

Youth Relationships Study Interim Findings


Early findings from the Youth Relationships Study show Big Brothers Big Sisters' (BBBS) one-to-one community-based youth mentoring program has a positive impact on young people.


ABOUT THE STUDY

More than 1,300 youth were randomly assigned to either receive a BBBS mentor or to a control group that would not receive a mentor until the end of the four-year study. Results, collected through youth and parent surveys, are based on the first 18 months of an ongoing four-year study. After 18 months, 65% of youth in the BBBS group had been matched with a mentor and received approximately one year of mentoring. The study is being conducted by Dr. David DuBois (University of Illinois Chicago) and Dr. Carla Herrera (independent research consultant).

INTERIM FINDINGS HIGHLIGHTS

The study primarily measured BBBS' impacts on four main risky behavior outcomes: arrests, substance use, violence, and property-related delinquent behavior. Based on 18-month survey responses, relative to youth in the control group, youth in the BBBS group were:

 **54%** less likely to have been arrested

 **41%** less likely to have engaged in substance use

Both effects were statistically significant. The study did not detect statistically significant impacts on the other two main outcomes measured (violence and property-related delinquent behavior).



ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

In addition to risky behaviors, the study also examined protective and positive factors in four areas: positive behavior, sense of belonging, emotional and mental health, educational success. Early findings suggest youth in BBBS' community-based mentoring program experienced a variety of positive outcomes. On average, youth receiving mentoring in the study¹:

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

- Reported less aggressive behavior than 57% of youth in the control group
- Scored higher in self-control than 55% of youth in the control group

SENSE OF BELONGING

- Scored higher in social skills than 58% of youth in the control group
- Had better family functioning than 57% of youth in the control group
- Experienced less inconsistent discipline from parents than 56% of youth in the control group

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Had more hopeful future expectations than 56% of youth in the control group
- Had greater coping efficacy than 55% of youth in the control group
- Scored higher on grit than 56% of youth in the control group

EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

- Scored higher on self-advocacy than 55% of youth in the control group

NEXT STEPS

The study continues to follow youth and their parents. The final report, expected in 2024, will share findings on the longer-term impact of BBBS' preeminent mentoring program on youth and families through four years after study enrollment. The final report will also include the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, post-secondary educational attainment, and more.

RESOURCES

Learn more about the study by watching bit.ly/3GXUObG OR visiting bit.ly/3X1upPZ.

For questions about the study, please contact impact@bbbsa.org.