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AN IMPACT STUDY OF THE YOUTH AND FAMILIES WITH PROMISE
MENTORING PROGRAM ON PARENT AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

by

Janet H. Cox

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2001

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ABSTRACT

An Impact Study of the Youth and Families with Promise
Mentoring Program on Parent and Family Outcomes

by

Janet H. Cox, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2001

Major Professor: Dr. Kathleen W. Piercy
Department: Family and Human Development

This study examined the effects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships; specifically, whether aspects of the youth's relationship with parents and siblings changed while he/she was involved in the mentoring program, and whether parent functioning and behavior became more effective and positive. Family systems theory and the social systems model of family stress provided the theoretical frameworks for the analysis.

Several aspects of the mentoring relationship were examined to understand their impact on family outcomes. These factors included the intensity of the mentoring experience, family involvement in program activities, and the unique aspects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program.

Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were utilized to provide a more complete picture of the program outcomes. Survey data were

collected from parents, youth, and mentors approximately eight months after youth were enrolled in the program. Qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews with parents, mentors, and grandmentors to identify specific changes observed in the youth. Additional data were collected through individual youth telephone interviews to understand how the youth perceived the program and its beneficial components.

Data were analyzed using paired t tests and a content analysis of the qualitative data. Comparisons were also made between youth actively involved in the program with an assigned mentor and youth who were enrolled but had little contact with their mentor or program activities.

Analyses showed that participation in this program had a positive impact on parent-child relationships, parent functioning, and sibling relationships for approximately one third of the youth and their families. This study suggests that the benefits of mentoring programs may extend beyond the mentored youth into the family system. To fully understand the impact of a mentoring program, these changes must be evaluated.

(103 pages)

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Special thanks go out to my family for their support, patience, and help. My husband, Stephen, took over many of my other responsibilities to allow me time to work on this project and offered constant encouragement. Ryan endured hours of watching the computer screen as he sat on my lap or played nearby. Thanks also go to other family members and friends who helped me keep the distant light in view. I could not have done it without all of you.

Janet H. Cox

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile violence and crime have made some neighborhoods and schools dangerous and frightening. The Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's *Juvenile Crime Statistics Report* describes Utah's juvenile arrest rate (3,570 arrests per 100,000 youth) as among the highest in the nation ("Crime," 1999). Juvenile delinquency reduces the quality of life for members of society and is very costly in terms of financial and human capital. The factors in society that put youth at-risk for delinquent behavior are complex, including poor academic and behavior management skills, family factors, and low involvement in the community.

In recent decades, mentoring programs have been developed in communities throughout the country to address these underlying causes of delinquency. These programs have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing school dropout rates and teen pregnancy, lowering delinquency, and helping youth accomplish goals, such as earning higher grades and making friends (Grossman, 1998).

School problems, delinquent behavior, and family dysfunction are related to many factors in the external environment of the youth, and to internal characteristics and skills the youth possess. Factors affecting school performance include reading ability, study skills, motivation, and family support. Youth who

perform well at school receive positive recognition, which reduces family stress and facilitates positive family interactions. On the other hand, youth who struggle at school may act out in frustration, increasing family stress. This may lead to less effective parenting and support, creating a harmful downward cycle for the youth and their families.

This thesis examined the effects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships, specifically between the youth, their parent(s), and their siblings. Parents' perceptions of their functioning and behaviors also will be explored.

Statement of the Problem

Families in today's society face many challenges as they strive to raise successful adolescents. Today's youth are growing up in a world in which caring, supportive adults with time to form meaningful relationships with youth are difficult to find (Brewster & Fager, 1998). Families are often geographically isolated from relatives, family friends, and other resources. The decrease of adult involvement has many negative consequences in the lives of adolescents, including lower academic performance, increased delinquency and problem behaviors, and lower self-confidence (Bernard, 1992; Brewster & Fager, 1998). Meanwhile, family and community involvement in the lives of adolescents has been shown to be very valuable in building assets and helping youth become successful adults (Benson, Galbraith, & Espeland, 1998).

Many organizations have developed mentoring programs to help families use their personal and family resources more effectively, help youth succeed, and reduce delinquency (Jaffe, 1998). Most of these programs focus on one individual family member, rather than supporting and strengthening the entire family system. Despite their success in many areas, little attention has been given to the ways in which one-on-one mentoring relationships with youth can impact family functioning at all levels. By examining the effects of mentoring through a family systems perspective, more complete outcomes can be obtained. Table 1 provides definitions for program-specific terms used throughout this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to measure the effects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships. Specifically, this study examined whether aspects of the youths' relationship with parents and siblings changed while they were involved in the program and if parent functioning and behavior became more effective and positive. It is important to understand how mentoring affects family relationships because interactions between parents and youth continue even after involvement in the mentoring program has ceased.

Changes in youth behaviors and parent functioning also affected other aspects of the family system. Understanding both the nature of these changes and whether other family members perceived them as positive provided a broader picture of how mentoring affects family relationships.

Table 1

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Assets	Traits or characteristics, internal or external, which help an individual be more successful.
At-risk	Youth or families with high stress factors or difficulties that make them more vulnerable to additional problems or delinquent behaviors.
“Grandmentors”	Older persons or couples who form a one-on-one mentoring relationship with an at-risk youth. Most are grandparents and many are retired.
Mentoring	A one-on-one relationship, where the mentor provides support for and interacts with another person who is younger, needs support, or has less experience in a given area.
Youth	Adolescents in general, especially those between the ages of 10-14.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring

Formal mentoring programs gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s as a way to address the needs of at-risk youth (Bernard, 1992). Many adolescents in low income or disadvantaged families have few links to outside resources and little support within their families. Mentoring programs allow another adult to form a relationship with the youth and to act as a support system.

Many successful planned mentoring programs have been developed throughout the United States (Brewster & Fager, 1998; Jaffe, 1998). One of the oldest and most well known national mentoring programs is the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America™ organization, which focuses specifically on youth from single-parent households and has been referred to as the “prototype of one-to-one mentoring” (Grossman & Johnson, 1998; Jaffe, 1998).

The Oxford Dictionary (1997) defines a mentor as “an experienced and trusted advisor” (p. 495). Mentors are viewed as caring, mature persons who form a one-on-one relationship in which they listen to, care for, interact with, advise, and share experiences with another person (Dondero, 1997). Mentors help youth apply knowledge to everyday life and build learning opportunities on a regular basis for an extended period of time (Dondero, 1997; Grossman & Garry, 1997).

Mentoring relationships can form naturally through interactions between youth and adults in neighborhood, work, church, or school settings. They also can be arranged formally through a planned mentoring program, which matches a youth with someone older in a one-to-one relationship. In either type of mentoring relationship, the mentor provides a role model and friendship while teaching the youth valuable social or academic skills during the challenging years of adolescence. Mentors also provide a sense of belonging as they show interest in the youth's accomplishments and activities (Bernard, 1992).

Many planned mentoring programs have a relatively narrow focus, such as academics; other programs do not have specific objectives or goals, but help mentors promote general youth development. Although specific programs differ in their focus, mentoring programs have been successful in improving academic performance, reducing delinquency, and increasing self-confidence. Successful programs include Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Sponsor-A-Scholar, Project RAISE, and Across Ages (Grossman & Johnson, 1998; LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, & Taylor, 1996; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995).

The Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program, one of the most widely recognized mentoring programs in America, was evaluated on several measures in 1992 and 1993. Half of the 10- to-16-year-old youth who applied to the program were matched with mentors and the other half were placed on a waiting list, providing a comparison group (Tierney et al., 1995). Eighteen months later, when

the two groups were compared, researchers found that participants in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program showed more improvement than the control group in several areas (Tierney et al.). The youth with mentors were 46 and 27% less likely to start using drugs or alcohol, respectively (Tierney et al.). They were almost one third less likely to hit someone, skipped half as many days of school, and showed small increases in grade point average compared to youth in the control group (Tierney et al.). Youth also indicated that they had formed better relationships with their family and peers (Tierney et al.).

Sponsor-A-Scholar is a mentoring program based in Philadelphia that uses mentoring to help youth reach college. Mentors work to improve academic performance and help their assigned youth with financial aid and college applications (Grossman & Johnson, 1998). Students enrolled in the Sponsor-A-Scholar program were more likely to have higher grades and to enroll in college than a control group of similar youth who were not assigned mentors (Grossman & Johnson).

Project RAISE provides support to youth from the time they enter sixth grade through middle and high school. Project RAISE students were compared with similar students at their middle school. Youth in the program missed nearly 3% fewer days of school, or just over one week less, than the comparison group (McPartland & Nettles, 1991). Students in the program also earned higher grades in English than similar youth in the control group (McPartland & Nettles).

Across Ages is a substance abuse prevention program targeted to sixth-grade students in Philadelphia through community service activities, parent workshops, and one-on-one mentoring with older adults (LoSciuto et al., 1996). Students with mentors were compared with other youth in the program who were not assigned mentors and against a control group who did not participate in any aspect of the program. Students who were assigned mentors had better attitudes toward school, the elderly, and the future than either of the other groups (LoSciuto et al.). They also had less substance abuse and slightly better school attendance (LoSciuto et al.).

Programs that focus on specific behaviors or goals have often focused their program evaluation on those specific outcomes. In a national survey of 7,500 mentors from a variety of programs, mentors were asked if the youth they were working with had a problem in selected areas and, if so, how much they felt they had helped (McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen, & Shapiro, 1998). Mentors were very effective in helping youth overcome negative feelings about themselves, with 62% indicating improvement in this area (McLearn et al.). Nearly half of the mentors reported that they had helped youth address problems with skipping school (52%), getting in trouble at school (49%) or elsewhere (47%), earning poor grades (48%), or with substance abuse (45%) (McLearn et al.). The mentors indicated that they had helped youth with other problems, including problems with family and friends, sexual activity, running away from home, abuse, or eating disorders (McLearn et

al.). In this study, data were collected only from mentors, and no information from youth or other sources was available.

Family Relationships

The majority of formal mentoring programs focus solely on individual outcomes such as improved academic or social skills, increased self-confidence, and reduced delinquency. Most programs do not address family relationships and functioning on any level, and references to family issues generally are vague. If changes in family relationships are mentioned at all, they are usually mentioned in the context of overall relations with teachers, parents, and peers (Brewster & Fager, 1998). Yet, according to a national survey of adults mentoring young people, poor relationships with family members were the second most prevalent problem that youth were facing (McLearn et al., 1998).

The national survey of mentors from various programs found that 35% felt they had helped the youth with poor relationships with family members (McLearn et al., 1998), but the survey did not explore how the mentors had helped or the specific improvements they observed. Students in one mentoring program, Career Beginnings, reported that mentoring helped them to improve their relationships with their family, and one-fourth of them felt it strengthened family relationships (Bernard, 1992). Another mentoring program, Sponsor-A-Scholar, looked at family support as a constant, examining the effects of mentoring on youth with minimal

family support versus youth with high family support, but did not study whether having a mentor increased family support (Grossman & Johnson, 1998).

One of the goals of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America mentoring program is to help youth form better relationships with family and friends. This concept was measured using the "Relationship with Mother Scale of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment" (IPPA; Grossman & Tierney, 1998), a scale that measures trust, communication, anger and alienation. The main area of improvement for the youth was increased trust in their parents, with the greatest increase reported to be seven percent among white boys (Tierney et al., 1995). Communication, anger, and alienation showed no improvement, except for White boys who felt they communicated better with their parents (Grossman & Tierney). The study also examined how frequently youth lied to their parents and found that youth in the program lied to their parents 37% less often than youth in the control group (Grossman & Tierney). No data on changes in family relationships from parent's viewpoints have been reported in any studies.

Theoretical Frameworks

Family Systems Theory

Individuals do not develop within a vacuum; family interactions provide regular input and influence on development. Family systems theory emphasizes that a family is more than simply the sum of its parts; it consists of dyads, relationships, memories, and shared interactions among members of the family

(McKenry & Price, 1994). The components of a family system are individual family members who are interdependent with one another (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). They exhibit a mutual influence on one another, where what happens to one individual will generally affect every other member of the family (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

The family system strives to maintain homeostasis, a balance, or state of equilibrium, through rules, expectations, and boundaries that allow the family to function successfully and meet the needs of individual family members (Klein & White, 1996). An experience or action by one family member may disrupt the equilibrium and alter the actions of other family members. Each part of the system or member of the family will respond to the event as the system strives to regain the equilibrium. For example, if one family member starts a new job, other family members may need to do additional household chores or adjust their schedules to accommodate the needs of the new job.

The reactions of other family members often are based on internal forces, or factors within the family, such as family cohesiveness, the ability of the family to support one another and maintain close relationships, and adaptability, the family's ability to adjust to change. Internal forces are characteristics that may be unique to a given family and may not be affected by factors in the community at large. For example, if the family has high cohesiveness, they may work together, viewing the change as a family event, whereas a family with low cohesiveness may perceive the

change as an individual event and be less responsive to changes other family members could make.

External forces, such as culture, economic factors, history, and stage in the family life cycle, also influence the family's response to an event or behavior (McKenry & Price, 1994). If the family has watched others deal with similar situations, they may be able to model their reactions and adjustments after those of others. They may have been able to anticipate the change and adjust the balance of the system before the change occurred. External forces can also make changes more stressful because cultural expectations or economic factors may limit the options a family has for dealing with the change.

When the family system is unable to maintain or regain equilibrium in response to a stressful event, individual family members and the system as a whole may experience stress, which further affects the functioning of each individual and the family system. Involvement in a mentoring program provides an external support mechanism that can help the individual cope with stress. In turn, the mentored individual may help the other members of the family cope and regain equilibrium within the system.

Family Stress and Coping

The social systems model of family stress is based on Hill's ABC-X model in which A, the stressor, interacts with B, the family's resources, and C, the meaning assigned to the event by the family, to produce X, the degree of stress

experienced by the family (McKenry & Price, 1994). A stressor, or stressful event, is anything that changes some aspect of the family system and can vary in intensity, type, and predictability. McCubbin and Patterson (1985, p. 9) defined family resources as "traits, characteristics, or abilities of (a) individual family members, (b) the family system, or (c) the community that can be used to meet the demands of a stressful event."

Social support is a family resource that allows a family or individual to adapt more easily to a stressful situation by providing social contacts who can help with problem solving and obtaining additional resources for the family (Demo & Cox, 2000; McKenry & Price, 1994). Outside supports can also help the family redefine the stressful event in a positive manner, which acts as an additional mediating factor in reducing its impact.

Adolescence is a time that brings unique stressors to adolescents and their families as developmental changes and peer influences force families to redefine their relationships and interactions (Murry & Bell-Scott, 1994). Family conflicts may develop as parents and adolescents adjust to their new roles, and as the youth deals with the accumulation of developmental changes. Youth who engage in delinquent or high-risk behaviors often have parents who are more rigid, less emotional, or more chaotic than other parents (Murry & Bell-Scott). These parents may be facing multiple challenges, such as poverty, job instability, or strained relationships, which make it more difficult to maintain stability within the family.

Persistent family stress can erode parents' ability to provide consistent involvement, support, and discipline (Demo & Cox, 2000).

Parents of difficult adolescents may use ineffective parenting styles with their youth, providing excessive restrictions or a lack of structure and parental involvement, as they strive to cope with the demands of a difficult youth (Murry & Bell-Scott, 1994). Parents also may be experiencing stressful events in their own lives and development that accumulate within the family system. These families may unintentionally create more stress and provide less support for the youth, who responds by engaging in other high-risk behaviors (Murry & Bell-Scott).

Factors That Influence Mentoring Outcomes

Several factors may influence whether or not a mentoring relationship is effective, including the commitment and involvement of the mentor, the participation and support offered by the family, and the characteristics of the mentor who is paired with a particular youth. There is not a perfect formula for success, but common characteristics are found in effective mentoring programs and relationships.

Effective mentors and programs provide social support to help youth cope with and reframe stressful events, which may help them achieve a new level of homeostasis in the family system. After a stressful event or change by one member of the family, other family members have to readjust to the change and possibly alter how they interact with that individual. For example, if an adolescent is

struggling in school, his/her parents may have to readjust their schedules to help with homework and meet with teachers about the youth's performance. Siblings may be required to spend more time studying, help tutor their sibling, and account for their grades more frequently. The youth may be required to give up extracurricular activities. Each member of the family is affected by the problems one member of the family is facing. Each of them must learn how to respond to their new responsibilities and expectations within the family system.

Intensity of the Mentoring Experience

In mentoring relationships, the amount of monthly contact between the mentor and youth, along with the length of the relationship, accounted for 63% of the variance in areas where youth demonstrated improvement (DuBois & Neville, 1997). In an evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, researchers found that youth who were matched with a mentor for at least 12 months showed the greatest improvements 18 months after applying to the program (Grossman & Johnson, 1998). Youth who had been matched for less than six months showed little improvement and often performed more poorly than at baseline (Grossman & Johnson).

When mentors and their youth made contact more than once a week, those youth showed greater improvements than youth who were in contact with their mentors less frequently (Grossman & Johnson, 1998). Youth who met infrequently with their mentors, had little contact, or had relationships of short duration showed

little change in academic performance, confidence, and amount of delinquent behavior (Grossman & Johnson; Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000).

Family Involvement

None of the mentoring programs that have been reviewed involve parents in the program beyond gaining their consent for their youth to participate. They may be informed of the activities, but are not encouraged to take an active part in them. Parents who are involved with their youth tend to communicate and discipline more effectively than parents who are uninvolved in their youth's activities (Benson et al., 1998). Research has shown that youth have more positive school attitudes, higher grades, and higher aspirations when their parents are involved with their schooling and activities (Desimone, 1998; Epstein, 1995; Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

Studies have also suggested that involved parents use their resources to help their youth be successful by creating supportive home environments, offering encouragement, and setting expectations for the youth (McNeal, 1999; Teachman & Paasch, 1998). Overall, parent involvement appears to increase positive outcomes for youth in a variety of ways.

Parental involvement has also been effective in youth drug prevention programs. Three hundred high-risk youth from the Boys & Girls Club participated in a drug prevention program. The control group of youth received no intervention, a second group received the prevention program only, another group of youth

received the prevention program and participated in monthly group activities, and a fourth group received the program, participated in monthly activities, and participated in activities with their parents. The youth who were more involved in the drug prevention program with youth activities and parent involvement improved in their ability to decline drugs more than the groups with only the drug prevention program, while the control group declined in such abilities (St. Pierre & Mark, 1997).

Increased interaction and support can help parents better understand their youth and cope with stressful events within the family system. Social networks or outside support networks provide valuable resources for parents and families in stressful situations (Demo & Cox, 2000). Unlike the relatively short-term mentor-youth relationship, interactions between parents and their youth are long term and will continue after involvement in the mentoring program has ceased.

Older Mentors

Individual characteristics of the mentor also affect the success of the mentoring relationship. One characteristic that has often been overlooked is the age of the mentor. Most mentoring programs recruit young adult mentors who have recently faced problems similar to those of the youth through colleges, universities, high schools, and community programs. The Across Ages mentoring program is one exception, using older, grandparent-age mentors and providing regular

activities where youth, parents, and mentors can interact with one another (LoSciuto et al., 1996).

Power and Maluccio (1999) suggested that older adults who are involved with the entire family should view children and parents as engaged in a continuous process of growth, who can be motivated and taught to cope with life's demands. While interacting with families in the role of a mentor, these older adults may be able to informally mentor the youth's parent(s) through their interactions with the youth.

Summary of Literature

Mentoring programs have been shown to be effective in helping deter youth from engaging in delinquent and high-risk behaviors. However, the areas of mentoring impacts on the family system and how mentoring affects family relationships have been largely overlooked. None of the programs reviewed invited parents and other family members to take an active part in the mentoring or program activities. The majority of mentoring programs also have focused on one specific area of development, rather than using a comprehensive approach. Integrating families into the mentoring process and evaluating the effects of that involvement are essential in helping at-risk youth overcome the challenges they face on every level.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions guided the data analysis: Can a youth-focused mentoring program, Youth and Families with Promise, strengthen family relationships, and if so, in which ways? Specific aspects of family relationships were examined to answer this question.

1. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program improve parent-youth relationships, including the youth's respect for their parents, feelings of closeness to their family, and ability to get along with their parents?
2. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program increase positive parenting behaviors, such as having consistent expectations, offering praise, enjoying being a parent, and feeling good about one's performance as a parent?
3. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program increase perception of control on the part of parents, such as feeling that the youth is cooperative, feeling closer to their youth, and feeling able to handle the demands of being a parent?
4. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program affect sibling relationships and, if so, in what ways?

It is hypothesized that:

1. H_0 : Involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program does not affect family relationships.
2. H_0 : Relationships between youth and their parents will show no change as a result of participation in the program.
3. H_0 : Involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program will not increase positive parenting behaviors.
4. H_0 : Involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program will not affect parent's perception of control over youth's behavior.
5. H_0 : Relationships between program youth and their siblings will show no change after involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes quantitative and qualitative data from the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program. After a description of the Youth and Families with Promise program, this chapter presents the research design and data collection procedures, followed by the analysis procedures and comparison groupings used for this project.

Youth and Families with Promise:

Program Description

The Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program was developed as part of a multi-year study designed and implemented through Utah State University Extension Services to address youth problems through early intervention with at-risk youth, ages 10-14, and their families. Youth referrals come from school administrators, officers of the Juvenile Court, community social service agencies, or from parents. When a referral is received, the youths' parent(s) are interviewed and the program is explained to them to obtain their consent for the youth to participate in the program and its evaluations.

The youth is then matched with a volunteer mentor recruited through universities, colleges, the family's religious congregation, or from community volunteer organizations. Whenever possible, youth are matched with both college-

age and grandparent-age mentors (grandmentors). The Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program is just getting started in several of the counties, so many youth were not matched with grandmentors, or were not matched the entire time they were involved in the program. Data from youth with both types of mentors were combined with data from youth with only a young adult mentor.

Mentors work directly with the youth, focusing on building academic and social skills while providing a positive role model for the youth to emulate. Young adult mentors receive monthly training and are given a curriculum with activities focusing on eight of the behavioral assets from the Search Institute's Developmental Asset model (Benson et al., 1998), which the mentor adapts to fit the needs of their assigned youth. These eight assets include: achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, reading for pleasure, planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, resistance skills, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Program youth, their families, and mentors participate in monthly "Family Night Out" group activities and periodic service projects. Through these activities and interaction with the youth, mentors support parent(s) and assist in the development of strong family bonds, better communication, and clear family rules. Family Night Out activities are experiential learning activities that have included talent shows, building balloon pyramids, egg drop competitions, and service projects, such as a service scavenger hunt or sorting food for needy families.

The program has expanded from one county in 1994 to eight counties in 1999-2000. Funding for the program is provided through Utah State University Extension Service, with additional grants from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Utah State Juvenile Justice Programs, the Utah State Legislature, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Youth and Families with Promise:

Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were utilized to provide a more complete picture of the program outcomes. In order to compensate for the problems of self-report questionnaire data and the limitations of qualitative data, multiple methods of data collection were used to strengthen the validity of the findings (Rossi & Freeman, 1993). Qualitative data are more difficult to summarize into numerical form, expensive to gather, and subject to misinterpretation (Rossi & Freeman). On the other hand, qualitative data provide more intimate knowledge about a program and its participants than quantitative data. Using multiple methods, or triangulation, can strengthen the validity of findings and offset measurement error, if results from the different methods are congruent (Rossi & Freeman). This study utilized data collected by the Youth and Families with Promise program. The principal investigators of the program had previously filed the required forms with the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A memo indicating this exemption from filing those forms is located in Appendix A.

Questionnaires

Survey data were collected for youth who were enrolled in the Youth and Families with Promise program in the fall of 1999. Approximately 8 months after starting the program, the youth, their parents, and mentors were asked to complete a post-then-pre format questionnaire. Respondents were asked to evaluate the youth's behaviors and attitudes on 21 variables prior to their involvement in the program and after having participated in program activities for 8 months. Frequency of behavior was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "always" to 5 "never."

Retrospective post-then-pre testing is a quantitative measure used to eliminate response shift bias present in standard pre/post testing. Response shift bias occurs when individuals begin a program with an understanding of the target concept that changes over time as participants gain a new level of understanding about the concept (Robinson & Doueck, 1994).

For example, a program is developed to improve listening skills. The pretest measures whether or not the participant actively listens on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The youth feels she usually listens and marks 4. She then learns about being an active listener and practices this skill, later being given a posttest asking the same question. She knows she is not a perfect listener, but thinks she now listens well, so she marks 4.

Her pretest and posttest scores of 4 indicate she did not change her listening skills in the program. However, a change in perception may have contaminated the validity of the instrument and not reflected actual outcomes of the program. If the youth could go back and retake the pretest, perhaps she would rate herself differently with her new knowledge. The post-then-pre test retrospective design allows participants to evaluate their level of understanding or behavior prior to the intervention/program.

The retrospective post-then-pre test has been effective in eliminating response shift bias in educational and training programs (Robinson & Doueck, 1994; Sprangers & Hoogstraten, 1989). This design is commonly used in programs whose aim is to educate or train. Prevention programs aim to teach new skills and educate participants about the downfalls of risky behaviors and benefits of thriving behaviors. As the youth's perception of the behaviors and concepts change, response shift bias is likely to occur.

Using the post-then-pre format, youth were also asked about their involvement in any of 11 problem behaviors: stealing; damaging property; getting in trouble with the police; using tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol; gang activity; fighting; skipping school; getting sent to the principal's office; and cheating. Parents were asked similar questions, plus questions about their youth earning poor grades or being called to the school for a conference about their youth.

Parents were asked nine additional questions about their feelings as parents and five questions about the youth's mentor. Mentors were asked about the same

thirteen problem behaviors as the parents, five questions about their feelings as mentors, and five additional questions about the youth's family. Each group also was asked a few demographic and open-ended questions about the program in general. The youth questionnaire contained a total of 39 questions, the parent questionnaire contained 57 questions, and the mentor questionnaire contained 53 questions. Respondents were offered \$10.00 each for completing the questionnaires. The parent questionnaire is found in Appendix B, the youth questionnaire is in Appendix C, and the mentor questionnaire is in Appendix D.

To maintain confidentiality, all youth were assigned a number by the site coordinator, which was placed on the questionnaires before they were administered. Respondents placed their completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope that was sent off-site for analysis. The questionnaires were then coded and analyzed using only the youth's assigned number to match the different questionnaires for each youth. No specific identifying information was included with the questionnaire, but some basic demographic information was collected. Youth were asked their age, grade in school, and gender; parents were asked their gender, current marital status, and relationship to the youth; and mentors were asked their gender and the gender of the youth they were mentoring. No income or socioeconomic status information was collected from the families in the program.

Questionnaires were distributed and collected by the site coordinator for each county. They were instructed to collect data from each family who had been enrolled in the program for at least 8 months and the mentors of these youth. Data

analysis for this project included 8 questions from the youth questionnaire, 17 questions from the parent questionnaire, and 7 questions from the mentor questionnaire that addressed demographics and family relationships. Portions of the questionnaire asking about academics, social skills, or problem behaviors were not included in this analysis.

Factor Analysis

Responses to the three questionnaire items asked of all respondents were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using the principal factor method. All three items loaded heavily on one factor, with factor loadings of greater than .80 for each. This factor has been labeled the parent-youth relationship factor and explained 74.5% of the variance. Questionnaire items and corresponding factor loadings are presented in Table 2.

Parental responses to the nine questionnaire items regarding their feelings and behaviors as parents were subjected to a separate exploratory factor analysis. The principal factor method was used to extract the factors, followed by a varimax rotation, which identified three meaningful factors. In interpreting the rotated factor pattern, an item was said to load on a given factor if the factor loading was .60 or greater for that factor, and was less than .60 for the other factors.

Using these criteria, four items were found to load on the first factor, which was labeled the positive parenting factor. Three items loaded on the second factor, which was labeled the parental control factor. Only one item loaded on the third

Table 2

Questionnaire Items and Corresponding Factor Loadings from the Factor Component Matrix, All Respondents

Questionnaire item	Parent-youth relationship factor loadings
Does this youth respect his/her parents?	.89
Does this youth feel close to his/her family?	.86
Does this youth get along with his/her parents?	.84

factor, labeled the overwhelmed parent factor. One item, parental worry, did not load on any factor, and was excluded from further analysis. Questionnaire items and factor loadings are presented in Table 3.

With parental worry excluded from the analysis, the positive parenting factor explained 30.5% of the variance, the parental control factor explained 30.1% of the variance, and the overwhelmed parent factor explained 13.8% of the variance for a cumulative total of 74.4% of the variance explained by these factors.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews with parents, mentors, and grandmentors. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to learn more from parents and mentors about the specific changes they had observed in the youth. The focus group interviews also gave participants the

Table 3

Questionnaire Items and Corresponding Factor Loadings from the Rotated Factor Component Matrix, Parent Questionnaire

Questionnaire item	Positive	Parental	
	parenting factor loading	control factor loading	Overwhelmed parent factor loading
Do you have consistent expectations for your youth?	.90		
Do you praise your youth?	.82	.19	
Do you enjoy being a parent?	.67	.52	.12
Do you feel good about how you are doing as a parent?	.63	.49	
Do you feel that your youth is cooperative at home?	.23	.81	.22
Do you feel close to your youth?	.17	.80	.16
Do you feel able to handle the demands of being a parent?	.17	.74	-.34
Do you feel overwhelmed as a parent?			.95

opportunity to focus on the aspects of the program and the areas of change that they felt were most important.

Participants were contacted by the site coordinator and invited to share their experiences regarding the program and their youth. Eleven focus group interviews were held, six of which were conducted with mentors and five with parents. Average attendance at both parent and mentor focus groups was seven participants. Participants were offered \$20.00 to compensate them for their time. Focus group interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

Parents were asked to explain what the mentoring experience was like for them and their child(ren). Parents described their family situation, the challenges their children were facing, and positive things they saw happening with their youth socially, academically, or at home which could be a result of their involvement in the program. Parents were also asked to voice any concerns that they had about the mentors and to suggest any changes for the program in general. A copy of the questions asked in the parent focus groups is contained in Appendix E.

Mentors were asked to explain what the mentoring experience was like for them and their assigned youth. They each introduced themselves briefly, and described the youth they were working with and the problems that youth was facing, including family issues. The mentors then described some of the things they saw happening with their youth socially, academically, or at home that could be a result of their involvement in the program. They explained why they had decided to

become a mentor, the goals that they had as a mentor, and how well those goals and expectations had been met. Finally, the mentors were asked to voice any concerns or suggestions that they had concerning the program in general. A copy of the questions asked in the mentor focus groups is contained in Appendix F.

Additional data were collected through individual youth interviews conducted via telephone. The purpose of collecting interview data was to better understand how the youth perceived the program and how they felt it was benefiting them. Individual interviews were conducted with 15 youth from five counties who were selected by their site coordinators.

After obtaining parental and youth consent, all youth were asked to share what they had learned while being in the program and what changes, if any, they had seen in various aspects of their lives, including family relationships, academics, and social situations. They were asked to describe their mentor and to share some of the things that they had learned from the mentor. Youth had been involved with the program from 6 months to 3 years, with the average length of involvement being a little more than 1 year. Each youth was given \$15.00 for taking the time to complete the interview. Interviews lasted from 15 to 25 minutes, with an average length of approximately 20 minutes. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

To maintain confidentiality, each youth was placed in a private office with a telephone at their local county site and the interviewers called the office telephone number. The interviewer did not know any identifying information about the youth.

Respondents were given a copy of the interview protocol during the interview to help clarify any questions they had difficulty hearing or understanding. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix G.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire data from the youth, their parents, and mentors were analyzed using paired t tests to determine if a statistically significant change had occurred in the youth's behaviors and attitudes. The following research question guided the data analysis: Can a youth focused mentoring program, Youth and Families with Promise, strengthen family relationships and if so, in which ways?

Specific areas of analysis included how close the youth felt to their family, how well they got along with their parents, and how much they respected their parents. The researcher was interested in how the youths' relationship with, and perception of, their parents changed while they were involved in the program.

Parents were asked how they felt their relationship with their youth had changed and about several areas of parent functioning. These included how well they felt able to handle the demands of being a parent, whether they felt good about being a parent, how often they worried about the way their youth will turn out, and how often they felt overwhelmed. They also were asked how close they felt to their youth, how often they praised their youth, if they enjoyed being a parent, how cooperative their youth was, and if they had consistent demands for their youth. With each of these variables, the parents were asked to indicate how their

relationship was before their involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise program and after participating in the program for at least 8 months.

The researcher was also interested in the youths' relationships with siblings and whether these relationships changed as a result of their involvement in the program. This issue was addressed through the individual youth interviews and in the focus groups. Interviewed youth were asked whether their relationship with their siblings was better, worse, or the same as it was before they were involved in the program. If there was a change, they were asked to describe the changes that they had seen. In focus group interviews, parents and mentors were asked about changes that they had seen at home which could be the result of the youth's involvement in the program. Some change reported included changes in relationships with siblings.

All individual interviews and focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for data analysis. Transcripts were read to develop initial ideas for categories, patterns, and themes. Codes were formulated to break down the data and combine similar topics for comparison and analysis. The computer software program Qualitative Solutions and Research (QSR) NUD*IST, Version 4 was used throughout this process. Codes and themes were revised, combined, and expanded as additional transcripts were analyzed. Throughout the data analysis process, data were examined by the codes assigned and in the context of the entire transcript.

Issues of reliability and validity were addressed for focus group data by using multiple transcript readers who coded the data separately before comparing

interpretations and coding schemes. The separate coding schemes were very similar and were combined with minimal discrepancies. Discussion and consensus concerning discrepancies among readers reduced researcher bias. One coder had no prior association with the mentoring program.

Including direct quotes in the research reports preserved the purity of the data. In addition, validity was strengthened by the degree to which quantitative data and qualitative data converged. Questionnaire data were collected from several respondents about each youth, who reported improvements and change similar to that reported by parents and mentors in focus group interviews.

Comparison Youth

Grossman and Johnson (1998) discussed the importance of using a control or comparison group to effectively measure program outcomes. Such a comparison group would consist of youth in background situations similar to the youth enrolled in the program. It is difficult to justify deliberately excluding at-risk youth from potentially beneficial activities; however, similar comparisons can be made between youth who were actively involved in the program with an assigned mentor, and youth who were enrolled but had little or no contact with their mentor or program activities. These data were referred to as dosage data and were collected through monthly mentor report logs, which documented meetings, activities, and contacts between the youth and their mentor.

Youth then were divided into high and low dosage groups, using the mean number of hours as the separation point. Paired t tests were run within each dosage group on the post and pretest scores to examine whether a statistically significant change occurred. The significance levels of the two groups were then compared to understand if the changes reported by program participants could be attributed in part to involvement in the program. The youth in the low dosage group had met the requirements to enroll in the program, and although they may have attended some of the group activities, they were not involved in the primary aspect of the program. These youth provided a comparison group of at-risk youth that did not receive the benefits of full involvement in the mentoring program.

Demographics

Limited demographic information was collected about program youth and their families. Participation in the program is nearly even for males and females, 48% and 52%, respectively. Youth ranged in age from 7 to 16, with a mean age of 11.85 and the majority of the youth (85%) between the ages of 10 and 14. Two thirds of the youth are in sixth, seventh, or eighth grades. Sixty-five percent of the youth live in single-parent homes. No numerical information was collected about income or socioeconomic status.

Summary

Different methods of data collection were used in this study to understand

and clarify the impacts of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships and parenting behaviors. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires completed by parents, youth, and their mentors; qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews with mentors and parents and through individual interviews with program youth; and comparison, or dosage, information was collected through monthly mentor reports.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

All of the research questions for this study focus on family relationships and parenting outcomes; therefore, only those items from the questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews relating to these areas were analyzed. A total of 276 questionnaires were received, 97 from youth, 94 from parents, and 85 from mentors. Of the 11 focus groups held, 6 were conducted with mentors and 5 with parents. Average attendance at both parent and mentor focus groups was seven participants. One focus group was comprised solely of grandmentors. Individual interviews were conducted with 15 youth from five counties. In the ensuing sections, findings and quotes from respondents are identified as follows: PG = Parent Focus Group, MG = Mentor Focus Group, and YI = Youth Interview. All proper names used throughout this section are pseudonyms.

Parent-Youth Relationship

Parents, youth, and mentors were asked about three aspects of the parent-child relationship. The mean values of each group were compared with the other groups on each of the three variables using independent t tests. No significant differences were found between the values reported by the parents and the values reported by the youth on any variable. A significant difference was found between the values reported by the youth and the values reported by their mentors on only

one variable, feeling close to their family, $t(178) = -2.65, p \leq .01$. Youth saw themselves as having closer relationships to their families than their mentors did. No significant differences were found between the values reported by the parents and the values reported by the mentors on any variable.

These data indicate that the responses from parents, youth, and mentors on these variables are very similar. Therefore, the three groups of respondents were combined for analysis on these variables. Table H.1 in Appendix H shows the means scores on each variable by group. Table H.2 in Appendix H shows the t values and significance levels for the between group comparisons.

Paired t tests were used to compare the posttest and pretest scores on each variable from the questionnaires. Thirty-seven percent of the questionnaire respondents reported that the youth got along better with their parents after being involved in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program, 60% reported no change, and only three percent felt the relationship was worse, $t(263) = 9.96, p = .000$. One mentor described how she helped her youth learn to get along better with her foster parents and helped her deal with anger toward men in general (MG4). A 15-year-old girl who had been involved in the program for about a year said having a mentor had helped her "take time to understand her mom." This youth also realized her mom is not always the bad guy and that they can have fun together (YI).

Thirty-five percent of the respondents felt that the youth respected their parents more after being involved in the program, 63% indicated no change, and

3% felt the youth was less respectful, $t(267) = 8.85, p = .000$. One mentor explained how she had noticed that her mentee often spoke disrespectfully to her mother. She decided to teach the youth about treating her family with more respect. The mentor would bring up the subject anytime the youth made disrespectful comments to her mother in order to help the mentee recognize how frequently she made this type of comment. The mentor explained that after a while, she noticed the youth was making a conscious effort to be kinder and more respectful (MG4).

Several parents who attended the focus group interviews also commented that after spending time with their mentors, their youth treated all family members with more respect and kindness. One parent said that she liked it when her children came back home after being with their mentors for an activity because they were excited and brought a positive attitude into their home. Her children “are more polite and nicer to each other [after spending time with their mentors]” (PG1). Another mother described the difficulties one youth was having with her stepfather before the program, then stated, “She has improved quite a bit in her relationship with him since she has come into the mentor program . . . she acts a lot better and more grown up” (PG2).

One third of the respondents indicated that the youth felt closer to their family after being involved in the program, 65% indicated no change, and less than 2% felt that closeness had decreased, $t(266) = 9.39, p = .000$. Several parents felt that Family Night Out activities played a major role in helping their family grow closer to one another. One parent noted, “I think it has helped us come closer as a

family. It has been fun and I've seen it pull the family closer" (PG4). Another parent commented, "It really pulled our family together. It made it [the family] a lot stronger" (PG4).

These results indicate that involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program does affect family relationships. Involvement in the mentoring program does improve parent-youth relationships for approximately one third of the participants, including the youth's respect for their parents, feelings of closeness to their family, and getting along with their parents. Based on these results, hypotheses H_01 and H_02 are rejected.

Parent Functioning

Paired t tests were used to compare the posttest and pretest scores on the parenting behavior variables from the parent questionnaires and parent focus group interviews. Parents were asked to reflect on how their behavior had changed as a result of their youth's involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program. Parents of youth in the program felt they were doing better as parents in every area surveyed. For this section, only data from parents is presented because parents were the only respondents who were asked about these items. These data are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Parent Functioning Outcomes, Post-Then-Pre Analysis

Variable	Retrospective	Post-	Paired
	pretest	test	t-test
	mean	mean	value*
Have consistent expectations for their youth.	3.85	4.15	3.88
Enjoy being a parent.	3.97	4.34	5.52
Praise their youth.	3.97	4.30	5.40
Feel good about how they are doing as a parent.	3.51	3.90	5.30
Feel close to their youth.	3.90	4.35	5.74
Feel that their youth is cooperative.	3.29	3.77	5.80
Feel able to handle the demands of parenting.	3.51	3.77	3.58
Don't feel overwhelmed as parents.	2.85	3.18	4.17

Note. $n = 93$

* All variables were statistically significant at $p \leq .001$

Positive Parenting Behaviors

Many of the parents involved in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program felt that they were more positive parents after participating in program activities. Twenty-three percent of the parents felt they were more consistent with their youth after being involved in the mentoring program, 75% reported no change, and 2% felt they were less consistent, $t(92) = 3.88, p = .000$.

Thirty percent enjoyed being a parent more and the remaining 70% indicated no change, $t(92) = 5.52, p = .000$. One parent felt she was "learning to spend more time with [her] children . . . now we are doing more things as a whole family" (PG2). Many of the youth who were interviewed also said that their family spent more time with each other and learned to have fun together as a result of their involvement in the mentoring program.

Twenty-eight percent of the parents praised their youth more frequently, and the remaining 72% indicated no change, $t(91) = 5.40, p = .000$. A 12-year-old boy who had been involved in the program for 1½ years felt that his parents were "a lot kinder" to him as a result of the program. He felt that his family had learned these skills through the Family Night Out activities (YI).

Thirty-one percent felt better about how they were doing as a parent, one percent felt less competent, and the remaining 68% reported no change, $t(92) = 5.30, p = .000$. One parent noted that after watching her son interact with the mentors, "I can understand him better, and easier, and we don't argue or have so much fighting between us" (PG4).

Many youth and parents learned how to communicate better with one another. One parent explained, "I think she has learned to express herself a little bit better to me" (PG2).

Several parents also felt that the program activities gave them something safe and easy to talk about. "It is just a positive and wonderful relief to have something like that to talk about between me and my girls," commented one parent (PG1). Several of the youth who were interviewed also mentioned how communication between them and their parents had increased. A ninth-grade girl who had been involved in the program for 3 years said that her family talked more with each other and did more as a family as a result of her participation in the mentoring program (YI).

These results indicate that involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program does increase positive parenting behaviors for some families. Parents in these families have more consistent expectations for the youth, enjoy being a parent more, praise their youth more frequently, and feel better about how they are doing as parents than they did before participating. Based on these findings, hypothesis H₀₃ is rejected.

Parental Perception of Control

Many parents of youth involved in the mentoring program felt they had more control over their youth's behaviors and that their youth was responding better to this control than before they were involved in the program. Thirty-three

percent reported feeling closer to their youth with the remaining 67% indicating no change, $t(90) = 5.74, p = .000$.

Thirty-five percent of the parents felt their youth cooperated better, 63% reported no change, and 2% felt the youth cooperated less, $t(91) = 5.80, p = .000$.

One mother explained that after her daughter spends time with her mentor,

she can remember everything I tell her. I can give her five things that need to be done, or said, or whatever, and she will remember them. She can whip through the house and do everything and have it done in five minutes.
(PG1)

Twenty-seven percent felt they were better able to handle the demands of being a parent, 68% indicated no change, and 5% felt less able to handle the demands of parenting, $t(92) = 3.58, p = .001$. One parent described a Family Night Out activity on personalities and colors that "gave [her] a lot of insight on parenting . . . and the kind of person he is growing up to be" (PG4).

Feeling Overwhelmed as Parents

Thirty-four percent of the parents reported that they were less likely to feel overwhelmed by the demands of being a parent after being involved in the mentoring program, 61% indicated no change, and 4% indicated they felt more overwhelmed, $t(92) = 4.17, p = .000$. One mother explained how the youth had started helping out more in the house. "He will clean out the dishwasher or take care of some laundry. Or he will want to come and talk with me and share a life with me, instead of just [being] two people who share a house" (PG1). The parents

also enjoyed being able to have someone to call if they were caught in a bind who would spend time with the youth and help keep them out of trouble.

Ninety-six percent of the parents felt that their youth's mentor set a good example for their child and provided an essential role model. One mother noted,

I'm a single mom, there are no relatives around here, and the only male role model that was in our home was my husband who was really abusive . . . so this has been a positive reinforcement because it is just the basic learning of how a positive male role model can be. . . being able to show the emotions . . . how to react to others. (PG1)

Many parents expressed gratitude for the changes that they had seen in the lives of their youth and in their family as a result of the Youth and Families with Promise program. Every parent surveyed indicated that they would recommend the program to other families in their situation, and 99% said they would participate again.

These results indicate that the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program does increase parents' perception of control. Parents participating in the program feel the youth is more cooperative, feel closer to their youth, feel better able to handle the demands of being a parent, and feel less overwhelmed than they did before participating. Based on these findings, hypothesis H₀₄ is rejected.

Sibling Relationships

Paired *t* tests were used to compare the posttest and pretest scores from youth, parents, and mentors on the questionnaires about fighting and problem solving. Forty-five percent of the youth in the program had learned to work out

problems with less fighting, 50% indicated no change, and 5% reported increased fighting, $t(267) = 10.09$, $p = .000$, which was often visible in the sibling relationships as well as outside of the home. One mother described how her youth was more willing to include her younger sister in activities and spend time with her after she had gone out with the mentor.

She acts totally different with her little sister. She acts like she is supposed to act. Instead of going at her and telling her to stay out and don't touch this, she acts different, like, let's sit down and play Barbie and read a book. (PG1)

One mentor and his friend work with brothers. He explained:

John and his brother used to fight, brotherly fights that get a little too physical. But since we have been working with them, they play around a lot better with each other and they don't get into so many fights. They have become a lot better friends because both of them go with us all the time and we are always together when we do activities. They just get along a lot better together. (MG1)

Youth who were interviewed also talked about how their relationships with siblings had improved. Most of them felt that having time alone with their mentor helped them be more patient with their brothers and sisters. Many of them also said that they fight less with their siblings. Another mentor stated, "I see her siblings being a lot nicer to her. She has cute little services that she has done for each of them. I see her getting along better with her siblings" (MG1).

These results indicate that the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program positively affects sibling relationships. Youth involved in the program fight less with their siblings and are more willing to spend time with their siblings

than they were before participating in the program. Based on these findings, hypothesis H₀₅ is rejected.

Program Impacts

Family Night Out

The parents spoke favorably about the Family Night Out activities, a unique aspect of the program designed to strengthen the families of the at-risk youth involved. These activities gave them a chance to work in a problem-solving atmosphere with their youth and observe other parents' behaviors. "As far as the [family] group meetings . . . I thought they were great, and we . . . not only did Charles get a lot out of it, but us as a family did," commented one parent (PG4).

Parents also felt that the Family Night Out activities helped their youth realize that their family was not the only one with problems, and that the problems can be overcome. One parent described how seeing other families working together encouraged her. "I love to see it when so many of the families show up. They care enough about their kids to participate and they do activities and whatever. I think that there is a success in that just right there" (PG2).

Another parent explained how Family Night Out activities benefited her family.

The kids are into baseball and basketball and stuff, but all we do is drive them back and forth, but this is something we can all get involved in and I think it is cool. It is great for the kid, and if we didn't get involved, I still think it would be a good program, but I think what makes it special is that

they do [have family activities] and they always make sure we do something every month as a family. (PG4)

Comparison Youth

Dosage data from monthly mentor reports were available for the youth from three of the counties where the program was administered ($N = 43$). Youth were divided into two groups, those who had regular contact with their mentors, the high dosage group, and those who spent little or no time with their mentors, the low dosage group. The median number of hours per month spent by the mentor with the youth was used as the dividing point (5.08). Youth in the high dosage group spent more than 5.08 hours per month with their mentor (mean = 6.94 hours per month), while youth in the low dosage group spent less time with their mentors (mean = 2.88 hours per month).

Youth in the high dosage group showed significant improvement in respecting their parents, $t(21) = 3.16$, $p = .005$, feeling close to their family, $t(20) = 2.94$, $p = .008$, and getting along with their parents, $t(18) = 2.72$, $p = .015$. Youth in the low dosage group showed statistically significant change on only one variable, respecting their parents, and the significance level was not as strong as the high dosage group, $t(17) = 2.20$, $p = .042$.

These data suggest that the improved family relationships reported by the youth, parents, and mentors in this study are attributed primarily to youth who had regular contact with their mentors. Youth who were not involved with their mentors on a regular basis showed little improvement, suggesting that the improved

relationships may be attributed in part to degree of involvement in the mentoring program.

Summary

The results of paired t tests showed statistically significant differences between the retrospective pretest and posttest scores on each variable, indicating improvement in each area. Relationships between youth and their parents improved during the time they participated in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program. Parents were more positive in their interactions with their youth, felt more in control, and felt less overwhelmed than they had before they were involved in the program. Relationships between youth and their siblings also improved during the time that the youth had a mentor.

Family Night Out activities and the emphasis on family participation contribute to these improvements. These activities gave families the chance to work together to solve problems and focus on communication skills. Another factor that greatly influenced the success of the program was the amount of contact the youth and family had with the mentor. Mentors who were involved and integrated into the youth's life had the most significant impacts on youth and their family relationships.

These results are supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. Each method contributes important elements to the findings. The quantitative results provide statistical evidence that the program is indeed having an effect, and that the

findings are not simply the result of chance. The qualitative data allow the program participants to tell their own story and capture the real-life impacts of mentoring. The information from this study could prove useful in designing comprehensive support programs for families who are at-risk for problems and who experience substantial stress.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to measure the effects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships. Measures of parent-youth relationships, parental perception of control, positive parenting behaviors, and sibling relationships were examined. Previous evaluations of mentoring programs have neglected the impacts of those programs on the family system. These impacts are important when designing and implementing a mentoring program because interactions between parents and youth are long term and will continue even after involvement in the mentoring program has ceased.

Four research questions were created to understand the relations between a youth focused mentoring program and family relationships.

1. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program improve parent-youth relationships?
2. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program increase positive parenting behaviors?
3. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program increase perception of control on the part of parents?
4. Does involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program affect sibling relationships and, if so, in what ways?

Data were collected through questionnaires administered to youth, their parents, and their mentors, through focus group interviews, and through individual youth interviews. The final sample consisted of 276 surveys, 97 from youth, 94 from parents, and 85 from mentors, 11 focus group interviews with parents and mentors, and 15 individual youth interviews.

Discussion of Results

Youth-focused mentoring does have a positive impact on family relationships and family systems for some youth. Quantitative and qualitative data showed a link between a youth's involvement in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program and more positive relations between the youth and other family members. Improvements were seen by some youth in every aspect of family relations that were examined. These areas included showing more respect toward parents and siblings, feeling closer to their family, and getting along with their family. Improvements also were seen by some parents in each aspect of parenting behavior examined, such as having consistent expectations, praising their youth, feeling more in control as parents, and feeling less overwhelmed as parents.

The areas showing the greatest improvement were in how well the youth got along with their parents, how much they respected their parents, and how well they cooperated with their parents. These areas may have shown the most improvement because they were the areas where mentors could observe youth

behaviors and discuss them with their mentees. These are also areas directly related to the youth's behavior, which was the focus of the mentoring program.

Mentors provided support to youth and their families, which could have allowed the family system to deal with stressful situations more effectively and may have given the youth someone outside of the family in whom they could confide. Youth may have listened to advice from their mentor, in areas where they would not listen to their parents. Interactions with the mentor's family and other families at group activities may have allowed them to observe how other families communicate and solve problems.

Approximately one third of the youth who were involved in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program had better relationships with their parents. These youth felt closer to their parents and respected them more. The improved relationships strengthened the family system as a whole as the youth treated their parents better and were more helpful, possibly reducing some of the stress experienced by their parents.

Sixty percent of the youth indicated that their relationships with their families did not change. It is possible that this lack of change may actually be a positive outcome for some families. These youth and their families are at-risk for various problems such as low academic achievement, delinquent behaviors (stealing, vandalism), and drug use. They are assumed to show a decrease in their functioning over time as the youth get older and the family system faces new

challenges and stressful situations. The finding of no change and little increase in negative behaviors may reflect a positive outcome of the mentoring program.

Many youth in this study are living in single parent homes (65%), with other relatives (7%), or in other situations (1%). These youth may have been thinking about their relationships with absent parents when responding. Other families may be facing problems too severe to be impacted by mentoring of one or more children. Some families may not have participated in any of the family activities, or the youth may have attended the activities with their mentor rather than with family members.

In other cases, the mentoring may have been ineffective or the time frame of the match may have been too short for a meaningful relationship to develop between the youth and their mentor. Some youth and their mentors may have focused on improving social or academic skills, rather than on building family relationships. These youth may have shown improvements in an area of focus that is not examined in this study.

Parent Functioning

When parents were asked about their perception of their parenting, many positive outcomes were reported. Many parents who attended the Family Night Out activities felt that these activities were especially beneficial. Parents learned to set more consistent expectations for their youth, they enjoyed being a parent more, they praised their youth more, and overall, felt better about how they were doing as

parents. As parents watched their youth interact with the mentors and other youth, they were able to identify strengths and ways of communicating with their youth that they may not have recognized before. They learned to focus more on the positive things that the youth were doing. By praising these activities, they encouraged the positive behaviors to continue. This cycle of recognizing and praising positive behaviors may help reduce family stress as the youth learn how to effectively solicit attention without misbehaving.

Family Night Out activities may provide a safe environment for parents and their youth to interact and engage in a fun activity. They may also be able to work through stressful or difficult family situations through the role-playing and learning activities. These activities may help parents and youth learn more effective ways of interacting within the family system.

Some parents indicated that their feelings of control toward the youth had increased. They felt closer to their youth, felt the youth cooperated better, and felt they were better able to handle the demands of being a parent. By involving their youth in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program, parents were helping their youth connect with positive role models and planned activities. The mentors often provided a break for the parents from the daily demands of care taking while providing a fun outing or activity for the youth. Some of the families indicated that the time they spent apart, working on separate activities, helped strengthen their family by giving them something to talk about when they were together again.

The time away from other family members may also have helped youth and parents reframe their current situation and bring a behavior back into context. A parent who is preoccupied with stressful family circumstances or personal problems may not be able to work through an issue while juggling the daily demands of a home. The mentor can provide an outside support for the youth, allowing the parent to deal with other concerns.

Approximately 70% of the parents indicated no change on the parent functioning variables, which may be the result of several factors. First, the primary focus of the program is on changing the behaviors of the youth, not the parents. The mentors were not trying directly to change the behaviors of the parents. While grandmentors are encouraged to support the parents, many of the families were not assigned grandmentors, due to recruitment challenges. Second, these parents may not have participated in any of the family activities or may be facing problems too severe to be impacted by a relatively short-term mentoring program that is focused on helping their youth. Finally, parents also may have viewed the program as focused on their youth, rather than themselves, and therefore not identified change in the self-report data.

Sibling Relationships

When asked about sibling relationships during individual youth interviews and focus groups, some respondents indicated that these relationships were strengthened as a result of the mentoring program. In some cases, these changes

occurred when two or more children from the same family were assigned separate mentors who gave them individual attention and time. In other cases, siblings were assigned separate mentors, but participated in many of the same mentor-youth activities. Relationships with siblings who were not involved in the program or assigned mentors also improved as the family attended Family Night Out activities or as the program youth learned how to include and interact with others in a positive way.

The skills youth learned from their mentors and from other youth at activities can be transferred to home and family relationships. For example, youth and their mentors may work on anger management and cooperation in the context of making friends. These new skills can then be practiced in the home and bring about positive changes in that system as well. Youth may have also benefited by spending time with someone outside of the family who was not experiencing the same problems. The one-on-one attention may have given the youth a chance to vent feelings and emotions or release tension that could not easily be released at home.

These results are consistent with previous research findings that mentoring is an effective strategy for helping some at-risk youth. An evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America program found that relationships with parents and peers improved for youth who were assigned a mentor, while youth in a control group did not show similar improvements (Tierney et al., 1995). Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other mentoring programs have demonstrated improvements in several

other areas including academics, social relations, and self-confidence (Grossman & Johnson, 1998; LoSciuto et al., 1996; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Tierney et al.).

Many mentoring programs rely only on quantitative data, such as surveys, to evaluate their program. The qualitative data collected by the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program support and strengthen the survey data and provide additional insights into the impacts of mentoring on youth. Through focus group interviews, parents were able to describe specific improvements they had seen in their youth that may not have fit within the categories on the questionnaire. They also discussed when and why improvements did not occur in their youth.

Several parents who attended the focus group interviews described how their family benefited from the Family Night Out activities. They often learned from other families and the activities how to interact and communicate more effectively. Some parents felt that their youth benefited by learning that other families also have problems and that these problems have solutions. Although these activities were directed toward the youth, all members of the family system were able to benefit, either directly, through their participation, or indirectly, through the improved behavior and attitudes of the program youth.

Focus group and individual interviews supported the findings from the questionnaires. The Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program had a positive impact on some families. Some parents felt their youth were more respectful, more responsible, or more cooperative. They had learned how to be more effective parents and how to communicate better with their youth. Mentors

who participated in the focus group interviews reported similar changes in the youth behaviors toward parents and other family members. Some of these changes were the direct result of things that the mentor had said to the youth, while others occurred more gradually over time, as the youth learned interaction skills and applied these to the family system.

Youth who were matched with mentors that visited regularly and consistently spent time with the youth showed more improvement in every area than those visited less often or sporadically. Mentors in the high dosage group spent an average of nearly 7 hours per month with their youth, while uninvolved mentors spent less than 3 hours per month with their assigned youth on average. These data correspond with previous findings that indicate that youth with involved mentors report more positive outcomes (DuBois & Neville, 1997; Grossman & Johnson, 1998; Herrera et al., 2000).

Limitations

This study focused on data collected from the first year of a multi-year youth mentoring program. Thus, the data reported here represent only eight counties in which some of the youth had participated for a limited amount of time. Although over 250 questionnaires were collected, participating youth and their families may not be representative of all the youth in the program, because the response rate to the questionnaire for each site is not available.

It is not possible to know whether the youth involved in the program would

be representative of all at-risk youth or whether the relatively short duration of the program (8-36 months) impacted the results. Many of the youth had been involved in the program for only 8 months, and previous studies indicate that it often takes much longer for close relationships to form between the youth and their mentor (Grossman & Johnson, 1998).

Very little demographic data were collected, with no numerical information about the income or socioeconomic status of the families involved in the mentoring program, although 65% were in single-parent families and most were low-income families as determined by the site coordinator. Without demographic data, it is difficult to accurately understand the backgrounds of the families and youth involved in the program. If demographic data were available, regression analyses between family characteristics and outcomes could be examined.

At the time of the study, data were available from only a limited number of mentors (43) in three counties about how frequently they met with the youth. These data were not collected from mentors in the other five counties, where mentors may have spent more or less time with their youth. Data also were not available about the length of time that the mentor and youth had been matched with one another and worked together. Surveys were administered after the youth had been involved in the program for at least 8 months, but did not ask about the length of time involved.

Data were not collected about the grandmentor level of the mentoring program, because it was not fully organized in some counties. This aspect of the program has been the most difficult to start, and many of the youth were not

matched with a grandmentor. Many of those who were matched with a grandmentor were not matched for the entire time that they were involved in the mentoring program.

No quantitative data were available about how involved the youth's parents were in the program, how supportive they were of the mentoring relationship, or how frequently they participated in the Family Night Out activities. This study also lacked a control group of similar youth; therefore, effects of maturation and outside circumstances or events cannot be distinguished from the effects of the mentoring program.

The post-then-pre retrospective survey design, which was selected to overcome the effects of a response shift bias, introduces other limitations. When respondents are asked to evaluate their pre and posttest behaviors at the same time, there may be the desire to show an improvement simply because the participant enjoyed the program or feels that improvement is expected.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should be designed to include youth from a larger population, where youth in rural and urban settings are better represented. Efforts should also be made to collect more complete demographic data as well as information about family support and the amount of involvement in the program. Future studies should also examine the type of activities the youth and mentor did together and the focus of these visits.

A comparison with other mentoring programs would allow researchers to determine which aspects of mentoring programs are most beneficial to families and what type of families benefit most from these programs. Information about which areas a particular youth was struggling with before having a mentor would allow the researchers to examine how well the program succeeded in meeting the needs of a given youth.

Future studies should collect data about whether the youth are assigned both the young adult mentor and a grandmentor, how long they are matched with each type of mentor, how much each mentor is involved, and how well the mentors work together. These data would allow for comparisons between youth who were only assigned one type of mentor and youth who were assigned to both types in order to understand whether the two-level mentoring program is more effective.

The findings of this study related to mentoring were consistent with previous research. Future efforts should be directed to better understanding the family situations of youth in mentoring programs, the needs of these families, and how mentoring can help fill those needs. Information about the types of stressful situations and events that the family system is facing would allow researchers to better understand the dynamics within the family system and how mentoring can be beneficial.

Longitudinal studies that follow the mentored youth and their families have the potential of providing information about the long-term effects of mentoring on family relationships, parent behaviors, and youth outcomes. Data collection

following families while they are involved in the mentoring program and after their involvement has ceased would allow researchers to evaluate whether the improved family relationships are temporary or long term. Reports of parent involvement and changes in parent behavior should also be collected by outside observers to overcome the limitations of self-report data and to better understand the changes made by parents.

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program on family relationships. Specifically, the study focused on whether aspects of the youth's relationship with parents and siblings changed while they were involved in the mentoring program and whether parent functioning and behavior became more effective and positive.

Using quantitative data and qualitative data, this study demonstrated that participation in the Youth and Families with Promise mentoring program has had a positive impact on family relationships for some youth and their families. Parents, youth, and mentors have reported improved parent-child relationships, better parent functioning, and more positive sibling relationships.

Although additional studies are needed to fully understand the impacts and benefits of youth mentoring on parent and family outcomes, this study suggests that youth mentoring can have positive impacts on family functioning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Institutional Review Board Exemption Memo

Memo

To: True Rubal
From: Glen Jenson
Date: January 20, 2001
Subject: Thesis project using program data

Graduate student, Janet Cox will be using the data collected by the Youth and Families with Promise Program for her thesis project. The data was collected during from fall of 1999 through summer of 2000. Existing IRB forms are on file for this research project and Janet will only be using the existing data.

Janet is in the Family and Human Development Department and can be reached at UMC 2705 or (435) 797-7222 if additional documentation is required.

Appendix B. Parent Questionnaire

Youth and Families with Promise
Parent Questionnaire
Post-Test

Survey # _____
County _____
Date _____

Please do not put your youth's name on this questionnaire. Your answers will be private and will not be identified with you or your youth personally. Your perceptions of your youth are very important to help us understand how we can make the mentoring program effective.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate your youth at the present time. Then, rate how they were before they had a mentor. Circle the numbers using the following key:

1=Always 2=Usually /Frequently 3=Sometimes 4= Not Often/Rarely 5= Never

	Now that your youth has had a mentor, do they...					Before having a mentor, did your youth...				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
1. think that doing well in school is important.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. care about what happens at school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. think that their teachers care about them.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. finish their school homework on time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. read when they have free time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. plan ahead of time for things that need to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. know how to make and keep friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. say no if friends wanted to do something wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. try to work out problems without fighting, when they are mad at someone.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. eat nutritious and well-balanced meals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. do things that are considered safe.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. save money for things they want.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. hang in there when things become difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. get along with you as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. act as a leader in a community, school, or church organized group.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. feel confident about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. get along with their friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. enjoy school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. try to do the right thing.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. feel close to family.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. respect their parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please continue on the back of this page.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate your youth at the present time. Then, rate how they were before they had a mentor.

	Now that your youth has had a mentor, how often do they. . .					Before your youth had a mentor, how often did they. . .				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never
22. steal something.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. try to damage or destroy property.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. get in trouble with the police.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. smoke cigarettes or use tobacco.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. drink alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. smoke marijuana (weed, pot).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. get involved in gang activity.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. hit or beat someone up who is not part of your family	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. skip school without permission.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. get sent to the principal's office for being in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. cheat on a test.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33. receive D or F grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34. get in trouble so that you have to go for a conference at the school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Now please answer a few questions about your feelings as a parent. Rate how you feel at the present time, then think back to how you felt before your youth had a mentor.

	Now that your youth has had a mentor, how often do you. . .					Before your youth had a mentor, how often did you. . .				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
35. feel overwhelmed as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36. feel able to handle the demands of being a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37. feel that your youth is cooperative at home.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38. feel close to your youth.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
39. enjoy being a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
40. praise your youth.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
41. have consistent expectations for your youth.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
42. feel good about how you are doing as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
43. worry about how your youth will turn out.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Now please answer a few questions about your feelings about your youth's mentor.

	Has your youth's mentor...				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
44. cared about your youth.	1	2	3	4	5
45. taught your youth valuable skills.	1	2	3	4	5
46. kept appointments.	1	2	3	4	5
47. told you about their plans.	1	2	3	4	5
48. set a good example for your youth.	1	2	3	4	5

Now a few questions about yourself.

49. Are you: Male or Female
50. My current marital status is:
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| A. Married | D. Widowed |
| B. Remarried | E. Never married |
| C. Divorce/Separated | |
51. My relationship to the youth is:
- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| A. Mother | E. Grandmother |
| B. Father | F. Grandfather |
| C. Step-Mother | G. Other _____ |
| D. Step-Father | |

Knowing now what your involvement has been in the program, would you:

52. Recommend a mentoring experience to others? Yes No
53. Participate in this program again? Yes No
54. What were the one or two most valuable things your child learned from the mentoring program? _____

55. What two things would improve this program? _____

56. Please describe the one activity your child enjoyed or benefitted from the most. _____

57. Are there other comments or suggestions you wish to make about the program? _____

Thank you for answering these questions. Please put your survey in the provided envelope and seal it so your answers remain private. Your envelope will be mailed to Utah State University and your answers will not be identified with you personally. (4-20-2000)

Appendix C. Youth Questionnaire

Youth and Families with Promise
Youth Questionnaire
Post-Test

Survey # _____
County _____
Date _____

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire. Your answers will be private and will not be identified with you personally. Your truthful answers are very important.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate yourself at the present time. Then, rate yourself for how you were before you had a mentor. Circle the numbers using the following key:

1=Always 2=Usually /Frequently 3=Sometimes 4= Not Often/Rarely 5= Never

	Now that you've had a mentor, do you. . .					Before you had a mentor, did you. . .				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
1. think that doing well in school is important.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. care about what happens at school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. think that your teachers care about you.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. finish your school homework on time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. read when you have free time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. plan ahead of time for things that need done.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. think you are good at making and keeping friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. say no to your friends if they want you to do something that is wrong	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. try to work out problems without fighting, when you are mad at someone.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. eat nutritious and well-balanced meals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. do things that are considered safe.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. save money for things you want.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. hang in there when things become difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. get along with your parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. act as a leader in a community, school, or church organized group.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. feel confident about yourself.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. get along with your friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. enjoy school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. try to do the right thing.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. feel close to your family.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. respect your parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please continue on the back of this page.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate yourself at the present time. Then, rate yourself for how you were before you had a mentor.

	Now that you've had a mentor, how often do you...					Before you had a mentor, how often did you...				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never
22. steal something.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. try to damage or destroy property.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. get in trouble with the police.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. smoke cigarettes or use tobacco.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. drink alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. smoke marijuana (weed, pot).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. get involved in gang activity.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. hit or beat someone up who is not part of your family	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. skip school without permission.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. get sent to the principal's office for being in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. cheat on a test.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Now, please answer a few questions about yourself.

33. Are you: Male or Female

34. How old are you? _____

35. What grade are you in school? _____

36. Would you recommend having a mentor to others? Yes No

37. Would you participate in having a mentor again? Yes No

38. What activities did you enjoy most with your mentor? _____

39. What are the two best things about having a mentor? _____

Thank you for answering these questions. Please put your survey in the provided envelope and seal it so your answers remain private. Your envelope will be mailed to Utah State University and your answers will not be identified with you personally. (4-20-2000)

Appendix D. Mentor Questionnaire

Youth and Families with Promise
Mentor Questionnaire
Post-Test

Survey # _____
County _____
Date _____

Please do not put the youth's name on this questionnaire. Your answers will be private and will not be identified with you or the youth personally. Your perceptions of this youth and the mentoring program are very important to help us understand how we can make this program more effective.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate the youth at the present time. Then, rate how they were before you started working with them. Circle the numbers using the following key:

1=Always 2=Usually /Frequently 3=Sometimes 4= Not Often/Rarely 5= Never

	Now that this youth has had a mentor, do they . . .					Before having a mentor, did this youth . . .				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
1. think that doing well in school is important.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. care about what happens at school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. think that their teachers care about them.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. finish their school homework on time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. read when they have free time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. plan ahead of time for things that need to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. know how to make and keep friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. say no if friends wanted to do something wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. try to work out problems without fighting, when they are mad at someone.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. eat nutritious and well-balanced meals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. do things that are considered safe.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. save money for things they want.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. hang in there when things become difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. get along with their parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. act as a leader in a community, school, or church organized group.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. feel confident about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. get along with their friends.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. enjoy school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. try to do the right thing.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. feel close to their family.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. respect their parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please continue on the back of this page.

Directions: Read each of the statements and rate the youth at the present time. Then, rate how they were before you started working with them.

	Now that this youth has had a mentor, how often do they...					Before this youth had a mentor, how often did they...				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never
22. steal something.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. try to damage or destroy property.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. get in trouble with the police.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. smoke cigarettes or use tobacco.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. drink alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. smoke marijuana (weed, pot).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. get involved in gang activity.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. hit or beat someone up who is not part of their family	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. skip school without permission.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. get sent to the principal's office for being in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. cheat on a test.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33. receive D or F grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34. get in trouble at school and have their parents called for a conference.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Now please answer a few questions about your feelings as a mentor. Rate how you feel at the present time, then think back to how you felt before you began working with the youth. Circle the numbers using the following key:

1=Always 2=Usually /Frequently 3=Sometimes 4= Not Often/Rarely 5= Never

	Now that you have been a mentor, do you...					Before you were a mentor, did you...				
	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never	Always	Usually	Some times	Not Often	Never
35. enjoy working with youth.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36. feel confident about yourself.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37. feel you can organize activities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38. feel satisfied with your accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
39. enjoy teaching/helping others.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E. Parent Focus Group Questions

Guidelines for Focus Groups Interviews with Parents

The mechanics: Extension Educator Invites 8-10 parents to come and participate in an evaluation of the mentoring program. Do not try to only pick those who have been the most active, but rather try to get a fair representation of all parents. Share with the Parents we will give them \$20.00 for their time. Have active informed consent forms available for each person to sign.

For the person conducting the interview: Hold the meeting in a private place, have some drinks or refreshments available, set a time limit of 1 ½ hours. Assure the parents that their comments will remain anonymous but that the meeting will be audio taped so an analysis can be done at a later date. Try to stay on task to find out is what they expected or wanted and what has their youth obtained from the program that would help him/her be a better citizen and person. Assure the panel members that their comments will remain anonymous. Have each parent fill out the standard written evaluation on their youth at the end of the meeting and put it into a sealed envelope.

Do not have anyone else in the room except the facilitator and note takers. It is important not to have someone who works with the program on a daily basis.

Guidelines for the interview and some sample questions

- I. Welcome the group and outline what we want to accomplish
 - A. We want to find out how the mentoring experience has been for you and your youth. We will pose questions, one at a time, asking each to respond if you so choose.
 - B. We would like to have a free and open discussion. We ask each to respect each other and not talk while someone else is talking.
 - C. Please be honest and open in your comments. We hope to hear how the experience has been in each of your families.
 - D. We will be together for about 1 ½ hours and there is \$20.00 to off set your gas and time.
 - E. At the end we will ask you to complete a short, 10 minute written evaluation on your youth and your perception of his/her behavior.

- II. Have each person introduce themselves by first name and put a name place card in front of themselves so others can call them by their first name.
 - A. Tell about themselves and their family in 1-2 minutes. (Watch this area and not let it go too long)
 - B. Moderator set the model to follow

- III. What do you see are some of the problems that youth such as yours are struggling with?
- IV. What are some of the positive things you see happening with your youth socially, academically and other ways, that could be a result of being in the program?
- V. What changes do you see happening at home as a result of your youth being in the mentoring program.
- VI. Are there some concerns you have had about the mentors?
- VII. What specific suggestion to you have for the mentoring program?

Appendix F. Mentor Focus Group Questions

Guidelines for Focus Groups Interviews with Mentors

The mechanics: Extension Educator Invites 8-10 College age mentors to come and participate in an evaluation of the program. Do not try to only pick those who have been the most active, but rather try to get a fair representation of all College age Mentors. Share with the Mentors we will give them \$20.00 for their time. Have active informed consent forms available for each person to sign

For the person conducting the interview: Hold the meeting in a private place, have some drinks or refreshments available, set a time limit of 1 ½ hours. Assure the mentors that their comments will remain anonymous but that the meeting will be taped so an analysis can be done at a later date. During the interview try to get comments from each person, probe a bit as comments are made so you clearly understand what is being said. Try to stay on task to find out is what they expected or wanted and what has their youth obtained from the program that would help him/her be a better citizen and person. Have each fill out the standard written evaluation on their youth at the end of the meeting and put it into a sealed envelope.

Do not have anyone else in the room except the facilitator and note takers. It is important not to have someone who works with the program on a daily basis.

Guidelines for the interview and some sample questions

- I. Welcome the group and outline what we want to accomplish
 - A. We want to find out how the mentoring experience has been for you and your assigned youth. We will pose questions, one at a time, asking each to try and respond.
 - B. Like to have a free and open discussion. Ask each of you to respect each other and not to talk while someone else is talking.
 - C. Please be honest and open in your comments. We hope to hear how the experience has been from each of you.
 - D. We will be together for about 1 ½ hours and there is \$20.00 to offset your gas and time.
 - E. At the end we will ask you to complete a short, 10 minute written evaluation on your youth and your perception of his/her behavior.

- II. Have each person introduce themselves by first name and put a name place card in front of themselves so others can call them by their first name.
 - A. Tell about themselves in 1-2 minutes, unless they already know each other. Keep this short and to the point
 - B. Moderator set the model to follow

- III. What do you see are some of the problems that youth such as yours are struggling with?
- IV. What are some of the positive things you see happening, socially, academically or any other way, with your youth that could be a result of being in the program?
- V. What changes do you see happening in the youth's home as a result of him/her being in the mentoring program.
- VI. Are there some concerns you have had about the mentoring program?
- VII. What specific suggestion to you have for the administrators of the program.
- VIII. We all have reasons why we volunteered to be a mentor. Lets discuss how your goals or needs have been met.

Appendix G. Youth Interview Protocol

**Informed Consent
Youth and Families with Promise
Youth Individual Interview**

Dear Parent:

We hope your youth benefited from his/her involvement in Utah's Youth and Families with Promise Program sponsored by the County Extension office. To understand how the program has impacted your youth, we would like to interview him/her about their involvement. A copy of the interview questions is enclosed for you to review before giving your consent for participation; however, we ask that you not share the questions with your youth prior to the interview. This will help keep the data valid and useful.

The interviews will be conducted over the telephone from your County Extension office and all answers will be confidential. The interviewer will be located in Logan, Utah. The county YFP site coordinator will schedule an appointment time with your youth. When they arrive, they will be taken into a private room where the interviewer will call them. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio taped for transcription purposes. Your youth will be compensated for their time and willingness to participate with \$15.00.

Participation is voluntary and your youth may refuse to answer any specific question or withdraw from the interview at any time.

Your youth must bring this form to the county extension office at the time of the interview with a parent signature and their signature to be allowed to participate and receive the \$15.00.

**Agreement to Participate and Authorization to Participate in Youth
Individual Interview**

We (I) and our youth agree to participate in an interview for the Youth and Families with Promise program to provide information about the youth's experience in the program.

We understand that all information provided will be kept confidential and that the decision to be interviewed is voluntary, and our (my) youth is free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

We (I) am aware that the interview is being audio taped to preserve interview contents for transcription purposes. We (I) give permission to have the interview audio taped. We (I) understand that my youth will be reimbursed \$15.00 for his/her time at the completion of the interview.

By signing below we (I) agree that my youth may be interviewed.

Parent Signature

Parent Signature

**Informed Consent
Youth and Families with Promise
Youth Individual Interview
Page 2**

Youth Consent

I understand that even though my parent(s) have given their permission for me to be interviewed, I can choose not to participate. I understand I can stop the interview at any time. I will be reimbursed \$15.00 upon completion of the interview.

By signing below I agree to participate.

Youth Signature

Date

County Site Coordinator

Date

Co-Director

Date

Co-Director

Date

If there are questions regarding this program, contact your County Extension office or Dr. Glen Jenson (435) 797-1542 or Dr. Thomas Lee (435) 797-1551.

Interview Protocol for Individual Youth Interviews

Hi, my name is _____ and I am going to be asking you some questions about your experience in the Youth and Families with Promise Program. Please stop me if you have any questions or if I'm unclear. Are you ready?

First of all, have you read and signed the consent form and given it to your site coordinator?

If yes, "Great, let's continue with the interview." If no, "please fill this out before we can proceed."

Age:

Grade in school:

Gender:

M F

County:

How long were you involved in the mentoring program?

How did you hear about the program?

Tell me about your experience in the program.

What did you learn?

How did it help you?

Tell me about your mentor.

What was he/she like?

What were your favorite activities?

What did he/she teach you?

How did you feel when your activity with the program stopped?

How did having a mentor affect how you feel about yourself?

What long term changes have you seen in your life as a result of having a mentor?

Now some questions about your family.

What changes have you seen in your family as a result of the program?

What did you enjoy about the 4-H activities?

What did you enjoy most about the other group activities?

What was the best thing about having a mentor and being in the program?

Looking back at your time in the program, is there anything you would change?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience in the mentoring program?

Well, that's everything I needed to ask you. Thank you for letting us interview you. Have a good night.

Appendix H. Supplemental Tables

Table H.1

Mean Scores for Parent-Youth Relationship Variables by Group

Group	n	Variable		
		Youth gets along	Youth feels close	Youth respects
		with parents	to family	parents
Parent	94	4.03	4.17	3.98
Youth	97	3.99	4.31	4.21
Mentor	85	4.00	3.95	4.04

Table H.2

Parent-Youth Relationship Between Group Comparisons Independent t Values

Group	Variable					
	Youth gets along		Youth feels close		Youth respects	
	with parents		to family		parents	
	t value	Sig.	t value	Sig.	t value	Sig.
Parent-youth	-.33	.74	1.08	.28	1.81	.07
Youth-mentor	.07	.94	-2.65*	.01	-1.23	.22
Parent-mentor	-.26	.80	-1.71	.09	.45	.65

* $p \leq .01$