

**Name of Program/Strategy: Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program**

**Report Contents**

1. Overview and description
2. Implementation considerations (if available)
3. Descriptive information
4. Outcomes
5. Cost effectiveness report (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)
6. Washington State results (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS) – if available)
7. Who is using this program/strategy
8. Study populations
9. Quality of studies
10. Readiness for Dissemination
11. Costs (if available)
12. Contacts for more information

---

**1. Overview and description**

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program is designed to help participating youth ages 6-18 ("Littles") reach their potential through supported matches with adult volunteer mentors ages 18 and older ("Bigs"). The program focuses on positive youth development, not specific problems, and the Big acts as a role model and provides guidance to the Little through a relationship that is based on trust and caring. The Big and Little agree to meet two to four times per month for at least a year, with get-togethers usually lasting 3 or 4 hours and consisting of mutually enjoyable activities.

Volunteers applying to be a Big are screened by local Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) agencies for potential safety risks, ability to commit the necessary time, and capability of forming positive relationships with youth. Approved volunteers undergo training, which includes presentations on the developmental stages of youth, communication and limit-setting skills, tips for building relationships, and recommendations on the best way to interact with their matched Little, whose racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background may differ from that of the Big.

In matching Bigs and Littles, BBBSA agencies often consider practical factors, such as gender, geographic proximity, and availability, as well as the match preferences of volunteers, youth, and parents. Volunteers indicate the type of youth they would like to be matched with, noting age, race, and the types of activities they expect to engage in with the youth.

# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

Youth and their parents state their preference for volunteers, noting such factors as age, race, and religion, and youth also provide their activity preferences. Matching policies may vary across local BBBSA agencies, but in all cases, the parent must approve the match.

The study reviewed for this summary was conducted with eight urban BBBSA agencies and included youth ages 10-16.

## **2. Implementation considerations (if available)**

BBBSA staff and national operating standards guide implementation staff in screening, orienting, and training volunteers and youth and in creating and supervising the matches. The mentoring program emphasizes supervision to facilitate effective matches. For example, national requirements specify that organizations implementing the program must contact the parent, youth, and volunteer within 2 weeks of the match; maintain monthly telephone contact with the volunteer during the first year of the match; and maintain monthly contact with the parent and/or youth. In addition, implementers must contact the youth directly at least four times during the first year of the match; after the first year, contact with the participants can be reduced to once per quarter. Staff from local BBBSA agencies also supports the match by providing guidance if problems arise in the Big-Little relationship.

## **3. Descriptive Information**

<b>Areas of Interest</b>	Mental health promotion Substance abuse prevention
<b>Outcomes</b>	1: Initiation of drug use 2: Aggressive behavior 3: School competence and achievement 4: Family relationships
<b>Outcome Categories</b>	Drugs Education Social functioning Violence
<b>Ages</b>	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)
<b>Genders</b>	Male Female
<b>Races/Ethnicities</b>	American Indian or Alaska Native Black or African American Hispanic or Latino

## ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

	White Race/ethnicity unspecified
<b>Settings</b>	Other community settings
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Urban
<b>Implementation History</b>	Big Brothers Big Sisters of America was founded in 1904 to provide one-to-one youth and adult volunteer mentor matching through the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program. Since then, more than 360 agencies in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam have used the program, which served 210,000 youth in 2010.
<b>NIH Funding/CER Studies</b>	Partially/fully funded by National Institutes of Health: No Evaluated in comparative effectiveness research studies: No
<b>Adaptations</b>	The parent orientation guide has been translated into Spanish.
<b>Adverse Effects</b>	No adverse effects, concerns, or unintended consequences were identified by the applicant.
<b>IOM Prevention Categories</b>	Universal

### **4. Outcomes**

#### **Outcome 1: Initiation of drug use**

<b>Description of Measures</b>	Initiation of drug use was assessed using a self-report item from the Big Brothers Big Sisters Outcome Survey: "Have you ever used any drugs other than medicines you may have taken for health reasons? Examples of drugs would be marijuana and cocaine." Youth responded to the item with "yes" or "no."
<b>Key Findings</b>	Ten- to 16-year-old youth were randomly assigned to the intervention group, which participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program, or to a wait-list control group. Data were collected for both groups at baseline and at the 18-month follow-up. From baseline to the 18-month follow-up, youth in the intervention group were less likely to initiate drug use compared with youth in the control group ( $p < .05$ ).
<b>Studies Measuring Outcome</b>	Study 1
<b>Study Designs</b>	Experimental
<b>Quality of Research Rating</b>	3.0 (0.0-4.0 scale)

# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

## **Outcome 2: Aggressive behavior**

<b>Description of Measures</b>	Aggressive behavior was assessed using a self-report item from the Big Brothers Big Sisters Outcome Survey: "Since last month, have you hit someone because you didn't like something they said or did?" Youth responded to the item with "yes" or "no."
<b>Key Findings</b>	Ten- to 16-year-old youth were randomly assigned to the intervention group, which participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program, or to a wait-list control group. Data were collected for both groups at baseline and at the 18-month follow-up. From baseline to the 18-month follow-up, youth in the intervention group were less likely to engage in aggressive behavior compared with youth in the control group ( $p < .05$ ).
<b>Studies Measuring Outcome</b>	Study 1
<b>Study Designs</b>	Experimental
<b>Quality of Research Rating</b>	3.0 (0.0-4.0 scale)

## **Outcome 3: School competence and achievement**

<b>Description of Measures</b>	School competence and achievement were assessed using self-report items from two instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Perception Profile for Children - Scholastic Competence Scale. Youth reported their ability to complete their homework.</li> <li>• Big Brothers Big Sisters Outcome Survey. Youth reported whether or not in the past month they skipped a class without a valid excuse and skipped a day of school without a valid excuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Findings</b>	Ten- to 16-year-old youth were randomly assigned to the intervention group, which participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program, or to a wait-list control group. Data were collected for both groups at baseline and at the 18-month follow-up. At the 18-month follow-up, youth in the intervention group felt more confident in their ability to complete their homework compared with youth in the control group ( $p < .01$ ), and youth in the intervention group had skipped 37% fewer classes ( $p < .05$ ) and 52% fewer days of school ( $p < .01$ ) than youth in the control group.

## ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

<b>Studies Measuring Outcome</b>	Study 1
<b>Study Designs</b>	Experimental
<b>Quality of Research Rating</b>	3.1 (0.0-4.0 scale)

### **Outcome 4: Family relationships**

<b>Description of Measures</b>	<p>Family relationships were assessed using self-report items from two instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Brothers Big Sisters Outcome Survey. Youth reported the number of times the youth lied to their parent in the past month.</li> <li>• Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). Youth reported their relationship with their custodial parent using the Relationship With Mother Scale of the IPPA, including the trust, communication, and anger and alienation subscales, as well as the summary parental relationship measure.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Findings</b>	<p>Ten- to 16-year-old youth were randomly assigned to the intervention group, which participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program, or to a wait-list control group. Data were collected for both groups at baseline and at the 18-month follow-up. At the 18-month follow-up, fewer youth from the intervention group had lied to their parent compared with youth in the control group (<math>p &lt; .05</math>). Also at the 18-month follow-up, youth in the intervention group had better relationships with their parent (<math>p &lt; .05</math>) and more trust in their parent (<math>p &lt; .05</math>) compared with youth in the control group; however, no statistically significant differences were found between groups in regard to communication, anger, and alienation.</p>
<b>Studies Measuring Outcome</b>	Study 1
<b>Study Designs</b>	Experimental
<b>Quality of Research Rating</b>	3.1 (0.0-4.0 scale)

# Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

## 5. Cost effectiveness report (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)

<p><b>Benefits minus cost, per participant</b></p> <p>Source:</p> <p><b>Return on Investment: Evidence-Based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes - July 2011 Update.</b> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, <a href="http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/11-07-1201.pdf">http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/11-07-1201.pdf</a>.</p> <p><b>Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth – 2004 update.</b> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, <a href="http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=04-07-3901">http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=04-07-3901</a>.</p> <p><b>Costs and Benefits of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for At-Risk Youth: Interim Report – 2003.</b> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, <a href="http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=03-12-3901">http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=03-12-3901</a>.</p>	<p><b>According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, the program/strategy returns</b></p> <p><b><u>\$2,822 per individual</u></b></p> <p>in taxpayer savings that would otherwise be associated with education, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, or criminal justice system.</p>
--	---

## 6. Washington State results (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS))

Scale	Result	Direction	N	Instruments used for this program
Favorable Attitudes 1	significant **	improvement	24	AM Favorable Attitudes [Y2]
Favorable Attitudes 2	significant **	improvement	24	AM Favorable Attitudes [Y2]

## 7. Where is this program/strategy being used (if available)?

Washington Counties	Oregon Counties
Klickitat, Pacific	

## 8. Study Populations

The studies reviewed for this intervention included the following populations, as reported by the study authors.

Study	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
<b>Study 1</b>	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)	60% Male 40% Female	45% White 36% Black or African American 9% Hispanic or Latino 8% Race/ethnicity unspecified 2% American Indian or Alaska Native

# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

## **9. Quality of Research**

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

### **Study 1**

Botvin, G. J., Baker, E., Dusenbury, L., Botvin, E. M., & Diaz, T. (1995). Long-term follow-up results of a randomized drug abuse prevention trial in a White middle-class population. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 273(14), 1106-1112.

Grossman, J. B., & Tierney, J. P. (1998). Does mentoring work? An impact of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. *Evaluation Review*, 22 (3), 403-426.

Tierney, J. P., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. L. (1995, November). Making a difference. An impact study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

### **Supplementary Materials**

Mentor Strength of Relationship Survey

Youth Outcomes Survey

Youth Strength of Relationship Survey

### **Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)**

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention's reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Quality of Research.

Outcome	Reliability of Measures	Validity of Measures	Fidelity	Missing Data/Attrition	Confounding Variables	Data Analysis	Overall Rating
<b>1: Initiation of drug use</b>	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.3	<b>3.0</b>
<b>2: Aggressive behavior</b>	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.3	<b>3.0</b>
<b>3: School competence and achievement</b>	3.2	3.0	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.3	<b>3.1</b>

# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

<b>4: Family relationships</b>	3.0	3.0	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.3	<b>3.1</b>
--------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	------------

## **Study Strengths**

Mentors met with their assigned youth on a frequent basis (i.e., more than 70% met at least three times per month, and approximately 45% met at least once per week, with the average meeting lasting 3.6 hours), thus providing some measure of intervention fidelity. Attrition was relatively low in both the intervention and wait-list control groups, and both the baseline and follow-up surveys were completed by approximately 84% of the total sample. The study had a large sample size and used random assignment. There were no important differences in characteristics between those assigned to the intervention group and those assigned to the control group. The analyses used were appropriate and very thorough. A variety of multivariate and subgroup analyses were conducted, and intent-to-treat analysis was used.

## **Study Weaknesses**

Only alpha coefficients of measures were used to establish reliability. Although face validity was reported for the measures, other types of validity were not. There was no discussion of missing data other than a narrative report by the study authors, who stated that there were very little missing data.

## **10. Readiness for Dissemination**

The documents below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

### **Dissemination Materials**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (2000). Membership affiliation agreement. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (2007). 2007-2010 nationwide strategic direction. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (2009). Onboarding program staff: Participant guide. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (n.d.). Personal safety awareness for teens: Relationships. Philadelphia, PA: Author. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (n.d.). Talking with grown-ups. Philadelphia, PA: Author.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Agency Connection Web site, <http://agencyconnection.bbbs.org/site/>, including the following materials:

- Match Activity Workbook
- Parent Orientation Guide
- Preparing Volunteers Guide



# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

- SDM Part 1--Checklist of Essential Practices
- SDM Part 1--Forms
- Service Delivery Job Descriptions and Interview Guide
- Service Delivery Model (SDM) Part 1 Manual
- Staff Guide for Orientation
- Supplemental Handouts
- Volunteer Selection Policy

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Learning Center training site, [http://rod.sumtotalsystems.com/bbbs/app/SYS\\_login.aspx](http://rod.sumtotalsystems.com/bbbs/app/SYS_login.aspx), including the following materials:

- BBBS Program Overview
- Customer Relations On-the-Job Training
- Enrollment and Matching On-the-Job Training
- Fundamentals of Youth Protection
- Match Support On-the-Job Training
- SDM for Customer Relations v.2
- SDM for Enrollment and Matching v.2
- SDM for Match Support v.2

Mentor Strength of Relationship Survey

Strength of Relationship Overview [PowerPoint slides]

Strength of Relationship Training and Fidelity [PowerPoint slides] Youth Outcomes Survey

Youth Strength of Relationship Survey

## **Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)**

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Readiness for Dissemination.

# **Excellence in Prevention** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

<b>Implementation Materials</b>	<b>Training and Support Resources</b>	<b>Quality Assurance Procedures</b>	<b>Overall Rating</b>
4.0	3.8	3.3	<b>3.7</b>

## **Dissemination Strengths**

Extensive implementation materials are available online and provide detailed information on program implementation requirements, including the necessary budget, program policies, and organizational expectations. An affiliation agreement codifies these expectations, which require that implementing organizations adhere to the BBBSA policies. The program offers extensive online and in-person training, with curricula for staff and program managers. Self-assessment tools support quality assurance at various levels (e.g., individual staff, implementing organization).

## **Dissemination Weaknesses**

Training materials for mentors are difficult to identify on the program Web sites. Although strength of relationship surveys are available for youth and mentors, it is not clear how they should be used to improve the program or support continuing strategic planning efforts.

## **11. Costs**

The information below was provided by the developer and may have changed since the time of review. For detailed information on implementation costs (e.g., staffing, space, equipment, materials shipping and handling), contact the developer.

<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Required by Program Developer</b>
Membership fee (includes standards of practice, affiliation agreement, parent and volunteer orientation guides, information for orienting program staff, child protection materials, information for program performance managers, information on agency development for regional staff, and surveys)	Varies depending on site resources (minimum of \$150,000 per year for 3 years)	Yes
Agency Information Management (AIM) System	\$2,000-\$12,000 depending on the number of youth served	No
Role-specific training for various levels of staff	Included in membership fee	Yes

# ***Excellence in Prevention*** – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

---

## **12. Contacts**

**For information on implementation or research:**

Keoki Hansen  
(315) 254-9759  
keoki.hansen@bbbs.org

**Learn More by Visiting:** <http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org>