
11. What’s the highest number of BBBS mentors that *any* of your children have had? \_\_\_\_
12. To what extent did you actively pursue finding BBBS mentor(s) for your child(ren)?
  - a. Not at all
  - b. Very little
  - c. Somewhat
  - d. To a great extent
13. In what ways have *you* been involved with your children’s **BBBS** mentoring? (Check all that apply)
  - a. I have not been involved at all
  - b. I completed paperwork for my child(ren) to be mentored
  - c. I talk to my child(ren) about what they do with their mentor
  - d. I have spoken with my child(ren)’s mentors

- e. I have gotten to know my child(ren)'s mentors.
  - f. I have regular contact with my child(ren)'s mentors.
  - g. I have spoken to my child(ren)'s teacher about the mentoring program
  - h. I have spoken to staff from BBBS about my child(ren) and their mentor
- Other (please specify; write NA if you prefer to not specify)

**What are your top 3 reasons for wanting a mentor for your children?**

- i. To be a positive role model in their life
- j. To help my children academically
- k. To help my children socially or emotionally
- l. I was mentored when I was a child and had a positive experience
- m. One of my children has a physical disability or a mental illness
- n. My children's father (or mother) is not in their life
- o. I don't have the time to be as actively involved with them as I would like.
- p. I have a health-related issues that make it hard for me to be there for my children
- q. I wanted my children to get to know other adults
- r. I wanted someone who could take my children places and show them things that I couldn't
- s. I wanted my children to have an adult friend they can talk to about things in their life
- t. I wanted an extra pair of eyes/hands in guiding my children's development
- u. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Risk Assessment – Economic Adversity and Family Stress items**

Herrera, C., DuBois, D. L. & Grossman, J. B. (2013) The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles. New York, NY: A Public/Private Ventures project distributed by MDRC.

Please respond to all of the items by indicating either Yes or No. Respond 'Yes' if the statement is true for one or more of your children.

1. My children live in a public housing development.
2. My children live in a situation where we could be forced to leave or evicted.
3. In the last 12 months, my family has experienced times when we had difficulty paying our bills.
4. There are gangs or illegal drugs in the neighborhood where we live.
5. Neither parent living with the children is currently working at a full-time job.
6. My children's family has a combined income below \$20,000 (or receives food stamps).
7. In the last 5 years, my children have lived with a foster parent.
8. One or more members of my children's family struggles with alcohol or drug use.
9. A significant member of my children's family (sibling, parent, or other close relative) is in jail or prison or is often in trouble with the police.
10. My children live with only one parent, guardian or other adult who takes care of him/her.
11. My children have moved or changed where they live two or more times in the last 12 months.
12. My children's parents separated or broke up in the last year (for example, they started living in different places).
13. My children have seen or experienced many fights or arguments in our home in the last 12 months.

14. My children have lost or lost contact with an important adult role model in the last 12 months (for example, a parent or other important adult died or moved out of our home).
15. My children have experienced homelessness in the last five years.
16. One or more of my children's parents did not complete high school.

### **Interpersonal Support Evaluation List-12**

Cohen, S., Memelstein, R., Kamarck, T., & Hoberman, H. (1985). Measuring the functional components of social support. In I.G. Sarason & B. Sarason (Eds.), *Social support: Theory, research and application* (pp.73-94). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

[1 = definitely false, 2 = probably false, 3 = probably true, 4 = definitely true]

1. If I wanted to go on a trip for a day (for example, to the country or mountains), I would have a hard time finding someone to go with me.
2. I feel that there is no one I can share my most private worries and fears with.
3. If I were sick, I could easily find someone to help me with my daily chores.
4. There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family.
5. If I decide one afternoon that I would like to go to a movie that evening, I could easily find someone to go with me.
6. When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to.
7. I don't often get invited to do things with others.
8. If I had to go out of town for a few weeks, it would be difficult to find someone who would look after my house or apartment (the plants, pets, garden, etc.).
9. If I wanted to have lunch with someone, I could easily find someone to join me.
10. If I was stranded 10 miles from home, there is someone I could call who could come and get me.
11. If a family crisis arose, it would be difficult to find someone who could give me good advice about how to handle it.
12. If I needed some help in moving to a new house or apartment, I would have a hard time finding someone to help me.

### **Brief Sense of Community Scale**

Peterson, N. A., Speer, P. W., & McMillan, D. W. (2008). Validation of a brief sense of community scale: Confirmation of the principal theory of sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36(1), 61-73. [Concepts based on McMillan and Chavis (1986)]

[1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree]

1. I can get what I need in this neighborhood.
2. This neighborhood helps me fulfill my needs.
3. I feel like a member of this neighborhood.
4. I belong in this neighborhood.
5. I have a say about what goes on in my neighborhood.
6. People in this neighborhood are good at influencing each other.
7. I feel connected to this neighborhood.
8. I have a good bond with others in this neighborhood