



2019 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Annual Impact Report

*Jessica Mitchell, Ph.D.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
May 2020*

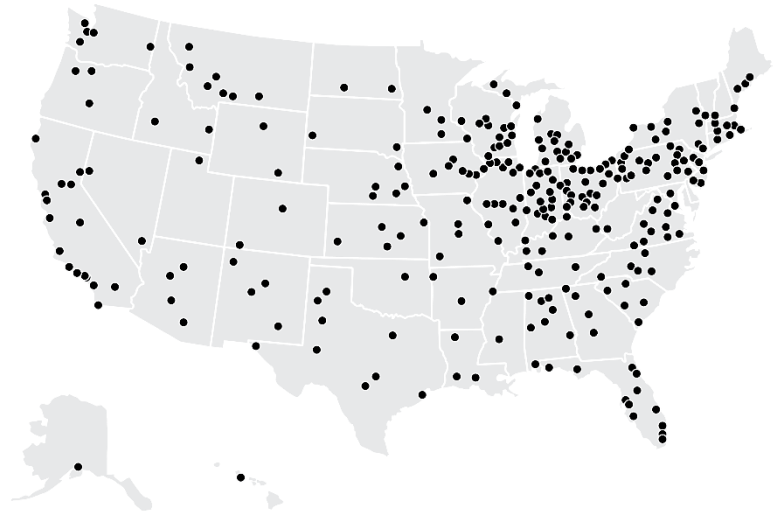
© Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2020. Unauthorized use, distribution, transmission, and/or duplication of this material without express and written permission from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is strictly prohibited. Excerpts and links may be used, provided that full and clear credit is given to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America with appropriate and specific direction to the original content.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **135,786 Littles** served by the BBBS network in 2019.
- Community-Based matches are lasting over 31 months – **over 35% longer** than the average match length 10 years ago.
- Site-Based matches are lasting over 16 months – **over 28% longer** than the average match length 10 years ago.
- Community-Based matches surveyed in 2019 made **significant improvements from baseline to follow-up in all eight outcomes areas**: parental trust, attitudes towards risky behaviors, grades, educational expectations, school attendance (*new measurement area*), ability to get along with peers (social competence), juvenile justice involvement, and the presence of a special adult.
- After at least one year of mentoring, over **95%** of Community-Based and over **89%** of Site-Based Littles report that **they feel they have a special adult** in their life.

OUR REACH

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. The 240 agencies across the country (which are indicated on the map) operate in all 50 states and serve youth from age 5 into young adulthood in both Community-Based and Site-Based settings. Our agencies have been matching mentees ("Littles") with mentors ("Bigs") in one-to-one relationships since 1904 and have served nearly 2 million Littles in just the past decade. More than 400,000 Littles, their families, their Bigs, and other mission-critical volunteers are part of our evidence-based mentoring program annually.



OUR MODEL

The core BBBS program is Community-Based Mentoring, which allows matches to spend one-on-one time together in settings and activities of their choosing. The Community-Based Mentoring Program began over a century ago as a way to stem juvenile delinquency. BBBS agencies specialize in creating and supporting the relationships that help Littles facing adversity develop the characteristics needed for academic, social, and economic success. As an evidence-based mentoring program, BBBS prides itself on building and supporting impactful, enduring, relationships. In fact, in 2019, over 71% of Community-Based matches lasted at least 12 months (the minimum match goal), and on average, BBBS Community-Based matches last about 31 months.

All agencies operate under the BBBS Standards of Practice. BBBSA also provides and regularly updates the Service Delivery Model (SDM) for agency use. The SDM provides a standardized guide, based on research and empirical evidence, for how agencies should engage Bigs, Littles, and parents or guardians to achieve safe, long, strong matches with the best possible outcomes for Littles, from the point of inquiry to match closure. BBBS is intentional about the populations of Littles served and the Bigs engaged in order to meet communities' most critical needs. Therefore, while the SDM provides consistency in service delivery across the network, it also provides space for innovation, so agencies can effectively offer specific, targeted services in their locations. For example, the SDM is

carried out in different settings, which include: 1) Community-Based, where matches meet in the community; 2) Site-Based, where matches meet at a designated site such as a school or workplace; 3) Site-Based Facilitated, where matches meet at a designated site and a staff member is present at all sessions, and 4) Site-Based Plus, “a hybrid that may combine elements of both Community-Based and Site-Based settings.

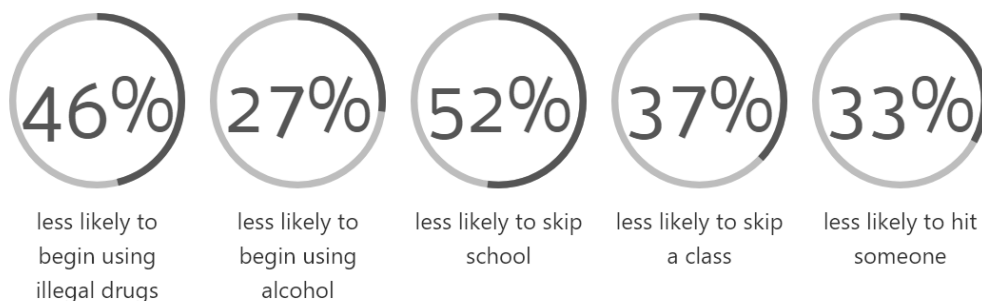
To meet the needs of their communities, many agencies have expanded services. For example, some agencies serve children into their early 20s, and therefore emphasize college and career readiness, and some offer wraparound services for Littles and their families. As of 2019, 27 agencies (+5 since 2018) have adopted Technology-Enhanced Mentoring (TEM) programs, which use a web-based platform and curriculum to allow mentors to connect regularly with students online in addition to meeting in person. Having the flexibility to customize services for agencies’ specific populations, while adhering to the SDM and BBBS Standards of Practice, allows agencies to meet the needs of their communities while still maintaining quality.

OUR IMPACT

Big Brothers Big Sisters holds itself accountable to the families, children, and mentors enrolled in our program. Our responsibility is to the donors, partners, and advocates who make our work possible. That is why a commitment to continuous learning, improvement, and research is at the heart of what we do.

According to the Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) study (1995), our one-to-one model truly makes an impact in children's lives. Approximately 1,000 youth from eight Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across the country who were looking for mentors were part of this study. Approximately half of the children were randomly chosen to be matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister. The others were assigned to a waiting list. The matched children met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters about three times a month for an average of one year. Researchers surveyed both the matched and unmatched children, and their parents, on two occasions: when they first applied for a Big Brother or Big Sister, and again 18 months later.

Researchers found that after 18 months of spending time with their Bigs, the Littles, compared to those children not in our program, were:



They also found that the Littles were more confident of their performance in schoolwork and getting along better with their families.

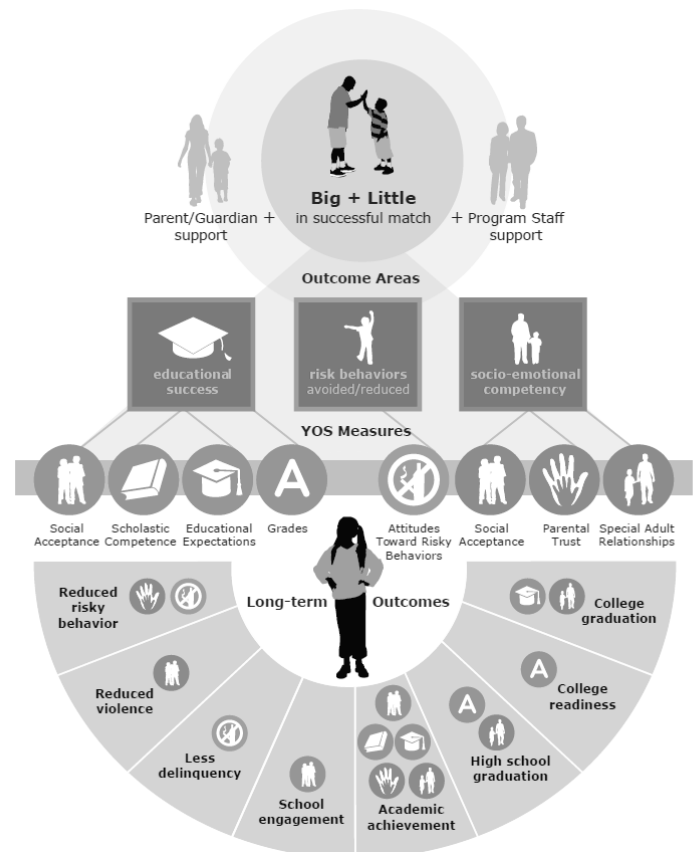
This study is widely considered to be foundational to the mentoring field in general and specifically to the BBBS Community-Based Mentoring Program by elevating it to model status (Blueprints for Healthy Littles Development; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs Guide). BBBSA strives to maintain this level of effectiveness and has embarked on a new long-term study of our Community-Based Mentoring Program to validate our continued positive impact on the Littles we serve. Study enrollment and data collection for the new study began February 2018 and continued through 2019. By the end of the year, over 1,300 youth were enrolled in the study. In 2020, study enrollment will end and 18-month follow-ups for study participants will continue.

OUR MEASUREMENT

BBBS strives to ensure that all Littles and Bigs served in our programs experience quality mentoring relationships that uphold our Standards of Practice. Agencies track outcomes that are proven predictors of long-term success, such as school attendance and engagement, and the avoidance of risky behaviors, throughout the match for ongoing program evaluation. BBBS defines success by measuring positive youth outcomes, the number of Littles effectively served by the program, and the lifelong success and community benefits that follow. See figure below for an overview of how these outcomes relate to long-term success.

We measure the quality of our programs and the strength of the mentoring relationships we create using two tools: the Youth Outcomes Survey (YOS) and the Strength of Relationships (SOR) survey.

- 1) **Youth Outcomes Survey (YOS):** Using a pre- and post-test methodology, the YOS is designed to track outcomes in the following areas: scholastic competency, educational expectations, social acceptance, parental trust, and attitudes toward high risk behavior. BBBS staff administer the YOS before the match begins, to establish a baseline. At the match anniversary milestone (annually for Community-Based Mentoring Programs and at the end of the academic school year for Site-Based Mentoring Programs), BBBS staff administer the YOS follow-up survey.
- 2) **Strength of Relationship (SOR):** The SOR measures the level of emotional attachment, satisfaction, and connection between the mentor and the child. This tool helps BBBS create even more positive outcomes for children. Research clearly shows that the stronger the mentoring relationship, the better children fare. The SOR measure is a powerful instrument that allows the agency to achieve higher quality program impact. Specifically, the SOR can be used to track match progress and increase the probability that the match will continue and that the Littles will achieve positive outcomes. Additionally, higher survey compliance rates ensure the most accurate picture of the match relationship development.



New in 2019

An updated version of our YOS was released in February 2019, alongside a new complementary Child Outcomes Survey (COS), allowing us to collect baseline (pre-match) data on younger Littles and learn more about the progress made earlier in matches. Updated and new measures include: expanded educational expectations, actual involvement in risky behaviors, bullying, depressive symptoms, positive affect (happiness), expanded special adult questions, protective behaviors, sparks or special interests, and overall life satisfaction.

BBBS staff collect, manage, and report survey and interview data through our shared match management system, Matchforce, to ensure compliance with the BBBS Standards of Practice and to achieve, track, and report outcomes for Littles served. It also allows BBBS to track and report key indicators such as demographics of program participants, number of active matches, total children served, number of mentors, match length, and 12-month retention rates.

OUR LITTLES

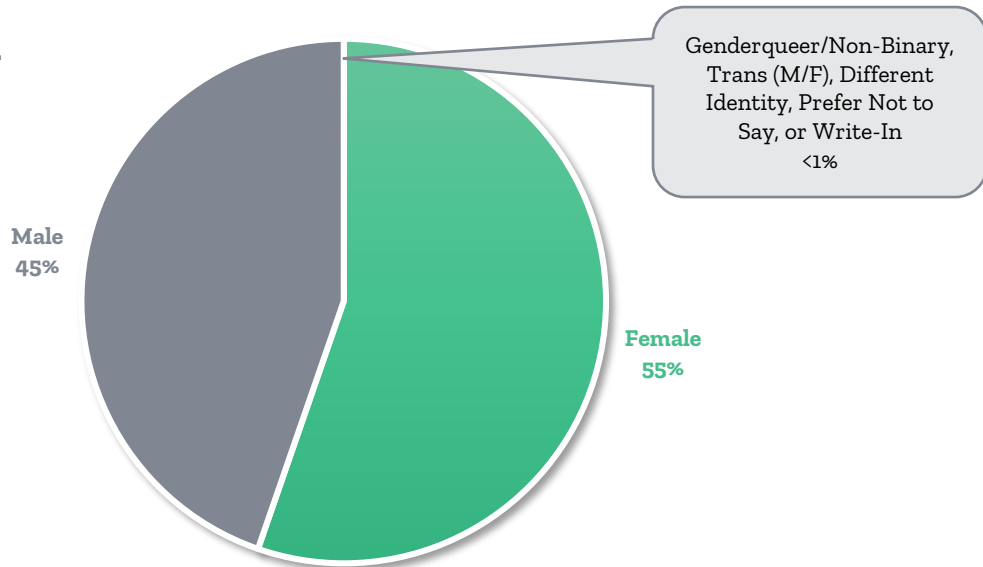
In 2019, BBBS agencies¹ collectively served 135,786 Littles.

- Over half (55%) of the children served in 2019 were female and 45% were male. With the launch of Matchforce in February 2019, BBBS expanded the options for gender identity. This year, 50 Littles identified as trans male, 14 as trans female, 25 as genderqueer or non-binary, one as a different identity, seven wrote-in an identity not listed, and nine preferred not to say.
- An estimated 32% of Littles served were Black, 29% were White, 20% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian/Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 11% were multi-race, and 6% listed "Other" as their race.
- The average age of Littles served in 2019 was 12.6 years old.
- The largest age group of Littles served in 2019 was youth ages 11-12 years old (24%), with 9-10-year-olds (20%) being the next largest age group served.
- Some agencies enroll Littles outside of the typical age window, and consequently, 121 Littles under the age of 5 were served and 5,479 (+1,075 Littles – a 24% increase from 2018) Littles 19 years or older were served.
- Approximately 57% of all Littles served in 2019 lived in a single-parent household, 28% lived in a two-parent household, and 6% lived with grandparents. A very small portion (8%) of Littles lived with other relatives or in a group/foster home.
- An estimated 20,679 (16%) Littles served had a parent who was incarcerated.
- About 102,404 (77%) Littles received free or reduced lunch from school and 27,904 (21%) of families received some type of income assistance – proxy measures of poverty.

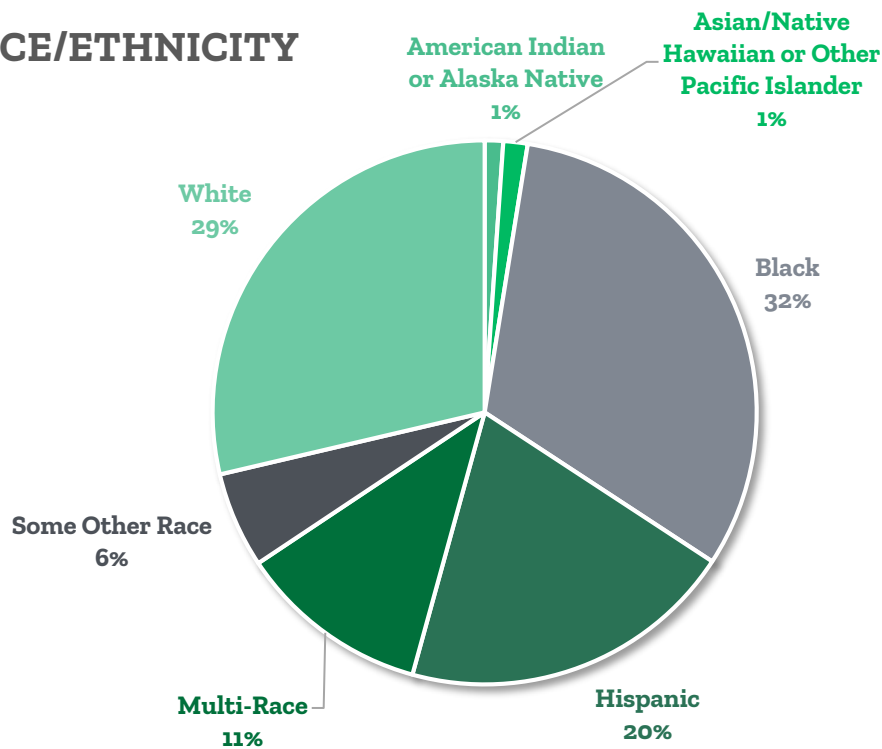
¹ Not all agencies were active in our shared match management system during this time period or may have since disaffiliated, therefore, the data shown below are based on the data available for 132,434 Littles.



GENDER

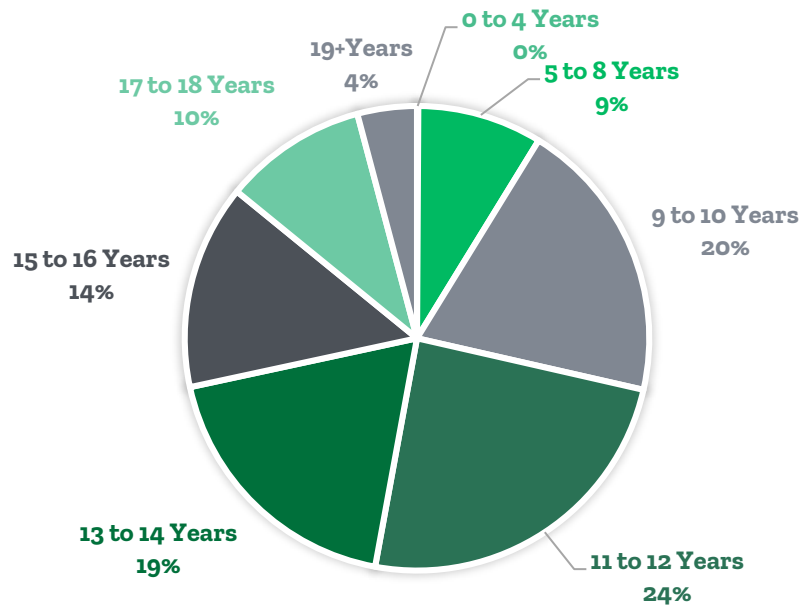


RACE/ETHNICITY

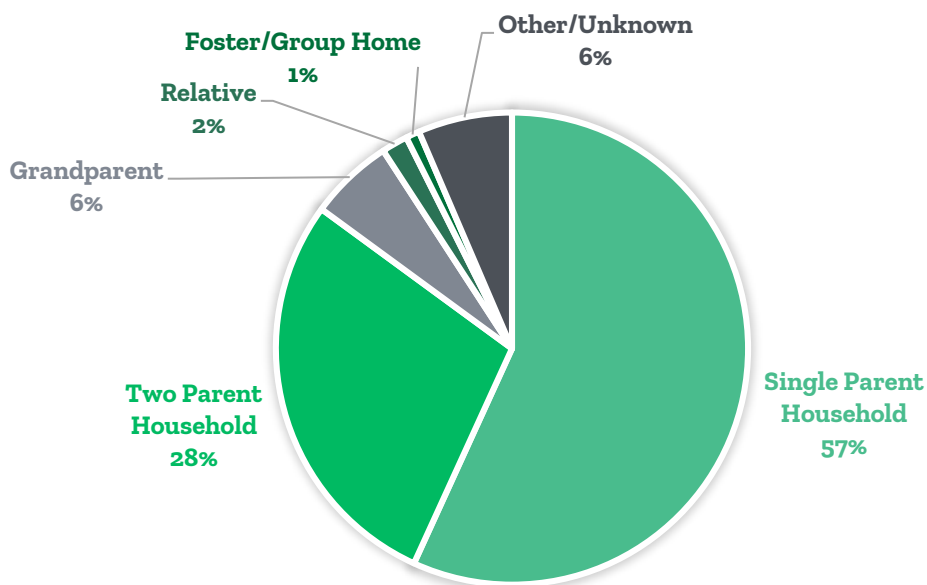




LITTLES SERVED BY AGE GROUP

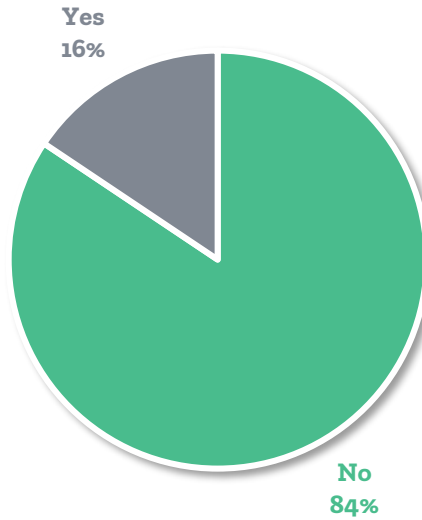


LIVING SITUATION

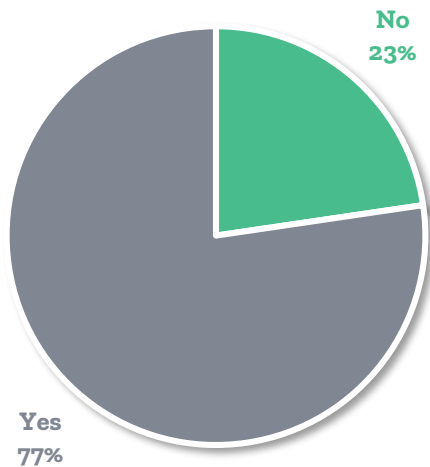




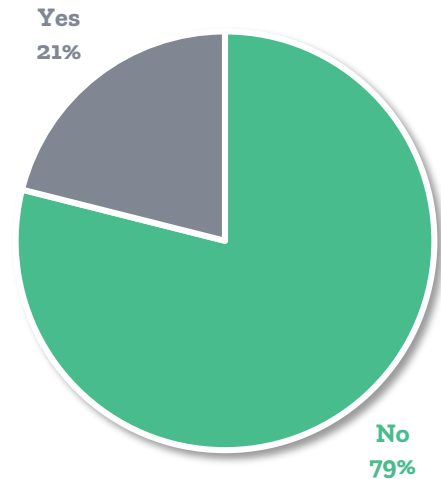
INCARCERATED PARENT



**FREE OR REDUCED
LUNCH RECIPIENT**



**FAMILY RECEIVES
INCOME ASSISTANCE**



OUR BIGS

In 2019, an estimated 121,349² Bigs were in an active match and in Matchforce³, with 11,085 Bigs participating in more than one match during the year. Of those Bigs:

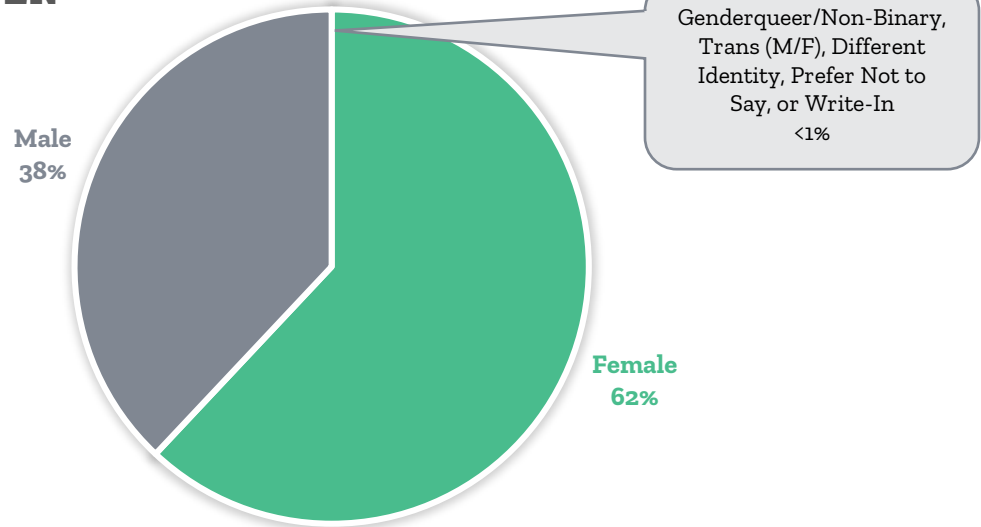
- Almost two-thirds were female. With the launch of Matchforce in February 2019, BBBS expanded the options for gender identity. This year, 25 Bigs identified as trans male, six as trans female, 20 as genderqueer or non-binary, six wrote-in an identity not listed, and 543 left a blank response.
- An estimated 66% of Bigs matched with Littles were White, 11% were Black, 9% were Hispanic, 4% were Asian/Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 3% were multi-race, and 4% listed "Other" as their race.
- The average age of Bigs in 2018 was 34.4 years old.
- Nearly half of Bigs are under 30 years old, with 8% under 18 years old, 16% 18-22 years old, and 22% 23-29 years old.
- Another 25% of Bigs are in their 30s, 11% are in their 40s, 10% are in their 50s, and 8% are 60 or older.
- Over 65% of Bigs have a bachelor's degree or higher, with 43% having completed a bachelor's degree, 18% a master's degree, and 5% a JD, MD, or Ph.D.
- Some programs have high school Bigs, comprising the estimated 8% of Bigs without a high school diploma.
- A majority of Bigs (54%) are single.

² The number of Bigs during the year is smaller than the number of Littles served due to matches closing and then the volunteer getting matched with a new Littles.

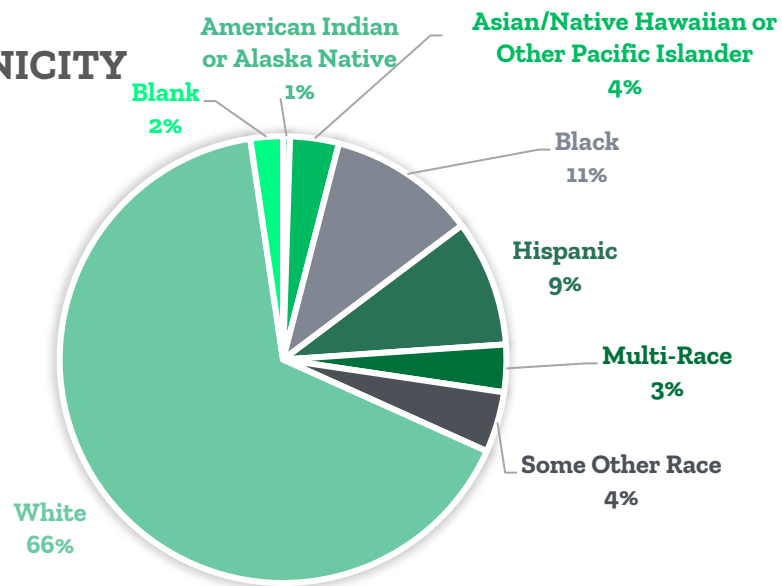
³ Demographics are based on the Bigs matched with the 132,434 Littles served in 2019 at agencies who use our national match management system.



GENDER

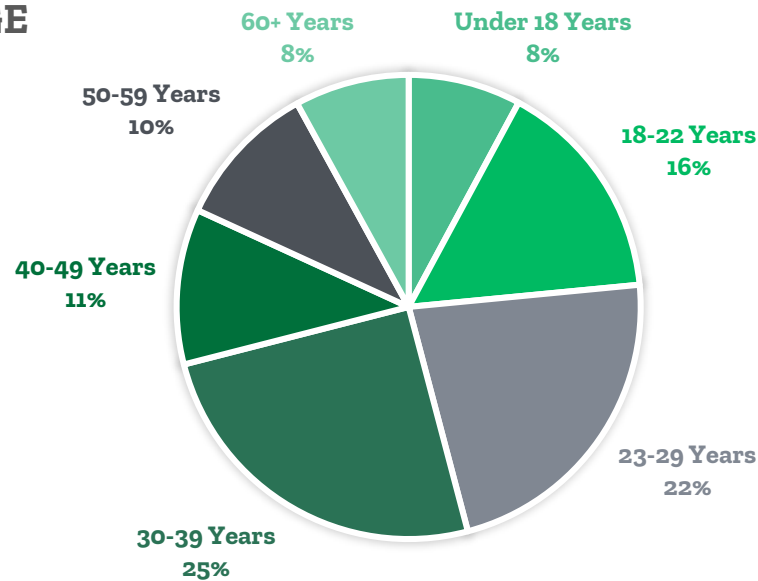


RACE/ETHNICITY

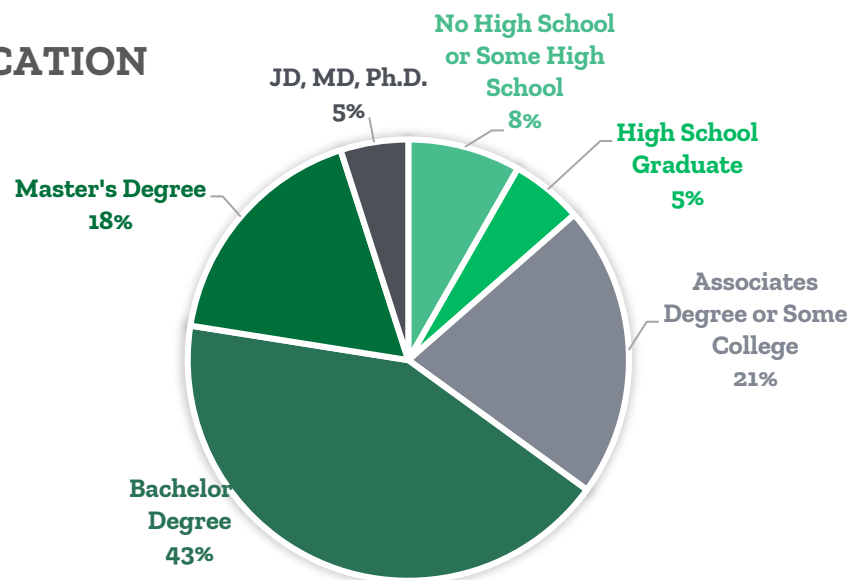




AGE



EDUCATION

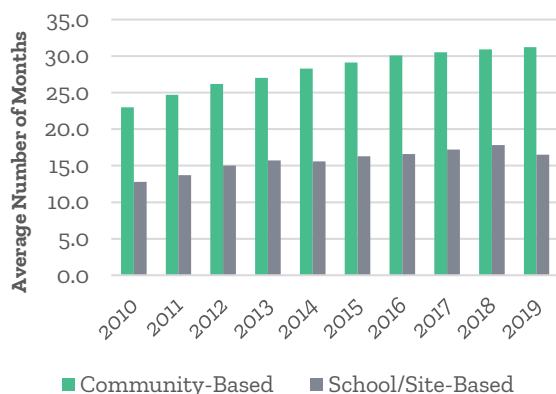


OUR OUTCOMES IN 2019

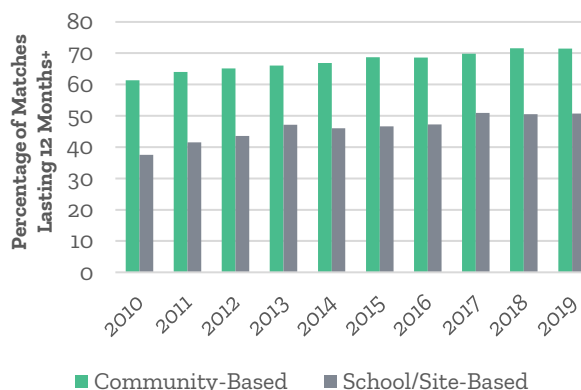
Average Match Length and 12 Month Retention Rates

We gauge the quality of BBBS match relationships by measuring match length, 12-month match retention rate, and youth outcomes. Research on BBBS shows that the longer the match, the stronger the relationship will be, resulting in more positive youth outcomes. Specifically, matches that last at least 12 months have been shown to produce significantly better outcomes than matches that end earlier.⁴ Over the past 10 years, the average match length in both our Community-Based Mentoring Programs and Site-Based Mentoring Programs has steadily increased. Over the past decade, the average length of Community-Based matches was over 28 months, and the average length of Site-Based matches was over 15 months. In 2019, Community-Based matches lasted over 31 months – over 35% longer than the average match length 10 years ago, and Site-Based matches lasted over 16 months – over 28% longer than the average match length 10 years ago.

10-Year Snapshot of Average Match Length (Months) by Program Type



10-Year Snapshot of 12 Month Retention Rate (%) by Program



Likewise, the number of matches meeting the minimum match length (referred to as the 12-month retention rate) in both the Community-Based Mentoring and Site-Based Programs has also been trending upward over the past decade. On average, 67.4% of all Community-Based matches lasted at least 12 months and 46.2% of all Site-Based matches lasted at least 12 months over the past 10 years. In 2019, Community-Based retention rates increased from 61.4% in 2010 to 71.5% in 2019 and Site-Based retention rates increased from 37.5% in 2010 to 50.7%.

Youth Outcomes Survey

Our matches made tremendous progress in 2019, making significant improvements from baseline to follow-up in all outcome areas measured by the YOS. A listing of each YOS construct, as well as the average baseline and follow-up scores for Community-Based and Site-Based Littles is provided below.⁵

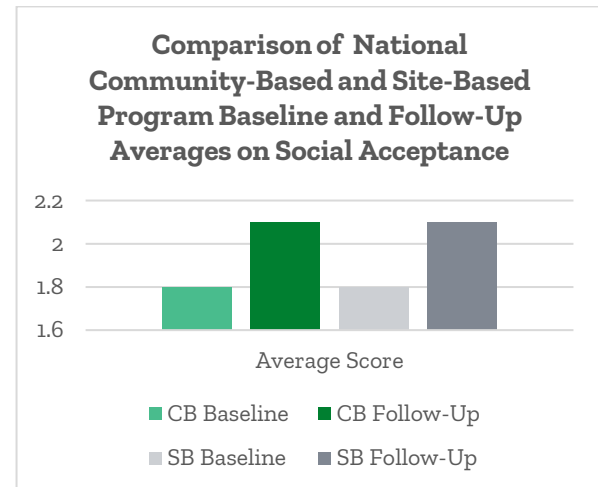
⁴ Grossman, J. & Rhodes, J. (2002). The Test of Time: Predictors and Effects of Duration in Littles Mentoring Relationships. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(2), 199-219.

⁵ For 2019, scholastic competence data is unavailable due to reporting limitations.

Social Acceptance (now Social Competence)

This scale taps a child's sense of belonging among and ability to get along with peers. Researchers have shown that mentoring can help a child strengthen peer relationships and increase social acceptance^{6,7,8}. Improvements in peer relations, in turn, have been linked to a range of positive outcomes, including school achievement,⁹ improved conduct, and a lower likelihood of dropping out.¹⁰

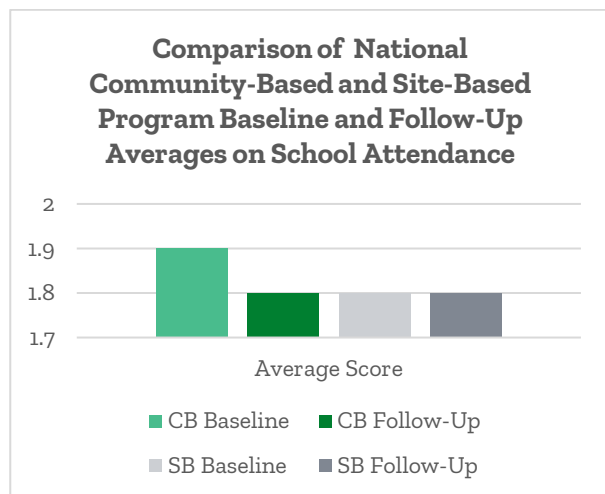
Consists of six questions using a 4-point response scale (0=not at all true; 3=very true).



School Attendance

This measure assesses a child's excused absences during the school year. In the updated YOS, unexcused absences are now captured in risky behaviors to better distinguish behavior that is within a child's control and could therefore be affected by mentoring (i.e., unexcused absences) and those that may be more attributable to health, family or other factors (i.e., excused absences). Total number of days absent (excused and unexcused) is associated with student performance at all levels of schooling, including grades,¹¹ test scores, school dropout,¹² and high school graduation.¹³

Consists of a single question using a 5-point response scale (0=never in my life; 4=5 or more times in the past month).



⁶ Dallos, R. & Comley-Ross, P. (2005). Young People's Experience of Mentoring: Building Trust and Attachments. *Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry*, 10(3), 369-383.

⁷ Rhodes, J.E., Haight, W.L., & Briggs, E.C. (2001). The Influence of Mentoring on Peer Relationships of Foster Littles in Relative and Non-Relative Care. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 9(2), 185-201.

⁸ Rhodes, J., Reddy, R., & Grossman, J. (2005). The Protective Influence of Mentoring on Adolescents' Substance Use: Directed and Indirect Pathways. *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(1), 31-47.

⁹ Bursuck, W. & Asher, S. (1986). The Relationship Between Social Competence and Achievement in Elementary School Children. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 15(1), 41-49.

¹⁰ Asher, S.R. & Paquette, J.A. (2003). Loneliness and Peer Relations in Childhood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(3), 75-78.

¹¹ Romero & Lee. (2007). A National Portrait of Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades. National Center for Children in Poverty.

¹² Musser. (2011). Taking Attendance Seriously: How School Absences Undermine Student and School Performance in New York City. Retrieved from Attendance Works website: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/elementary-school-absenteeism>.

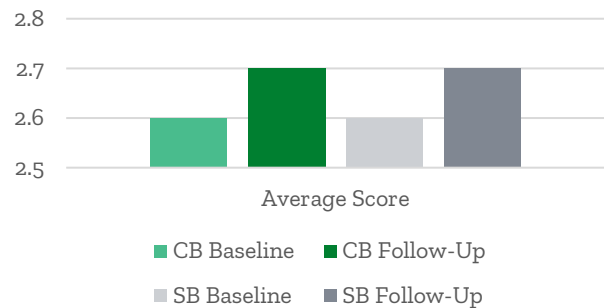
¹³ Ou & Reynolds. (2008). Predictors of educational attainment in the Chicago Longitudinal Study. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23, 199-229.

Educational Expectations

These items measure how sure the child is that they will reach different levels of schooling (finish high school, some college, finish college). Mentoring has been linked to higher educational and vocational aspirations.^{14,15} Children and adolescents' academic expectations and plans, in turn, have shown associations with long-term school performance and standardized test scores.^{16,17,18}

Consists of three questions using a 4-point response scale (0=not at all sure; 3=very sure).

Comparison of National Community-Based and Site-Based Program Baseline and Follow-Up Averages on Educational Expectations

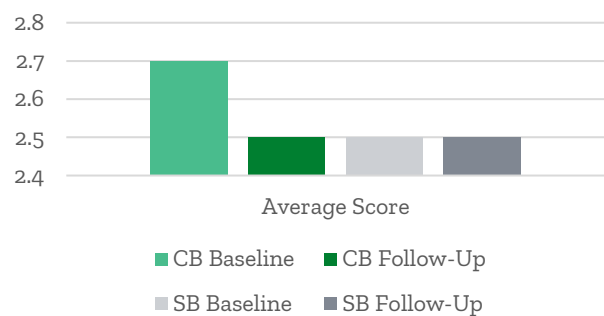


Grades

The child self-reports how well they do in mathematics, reading or language arts, social studies, science, and this information is used to get an average of their overall academic performance.

Consists of four questions using a 5-point response scale (4 =A (Excellent), 3=B (Very Good), 2=C (Good), 1=D (Not So Good), or 0=F (Not Good At All)).

Comparison of National Community-Based and Site-Based Program Baseline and Follow-Up Averages on Grades



¹⁴ Hellenga, K., Aber, M.S., & Rhodes, J. E. (2002). African American Adolescent Mothers' Vocational Aspiration-Expectation Gap: Individual, Social, and Environmental Influence. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26, 200-212.

¹⁵ Karcher, (2005). The Effects of School-Based Developmental Mentoring and Mentor's Attendance on Mentees' Self-Esteem, Behavior, and Connectedness. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42, 65-77.

¹⁶ Eamon, M.K. & Altshuler, S.J. (2004). Can We Predict Disruptive School Behavior? *Children & Schools*, 26(1), 23-37.

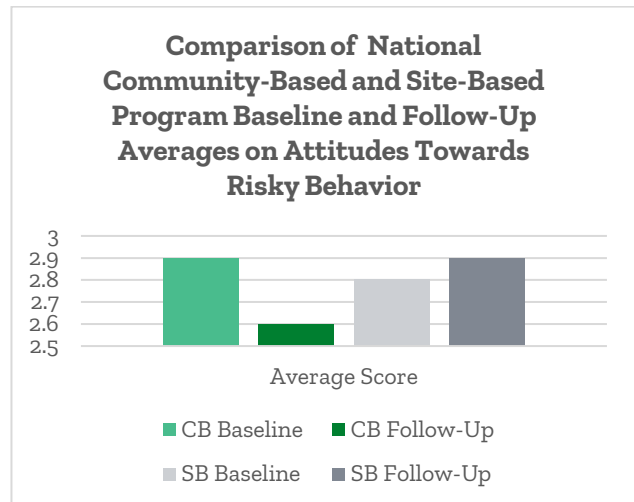
¹⁷ Khattab, N. (2005). The Effects of High School Context and Interpersonal Factors on Students' Educational Expectations: A Multi-Level Model. *Social Psychology of Education*, 8, 19-40.

¹⁸ Sirin, S.R. & Rogers-Sirin, L.R. (2004). Exploring School Engagement of Middle-Class African American Adolescents. *Little and Society*, 35(3), 323-340.

Attitudes Towards Risky Behavior

These items measure how a child feels when other kids their age engage in certain risky behaviors such as using tobacco, skipping school, or hitting someone. These attitudes are associated with actual risky/antisocial behavior and violence.^{19,20,21,22,23}

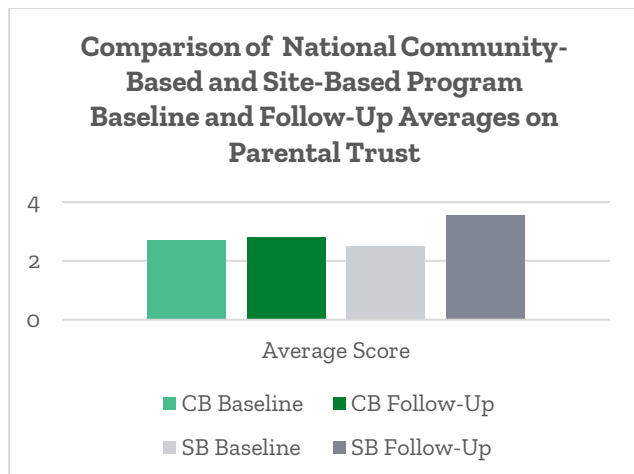
Consists of seven questions using a 4-point response scale (0=It's not okay; 3=It's perfectly okay).



Parental Trust

These items measure the extent to which the child feels that they have an understanding and respectful relationship with a parent or guardian. Youth mentoring has been linked to improved parental relationships which, in turn, have been associated with improved grades and attendance²⁴ and reduced substance use.²⁵

Consists of four questions using a 4-point response scale (0=not at all true; 3=very true).



¹⁹ Tonin, S.L., Burrow-Sanchez, J.J., Harrison, R.S., & Kircher, J.C. (2008). The Influence of Attitudes, Acculturation, and Gender on Substance Use for Mexican American Middle School Students. *Addictive Behaviors*, 33, 949-954.

²⁰ Gellman, R.A. & Delucia-Waack, J.L. (2006). Predicting School Violence: A Comparison of Violent and Nonviolent Male Students on Attitudes Toward Violence, Exposure Level to Violence, and PTSD Symptomatology. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(5), 591-598.

²¹ Butler, S.M., Lescheid, A.W., & Fearon, P. (2007). Antisocial Beliefs and Attitudes in Pre-Adolescent Littles: The Development of the Antisocial Beliefs and Attitudes Scales (ABAS). *Journal of Littles Adolescence*, 36, 1058-1071.

²² Lambert, P., Scourfield, J., Smalley, N. & Jones, R. (2008). The Social Context of School Bullying: Evidence from a Survey of Children in South Wales. *Research Papers in Education*, 23(3), 269-291.

²³ Wells, E.A., Morrison, D.M., Gilmore, M.R., Catalano, R.F., Iritani, B., & Hawkins, J.D. (1992). Race Differences in Antisocial Behaviors and Attitudes and Early Initiation of Substance Use. *Journal of Drug Education*, 22(2), 115-130.

²⁴ Rhodes, J., Grossman, J. & Resch, N.L. (2002). Agents of Change: Pathways Through Which Mentoring Relationships Influence Adolescents' Academic Adjustment. *Child Development*, 71(6), 1662-1671.

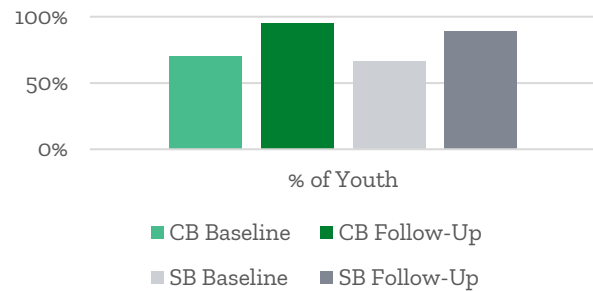
²⁵ Rhodes, J., Reddy, R., & Grossman, J. (2005). The Protective Influence of Mentoring on Adolescents' Substance Use: Direct and Indirect Pathways. *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(1), 31-47.

Special Adult

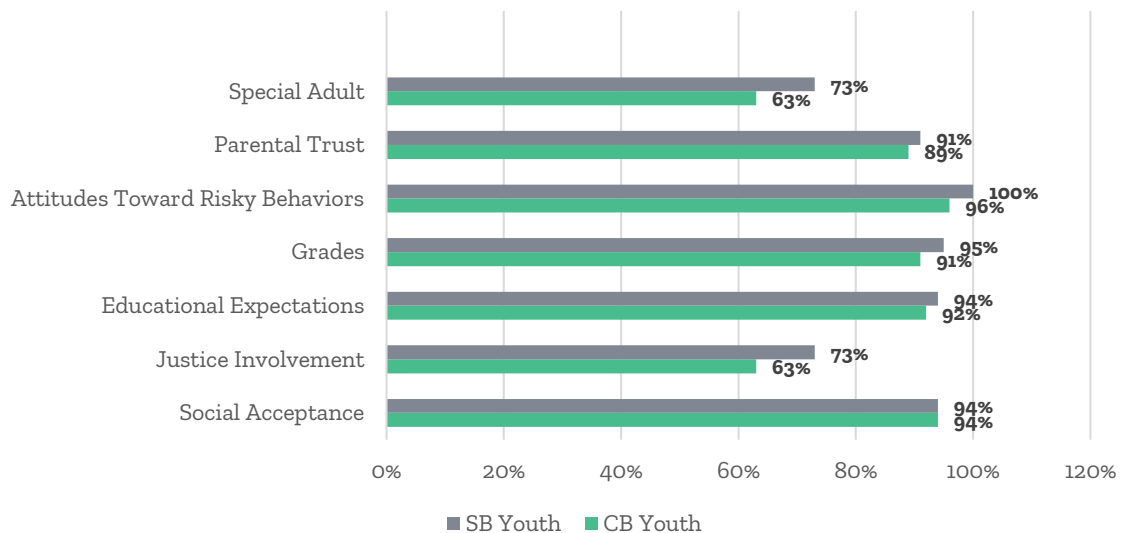
This single question asks if the child has a special adult in their life. The presence of a special adult is associated with improved school attendance and competency, parental trust, mental health, and overall promotion of pro-social behaviors and decreased delinquency.

Consists of a single question with a yes/no response.

Comparison of % of National Community-Based and Site-Based Program Littles Who Have a Special Adult



Percent of CB and SB Littles Improving or Maintaining from Baseline to Follow-up in 2019



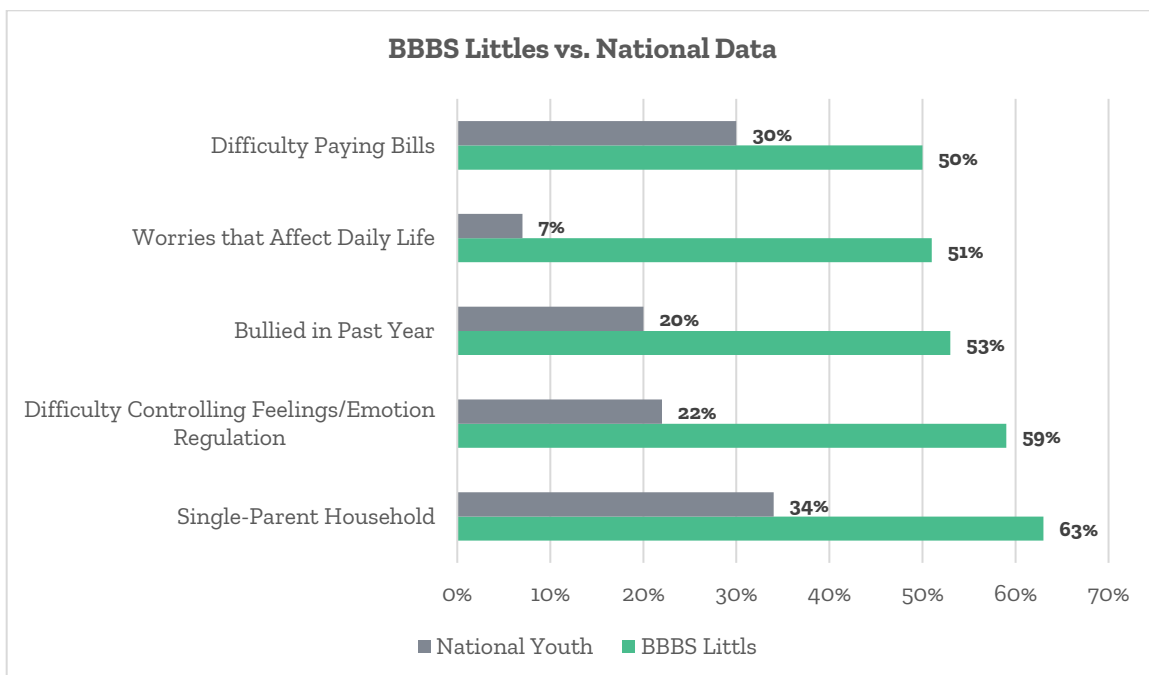
Statistically significant improvements were made in all categories measured for Littles in Community-Based Mentoring Programs who completed a follow-up YOS in 2019. Site-Based Littles showed significant improvement in educational expectations, grades, parental trust, social competence, and special adult. Furthermore, 100% of Littles enrolled in both types of programs showed improvement or maintenance in at least two outcome areas.

OUR FUTURE

BBBSA and a BBBS agency task force continue to make adjustments to the YOS and new COS to improve their usability with youth, sensitivity to change over time, and ability to capture more of the positive outcomes that occur earlier on in the mentoring relationship and lead to long-term success. Final versions of these two surveys are scheduled to be released in August 2020, alongside improved training on survey administration with Littles.

BBBSA has also developed and piloted a tool called the Risk and Protective Inventory (RPI), which identifies the strengths and needs of a child and their family. BBBSA piloted the RPI for over four years and used this data to better understand the needs our families have and what partnerships we need to make in the communities we serve, as well as training for Bigs, staff, and parents in a variety of areas, including trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, and prevention of justice involvement. With the launch of Matchforce, the RPI was made available as an optional tool to the entire network.

Among the 90 agencies that were using the RPI in 2019 and 11,244 families surveyed this year, we found that the top 21 items endorsed by parents were all strengths, illustrating the potential our families already have to support their children. Among the risks or needs identified by parents or guardians, the top five were: single-parent household (63%), difficulty controlling feelings/emotion regulation (59%, +24% from 2018), bullying in the past year (53%, +12% from 2018), worries that affect their daily life (51%), and difficulty paying bills in past year (50%). **Of particular interest is that over 29% of Littles have lost contact with an important adult role model in the last 12 months – demonstrating the critical need for BBBS mentoring.** In comparison to national averages, our Littles are facing challenges at much higher rates compared to the average youth in the U.S.



This information has highlighted where our Littles and their families need us most. We look forward to expanding the usage of this tool across the network in 2020 and bolstering services to address these needs.