



HOW EFFECTIVE ARE MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH? A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF THE EVIDENCE

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• AVAILABLE FREE HERE: [HTTP://WWW.PSYCHOLOGICALSCIENCE.ORG/INDEX.PHP/PUBLICATIONS/JOURNALS/PSPI/MENTORING.HTML](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/journals/pspi/mentoring.html)

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This article describes findings from a meta-analysis of mentoring programs which is a method of analyzing multiple independent studies together.

Moderators or Characteristics that related to the effectiveness of programs included the following:

- **Characteristics of youth**

- ◇ Programs demonstrated high levels of effectiveness when serving youth who exhibit delinquent behavior or youth with personal vulnerability such as at risk for academic failure
- ◇ Effectiveness was found to be greatest with youth exhibiting moderate risk levels (versus severe or no risk)

- **Recruitment and selection of mentors**

- ◇ High levels of effectiveness were seen when programs used mentors whose background aligned with program goals. For example, programs with educational goals used teachers or other school staff as mentors.

- **Guidelines or criteria used to match youth and mentors**

- ◇ Matching based on mentors' and youths' shared interests was found to be more effective than matching on demographic characteristics .

- **Expectations and supports for mentors**

- ◇ Strong effects were found in programs where mentors are both advocates and serve as teachers or a resource.

In sum, the researchers concluded that mentoring is an effective intervention. However, the effectiveness for programs can be modest and it is important for researchers and practitioners, as well as policy makers and funders, to coordinate efforts to ensure impact of programs.



IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE & POLICY

Implications of the findings for practice and policy include need for the following:

- ◆ Greater emphasis on sound implementation practices to ensure program quality
- ◆ Adherence to clear guidelines for screening and training mentors, including establishing clear expectations and providing ongoing support.
- ◆ Greater use of research findings to inform and refine programming.
- ◆ Continued use of research and evaluation to identify critical program elements and allow for ongoing monitoring of implementation.
- ◆ Increased collaboration between practitioners and researchers. Advancing the effectiveness of mentoring programs will require more direct communication and partnerships between researchers and practitioners.