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Mentoring Program

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## BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring



### Evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters – Greater Twin Cities School-Based Mentoring Program

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## Executive Summary

For nearly 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS-GTC) has been making meaningful matches between adult volunteers (Bigs) and children (Littles) in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The BBBS-GTC school-based program matches elementary-aged Littles with Bigs and brings them together for typically about an hour each week during the school year to eat lunch, work on crafts or homework, play a game, read a book, or just talk about their week.

This report summarizes evaluation findings about the school-based mentoring program based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered during 2013 and 2014. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 29 Bigs and focus groups were held with 12 BBBS-GTC staff who coordinate matches. Quantitative data consisted of survey results from 304 Bigs who filled out an initial (T1) survey near the beginning of the 2013-14 school year and 283 Bigs (93% of the 304) who also completed a second survey (T2) after the school year ended. Findings shared are largely descriptive, illuminating strengths while also highlighting areas for possible improvement.

### Key Findings

- Younger Bigs were less experienced, more diverse, and more likely to be female.
- High school Bigs expressed more positive attitudes about Littles, compared to other Bigs.
- Adult Bigs were more likely to be continuing a relationship with their Little and more equally balanced between genders.
- High numbers of Bigs were satisfied with the application, interview and match processes, as well as training, program structure and match support.
- BBBS-GTC is effectively managing expectations for most mentors, an important best practice.
- Bigs wanted additional training in relationship-building strategies, such as working with challenging Littles, cultural competency, and ending matches.
- Meeting during lunch/recess is more challenging than other times.
- Struggling Bigs may need more effective problem solving or coaching from match support coordinators that is developmentally tailored for both the Big and Little.
- Bigs strongly agreed on surveys that they received highly effective match coordination, indicating that concerns with match coordination are isolated.

### Recommendations

- Develop specific strategies to increase engagement among younger Bigs who are fulfilling a service obligation
- Continue to engage with match support coordinators to improve match-making strategies and processes.
- Add more about how to build a strong relationship to training content.

## BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring

- Regularly consider issues related to school context (i.e., finding school administration or staff who believe in the program, making sure Bigs feel welcome by school staff) and address when possible.
- Consider using findings from this evaluation to help guide decisions and tailoring about recruitment strategies, training, program structure, and program guidance for different types of Bigs, including:
  - For **high school Bigs**, reconsider whether homework help is a necessary and effective part of the high school Bigs program. Consider adding more group activities. Ensure match support coordinators are regularly checking-in on match strength.
  - For **college Bigs**, consider how best to tailor program structure to meet developmental needs and implement realistic benchmark for maintaining communication with Bigs during match process.
  - For **adult Bigs**, ensure bi-monthly check-ins for all mentors in new matches regardless of a Big's level of mentoring experience. Ensure match support coordinators are equipped to identify and support adult Bigs who may be judgmental of Littles.

Finally, our results included evidence that BBBS-GTC is implementing 36 of 39 effective practice elements that we were able to assess, as articulated in the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (MENTOR, 2009) report. These 50 elements consist of benchmarks that represent minimum requirements necessary to produce a positive outcome for mentees, as well as program enhancements. Out of the 36 elements for which we found evidence, we found *strong evidence* of consistent and high-quality implementation for 14 benchmarks and eight enhancements.

### MENTOR Benchmark

#### Implementation of Effective Practice for Mentoring

- ★ Strong Evidence: 22
- Some Evidence: 14
- ◐ Little Evidence: 3
- ⊘ Did Not Assess: 11

## Introduction

For nearly 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS-GTC) has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive. To help cultivate that inherent ability, BBBS-GTC makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles") in the Twin Cities in both school and community settings (Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities, 2011). The BBBS-GTC school-based program matches elementary-aged Littles with Bigs and brings them together typically for an hour each week during the school year to eat lunch, play a game, work on crafts or homework, read a book, or just talk about their week.

BBBS-GTC school-based mentoring programs differ from community-based programs in key ways. For example, Littles in the school-based program who are referred by school personnel rather than parents, may have an easier time scheduling meeting times during or directly after the school day, and are more diverse in terms of gender and race/ethnicity compared to community-based Littles. Bigs in school-based programs tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse, interested in structured mentoring opportunities, and of a greater variety of ages (e.g., high school, college, and over age 50) than community-based Bigs (Herrera, 2004). Mentoring relationships formed in these programs differ as well, with a reduced duration of meeting times due to the length of the school year and more limited activity choices, due to the school setting. Given these differences, the training, support and relationship needs of school-based programs likely differ from evidence-based best practices established in the community-based mentoring literature.

Careful evaluation of programming at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities in Minnesota offers an ideal opportunity to add to what is known about factors that lead to successful mentoring matches and how implementing proven best practices affects mentor satisfaction and retention. In 2013, the Healthy Youth Development \* Prevention Research Center at the University of Minnesota's Medical School received funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to conduct a program evaluation. The overall goal of the study was to assess factors that contribute to successful mentoring matches and improved outcomes for at-risk youth participating in the school-based mentoring program offered by BBBS-GTC, during the spring/summer of 2013 and the 2013-14 school year.

During the two-year time period of this study, the agency underwent some significant changes that had a direct impact upon program services. The agency had to reduce its workforce, which resulted in a 31% decrease in the number of school-based matches served, as well as the departure mid-project of several long-term and experienced staff members. Thus, there were several sites with very new staff who were still learning their new roles and how to best support mentors. Interpretation of findings should incorporate this context.

### Methods

During the study, school-based Bigs were classified into three groups — high school, college, and adult Bigs — to capture differences related to program structure for each group and to assess developmentally-specific benefits and challenges within those mentor groups. Data collection for the study had two phases. An initial qualitative phase in the spring of 2013 included two focus groups in March with match support coordinators (program staff who directly support school-based matches) and individual interviews with 29 mentors between April and July. Match support coordinators nominated high school, college and adult Bigs to participate in interviews and included Bigs from matches that were perceived as successful or challenging within each age group. Recordings from interviews and focus groups were transcribed, coded and analyzed for themes and patterns. Findings from the qualitative data informed the creation of online surveys collected at the beginning and end of the 2013-14 school year with all mentors who consented (n=304). The first survey, referred to as the T1 (Time 1) survey in this report, was collected between November 2013 and February 2014. The year-end survey, collected between June and September 2014, is referred to as the T2 (Time 2) survey.

### Analysis Strategies

For this report, quotes from interviews with Bigs and focus groups with match support coordinators are used to illustrate key findings and themes from the evaluation. Survey data are used to describe experiences of Bigs at both survey time points. Descriptive statistics such as mean values and percentages are discussed in the text and displayed in tables and figures. To test for significant differences in reports of experiences with the BBBS-GTC program between types of Bigs, we conducted statistical tests such as Chi-square analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVAs) using the IBM SPSS statistical software package.

### Application and Interpretation

This report integrates data from all sources (focus groups, interviews and surveys) and shares results that focus on programmatic factors such as mentor training and program support. Additionally, we reference two well-known reports in the mentoring field to compare results from this evaluation to established mentoring best practices. The first by MENTOR is the 3rd edition of *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* published online in 2009 and referred to here as the MENTOR report. The second is the 2008 report by Carla Herrera et al, *High School Students as Mentors*, published by Public/Private Ventures. We refer to this as the P/PV report.

## Description of Study Participants

### Key Findings

- Focus groups yielded data from an experienced group of staff that assisted evaluators in interpreting themes from the interviews.
- Mentors who filled out surveys are a snapshot of school-based Bigs.
- Younger Bigs were less experienced, more diverse and more likely to be female.
- High school Bigs have more positive attitudes about Littles, compared to other Bigs.
- Adult Bigs were more likely to be continuing a relationship with their Little and equally balanced between genders.

### Recommendations

- Big characteristics could be used to help guide decisions about recruitment strategies, training, program structure and program guidance.
- Develop specific strategies to increase engagement among younger Bigs who are fulfilling a service obligation.

**75%** of Bigs had a mentor when they were growing up

Participants in the program evaluation are described in this section. As noted previously, the study consisted of two phases. During the first phase, qualitative data from focus groups and individual interviews were collected. As seen in Table 1, the two focus groups held in the spring of 2013 included twelve BBBS-GTC school-based match support coordinators (MCs). The average age of staff was 31 years, 83% were female and all had attained at least a 4-year college degree. Five of 12 (42%) had been a Big or mentor themselves and half had worked at BBBS-GTC for 6 years or longer. Four of the match support coordinators (a third) had worked in their positions for less than one year.

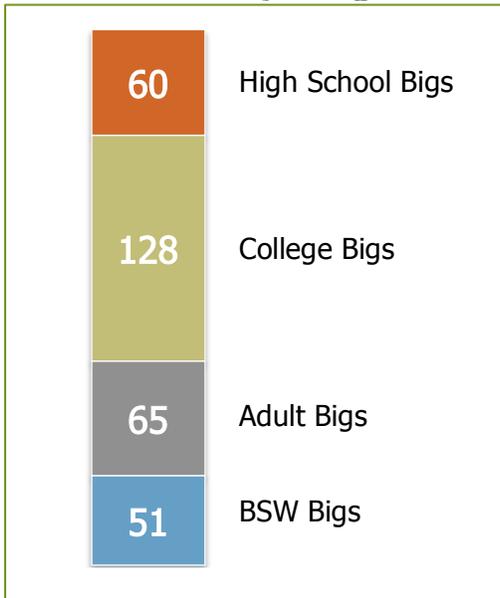
The 29 Bigs who participated in the individual interviews in May, June and July 2013, included six high school students, nine college students and 14 adults. The average age of interviewed Bigs was 32 years (range 16-69); 68% were female. About a third were new mentors in the BBBS program and almost half (46%) reported being a Big for 3 years or more.

**Table 1**

Demographics of 2013 Focus Group and Individual Interview Participants

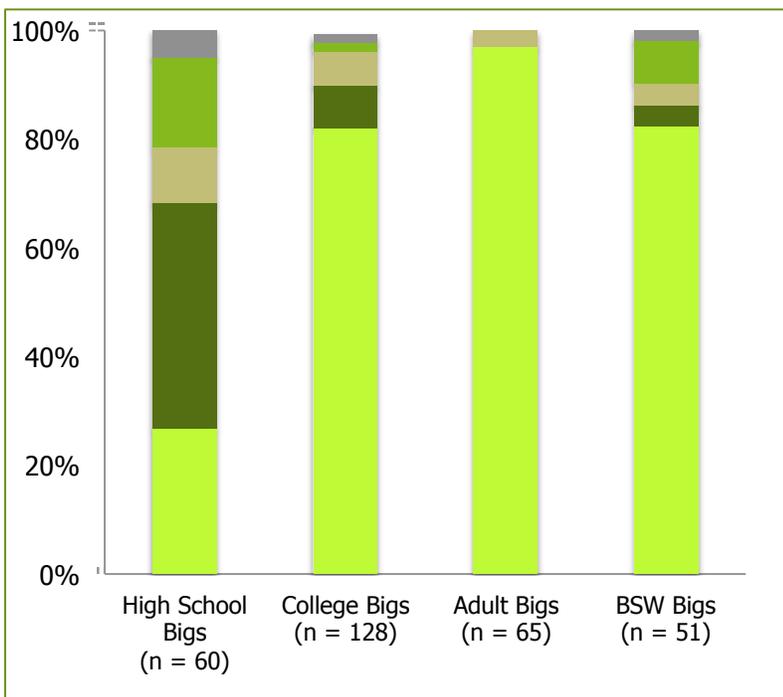
	Match Support Coordinators (n=12)		High School Bigs (n=6)		College Bigs (n=9)		Adult Bigs (n=14)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Gender</b>	2	10	2	4	4	5	3	11
<b>Ave. Age</b>	30.7 yrs		17.0 yrs		21.2 yrs		45.3 yrs	
<b>Ave. # Years</b>	5.2 yrs as MC		1.5 yrs as Big		1.9 yrs as Big		3.1 yrs as Big	

**Figure 1**  
Number of Surveyed Bigs



The second phase of the study consisted of quantitative survey collection. Between November 2013 and February 2014, 77% of the 432 mentors in the 2013-14 BBBS-GTC school-based program consented to enroll and complete online surveys, resulting in a sample of 304 mentors. A comparison of enrolled Bigs to those who did not enroll with regard to demographic characteristics yielded few significant results; non-enrollees were more likely to be younger (i.e., still in high school), African American and Asian, compared to Bigs who consented to and participated in the baseline survey. As such, these data can be interpreted as representative of the population of Bigs who were in the program in the fall of 2013, which may or may not represent a typical year.

**Figure 2**  
Race/Ethnicity of Bigs



The 304 mentors consisted of 60 high school Bigs,

128 college Bigs, and 116 adult Bigs (Fig 1.). Of note, 51 adults participated in the Beyond School Walls (BSW) program, a unique program in which Littles, from a particular school, visit corporate headquarters to spend time one-on-one with an employee volunteer mentor.

Basic demographics for all surveyed Bigs are shown in Table A of the Appendix. High school Bigs were more racially and ethnically diverse than other groups of Bigs (Fig. 2). Most college and adult Bigs were white, although the BSW adults were slightly more diverse than school-based adult Bigs.

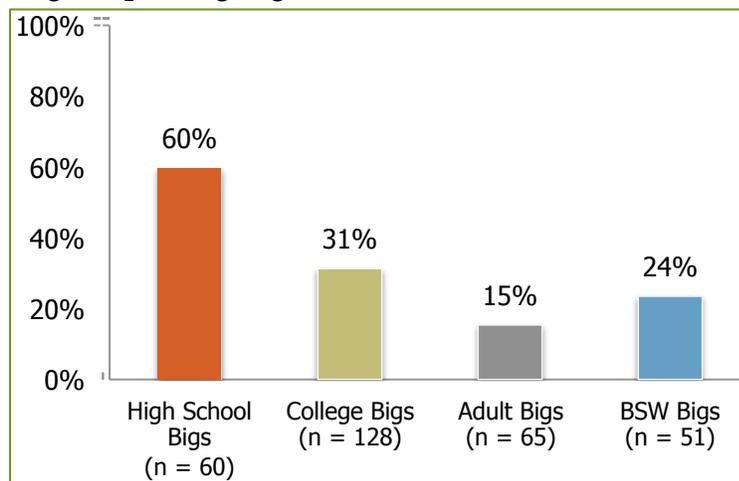
- Hispanic
- Black, African, African-American
- Multiple Race/Ethnicity
- Asian
- White

The large majority of high school and college Bigs were

female, while about half of adult Bigs were female. Among high school Bigs, 13% were in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 43% were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 45% were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Only 10 high school students (17%) reported being both a senior and a new Big, which indicates that few high school mentors were new to the program at a time when they could only commit for one year. Among all adult Bigs, 75% had a college or graduate degree and 58% were married.

Socio-economic indicators were collected, including whether high school and college Bigs ever received free or reduced price lunches (72% of high school Bigs, 17% of college Bigs) and whether or not all Bigs described their or their family's current financial situation as struggling or just barely able to make ends meet (Fig. 3). These data reveal that high school Bigs come from less privileged backgrounds compared to college and adult Bigs.

**Figure 3**  
Bigs Reporting Tight Finances



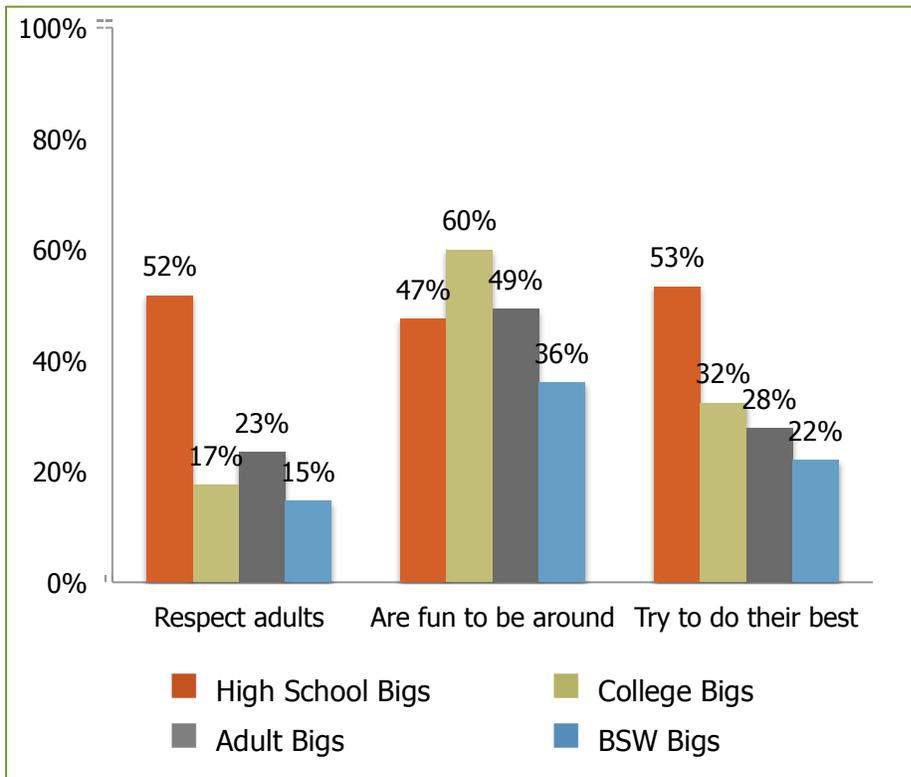
Bigs begin mentoring each fall with a range of experiences which inform their mentoring practices. For example, high school Bigs were much more likely than older Bigs to be brand new mentors at BBBS-GTC, and just over one-third have been mentors elsewhere. A large majority of all types of Bigs have had a mentor in their own past and have been volunteers in other settings. Adult Bigs in the school-based setting were the most likely to be continuing with the same

Little from the previous school year. Seventy-eight percent of high school Bigs said mentoring fulfills some sort of obligation for community service and were also more likely than other Bigs to be volunteering for the first time. During the focus group, match support coordinators expressed some concerns that Bigs who were fulfilling an obligation were not as committed. Given such a large percentage of high school Bigs endorsed this category, BBBS-GTC might develop specific strategies for increasing engagement for this group. Additional experiences of mentors are included in Table A of the Appendix.

Although younger Bigs come to the program with less volunteering and mentoring experience than older Bigs, they were more likely to express positive attitudes about the types of kids (Littles) who participate in BBBS mentoring programs. Fig. 4 shows the percentage of Bigs who reported on the T1 survey that all or almost all of the kids in the BBBS-GTC program exhibit particular characteristics. For example, 52% of high school Bigs indicated that almost all Littles respect adults compared to 17% of college students.

**Figure 4**

Bigs' perception: All or almost all Littles ...

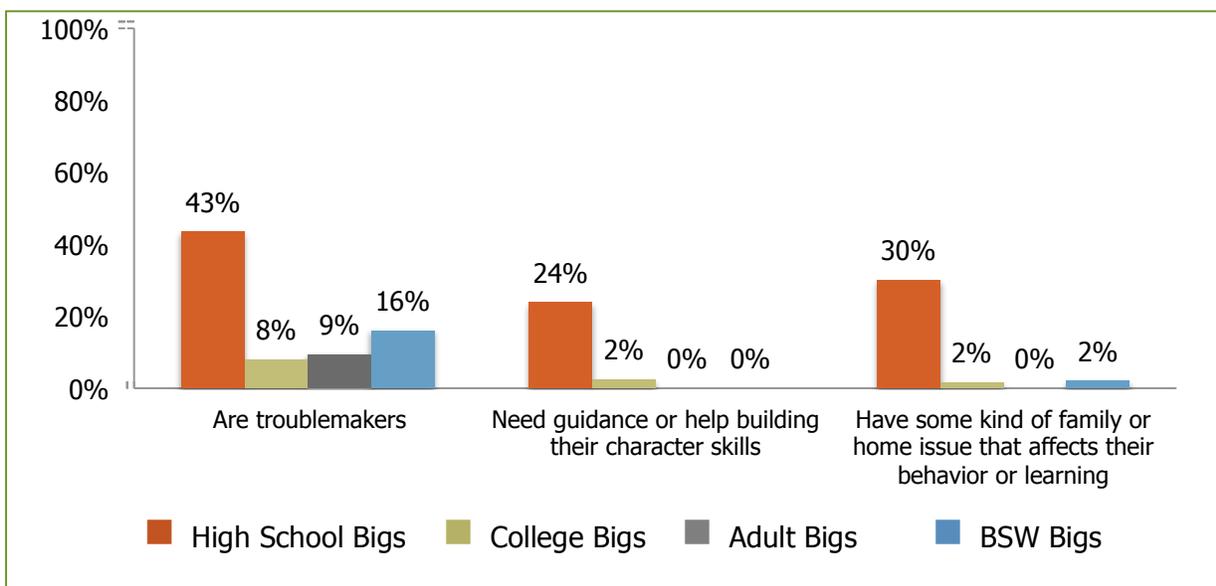


In addition, some assessed characteristics revealed more negative attitudes or suggested less positive regard. Results related to the more negative characteristics are shared in Fig. 5 which shows the percentage of Bigs who said none or almost none of Littles in the BBBS-GTC demonstrate each characteristic. For example, a quarter of high

school Bigs reported almost no Littles needed extra guidance to build their character compared to none of the school-based adult Bigs and 2% of college Bigs.

**Figure 5**

Bigs' perception: None or almost none of Littles ...



## BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring

In summary, high school Bigs were significantly more positive about Littles than college and adult Bigs. It is important to recognize volunteer mentors enter the program as a product of our society, in which narratives about families in need are often unconsciously embedded in beliefs, values and actions. BBBS-GTC could consider additional screening and training practices to identify and increase levels of positive attitudes and beliefs about children and youth among older Bigs.

### T2 Survey Particulars

Additional descriptive information was gathered on the T2 survey, administered after the school year had ended. We collected T2 survey data from 93% of enrolled Bigs (n = 283). However, 38 (13%) of these Bigs were not matched during the school year, leaving us with a sample of 245 active Bigs at T2. Both high school and college Bigs were more likely than adults to report not being matched at all.

With regard to match duration at the close of the 2013-14 school year, high school Bigs reported being matched an average of 12 months, while both college and BSW Bigs reported matches lasting slightly longer than a year (means = 16 and 14 months, respectively). With an average match length greater than 2 years, adult Bigs reported significantly longer matches than the other groups. Adult Bigs in school-based and BSW settings tended to have only one Little during the school year, while 17% of college and 29% of high school Bigs reported having more than one Little.

## Assessment of Process to Become a Big

### Key Findings

- Bigs were generally satisfied with application, interview and match processes.
- BBBS-GTC is effectively managing expectations for most mentors, an important best practice.

### Recommendations

- Implement a realistic benchmark for maintaining communication with Bigs during match process.
- Review recruitment and training messaging to ensure the range of potential mentoring experiences are shared.
- Continue to engage with match support coordinators to improve match-making strategies and processes.

During interviews and the T1 survey, Bigs were asked about their satisfaction with initial BBBS-GTC program requirements, including recruitment and the screening and interviewing processes to become a Big. The process of making matches was discussed at length during the focus groups with match support coordinators in the spring of 2013, and was also a focus of some qualitative feedback from the Big follow-up survey in the form of open-ended comments. Overall, Bigs expressed a high level of satisfaction with the process of becoming a Big.

### Recruitment

The shared characteristics of Bigs shown in the previous section reflect the types of people who are currently attracted to volunteer with BBBS-GTC in the school-based program. Nearly all Bigs regardless of age had volunteered in other settings and previously mentored youth. Younger Bigs were often fulfilling a service requirement for school and chose to do that through participating in the school-based mentoring program. Thus, BBBS-GTC appears to be successfully recruiting and accepting people with relevant experience to be school-based mentors. Decisions about adapting recruitment strategies to reach a wider variety of people should be weighed against the additional training that individuals with less volunteering or mentoring experience might require to be successful.

We did not ask how mentors were recruited in the surveys, so we lack information on recruitment that is representative of all Bigs in the school-based program. Despite this shortfall, we learned through interviews with Bigs that word of mouth and on-campus recruiting were common ways for high school and college Bigs to be recruited. In contrast, adults tend to get involved through a variety of sources, including word of mouth, advertisements in local papers or church bulletins, employer outreach or because they know about BBBS and sought out the program's website.

Shedding light on potential key recruitment messages, interviewed Bigs talked about choosing the school-based program because the logistics were easier and the school-based context was perceived as a good way to begin mentoring. This quote below exemplifies the sentiments shared by several college and adult Bigs:

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*I felt like the school based program had more support behind it...it's an allotted amount of time where you're going every week. I also thought if I had failed miserably and I really didn't like it, it would be an easier out - the [school] year would end and then it would just be more natural to discontinue it. As far as the community-based program, I just felt like, 'Then I have to think of something to do,' and it just felt like more pressure. So I went with the school-based program because I like how it was a little bit more planned out. – Adult Big*

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Another important aspect related to recruitment according to the 2009 MENTOR report (p.4), is that the program “realistically portrays the benefits, practices and challenges of a mentoring program.” While we did not assess all of these elements, the evidence we have suggests BBBS-GTC is meeting this benchmark. On the T2 survey, almost 9 out of 10 (87%) Bigs reported their expectations about how their match would go this year were about right; only 1 out of 10 (11%) indicated their expectations were too high.

The T1 survey asked about some specific expectations that Bigs might have regarding their interactions with their Littles. Results included that new Bigs were more likely than continuing Bigs to expect to focus on school work with their Littles. This finding reflects the fact that more new Bigs were in high school and that homework help is a key component of the high school Bigs program. With regard to expectations about the match, 77% of new Bigs expected that the relationship would happen naturally and easily. Continuing Bigs also agreed with this statement at a high rate (90%), likely reflecting that many of them were continuing with the same Little from the previous year.

One college Big did express concern in her interview that the benefits of mentoring seemed exaggerated when compared to her experience:

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*I think sometimes...organizations that have mentors...paint a picture that you can make this huge impact in someone's life. And I don't know if I necessarily felt that way, but I feel like I valued our time we spent together, but I don't know if I really made that big of an impact in her life. I don't know if it's because we only spent two years together or what. I think that would be the only – not that I expected it, but it was always there... – College Big*

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Thus, while results suggest that overall BBBS-GTC is accomplishing the goal of managing expectations during the recruitment and training of mentors, it may be worth a brief review to ensure recruitment and training practices realistically portray the range of experiences in mentoring.

### Application, Screening and Interviews

On the T1 survey, Bigs were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 *low* to 5 *high*, their satisfaction with the application process and the screening/interviewing process to become a Big. A mean score, ranging from 1 to 5, was calculated for each age group of Bigs. All groups reported high satisfaction rates, although college Bigs reported slightly lower rates of satisfaction with the screening and interviewing process compared to high school, adult and BSWs Bigs, as shown in Table B in the Appendix.

**85%** of Bigs are highly satisfied with application process

It is worthwhile to note that some of the younger Bigs valued the perceived rigor of these processes of “vetting” potential mentors as an important opportunity for their own professional development. During the interviews, one high school Big shared,

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*I got an interview, which I was surprised because... it seemed like a big organization.... [It's] one thing I remember the most just because it was a lot of really intimate questions and it lasted for like an hour and half and it was this really...serious interview that tested a lot of my [skills]....It felt good to be interviewed in that way.*

---

### Match Making

The slightly lower rates of satisfaction regarding the screening/interviewing process noted by college Bigs on the survey may be related to delays between interviews and making matches. The most common concern shared during interviews regarding the process of becoming a Big was about the length of time spent waiting to be matched. We also found that at T2, some surveyed Bigs did not yet have a Little (13% total: 18% high school, 16% college, 11% adult and 2% BSW Bigs).

A final question on the T2 survey asked Bigs to offer advice to BBBS-GTC. College students were more likely than other Bigs to offer advice related to the process of getting matched, including one college respondent who wrote, “Keep in contact with your Bigs, I have been asking for a new match for a year and have not heard from my coordinator.” As indicated in this quote, the time between acceptance and getting a match becomes a problem primarily when the Big perceives a lack of communication while waiting.

However, many Bigs recognized the necessity of a waiting period once they were accepted and were fine with how the process played out for them, as exemplified in an interview with an adult Big who said, “It was just the initial waiting because it was push, push, push

to get in for the orientation and then...It's just kind of waiting to hear from them that they have found you a match. It was probably two months or more."

The process of making matches and related challenges were discussed in depth during the focus groups with match support coordinators and illuminate some of the reasons for delays. As exemplified in the following quotations, match support coordinators discussed the desire to make ideal matches based on such factors as Little preferences for having a Big of the same gender or race, common life experiences and personality fit and matching the Little's level of need with the Big's skill level. Common life experiences matter..."so that the Big can really kind of put themselves in their Little shoes and really understand some of the things that maybe are happening." Match support coordinators also shared the following examples of ideal matches.

MENTOR Benchmark

B.4.1 

Program considers its aims, as well as characteristics of the mentor and mentee when making matches.

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*Some good examples of common life experiences in the matches that I've worked with this year would be like a boy whose dad is in the army and then the Big brother is a member of the National Guard so that kind of helps. And then another one would be a Somali student who's just learning English who's new to the country and then a Somali Big, she doesn't speak the best Somali but it kind of shows the Little that, you know, you can make it past this year and this is what your future could hold. So I've had the opportunity to make some cool matches that way this year.*

*If [the Little] says I want someone who looks like me and they're African American or they're Somali then you want to really honor that and make sure that you try as best as you can to find someone because they have this idea in their mind of who this person is going to be and so you don't want them to be disappointed just by seeing them.*

---

However, match support coordinators talked about the fact that this ideal match is often limited by much more practical concerns such as conflicting schedules and the limited amount of time they themselves have to get to know Littles waiting to be matched. There is little time to build the trust needed to get accurate information on Little's preferences or need. Match support coordinators would value having time to ensure both Littles and their parents fully understand the BBBS-GTC program. Match support coordinators may need additional guidance on how to use developmentally-specific approaches to help potential mentees "understand what mentoring is and what they can expect from a mentoring relationship" as recommended by the MENTOR report (p.4).

---

*In an ideal world, being able to sit down and talk with the teacher...for 15 minutes would be so much better than taking things from a piece of paper. I also think it would be great if we could focus more on some of the strengths that the Littles have because most likely the Bigs are not going to be able to fix all of the Little's academic needs and, you know, there is a support there, but really being more that cheerleader in their life rather than trying to fix their problems....So having a better understanding of the Little's strengths and being able to relay that to the Big or to the future Big would be nice.*

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Despite these perceived constraints, some match support coordinators expressed strong reservations of adding any steps to an already complex enrollment process. Finally, during the focus groups, several expressed strong concerns about having to share the race and sexual orientation of a potential Big with the Little's parents, saying:

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*You can hear the hesitation of the parent going, 'Uhhh.' They want to say no, but then they don't want to be rude and they don't want their child to miss out on this opportunity and so they say, 'yes.' And you're like, oh, I just don't know if it's going to work out if I'm hearing this hesitation already. I feel like if you feel very strongly about this, then you should indicate on the application. So I usually tell a lot of my parents and even the Littles and say, just be very honest with me. Like if you want someone who looks like you, who comes from your particular background, just be honest with me and let me know.*

---

Given the challenges inherent in match making, it is important to note that Bigs are generally very satisfied with their matches. On the T1 survey, continuing Bigs were asked how happy they were with their current match. Responses ranged from 1 *very unhappy* to 5 *very happy*, and a large majority marked either very happy (69%) or pretty happy (26%). On the T2 survey, almost all (96%) Bigs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "BBBS did a good job in matching me with my current Little." No differences in these ratings were found by the type of Big.

## Assessment of Training

### Key Findings

- Overall, surveyed Bigs were extremely satisfied with training.
- Some Bigs wanted additional training in relationship-building strategies, such as working with challenging Littles, cultural competency and endings.
- Advice to future Bigs: be flexible, patient and consistent.

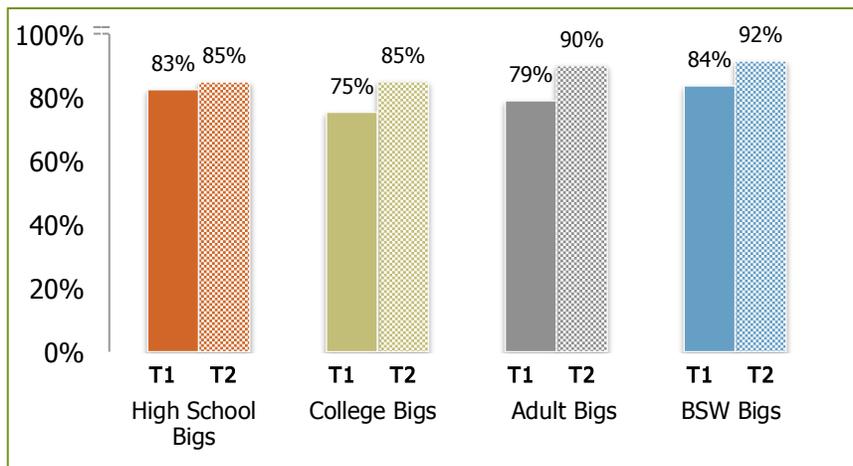
### Recommendations

- Add more about how to build a strong relationship to training content.
- Strategically consider how to tailor training content, setting and delivery to different types of Bigs.

**91%** of College Bigs report BBBS-GTC provides right amount of training

During interviews and both surveys, Bigs were asked about their training experiences. Early on in the interviews, it became clear that the term ‘training’ was not understood by all Bigs in the same way. Many referred to the group session they attended as ‘orientations,’ while others referred to ‘information’ they received in written format or during one-on-one conversations with their match support coordinate. The survey questions tried to capture that complexity, while also aiming to gather data about how well the training met the needs of Bigs in the program.

**Figure 6**  
Bigs Reporting High Satisfaction with Preparation: T1 vs T2



Bigs were asked to share their opinions about training on both the T1 and T2 surveys. This allowed us to assess whether there were changes in perceived levels of mentor preparation from the beginning to the end of a school year. Specifically, Bigs were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the preparation to

become a Big (on a scale from 1 = *low satisfaction* to 5 = *high satisfaction*), whether the preparation helps them be a better mentor (on a scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) and whether the information, orientation and training they received was the *right amount, too little* or *too much*. Almost all Bigs positively assessed each item, and ratings stayed high and even slightly increased in most categories from T1 to T2. Proportions of Bigs who indicated high satisfaction with preparation to become a Big (ratings of 4 or 5) on

each survey are shown in Fig. 6. In addition, no less than 80% of all groups of Bigs *agreed or strongly agreed* that preparation helped them to be a better mentor and reported that the amount of preparation they received was *about right*.

Qualitative data also revealed themes related to training. First, Bigs do not clearly differentiate between training and orientation for the school-based mentoring program. When asked about their training, many Bigs asked for clarification, saying they attended an orientation but did not really get trained. Upon further conversation, some Bigs then discussed information they received during one-on-one meetings with their match support coordinator that reflected some messages about mentor preparation that other Bigs reported hearing at a 3-hour session they attend at the main BBBS-GTC office. Bigs differed in their perception of this 3-hour session as an orientation or a training.

The second theme revealed differences between high school, college and adult Bigs regarding the effectiveness of training. High school Bigs expressed most clearly the sentiment that orientation and training was useful to them. For example, one high school mentor said,

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*It's kind of a cool feeling, because when we were done with all the [training], I kind of felt like I could go with the kid and try it all out. I didn't know who I was going to get paired with. But I was prepared. I was excited to actually go out there and start new with someone.*

---

College and adult Bigs seemed slightly less enthusiastic about the training, saying the information is mostly an orientation to the program, rather than training, that the information shared is not new to them or that it is too hard to train on what is needed. One college mentor said, *"It seems like tips, that is the most helpful and everything else, you just kind of learn."*

On the other hand, one adult Big remembered that the orientation was where she learned that her role was to be a friend rather than trying to "fix" the Little, a message she found very useful and helped her be at ease. Mentors also commonly recalled information about when to report abuse as a key message during training, such as this adult Big who said,

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*There are a couple of things where it's like, 'Wow!' You know? It made you kind of pause and hope that like it doesn't get like those dire situations or you never have to make those decisions. But then again, I think it prepares you for possibly a chance where, hey, it doesn't go perfect.*

---

Another adult Big reflected that it wasn't helpful to attend a session for both community and school-based mentors because there are different rules for each setting.

### Time Spent Receiving Training

Both MENTOR (p.9) and the P/PV report (p.27) suggest all Bigs receive a minimum of two hours of pre-match training. To assess BBBS-GTC program practices, Bigs were asked to respond to the following statement on the T1 survey: Please tell us how much time you spent receiving information, orientation and/or training in the following ways (i.e., group training, individual support, written material, online training and my own research) before meeting with your Little. Response options included 0 = *no time*, 1 = *less than 30 minutes*, 2 = *30 to 60 minutes*, 3 = *60 or more minutes*. These multiple options for identifying how Bigs were trained were developed based on the qualitative interviews. We combined these response options regarding time for simplicity in reporting.

#### MENTOR Benchmark

**B.3.1**



Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person training.

Although the way this survey question was asked does not allow us to determine an exact amount of total training, only 13 of 304 Bigs (4%) responded in a way that the total of all time spent receiving training, regardless of how training was received, would be less than two hours. Looking at reported amounts of time across groups of mentors, results shared in Table C of the Appendix show that high school Bigs reported spending less time in training (group training, individual support, written material, online training or their own research) compared to college and adult Bigs. A greater percentage of older Bigs spent substantial time in each type of training than high school Bigs. BSW Bigs are the only group who reported spending time receiving information or training online. In comparison, school-based adult Bigs tended to report doing their own research more often than college, high school or BSW Bigs. These differences may reflect actual distinctions in how each group receives training, although these data could also reflect differences in perceptions or definitions of training. For example, during the interviews, some high school Bigs talked about ongoing check-in times with match support coordinators prior to each group mentoring session where they often received important messages about relationship development, consistency and program policy.

**1 in 3** BSW Bigs spent >30 minutes completing online training

### Training on Specific Topics: Amount Received vs Amount Desired

The two main training challenges, mentioned in interviews and focus groups by both Bigs and match support coordinators, were that the group training session is too general and that there is not a good way to make this session more specific as it would be impossible to train on everything a Big might encounter in a given match. Despite this very real tension, after hearing a variety of experiences related to training during the individual interview, we attempted to evaluate what training Bigs reported they received as compared to what they would have like to receive.

When recalling their training during interviews, Bigs discussed content such as:

## BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring

- rules for the program (e.g., no outside contact, gift policy),
- information on their role as a mentor,
- when to report child abuse,
- the importance of prioritizing the one-on-one relationship with their Little,
- to rely on their match coordinators for support if they had questions,
- to be consistent in their relationship with their Little,
- to have fun.

Bigs were then asked whether there was information they wished they would have received during training or orientation. Responses covered a wide variety of topics but included:

- training about how to build a relationships, including cross-cultural relationships,
- how to deal with Littles who are resistant to building a relationship,
- how to end a relationship,
- guidelines for talking about family.

A few interviewed Bigs also wanted information about whether their Little's parents or teachers had specific expectations for the program.

During the focus groups, some match support coordinators also expressed concern about whether having joint orientations for school-based mentors and community-based mentors was a good idea. About additional training topics, one match support coordinator said, *"I think if a similar training [on cultural literacy] was done for Bigs that is done for employees that would be really helpful."*

Based on these results from the interviews, the T1 survey asked Bigs to tell us how much training or information they received on a list of topics as part of their BBBS-GTC preparation. Response options included *none*, *some*, and *a lot*. Of note, at least 85% of Bigs in all groups reported receiving some or a lot of training on content named as a minimum standard in the MENTOR report (p.9). For example, more than 75% of all Bigs reported receiving *a lot* of training on program policies and expectations and who to call with questions. Roughly 80% of high school, college and BSW Bigs reported receiving *a lot* of training on when to report abuse, compare to 62% of school-based adult Bigs.

**> 1 in 10** Bigs reported receiving **NO** training on:

- Working across cultures
- Child development
- Working with a quiet or resistant Little

### MENTOR Benchmark

#### B.3.2. ★

Program training includes a) program rules, c) mentors' obligations/roles, e) ethical issues and g) available sources of assistance.

While Bigs reported consistently high rates of training on program rules and expectations, training on topics related to how to be an effective mentor were more mixed. Survey participants reported they received *a lot* of training on understanding their role as a Big,

**BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring**

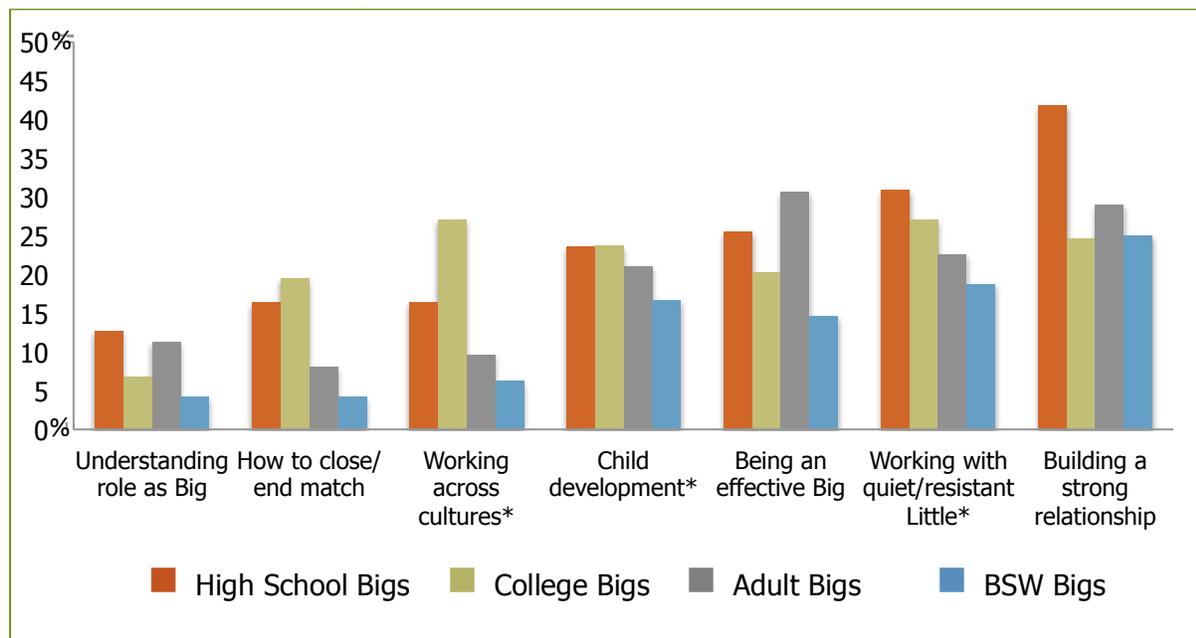
with the lowest being BSW Bigs at 66%. However, more than 10% of Bigs reported receiving *no* training on how to end/close a match, working across cultures, child development and working with a quiet or resistant Little.

More than half of high school Bigs reported receiving a lot of training on how to work with a quiet or resistant Little and how to close a match, but fewer than 45% of college Bigs or adult Bigs reported receiving a lot of training in these areas. A greater number of high school students felt that they received a lot of training in each relationship building topic compared to college age and adult Bigs. This may reflect the opportunity for additional training provided by the high school mentoring program structure. Additional results are shared in Table D of the Appendix.

The T2 survey then displayed the same list of training topics and asked Bigs to check all topics for which they would have liked more training or information. In general, few Bigs requested additional training or information on program logistics. For example, only about 1 in 20 Bigs wanted more training on program policies and expectations. Fig. 7 includes training topics related to building the match relationship. Topics indicated with an asterisk are characterized by the MENTOR report (p.9) as enhanced training content; other topics are considered minimum standards. Across all groups, Bigs reported the area where they most wanted more training is on how to build a strong relationship.

**1 in 5** college Bigs want more training on working across cultures

**Figure 7**  
Bigs Want More Training on These Topics



On average, 1 in 5 Bigs told us they want more training on how kids grow and develop at certain ages, being an effective Big and how to close or end a match. High school age Bigs

## BIG Ideas on School-Based Mentoring

were more likely than other age groups to want information on how to work with a Little who was quiet or resistant. Both high school and college Bigs wanted more information on closing a match. Finally, 1 in 5 college Bigs requested more training on working across cultures. This finding may be reflective of the specific developmental stage of college students who may be just at the right stage in their development and education where they are becoming more cognizant of the reality of racial disparities and are forming their opinions about how to be an ally to people of color.

The only minimum training standard suggested by the MENTOR report that we did not assess was whether Bigs received training on expectations and goals related to the mentoring relationship. Themes from the interviews suggested that the BBBS-GTC training spends much time on program expectations for mentors, rather than on mentors' own expectations and goals for their match. However, MENTOR indicates that "mentors who report a discrepancy between their initial expectations of their relationship with their mentee and their actual post-match experiences with their mentee are less likely to report an intention to stay in the mentoring relationship. Consequently, training should include a focus on mentor motivations, as well as on helping mentors to identify their goals, modify unrealistic expectations, and plan to compare their goals with their mentees' goals to identify and address discrepancies between the two" (p.10). It may be beneficial for BBBS-GTC to review how and whether mentor expectations are identified and addressed during training.

A few Bigs focused on training as a topic in their open-ended advice to BBBS-GTC on the T2 survey, supporting the findings shared here. A college mentor wrote: *"I think the program is run great- the only comment I have is regarding ending the match. I felt a little unprepared."*

An adult Big wanted more ongoing support and training: "Provide follow up training/ideas as the relationships progress. Remind Bigs of their resources and the importance of their role."

At least two Bigs requested more "cultural training" in their open-ended responses on the T2 survey.

### Big's Advice to Other Bigs

Bigs were asked what advice they would give to new Bigs during interviews and explicitly on the T2 survey. These data are grouped by theme and yield key insights as to what Bigs think are important messages to give to incoming Bigs. All of the themes were connected to how to best build relationships, a key area where Bigs indicated they would like more training. BBBS-GTC could consider incorporating three key messages early into the training and orientation process:

**Be flexible**

**Give it time**

**Be consistent, committed  
and fully present**

### Be flexible

Of 234 Bigs who filled out comments at the end of the T2 survey, 157 (67%) included some version of advice related to being flexible in the relationship and responsive to the Little's needs (e.g., being engaging, a friend/not fixing, open-minded, patient, a good listener, encouraging). Similar ideas were expressed often in the interview. A high school Big expressed flexibility by saying: "*Just be yourself but also know what's going on with your Little - be in their shoes and feel what they feel before you say anything.*"

Additional advice included:

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*No matter what, be fully open to it...You really will learn a lot and just to go into it with an open mind because you have no idea what the little person, boy or girl, is going to look like when they come out or what they've been through or anything." – College Big*

*Be who they need you to be, not what you think you should be" – Adult Big*

*Be an active listener. And by that, I mean you want to listen to them but the active part is that...you turn it into a dialogue, not a monologue and...be somewhat flexible. It's not about what you enjoy doing. It's about figuring out how to have, you know, a meaningful experience with the two of you.  
– Adult Big*

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### Give it time

The second most common type of advice on the T2 survey was to give relationships time to develop (37 responses of 234). This idea was also commonly expressed by Bigs who were interviewed.

Specific advice stressed that Bigs should:

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*Be patient, it can take Littles a long time to open up. Try to be a friend to them rather than making them feel like there's a problem you're helping them with, this way they will trust and open up to you naturally.*

*Keep at it when it comes to getting that emotional connection with your Little...it takes time!*

---

**Be consistent, committed  
and fully present**

While this is already a clear message in BBBS-GTC trainings, it was also the third most common theme in the T2 survey responses, and was a common piece of advice shared by interviewed Bigs. For example, a high school Big responded:

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*I would advise a new Big to show up...Make sure you have time, and live up to it, because like I said, I've seen a lot of Littles that were upset when their Big didn't show up, and our showing up makes a big difference to how their week's going to go.*

---

A college Big suggested fully disconnecting by saying: *"It's the Little's time with you. Show up on time and be 'present'. No phones, laptops, or electronics."*

Finally, an adult Big advised others to:

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*Be a consistent presence in your Little's life. You should be able to make all (most) of your meetings. Be on time, because they are expecting you. Listen. Share your personal story.*

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## Assessment of Program Structure

### Key Findings

- Meeting during lunch/recess is more challenging than other times.
- Bigs are satisfied with the amount of time they meet with their Little.
- High school Bigs work on homework or school projects with their Littles more often than other types of Bigs.

### Recommendations

- Monitor matches closely and provide additional help to Bigs as needed.
- Reconsider whether homework help is a necessary and effective part of the high school Bigs program.
- Regularly consider issues related to school context and address when possible.

BBBS-GTC is working to achieve the recommendation of the P/PV report that programs involving high school mentors respond to that developmental stage and “have a standardized set of practices that reflect [high school mentors’] distinct needs...in types of support, training and structure” (p.26). Given the distinct program structures and types of Bigs included in the BBBS-GTC SBM program, it was important to assess how satisfied Bigs are with the different structures. In the interviews and on the T2 survey, Bigs were asked several questions about program structure such as when and where they met with their Little and for how much time, in addition to rating their levels of satisfaction. Survey results in this section are based on responses of 245 Bigs, as 21 of the original 304 did not take the follow-up survey and 38 were not matched during the school year.

### Location

Big reports on where they met with their Little appear to reflect differences in program practices. Adults most often met with their Littles in a designated BBBS area, in the library, or at their place of work; high school students mostly met with their Littles in the cafeteria and a large majority of college Bigs met with their Little in a designated BBBS area while many also met in the cafeteria.

Many Bigs marked more than one area, reflecting the opportunity to use multiple spaces in their settings. Participants were then asked to respond to the following item: “On a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high), please rate your satisfaction with the space for meeting with your Little.” Overall, all participants were satisfied with their meeting space with 73% of Bigs rating their space either a 4 or 5. There were some significance differences in satisfaction with space, however. High school ( $M=4.23$ ) and BSW Bigs ( $M=4.19$ ) were significantly more satisfied than adult Bigs ( $M=3.75$ ).

**52%** of adult Bigs meet in a designated BBBS area

In the interviews, we heard about a full range of experiences regarding meeting places. Only a few Bigs expressed difficulty due to lacking a dedicated space for meeting or trying

to be in multiple spaces during what feels like a short amount of time. Many Bigs talked about meeting in multiple locations on any given day. Several really appreciated that they had access to multiple spaces and activities, such as this college Big who talked about location by saying,

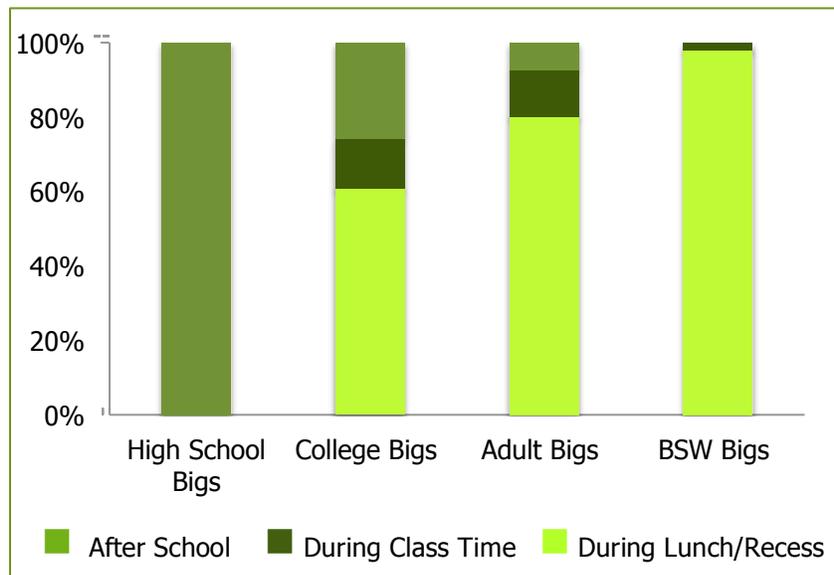
*In the teachers' lounge there is one cabinet that has games in it. That's really the only space that's reserved for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Other than that, there's a couple of tables in the hallways that you can go sit at and you could go in the library or if the lunchroom's open, you can go in the lunchroom or even outside if it was a nice enough day to go outside. So we were all over the place.*

One adult Big expressed frustration with the types of activities available in the BBBS space, saying, *"You'd take out a game and most of the pieces are broken...[and] I wish there was something that you can work on together instead of having a competition over a game."*

### Time of Day

Participants were asked about when their match typically met. As seen in Fig. 8, Bigs infrequently reported meeting with their Littles during class time.

**Figure 8**  
Bigs Reporting on When Matches Meet



All high school students met with their Littles after school. The majority of college and adult Bigs met with their Littles during lunch and/or recess. There was a high level of satisfaction with these meetings times, with 86% of Bigs rating their level of satisfaction as a 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 = low to 5 = high.

However, during interviews, several Bigs shared concerns related to meeting at lunch time. Of the 16

interviewed Bigs who met during lunch and recess, half spoke of their reservations about this arrangement. Two main themes emerged.

1. Bigs felt it was difficult to fit in relationship building activities with the logistics of getting lunch. For example, one adult Big shared, *"We were allowed to go in the*

*library, but you couldn't eat in the library and it was over lunch. So it was like we could eat and then go in the library, but it's kind of a hassle too."*

2. There was often a tension between Littles preferring the social time with their friends to the time with their Big. It seemed this second tension more commonly emerged by 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, with more Littles starting to express a desire to be with friends during lunch and recess. This is consistent with knowledge about early adolescent development: around the age of 10, young people begin transitioning from activity-based friendships to affectively oriented relationships that provide support and connections. Generally, Bigs expressed an understanding of this, given how important friends become in early adolescence. However, some Bigs struggled with this tension while others were able to navigate with little trouble, as evidenced in the two quotations below.

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*I went at lunch time and it didn't work out because she wanted to go outside and play with her friends on the playground. She didn't want to be with me.*

*There were a few times we were out...and the other kids in his class were out on the playground...and probably a game of Kickball or something like that, and I said, "[LITTLE], go." If you want an opportunity...to get some exercise with your classmates, that was fine, and he never spent the whole time with them...It was a good opportunity for me too, to observe [LITTLE] interacting with his own classmates.*

---

During focus groups, match support coordinators also discussed having to help a few matches find a new time to meet when lunch was not working out. They were able to facilitate the match meeting at a different time. However, there are barriers to changing meeting times depending on the school. Specifically, match support coordinators recognize that schools are often quite resistant to matches meeting during class because the student misses out on instruction time.

### Amount of Time

Bigs were also asked how much time they typically spent with their Littles and how satisfied they were with that amount of time on the T2 survey. Half of Bigs (51%) spent between 46 and 60 minutes with their Little, while fewer than 15% of Bigs reported spending less than 45 minutes per week. About 4 in 5 Bigs responded that this is "about the right amount of time", while the remainder would like to meet longer. There were no significant differences by age group related to these questions.

#### MENTOR Benchmark

##### B.2.2

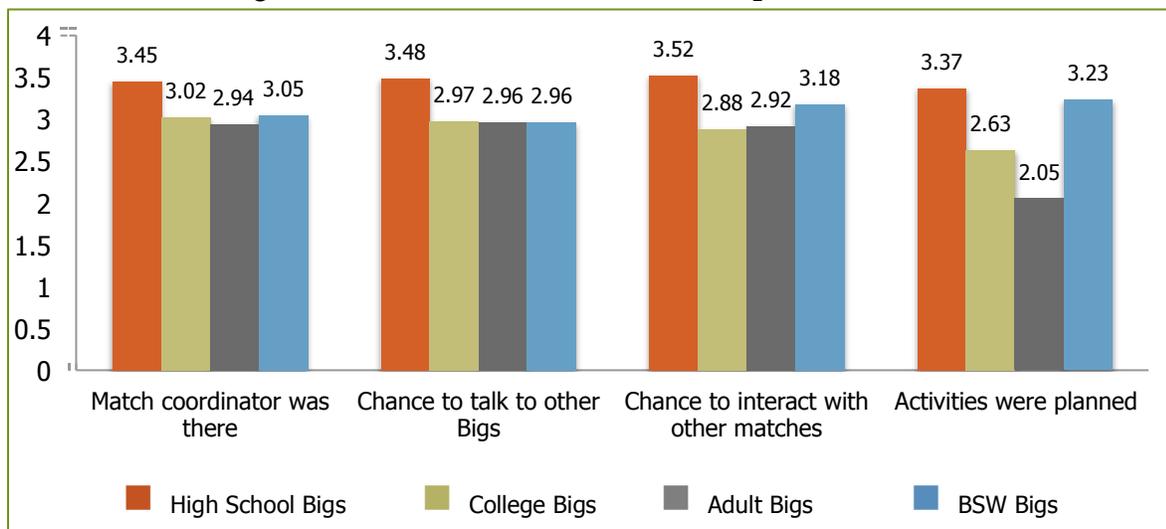
Mentor agrees to participate in face-to-face meetings one time per week for one hour

### Group Setting

To assess satisfaction with the different types of settings in which matches met, the T2 survey asked, “Were there other matches meeting together at the same time you met with your Little at school?” Significant differences were found by type of Big. Almost all high school (93%) and BSW (94%) Bigs reported meeting in a group, whereas just under half of college Bigs (47%) and adult Bigs (40%) reported meeting at the same time and place as other matches. According to interviewed Bigs and program staff, after-school group settings for high school and college Bigs are designed to provide structure and supervision to the match. School-based adult Bigs who met with their mentees in group settings were more likely to simply be sharing a space, while not relying on the match coordinator to provide a structure to the match time.

As seen in Fig. 9, several questions on the T2 survey aimed to assess satisfaction and perceived benefits of meeting in group settings, including the helpfulness of having a match support coordinator present and opportunities to talk to other Bigs and interact with other matches. Responses included 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, 4 = *strongly agree* and mean scores were calculated to display levels of perceived agreement. Of those who participated in a group setting, high school Bigs had significantly higher levels of agreement with each benefit compared to college and adult Bigs. This likely reflects the fact that the match environment for high school Bigs was more intentionally structured. In addition, high school and BSW Bigs were more likely than other Bigs to strongly agree that meeting in a group setting was helpful because activities were already planned. BSW Bigs may appreciate planned activities because of constraints in the work setting where they met. In comparison, high school Bigs likely value planned activities because they are less experienced working with children.

**Figure 9**  
**Mean Levels of Bigs Endorsement of Benefit of Group Structure**



Participants were also asked to respond with their level of agreement about whether meeting in a group setting with their Littles was helpful or distracting. Overall, most Bigs

disagreed that group settings were distracting to themselves or prevented them from talking about personal things. And, in general, Bigs agreed that they got to know their Littles in ways they would not have if they were alone. Qualitative results were largely reflective of this range of experiences.

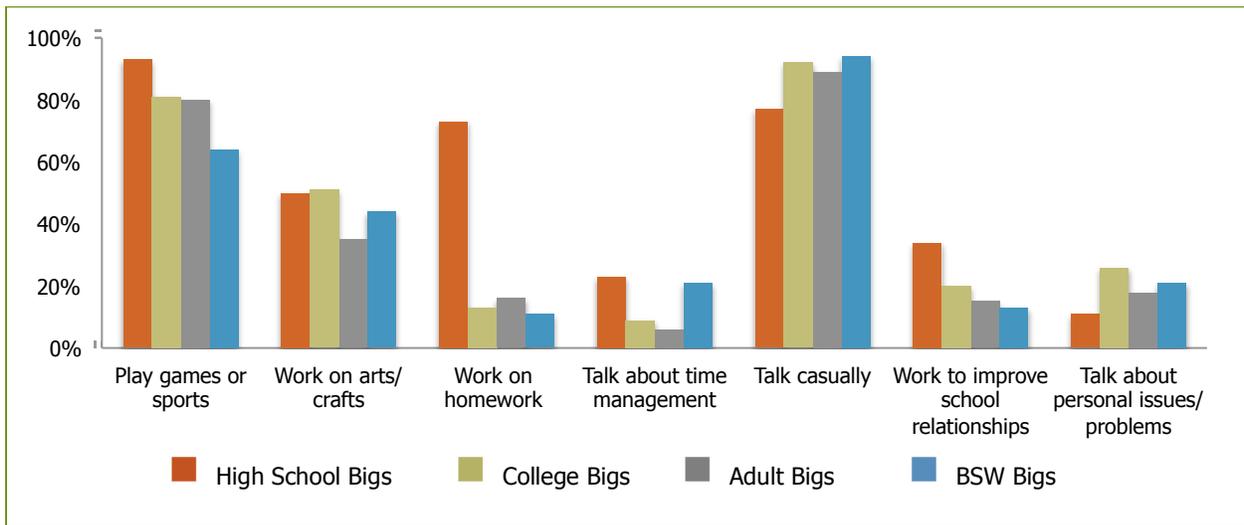
### Structure of Time Together

Another important component of program structure is how Bigs and Littles spend their time together. Many Bigs let Littles choose activities. College students were the most likely to report letting their Little decide how to spend their time together. Nine out of 10 Bigs, regardless of type, reported they often or very often had fun with their Little during the school year.

**9 of 10**  
Bigs often had fun with their Little

Participants were also asked how often they participated in a variety of activities with their Little during the school year. Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 5 = *very often*. Fig. 10 shows the number of Bigs who responded that they often or very often spent time with their Littles engaged in activities such as working on homework, playing games or sports, or just talking casually.

**Figure 10**  
Bigs Reporting on Types of Activities with their Little



Almost three-quarters of high school Bigs reported often or very often working on homework or school projects together with their Littles, significantly more than other types of Bigs who infrequently reported this activity. During the qualitative interviews, high school Bigs talked about having more structure, which included dedicated time for homework. According to the P/PV report, having more structure is a best practice for younger mentors. However, asking high school Bigs to help Littles with homework goes against the P/PV recommendation that programs should consider how to use high school Bigs’ natural strengths related to helping mentees improve in peer-related areas, rather

than focusing on academics which can inhibit strong relationship building (Herrera et al., 2008, p.27). The relationship between high school Bigs and their Littles may experience additional tension when homework is a required activity.

During the interviews, many high school Bigs talked about hearing the strong message from program staff that mentors should focus on the one-on-one relationship during the entire match meeting time. While this is an important and key dynamic of the relationship, the P/PV report recommends providing matches with the opportunity to interact with other youth and mentors (p.27). Highly structured group activities, such as group team-building activities, where multiple matches have fun interacting together for a portion of the group meeting time may be a more developmentally appropriate activity for young Bigs and their mentees than homework help time.

College Bigs were slightly more similar to adult Bigs with regard to the types of activities they engaged in with their Littles. They were also second behind BSW Bigs to report more often just talking casually (about books, games, movies, or holiday/weekend plans, etc.) with their Littles. They spend more time than other groups talking about personal problems with their Little. Compared to the school-based adult Bigs, fewer BSW Bigs report working on school related things and playing sports or games, while more say they do crafts.

The following quotes demonstrate how Bigs (and a match support coordinator) reflected on program structure and illuminate some of the interesting dynamics that arise, including negotiations of working on academics versus having fun.

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*What we'd first do is we'd grab our name tags, we'd grab these little snack packs...then bring it to our tables.... Then we'd sit down with our Littles, kind ask them how their day was, have our snacks with them. And after that, [MC] would be like, "Well, you guys can get started on your homework. I'd like you guys to do that for 15 minutes." After 15 minutes, [MC] might have an activity that we were doing or we would have like a reading bingo where if you like a certain type of book, we might have to write a little paragraph about it, summarizing or like draw a picture or something like that. Basically, there'd be activities that [MC] would set or we would do just separate activities that the Little and the Big kind of decides on... recess, playground, [MC would let us] do that maybe like every other week. – High School Big*

*I pick him up when school is over, go upstairs, and then we'll read a book, then he eats his snack and then there are different activities for the time. Sometimes, we will be outside, or if it's snowy, crafts and games inside. He likes Lincoln Logs a lot. For a while, we had, like, a health bingo kind of*

*thing that we had to do, although it was hard to get him to do some of the activities because he mostly just wants to go outside. – College Big*

*We did a lot of arts and crafts and stuff because she was very eager in learning and being encouraged in that...I would bring stuff in and we tried, and if it didn't work out, we'd laugh about it. If it worked out, "Oh, great! A miracle." And we played games. But a lot of times, we just sat and talked... whatever came up, we just sat there and talked and it could have been about anything. – Adult Big*

*I would say, well, sometimes the activities that [MC] has offered us to do, she's well beyond wanting to do....It's good intentions of... we've had, like, a month of wellness and okay, if you'll do this, we'll give you a back pack, it was wellness bingo. Okay, we can do some of the things. We can walk around the hallways for 10 minutes. But there's some things, I said, "We're not gonna do this."...I just think some other things weren't age appropriate. – Adult Big*

*[A Big and Little] agreed that one visit, they would do 30 minutes of homework. And then the next time they met, they would do 30 minutes of free time or whatever time they wanted to do. And so that's really worked for them. And they do reading and homework during their academic time. And then when they have free time, they go outside. They build forts together. They play basketball. – Match Support Coordinator*

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### School Context

An important element that potentially affects satisfaction with the BBBS-GTC program structure relates to the school context in which the matches are occurring. College and adult Bigs discussed a range of experiences as to whether and how they interacted with teachers and other school staff. Helpful and friendly teachers who recognized the value of a Big appeared to facilitate Bigs feeling comfortable in their role. Bigs also commonly expressed challenges related to keeping track of whether their Littles would be present and available on any given day. The following quotes show the range of dynamics occurring within the school context.

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*She wasn't doing as well in school. It didn't ever affect our relationship, but there was some pressure from her teacher. Her teacher would pull me aside and tell me [Little]'s not doing so well in school... I felt like I didn't really*

*know my place because [Little] was clearly looking for a friend, and her teacher was looking for the more mentor authority role. – College Big*

*And his teacher was really cool and really supportive...I think she was really happy that [Little] had this support. He was one of the children that was definitely next in line to get a Big Brother. So she let us, if we wanted to stay in the room, I helped him with his homework in the room. – College Big*

*The teacher that [Little] had last year was very... she was younger and she was very communicative with me. I would be able to email her about possibly changing things or something. And she would email me right back. She also would invite me to concerts and things like that. Or if [Little] was struggling in something in school, I would know about it and maybe try to reinforce something. And the teacher this year hasn't really been as communicative, so I haven't really had that experience this year. – Adult Big*

*Her second grade teacher...understood what our relationship was supposed to be. [changes tone]...The first grade teacher thought my job was to help her do her homework. – Adult Big*

*At certain times where I maybe was talking with [Little]'s teacher or something and saying that "you know how he's doing in this?" And she might give me feedback like, "he's having a rough week" or something like that. That's when I go in there and say, "Look, if there's anything you want to talk about or anything I can do...I'm here to listen if you want to talk." – Adult Big*

*I think the other unexpected challenge...with the school based program is there was a...lot of times I went to her school and she wasn't there....There is a giant missing communication thing between her teacher, the match coordinator, [Little] herself and the school. I got to a point where I just had to look at that school calendar every week and make sure and even then still*

*like I would go, and there was something that was on the calendar that I didn't realize was during her lunch and recess break. So it was just very deterring to make myself go to this thing and then have it be like she's not even here, like if she was sick one day, you know? How's her teacher going to remember that her Big comes on Wednesdays and have time to like send me an email?...I got to a point where I kind of just surrendered to the fact that's how the school-based program is and there was really no way around it. – Adult Big*

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Match support coordinators also recognized the school's effect on matches, including how adults within the school environment can really determine whether or not a volunteer feels valued. In addition, match support coordinators stressed that having a champion at school was very important. For example, one match support coordinator commented,

*I used to have two schools...and...it was night and day between the two schools that were separated one mile apart. And the difference was the principal. One principal...completely supported the program, like overtly. And the other one, just factually- he was a nice guy, very nice, super nice. But didn't care [whether the program was there.]*

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## Assessment of Match Support

### Key Findings

- BBBS-GTC meets many best-practice program support benchmarks regarding match support.
- A key qualitative theme was that struggling Bigs need effective problem solving or coaching from match support coordinators that is developmentally-appropriate.
- Bigs strongly agreed on surveys that they received highly effective match coordination, indicating that concerns with match coordination are isolated.

### Recommendations

- Consider initial bi-monthly check-ins for all Bigs in new matches regardless of the Big level of mentoring experience.
- Consider structural changes to further enhance match support.

Satisfaction with match support was assessed in both interviews and surveys. Given that challenging matches were oversampled for the interviews, themes that emerged from the interviews informed survey questions to assess whether they were shared widely among all Bigs. For example, during interviews, we heard about times when Bigs felt they received inadequate support from match support coordinators around problem-solving issues with their Littles. Instead, some Bigs relayed that they were simply given general encouragement to work things out with their Little and/or that the issue was not addressed because their match support coordinator was too busy dealing with logistics. However, survey results showed that issues with match support were rare. On the T2 survey, 84% of Bigs rated their match support coordinator as effective or very effective at providing coaching, problem solving and feedback.

Just over a quarter (26%) of matched Bigs (n = 66) reported having had more than one match support coordinator during the 2013-14 school year in the T2 survey. A higher number of high school Bigs (57%) had more than one match support coordinator compared to college, adult and BSW Bigs (22%, 24%, 13% respectively). Seventy percent of Bigs who had more than one match support coordinator reported that it did not affect their mentoring, while 27% (n = 18) said the change made mentoring harder, and a couple (n = 2) said it made it easier.

**1/4** of Bigs  
reported having  
more than one match  
support coordinator

Additional survey results about Bigs' perceptions of match support are shared below, along with quotations from the qualitative data that illustrate each of these themes. Program support and monitoring benchmarks from the MENTOR report are also reported here to illustrate best practices.

### Effectiveness of Match Support Coordinator

In the T2 survey, participants were asked, "How effective was your match support coordinator in the following areas?" Ratings of effectiveness included 1 = *not effective*, 2 = *a little effective*, 3 = *somewhat effective*, 4 = *effective*, 5 = *very effective*. On average, all Bigs, regardless of type, reported that their match coordinator was effective to very effective at providing coaching, problem solving and feedback ( $M = 4.44$ ). Match support coordinators were also effective at providing encouragement and motivation ( $M = 4.34$ ), identifying problems before they became a big issue ( $M = 4.13$ ) and regularly checking in ( $M = 4.31$ ). There were no statistically significant differences between types of Bigs in their responses to these questions. However, it may be worth noting that high school Bigs reported the lowest mean rating ( $M = 4.11$ ) that their match support coordinators were effective at regularly checking in.

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*Definitely with that first [challenging] match [the MC was there for me.] I was in communication with MC, and we had several discussions about expectations and how to manage the different behaviors. –Adult Big*

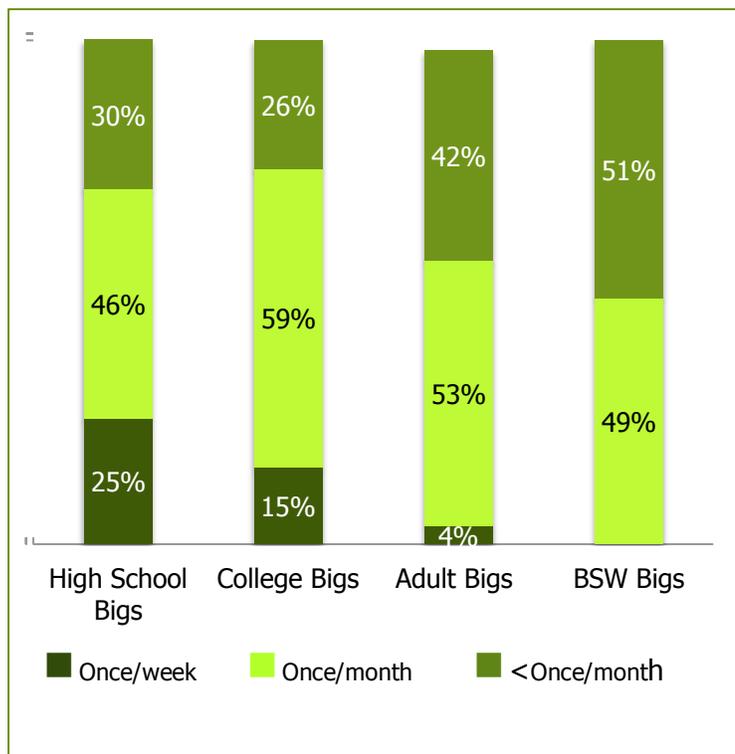
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### Frequency of Check-Ins

As their benchmark for match support, the MENTOR report (p. 14) suggests that a "program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and monthly thereafter." In this evaluation, program contacts were not explicitly counted. Instead, Bigs were asked on the T1 survey about expectations for how often their match support coordinator would check-in with them about how their match is going. We looked for differences in expectations about check-ins by whether Bigs were new or experienced. Almost 9 out of 10 (85%) new Bigs expected their match coordinator to check with them once a month or more, compared to only 6 out of 10 (58%) experienced Bigs.

On the T2 survey, all Bigs were asked to report how often check-ins happened. Responses were similar to expectations reported at T1, with no significant differences by type of Big. Fig. 11 shows Big reports of how often match support

**Figure 11**  
Bigs Reports of Frequency of Check-Ins



coordinators actually checked in during the school year. High school Bigs reported more frequent check-ins than college, adult or BSW Bigs.

In the qualitative interviews, several Bigs who had mentored multiple years talked about only speaking with their match support coordinators a couple of times per year. Two interviewed Bigs told us about their difficulty connecting with a second match after experiencing an easy and positive first match. Both had minimal conversations with their match support coordinators during the second match and did not find them helpful in working through these difficulties. One of these Bigs expressed frustration by the lack of support:

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*I was talking to [MC] about it...and [MC] says, "Well, let me talk to a counselor from the main office." And basically...[MC] emailed me back what the counselor said...and that was our only conversation of that – it was as far as it went.*

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These findings suggest that a review of BBBS-GTC program practices regarding check-ins between mentors and staff is warranted. Program policies regarding check-in should be based on the newness of the match, not on the mentoring experience of the Big. In particular, we recommend that BBBS-GTC ensure that MENTOR recommendations of twice monthly check-ins for new matches are followed regardless of whether the Big is new or experienced.

### Coordinator Responses to Trouble with the Match

It is not uncommon for uncomfortable situations or problems to occur during mentoring relationships, similar to any relationship between two individuals. During interviews with Bigs, we heard about a range of match support coordinator actions in response to match challenges or issues. Some Bigs found program staff to be very helpful while others relayed the impression that match support coordinators were too busy to fully support their match, as these quotations illustrate.

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*I tried to talk to her...she was helpful, but I think she was at a loss. She was running the whole program...and...had a lot of other things to do....She offered me some ...guidance.... I felt like I was fairly experienced. The advice I was getting was not helpful. – Adult Big*

*We had some issues this year, and I did run them past [MC] and she was helpful with that....[My Little] wanted to stay with her friends [for lunch] instead of go with me. So we worked through some of those issues with the match coordinator and that was helpful. – Adult Big*

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Within the interview data, we also noted a difference in how high school Bigs defined whether or not they experienced a high quality interaction with their match support coordinator. For instance, high school Bigs seemed to highly value specific feedback and ideas on how to navigate difficult situations, perhaps due to lack of experience. Quotations from two high school Bigs, who talked about different experiences with their match support coordinator, exemplify the different level of problem-solving support or coaching these particular young mentors may need in addressing issues with their match:

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*[MC] was always like, "He is a kid, just keep that in mind. He's a kid." I'm like, "okay, [MC]. He's a kid. He's not going to make me cry. He's just a kid."...So [MC gave] more general encouragement rather than like tips and ideas. – High school Big*

*I wasn't really sure what to do so I told [MC] about what had happened. She said, "The best thing for you to do is to talk to her and tell her that her mom is doing this because she wants the best for her." So I did and from that moment, she talked more about her family situation. – High School Big*

---

On the T1 survey, Bigs were asked their expectations of what the match support coordinator would do if they were having trouble with their match. Results are reported in Table E of the Appendix. Of note, the large majority of Bigs (regardless of type) expected that they would find a time to talk together with their match support coordinator and come up with specific strategies if they were having trouble with their match. College and adult Bigs expected that their match support coordinator would direct them to existing information or email or text resources at much higher rates than high school Bigs. While there is a perception today that younger people prefer to receive information via text, email or website link, these results imply that face-to-face communication between match support coordinators and Bigs of all ages is highly expected.

**9 in 10** Bigs  
had expectations of  
talking and  
strategizing about  
match issues

On the T2 survey, there was some evidence that Bigs hesitated to engage their match support coordinators about challenges. Of 122 Bigs who said they did have some challenges during the school year, only 17 (14%) said they asked their match support coordinator for help and ideas, while 72 (59%) reported dealing with challenges on their own. Fifty-one (42%) said they got helpful tips and ideas from their match support coordinator. We do not know whether these findings reflect that Bigs thought the challenges were not serious enough to require help or that they hesitated to admit to match support coordinators there were challenges.

Taken together, the results of the match support assessment indicate that there may be a slight but important difference between perceptions of match *coordination* and match *support*. For example, given the group setting for high school Bigs, a match support coordinator was always present during a meeting. They clearly provided match *coordination*: communicating to Bigs and Littles about attendance and providing structure to each day. However, the presence of a BBBS-GTC staff does not necessarily equate with match *support*: individual check-ins to assess how things are going in a given match on a regular, consistent basis. For example, one high school Big noted a strength of her match support coordinator as, "*She'd always like text us, like message us, like, yeah, be here this day. Be here those times and, like, if our kid wasn't at school that day, she'd be sure like to let us know that you don't need to come.*" However, this same young Big struggled to connect with her Little and reported that she did not have a significant conversation about her match with her match support coordinator until she was planning to leave the program. BBBS-GTC could consider structural changes to the organization to increase effectiveness in provide match support. For example, a match support specialist could be asked by match support coordinators to work with individual matches identified during a check-in as needing extra guidance.

## General Feedback from Bigs to BBBS-GTC

Bigs were given the opportunity at the end of the individual interview and the T2 survey to offer general feedback to the program: “What advice would you give to BBBS-GTC?” Many Bigs responded with ideas and topics that are already included in previous sections in this report. However, it was very common for Bigs to take this opportunity to offer general, positive feedback about their experience in the program. In fact, many Bigs affirmed and complimented the BBBS-GTC school-based program. Typical comments from Bigs included:

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*Great program. Glad to have been a part of it. – College Big*

*Just thank you. It is a wonderful program that has certainly made a difference in my life as well as my Little's. – College Big*

*I love this program and I talk about it all the time. – High School Big*

*I really enjoy the program. – Adult Big*

*I wouldn't really change much. – High School Big*

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A smaller number of Bigs raised concerns about the lack of connection with parents and whether there was clear guidance around when to end a match. The following quotes are examples of how Bigs talked about these issues during the interviews.

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*This lack of connection with their family is probably the only thing that I wonder about...maybe to some people that's great...I'm not allowed to interact with their parents. I'm used to doing that. And it just feels odd to me that I'm not doing that. – Adult Big*

*I think that there would be a way that the parent could contact [someone from BBBS-GTC] at the school and say, "You know, we're having this issue. Is there any way we can talk to [Big]?"...We're not there to fix them or put Band-Aids on them, but I think there are some issues that some of these parents really want these kids to feel comfortable to talk to somebody about...I think that is important. So I guess if [BBBS-GTC] could improve, I would suggest that. – Adult Big*

*What I've wondered about, is there a point in time when they say he doesn't need it anymore from a why-did-you-get-him-into-it standpoint? And then, you know, then your relationship is...you just want to keep it going because you have a relationship, not because he needs what he needed two years ago. – Adult Big*

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## Summary & Recommendations

This section summarizes results reported earlier and offers recommendations by type of Big. It concludes with an assessment of the extent to which BBBS-GTC is meeting best practice benchmarks for mentoring programs, as well as offering enhancements, recommended by MENTOR.

### High School Bigs

There is strong evidence BBBS-GTC is successfully following several P/PV recommendations for programs involving high school mentors including providing a minimum of two hours of training, having highly structured environments and match support present during meetings, ensuring that volunteers understand the importance of consistency, trying to involve high school mentors before their senior year and providing significant communication with high school Bigs. As part of continuing efforts to structure the high school program to be developmentally specific to the skills and experiences of these young mentors, consider removing homework help as a key part of match activities. Think about adding group activities that involve multiple matches interacting together. Ensure that staff are identifying the isolated matches that may be struggling and providing them with individualized, developmentally appropriate support. Match support coordinators could ask specific questions and provide guidance for high school Bigs at each stage of the match to help identify and support struggling matches. For example, Bigs who are struggling with quiet or resistant Littles during the early stages of the match might benefit from coaching to be a consistent presence, engage in activities together, and share personal interests and stories to allow Littles to build connections at their own pace.

Additionally, high school Bigs were the most diverse group of school-based mentors and expressed the most positive attitudes toward Littles. BBBS-GTC might benefit greatly from having these Bigs return as mentors once they become adults, if not as college students. The program could consider creative ways to stay connected to these Bigs as they move into adulthood. A structured exit interview could assist efforts to transition these young people to a recruitment or retention specialist who develops a long-term relationship with them via social networking sites and keeps them connected to opportunities in the Twin Cities or elsewhere. This strategy may not pay off for several years, but once the pipeline is established, it may prove to be an effective source of volunteers.

### College Bigs

During this evaluation, BBBS-GTC expressed interest in exploring whether college students benefit from having access to additional support and structure during match meetings in the same way that high school mentors do. Most research related to college student mentoring focuses on programs that involve a highly structured class, in which college students are learning about poverty or other social issues while also engaging in mentoring as a form of service-learning. In these settings, college students were supported by both their professor and program staff as they reflected upon their experiences (Weiler, 2014; Hughes, 2008). From a developmental perspective, this makes sense. College students

are not yet adults, in that they are still mastering the tasks of adolescence, such as developing and applying abstract thinking skills, defining a personal sense of identity and adopting a personal value system. BBBS-GTC could consider those kinds of program structures and the unique developmental stage of college students in continuing to shape how to best support this group.

In addition, results from this report suggest other ways in which college Bigs are unique. Our quantitative findings of college Bigs in the BBBS-GTC SBM program show that demographically, college Bigs more closely align with adult Bigs as they tend to be less diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, more affluent and more likely to express slightly less positive attitudes about children who participate in BBBS. Related to previous experience, college Bigs are almost as likely to be new to mentoring as are high school Bigs and rarely have they mentored more than one Little.

In terms of program structure, college Bigs tended not to endorse the benefits of group structure as frequently as high school Bigs. There is some evidence that college Bigs have natural strengths similar to the strengths of high school mentors noted in the P/PV report. Specifically, college Bigs reported on online surveys that they often engaged in activities with their Littles that allowed for relationship building (e.g., worked on arts/crafts, talked casually about stuff and about personal issues or problems ) compared to more goal-oriented activities (i.e., worked to improve behavior at school, did homework). Our qualitative findings indicate that college Bigs experience being a mentor as formative in their own growth, as interviewees expressed clear themes about what they gained developmentally from being a mentor (Beckman et al., 2013).

This information can be used to consider adaptations to recruitment, program structure and support for college Bigs. For instance, BBBS-GTC might focus on broadening their base of college mentors by looking for partnerships with community colleges or universities with more diverse student bodies. Once recruited, college students want clear and frequent communication from program staff during the match process. Similar to other groups of mentors, college Bigs asked for more training related to building a strong relationship with Littles. And college Bigs might benefit from additional training around cultural sensitivity and frequent check-ins from program staff about their assumptions and expectations about Littles. To tailor support to the developmental needs of college Bigs, BBBS-GTC might explore whether they could provide an online or social media space for learning and reflections that would be monitored by a college match support specialist. This space could be used to meet the specific training needs of college Bigs as well as help them identify, consolidate and apply what they are learning through their mentoring experience.

Match support coordinators would be a good resource for further exploring how to best structure the SBM program for college Bigs, given that they are currently supporting both group and individual mentoring formats.

### Adult Bigs

An important finding from this program evaluation is that adults in the BBBS-GTC school-based and BSW program are more experienced mentors who tend to express less positive attitudes about children who participate in the BBBS program, compared to younger Bigs. School-based adults had the longest average duration of matches, with 71% continuing with the same Little at T1. However, while adult Bigs are dedicated to the program, they could improve skills needed to form strong relationships with the range of Littles in the program. Indeed, nearly 1/3 of school-based adult Bigs indicated on the T2 survey that they wanted more training on building a strong relationship and being an effective Big.

#### MENTOR Benchmark

E.6.1



Program explores opportunity to continue mentor/mentee match for a second year.

Based on these findings, we recommend BBBS-GTC continue efforts to recruit a more diverse group of mentors. One strategy could be to look for new BSW partnerships with businesses with more diverse employees. In addition, given current demographics of adults Bigs, BBBS-GTC might consider how best to provide them the extra support they may need to be able to build strong relationships with all Littles. Given the uniqueness of each match, this extra support will likely be provided through the match support coordinators rather than through additional required training. Thus, BBBS-GTC should ensure their support staff are adequately prepared to identify and respond to match challenges. Following the MENTOR report guidelines, we recommend that all Bigs in new matches (whether they are brand new to the program or starting their third or fourth match) receive bi-monthly check-ins for the first few months of the match. These check-ins should screen for signs that Bigs might be frustrated with the way their Little is engaging in the relationship, and for subtle bias or judgment about the Little's behavior and family. All match support coordinators should have the capacity to provide quick and direct feedback that offers alternative perspectives on potential challenges (e.g., a Little who does not appear to appreciate her Big may have had multiple new adults in her life and needs a long time to build trust before discussing anything personal) and give specific ideas on how to navigate them. Match support coordinators in the BSW setting should also ensure that they are attending to match dynamics along with providing structure during match times, with the goal of identifying and responding to the needs of the small number of matches who may be struggling. Matches that need more support could be referred to a match support specialist as needed.

## Summary of BBBS-GTC Implementation of Mentoring Best Practices

The design and goal of this program evaluation was not primarily focused on assessing best practices in BBBS-GTC’s school-based mentoring program. However, in interpreting results from both qualitative and quantitative data, we recognized that there was evidence of implementation of the best practices as outlined in the MENTOR report. Table 2 displays the six critical dimensions of mentoring program operations: 1) recruitment; 2) screening; 3) training; 4) matching; 5) monitoring and support and 6) closure. For each standard, there are specific benchmarks recommended for programs, in addition to enhancements. Together, benchmarks and enhancements make up the 50 elements of effective practice. Using data from this program evaluation, we assessed whether BBBS-GTC demonstrated *little evidence* of implementing each element, *some evidence* of implementation, or *strong evidence* of implementation. We also indicate when we *did not assess* particular elements because of our lack of data or information (primarily due to the limited scope of the evaluation study design.)

To qualify our assessment of these elements for the BBBS-GTC school-based mentoring program, it is important to note several limitations. First, we collected perspectives and data only from Bigs and match support coordinators. Second, from these two data sources, we often heard information about BBBS-GTC engaging in some of the best practices, but the scope of the project prevented us from assessing the level of implementation quality. In these cases, we note that we collected *some evidence* of BBBS-GTC engaging in the practice but were unable to classify it as *strong evidence* due to lack of information.

MENTOR Benchmark	
Implementation of Effective Practice for Mentoring	
	Strong Evidence: 22
	Some Evidence: 14
	Little Evidence: 3
	Did Not Assess: 11

It is promising that findings suggest BBBS-GTC is implementing 36 of 39 elements of effective practice that we were able to assess – these elements include both benchmarks (minimum requirements) and enhancements as noted by MENTOR. Using data and information from this program evaluation, we found *strong evidence* that BBBS-GTC is implementing 22 of those 39 essential elements, as seen in Table 2; 14 were benchmarks and eight were enhancements.

Only three best practices were assessed as having “little evidence” of implementation: program provides opportunities for post-match mentor training, mentor training includes effective closure of the mentoring relationship, and program conducts and documents an exit interview with mentor and mentee. Our data suggest that BBBS-GTC does not consistently implement these elements with high quality in the school-based mentoring program.

We were unable to assess 11 of the 50 best practices. Again, the elements for which we assigned *some evidence* of implementation should be interpreted to mean that we had limited information or data. If BBBS-GTC desired to do a full audit of its implementation of

best practices, they could build on these results. For example, a document review of program materials and policy would provide evidence related to several of the benchmarks that we did not assess.

Finally, it is important to note that the 2009 MENTOR report is not specific to school-based settings. Some of the benchmarks and enhancements may need to be adapted to be most relevant to this context. The MENTOR elements for effective practice are currently under revision in preparation for the release of a fourth edition. We are hopeful that important additions and revisions specific to school-based settings will appear in the updated edition.

**Table 2.**  
**MENTOR Recommended Benchmarks (B) and Enhancements (E)**

Recruitment		
B.1.1.	Program engages in recruiting strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices and challenges of mentoring in the program.	●
B.1.2.	Program recruits youth whose needs best match the services offered by the program and helps them understand what mentoring is and what they can expect from a mentoring relationship.	⊘
E.1.1.	Program has a written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors in its program.	★
E.1.2.	Program has a written statement outlining eligibility for mentees in its program	⊘
Mentor Screening		
B.2.1	Mentor completes an application.	★
B.2.2	Mentor agrees to a one (calendar or school) year minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship.	★
B.2.3	Mentor agrees to participate in face-to-face meetings with his or her mentee that average one time per week and one hour per meeting over the course of a calendar or school year.	★
B.2.4	Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with mentor.	★
B.2.5	Program conducts a reference check (personal and/or professional) on mentor.	●
B.2.6	Program conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on adult mentor, including searching a national criminal records database along with sex off ender and child abuse registries.	★
Mentee Screening		
B.2.7	Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application and provide informed consent for their child to participate.	★
B.2.8	Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentee agree to a one (calendar or school) year minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship.	⊘
B.2.9	Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentee agree that the mentee will participate in face-to-face meetings with his or her mentor a minimum of one time per week, on average, for a minimum of one hour per meeting, on average.	★

Legend	
●	Evidence that benchmark was met
★	strong evidence
●	some evidence
⊘	little evidence
⊘	Did not assess

E.2.1	Program utilizes national, fingerprint-based FBI criminal background check.	<input type="radio"/>
E.2.2	School-based programs assess mentor's interest in maintaining contact with mentee during the summer months following the close of the school year and offer assistance with maintaining contact.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b>Mentor Training</b>		
B.3.1	Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person training.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
B.3.2	Mentor training includes the following topics, at a minimum:	
	a. Program rules;	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	b. Mentors' goals and expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship;	<input type="radio"/>
	c. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	d. Relationship development and maintenance;	<input type="radio"/>
	e. Ethical issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship;	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	f. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship; and	<input type="radio"/>
	g. Sources of assistance available to support mentors.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
E.3.1	Program uses evidence-based training materials.	<input type="radio"/>
E.3.2	Program provides additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
E.3.3	Program addresses the following developmental topics in the training:	
	a. Youth development process;	<input type="radio"/>
	b. Cultural, gender and economic issues; and	<input type="radio"/>
	c. Opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of children (e.g., children of prisoners, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, high school dropouts), if relevant.	<input type="radio"/>
E.3.4	Program uses training to continue to screen mentors for suitability and develops techniques for early trouble-shooting should problems be identified.	<input type="radio"/>
E.3.5	Program provides training for the mentee and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) (when appropriate) on the following topics:	
	a. Program guidelines;	<input type="radio"/>
	b. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;	<input type="radio"/>
	c. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles; and	<input type="radio"/>
	d. Parental/guardian involvement guidelines.	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Matching</b>		
B.4.1	Program considers its aims, as well as the characteristics of the mentor and mentee when making matches.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
B.4.2	Program arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee.	<input type="radio"/>
E.4.1	Program staff member should be on site and/or present during the initial meeting of the mentor and mentee.	<input type="radio"/>

Monitoring & Support		
B.5.1	Program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and monthly thereafter.	●
B.5.2	Program documents information about each mentor-mentee contact, including, at minimum, date, length and nature of contact.	●
B.5.3	Program provides mentors with access to at least two types of resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others; publications; Web-based resources; experienced mentors; available social service referrals) to help mentors negotiate challenges in the mentoring relationships as they arise.	●
B.5.4	Program follows evidenced-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from the mentor and mentee about the relationship and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.	★
B.5.5	Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.	◐
E.5.1	Program has quarterly contact with a key person in the mentee's life (e.g., parent, guardian or teacher) for the duration of the match.	⊘
E.5.2	Program hosts one or more group activities for mentors and their mentees, and/or offers information about activities that mentors and mentees might wish to participate in together.	★
E.5.3	Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the relationship, prior to match closure.	★
Closure		
B.6.1	Program has procedure to manage anticipated closures, including a system for a mentor or mentee rematch.	●
B.6.2	Program has procedure to manage unanticipated match closures, including a system for a mentor or mentee rematch.	●
B.6.3	Program conducts and documents an exit interview with mentor and mentee.	◐
E.6.1	Program explores opportunity to continue the mentor/mentee match for a second (or subsequent) year.	★
E.6.2	Program has a written statement outlining terms of match closure and policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match ends.	★
E.6.3	Program hosts a final celebration meeting or event with the mentor and mentee to mark progress and transition.	★

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## Appendix

Table A. Characteristics of Surveyed Bigs (n=304) in 2013-2014				
	High School Bigs (n = 60)	College Bigs (n = 128)	Adult Bigs (n = 65)	BSW Bigs (n = 51)
	or %	or %	or %	or %
Average age in years (range: min-max)	16.9 (15-19)	19.8 (18-29)	40.2 (19-80)	36.2 (24-54)
Female	80%	78%	57%	53%
Never been married	98%	92%	37%	24%
Have children	3%	1%	41%	39%
<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b>				
American Indian	0%	1%	0%	0%
Asian	42%	8%	0%	4%
Black, African, African American	17%	2%	0%	8%
Hispanic	5%	2%	0%	2%
White	27%	82%	97%	82%
Multiple race/ethnicity	10%	6%	3%	4%
<b>Socioeconomic Indicators:</b>				
Have college/graduate degree	--	5%	82%	67%
Currently employed	32%	61%	80%	82%
Receive(d) free/reduced school lunch	75%	17%	--	--
Family financial situation: just making ends meet, struggling or require financial assistance	60%	31%	15%	24%
<i>Notes</i> Significant differences between types of Bigs at p .05 yielded by ANOVA or Chi square tests for all characteristics except those marked with an asterisk *				
check all that apply; responses will add up to more than 100%				
BSW = Beyond School Walls; = mean value; % = percentage				

<b>Table A. Characteristics of Surveyed Bigs (n=304) in 2013-2014 (cont.)</b>				
	High School Bigs (n = 60)	College Bigs (n = 128)	Adult Bigs (n = 65)	BSW Bigs (n = 51)
	or %	or %	or %	or %
<b>Mentoring/Volunteering Experience:</b>				
Average # of years a Big (range: min-max)	0.6 (0-3)	0.9 (0-7)	2.6 (0-18)	1.9 (0-5)
New school-based Big	65%	49%	22%	28%
Have previous youth mentoring experience	35%	74%	69%	71%
Being a Big fulfills obligation for service	78%	12%	13%	0%
With same Little as last year	23%	45%	71%	53%
Have mentored more than 1 Little	18%	4%	31%	43%
Had mentor themselves when growing up	66%	80%	71%	78%
<b><i>Ever done any volunteering besides being a Big?+</i></b>				
No previous volunteer experience	18%	4%	5%	10%
Have previous short-term volunteer experience*	65%	77%	68%	77%
Have previous long-term volunteer experience	25%	52%	21%	41%
<i>Notes</i> Significant differences at p < .05 yielded by ANOVA or Chi square tests for all characteristics except those marked with an asterisk *				
check all that apply; responses will add up to more than 100%				
BSW = Beyond School Walls; = mean value; % = percentage				

Table B. Ratings of Satisfaction with Process to become a Big				
	High School Bigs (n = 60)	College Bigs (n = 128)	Adult Bigs (n = 65)	BSW Bigs (n = 51)
	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)
Application process	4.30 (0.87)	4.23 (0.86)	4.40 (0.88)	4.40 (0.67)
Screening and interviewing process	4.51 (0.71)	4.29 (0.78)	4.43 (0.61)	4.48 (0.54)

*Note.* Rating scale: 1 low to 5 high satisfaction

Table C. Amount of Time Spent Receiving Training in Different Formats					
		High School Bigs (n = 60)	College Bigs (n = 128)	Adult Bigs (n = 65)	BSW Bigs (n = 51)
	Time	%	%	%	%
Attending a group orientation or training**	hour	39%	68%	75%	47%
Speaking individually with BBBS staff person**	3 min.	54%	72%	84%	80%
Reading written information from BBBS*	3 min.	54%	50%	69%	67%
Doing on online BBBS training**	3 min.	9%	9%	13%	32%
Doing my own research**	3 min.	23%	33%	57%	35%

*Note.* Significant differences between types of Bigs were found using Chi square tests at the following levels:  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .01$

Table D. Amount of Training Received by Type of Big													
		High School Bigs (n=60)			College Bigs (n=128)			Adult Bigs (n=65)			BSW Bigs (n=51)		
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
		none	some	lot	none	some	lot	none	some	lot	none	some	lot
<b>Program logistics</b>													
B	How long to be a Big *	7%	23%	70%	3%	33%	63%	8%	36%	56%	12%	46%	42%
B	Policies & expectations	2%	10%	88%	0%	11%	89%	0%	26%	74%	0%	18%	82%
B	Who to contact with questions	0%	3%	97%	0%	12%	88%	0%	16%	84%	0%	18%	82%
B	Reporting abuse	0%	21%	79%	0%	22%	78%	3%	34%	62%	2%	18%	80%
<b>Building Matches</b>													
B	Understanding role as Big ***	0%	7%	93%	0%	14%	86%	0%	26%	74%	0%	34%	66%
B	Building a strong relationship **	0%	33%	67%	1%	41%	58%	2%	54%	44%	4%	62%	34%
E	Working across cultures ***	5%	43%	52%	11%	52%	38%	10%	73%	17%	18%	59%	22%
E	Child development	16.1	54%	30%	24%	55%	21%	31%	61%	8%	25%	59%	16%
B	Being an effective Big *	0%	29%	71%	0%	38%	62%	2%	46%	52%	4%	50%	46%
E	Working with quiet/resistant Little **	5%	42%	53%	11%	52%	36%	16%	65%	19%	16%	63%	20%
B	How to close/end match	7%	28%	65%	11%	47%	42%	13%	50%	37%	13%	48%	39%
Notes. = minimum benchmark standard; = enhanced content per MENTOR.													
Chi-square tests were conducted to determine significant differences between types of Bigs at the following levels: * p .05; * p .01; ** p < .001													

Table E. Expectations of Match Coordinator Actions in Response to Match Issues+				
	High School Bigs (n = 60)	College Bigs (n = 128)	Adult Bigs (n = 65)	BSW Bigs (n = 51)
	%	%	%	%
Encourage me to keep trying**	65%	81%	68%	57%
Figure it out on my own	18%	18%	22%	12%
Email or text resources**	20%	62%	62%	47%
Talk and strategize together	88%	88%	91%	90%
Direct to existing information to help	22%	39%	34%	28%

*Notes.* Significant differences between types of Bigs were found using Chi square tests at the following level:  
 \*  $p < .01$

+This question asked Bigs to check all that applied; thus, percentages will not add up to 100%.