

# Youth mentoring linked to many positive effects, study shows

January 15 2013

---

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada (BBBSC) are releasing the first results of one of the largest mentoring studies ever conducted.

The five-year study, which tracks the experiences of almost 1,000 [children](#) and teenagers registered with Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across Canada, found that those with a mentor are significantly more confident in their academic abilities and considerably less likely to display [behavioural problems](#).

One stand out finding is that girls in the study with a Big Sister were four times less likely to bully, fight, lie or express anger than girls without a mentor.

"This ground-breaking research confirms that mentoring changes the trajectory of young lives," says Bruce MacDonald, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBSC). "The findings will have a profoundly beneficial impact on our mentoring programs."

The study was conducted by a team of academics led by Dr. David DeWit, a senior scientist CAMH in London, Ontario, and Dr. Ellen Lipman, a psychiatrist and Professor at McMaster University in Hamilton. The research was made possible by a \$1.7 million grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

The study's findings are expected to bring about significant advances in

how the agencies of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBSC) deliver mentoring services. Expected outcomes are more specialized pre-match training for the child, parents and mentor; more effective match support for all three participants to better manage expectations and earlier detection of special needs among children and teenagers.

BBBSC believes that this landmark study's legacy will be longer and more successful matches and mentoring that is more closely tailored to individual needs.

"We showed that the positive findings held regardless of the children's age, personal history, family circumstances or [cultural identity](#)," explained DeWit. "Over time, Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies will be able to counsel [mentors](#) on how best to engage with their 'Little' and will make it easier to identify the children most likely to benefit from having a mentor."

#### Key findings:

- Girls with a Big Sister are two and a half times more likely than girls without a mentor to be confident in their ability to be successful at school.
- Boys with a Big Brother are three times less likely than boys without a mentor to suffer peer pressure related anxiety, such as worrying about what other children think or say about them.
- Mentored boys are two times more likely to believe that school is fun and that doing well academically is important.
- Mentored boys are also two times less likely than non-mentored boys to develop negative conducts like bullying, fighting, lying, cheating, losing their temper or expressing anger.

These current findings are just a small sample of what will be released in

the months and years to come.

Each new release of findings will further illuminate the extent to which mentored children do better; why mentored children do better and Big Brothers Big Sisters agency practices that lead to the most successful mentoring relationships.

Over time, Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies will actually be able to counsel mentors on how best to engage with their "Little" based on their, age, [personal history](#), family circumstances and cultural identity.

During the pre-match screening process, the study's conclusions are also expected to make it easier to identify the children most likely to benefit from having a mentor.

"When the findings of this research are fully understood, we expect that virtually every aspect of how we approach, design and maintain our mentoring relationships will be impacted," says MacDonald. "The work of the project's outstanding team, so ably led by Dr. DeWit and Dr. Lipman, will benefit children and teenagers in every region of Canada for generations."

"We recognize that the work of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada has played a crucial role in the lives of many young Canadians," says Dr. Anthony Phillips, Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction. "CIHR is pleased to support research that provides communities with information about youth [mental health](#) and healthy development in society."

Provided by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Citation: Youth mentoring linked to many positive effects, study shows (2013, January 15)

retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-youth-linked-positive-effects.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.