



2017 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Annual Impact Report

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
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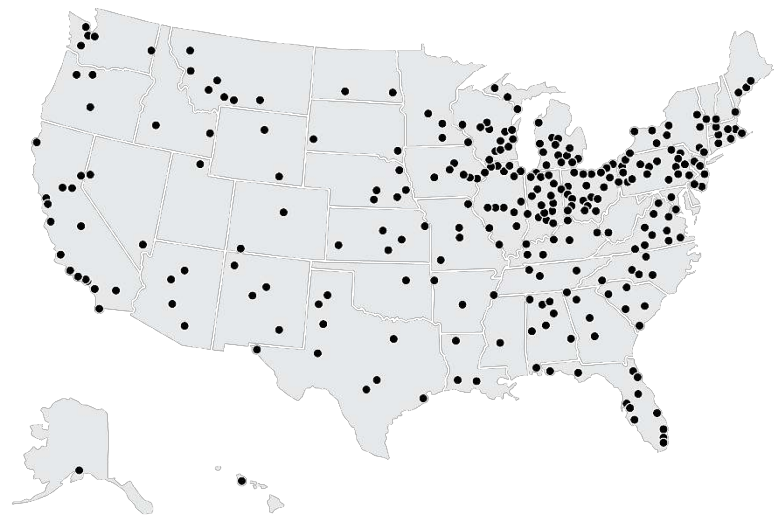
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HIGHLIGHTS

- **150,438 Littles** served by the BBBS network in 2017
- Community-Based matches are lasting over 30 months – **over 50% longer** than the average match length 10 years ago.
- Site-Based matches are lasting over 17 months – **over 62% longer** than the average match length 10 years ago.
- Matches surveyed in 2017 made **significant improvements from baseline to follow-up in all seven outcomes areas:** parental trust, attitudes towards risky behaviors, grades, educational expectations, confidence in doing schoolwork (scholastic competence), sense of belonging among peers (social acceptance), and the presence of a special adult.
- Over 94% of Community-Based and over 91% of Site-Based Littles report that **they feel they have a special adult** in their life after at least one year of mentoring

OUR REACH

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. The 270 agencies across the country (which you can see in the map) operate in all 50 states and serve youth from age 5 into young adulthood in both Community-Based and Site-Based settings. Our agencies have been matching Littles with Bigs in one-to-one relationships since 1904 and have served nearly 2 million youth in just the past decade. More than 400,000 youth, their families, their mentors, and other mission-critical volunteers are part of our evidence-based mentoring program annually.



OUR MODEL

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring programs make meaningful one-to-one mentoring relationships (“matches”) by pairing adult volunteers (“Bigs”) and children (“Littles”), age 5 through young adulthood, in communities across the country. Our core program is Community-Based Mentoring, which allows matches to spend time together one-on-one in settings and activities of their choosing. Our Community-Based Mentoring Program began over a century ago as a way to stem juvenile delinquency. Our agencies specialize in the personal development of youth facing adversity by connecting them with mentors who help develop the characteristics needed for academic, social, and economic success. As an evidence-based mentoring program, BBBS prides itself on building and supporting impactful, enduring, relationships. In fact, in 2017, nearly 70% of community-based matches lasted at least 12 months (the minimum match goal), and on average, BBBS community-based matches last about 30 months.

All agencies operate under the Service Delivery Model (SDM) and BBBS Standards of Practice. The SDM provides a standardized guide, based on research and empirical evidence, for how agencies should engage volunteers, youth, and parents or guardians to achieve safe, long, strong matches with the best possible youth outcomes, from the point of inquiry to match closure. BBBS is intentional about the youth served and the volunteers engaged in order to meet

the critical needs in communities. Therefore, while the SDM provides consistency in service delivery across the network, it also provides space for innovation, so agencies can effectively provide specific, targeted services in their locations. For example, the SDM is carried out in different settings, which include: 1) Community-Based, where matches meet in the community; 2) Site-Based, where matches meet at a designated site such as a school or workplace; and 3) "Site-Based Plus," a hybrid that may combine elements of both Community-Based and Site-Based settings.

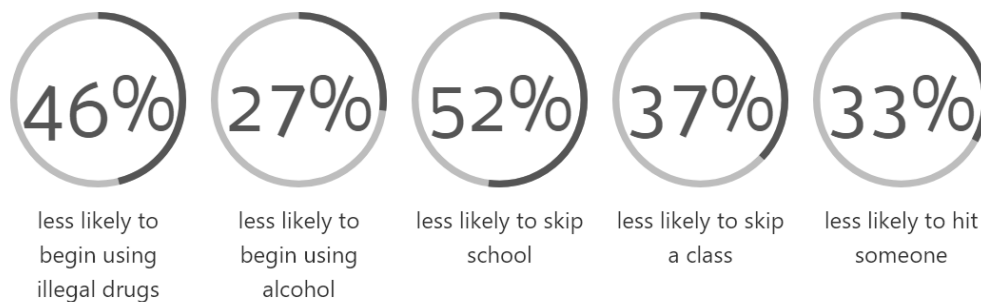
To meet the needs of their communities, many agencies also have expanded services. For example, some agencies serve children into their early 20s, and therefore emphasize college and workforce readiness, and some offer wraparound services for Littles and their families. As of 2017, 20 agencies have adopted Technology-Enhanced Mentoring (TEM) programs, which use a web-based platform and curriculum to allow mentors to connect regularly with students online in addition to meeting in person. Having the flexibility to customize services for agencies' specific populations, while adhering to the SDM and BBBS Standards of Practice, allows agencies to meet the needs of their communities while still maintaining quality.

OUR IMPACT

Big Brothers Big Sisters believes that it must hold itself accountable to the families, children, and mentors enrolled in our program. We must also hold ourselves accountable to the donors, partners, and advocates who make our work possible. That is why a commitment to continuous learning, improvement, and research is at the heart of what we do.

According to the [Public/Private Ventures \(P/PV\) study \(1995\)](#), our one-to-one matches truly make an impact in children's lives. Approximately 1,000 youth from eight Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across the country who were looking for mentors were part of this study. Approximately half of the children were randomly chosen to be matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister. The others were assigned to a waiting list. The matched children met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters about three times a month for an average of one year. Researchers surveyed both the matched and unmatched children, and their parents, on two occasions: when they first applied for a Big Brother or Big Sister, and again 18 months later.

Researchers found that after 18 months of spending time with their Bigs, the Littles, compared to those children not in our program, were:



They also found that the Littles were more confident of their performance in schoolwork and getting along better with their families.

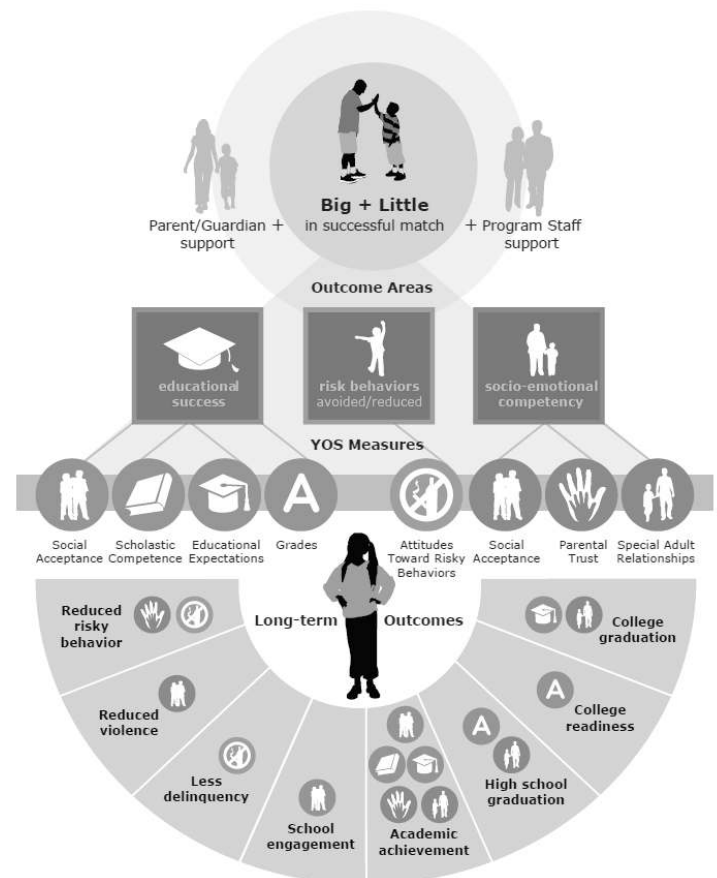
This study is widely considered to be foundational to the mentoring field in general and specifically to the BBBS Community-Based Mentoring Program by elevating it to model status (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs Guide). BBBSA strives to maintain this level of effectiveness and has embarked on a new long-term study of our Community-Based Mentoring Program to validate our continued positive impact on the youth we serve. Study enrollment and data collection for the new study begins February 2018.

OUR MEASUREMENT

BBBS strives to ensure that all youth and mentors served in our programs experience quality mentoring relationships that uphold our legacy standards. Youth outcomes that are proven predictors of long-term success, such as school attendance and engagement, and the avoidance of risky behaviors, are tracked throughout the match for ongoing program evaluation. BBBS defines success by measuring positive youth outcomes, the number of youth effectively served by the program, and the lifelong success and community benefits that follow. See figure below.

We measure the quality of our programs and the strength of the mentoring relationships we create using two tools, the Youth Outcomes Survey (YOS) and the Strength of Relationships Survey (SOR).

- 1) **Youth Outcomes Survey (YOS):** Using a pre- and post-test methodology, the YOS is designed to track outcomes in the following areas: scholastic competency, educational expectations, self-assessment, social acceptance, parental trust and attitudes toward high risk behavior. BBBS staff administer the YOS before the match begins, to establish a baseline. At the match anniversary milestone (annually for Community-Based Mentoring Programs and at the end of the academic school year for Site-Based Mentoring Programs), BBBS staff administer the YOS follow-up survey.
- 2) **Strength of Relationship (SOR):** The SOR measures the level of emotional attachment, satisfaction, and connection between the mentor and the child. This tool helps BBBS create even more positive outcomes for children. Research clearly shows that the stronger the mentoring relationship, the better the children fare. The SOR measure is a powerful instrument that allows the agency to achieve higher quality program impact. Specifically, the SOR can be used to track match progress and increase the probability that the match will continue and that the youth will achieve positive outcomes. Additionally, higher survey compliance rates ensure the most accurate picture of the match relationship development.



BBBS staff collect, manage and report survey and interview data through our shared match management system to ensure compliance with BBBSA standards. This shared system allows agencies to achieve, track, and report positive outcomes for youth served. It also allows BBBS to track and report key indicators such as demographics of program participants, number of active matches, total children served, number of mentors, match length, and 12-month retention rates.

OUR YOUTH

In 2017, BBBS agencies¹ served 150,438 youth.

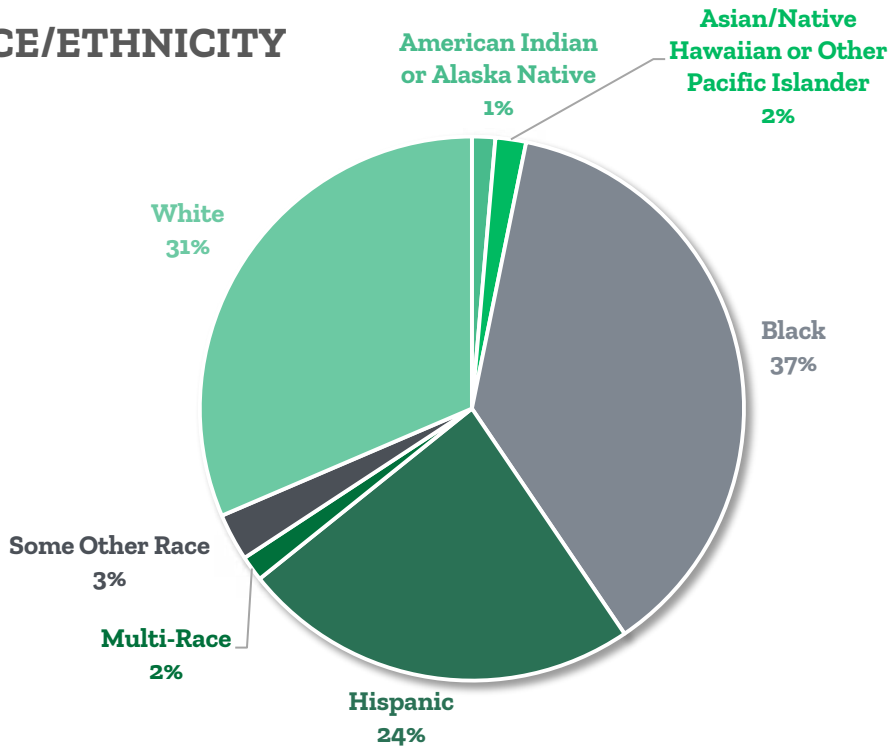
- Over half (55%) of the children served in 2017 were female.
- An estimated 37% of youth served were Black, 31% were White, 24% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian/Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% were multi-race, and 3% were some other race
- The largest group of youth served in 2017 were 11-12 years old, with 9-10-year-olds being the next largest age group served
- Some agencies enroll youth outside of the typical age window, and consequently, 111 youth under the age of 5 were served and 3,475 youth 19 years or older were served
- An estimated 60% of all youth served in 2017 lived in a single parent household, 29% lived in a two-parent household, and 6% lived with grandparents, and a very small portion of youth lived with other relatives or in a group/foster home.
- An estimated 23,870 (18%) youth served had a parent who was incarcerated.
- About 114,640 (79%) received free lunch from school – a proxy measure of poverty.

¹ Not all agencies were active in our shared match management system during this time period or may have since disaffiliated, therefore, the data shown below are based on the data available for 145,312 youth.

GENDER

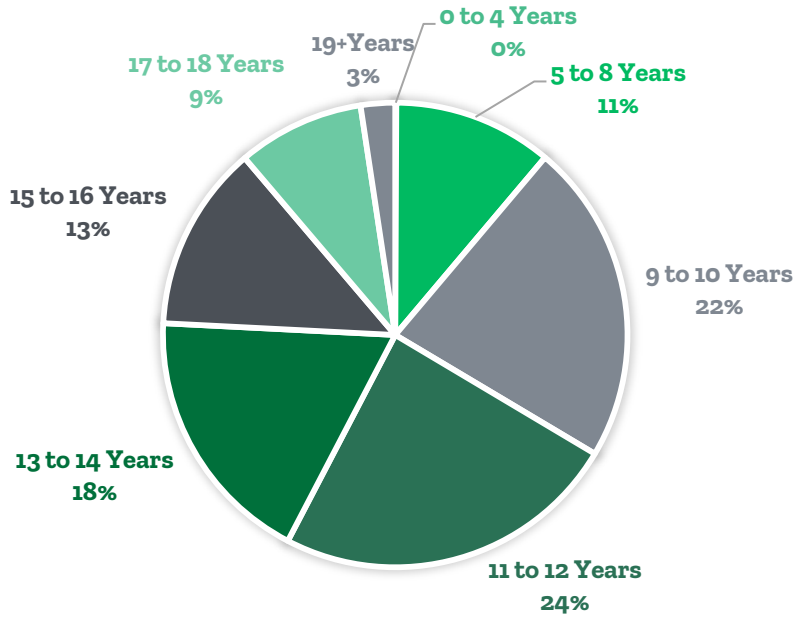


RACE/ETHNICITY

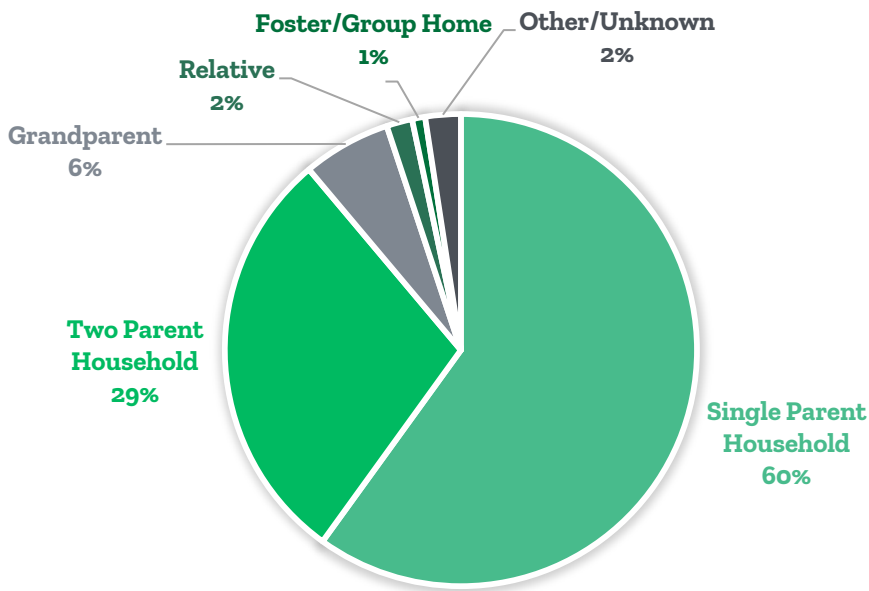




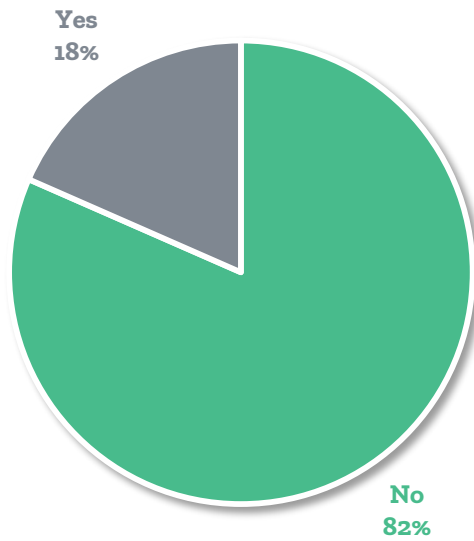
YOUTH SERVED BY AGE GROUP



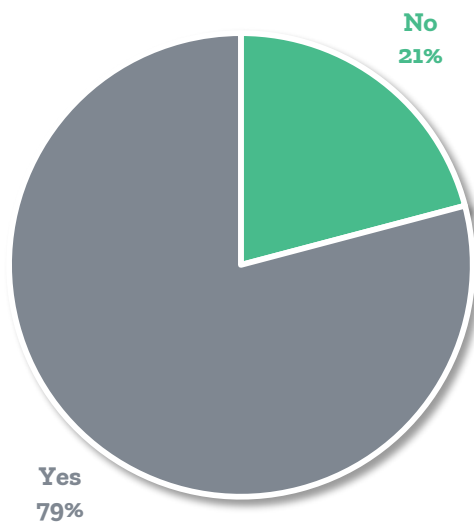
LIVING SITUATION



INCARCERATED PARENT



FREE LUNCH RECIPIENT (POVERTY)

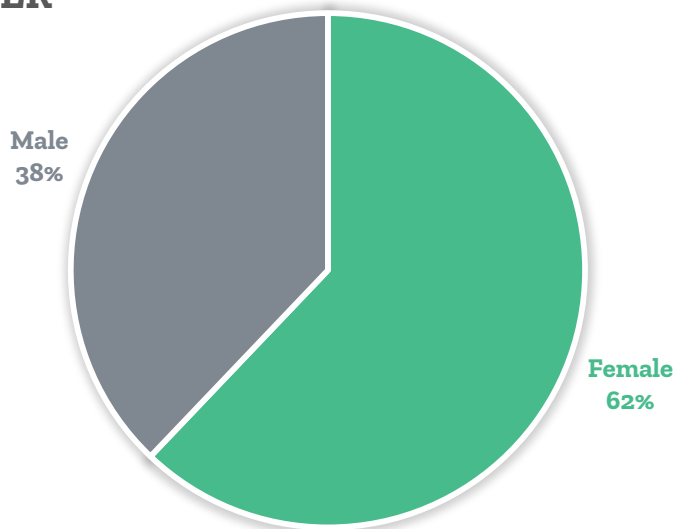


OUR VOLUNTEERS

In 2017, an estimated 138,967² volunteers were active with the BBBS Network and in the AIM system³ Of those volunteers:

- Almost two-thirds were female.
- An estimated 69% of volunteers matched with youth were White, 12% were Black, 10% were Hispanic, 4% were Asian/Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% were multi-race, and 4% were some other race.
- Exactly half of volunteers are under 30 years old, with 9% under 18 years old, 18% 18-22 years old, and 23% 23-29 years old.
- Another 23% of volunteers are in their 30's, 10% in their 40's, 10% in their 50's, and 7% 60 or older.
- Over 60% of volunteers have a bachelor's degree or higher, with 41% having completed a bachelor's degree, 16% a master's degree, and 5% a JD, MD, or Ph.D.
- Some programs have high school Bigs, comprising the estimated 9% of volunteers without a high school diploma.
- A majority of volunteers (62%) are single.

GENDER

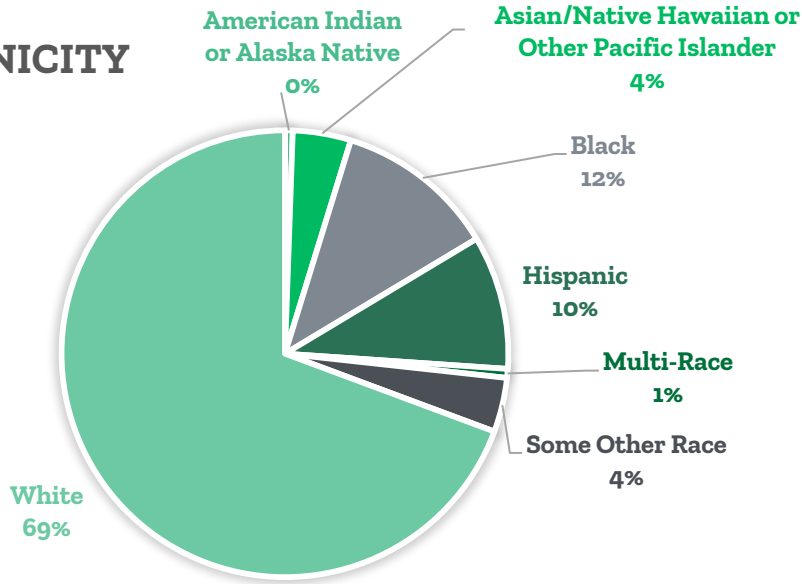


² The number of volunteers during the year is smaller than the number of youth served due to matches closing and then the volunteer getting matched with a new youth.

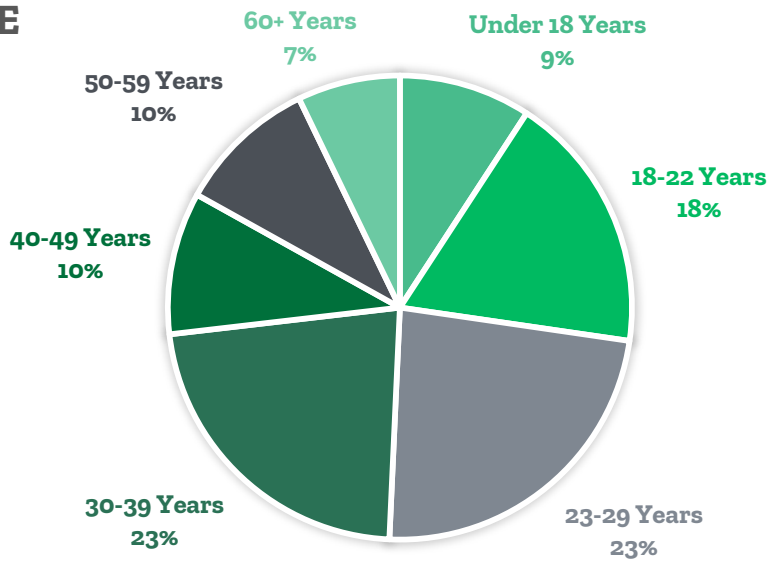
³ Demographics are based on the volunteers matched with the 145,312 youth served in 2017 at agencies who use our national match management system.

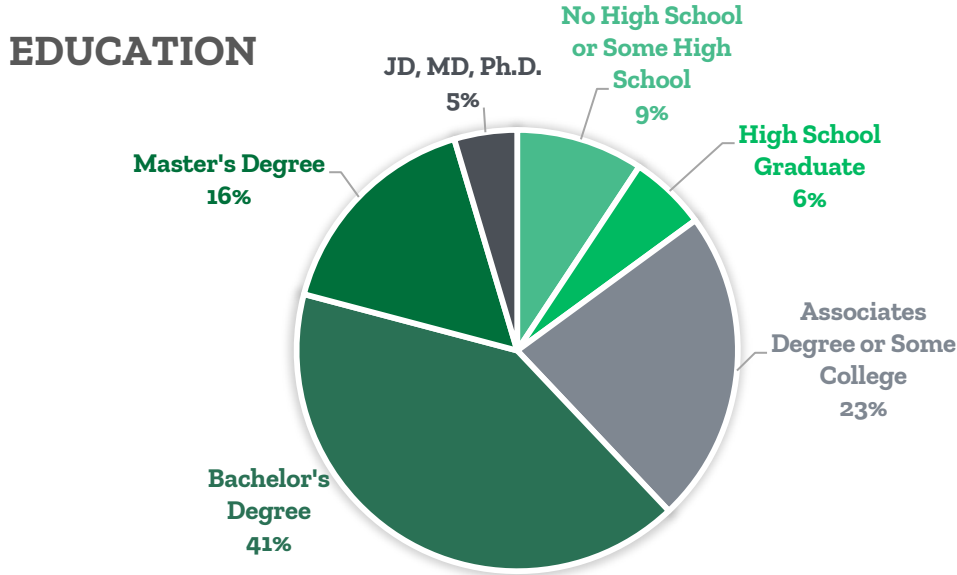


RACE/ETHNICITY



AGE



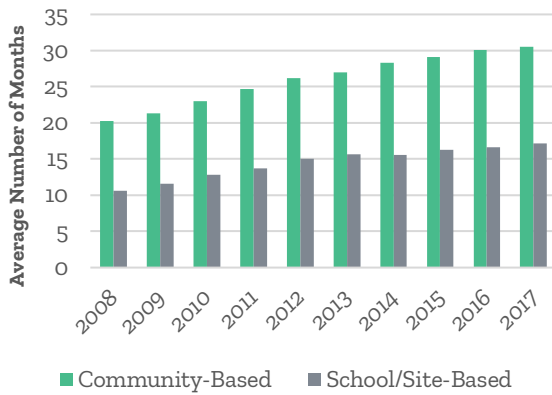


OUR OUTCOMES IN 2017

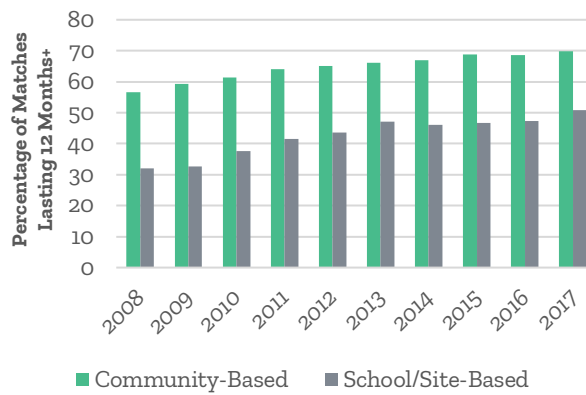
Our match relationships are measured through match length, 12-month match retention rates, and youth outcomes. Research on BBBS shows that the longer the match, the stronger the relationship will be, resulting in more positive youth outcomes. Specifically, matches that last at least 12 months have been shown to produce significantly better outcomes compared to matches that end earlier⁴. Over the past 10 years, the match length in both our Community-Based Mentoring Programs and Site-Based Mentoring Programs has steadily increased. Over the past decade, the average length of Community-Based matches was over 26 months, and the average length of Site-Based matches was over 14 months. In 2017, Community-Based matches are lasting over 30 months – over 50% longer than the average match length 10 years ago and Site-Based matches are lasting over 17 months – over 62% longer than the average match length 10 years ago.

⁴ Grossman & Rhodes (2002). The Test of Time: Predictors and Effects of Duration in Youth Mentoring Relationships. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30 (2), 199-219.

10-Year Snapshot of Average Match Length (Months) by Program Type



10-Year Snapshot of 12 Month Retention Rate (%) by Program



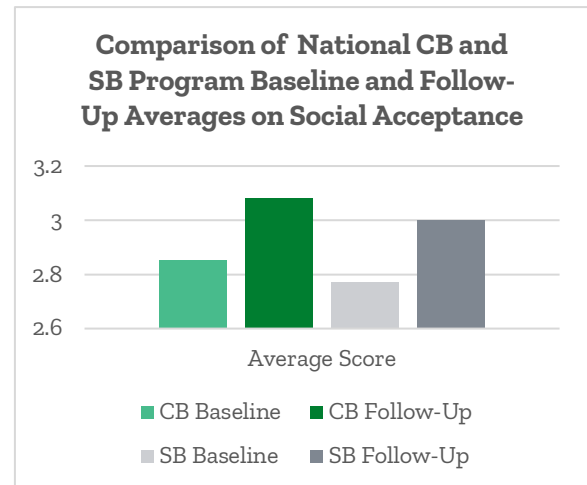
Likewise, the 12-month retention rate, the minimum goal for matches, for both the Community-Based Mentoring and Site-Based Programs has also been trending upward over the past decade. On average, 64.7% of all Community-Based matches last at least 12 months and 42.5% of all Site-Based matches last at least 12 months over the past 10 years. In 2017, Community-Based retention rates have increased from 56.7% in 2008 to 69.8% in 2017 and Site-Based retention rates have increased from 32.1% in 2008 to 50.9%.

Our matches made tremendous progress in 2017, making significant improvements from baseline to follow-up in all outcome areas. A listing of each YOS construct, as well as the average baseline and follow-up scores for Community-Based and Site-Based youth is provided below.

Social Acceptance

This scale taps a child’s sense of belonging among peers. Researchers have shown that mentoring can help a child strengthen peer relationships and increase social acceptance (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005; Rhodes, Haight, & Briggs, 2001; Rhodes, Reddy, & Grossman 2005). And, improvements in peer relations, in turn, have been linked to a range of positive outcomes, including school achievement (Bursuck & Asher, 1986), improved conduct and a lower likelihood of dropping out (Asher & Paquette, 2003).

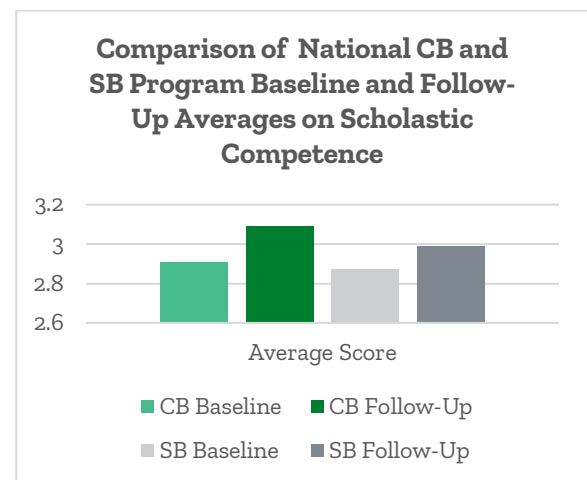
Consists of six questions using a 4-point response scale (1=not at all true; 4=very true).



Scholastic Competence

This scale assesses a child’s confidence in doing his/her school work. Increases in this scale often occur before seeing improvement in school. In a preliminary investigation of Site-Based mentoring, Herrera and colleagues found that the longest matches experienced the biggest changes on this measure. Moreover, higher levels of scholastic competence are associated with better mental health (Harter & Whitesell, 1996) and higher grades (Hagborg, 1998) among children and adolescents.

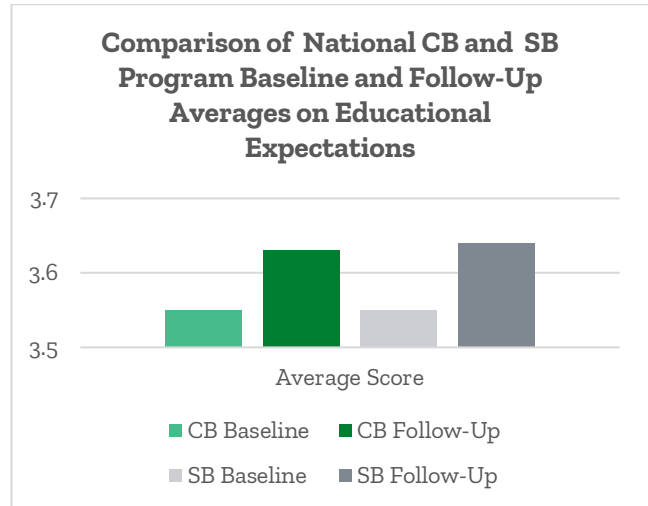
Consists of six questions using a 4-point response scale (1=not at all true; 4=very true).



Educational Expectations

These items measure how sure the child is that he/she will reach different levels of schooling (finish high school, some college, finish college). Mentoring has been linked to higher educational and vocational aspirations (Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002; Karcher, 2005). Children and adolescents' academic expectations and plans, in turn, have shown associations with long-term school performance and standardized test scores (Eamon & Alshuler, 2004; Khattab, 2005; Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2004).

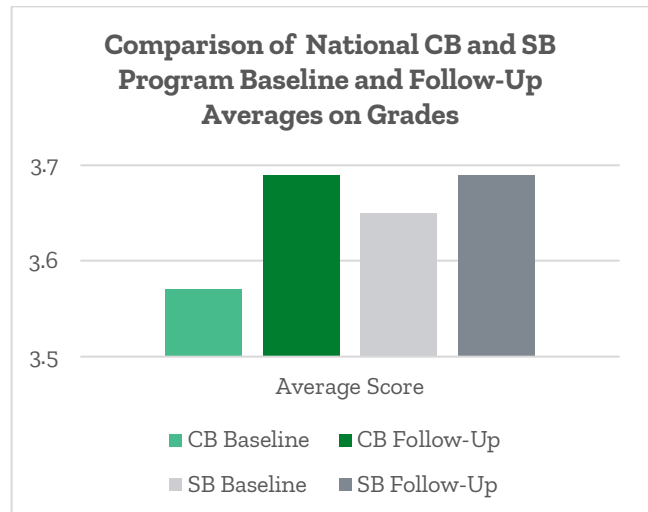
Consists of three questions using a 4-point response scale (1=not at all sure; 4=very sure).



Grades

The child self-reports how well they do in mathematics, reading or language arts, social studies, science, and their overall academic performance.

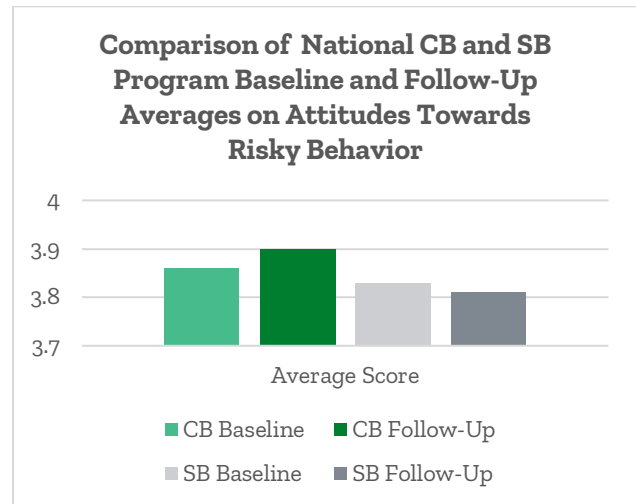
Consists of four questions using a 5-point response scale (5 =A (Excellent), 4=B (Very Good), 3=C (Good), 2=D (Not So Good), or 1=F (Not Good At All)).



Attitudes Towards Risky Behavior

These items measure how a child feels when other kids their age engage in certain risky behaviors such as using tobacco, skipping school, or hitting someone. These attitudes are associated with actual risky/antisocial behavior and violence (Tonin et al., 2008; Gellman & Delucia-Waack, 2006; Butler, Lescheid, & Fearon, 2007; Lambert et al., 2008; Wells et al., 1992).

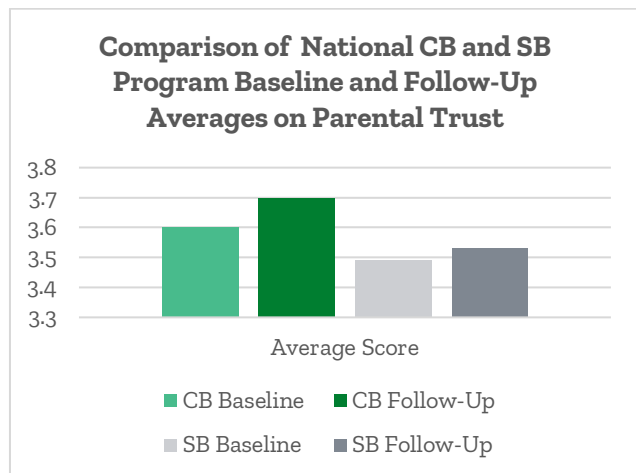
Consists of seven questions using a 4-point response scale (1=It's not okay; 4=It's perfectly okay).



Parental Trust

These items measure the extent to which the child feels that he/she has an understanding and respectful relationship with a parent or guardian. Youth mentoring has been linked to improved parental relationships which, in turn, have been associated with improved grades and attendance (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2002) and reduced substance use (Rhodes, Reddy, & Grossman, 2005).

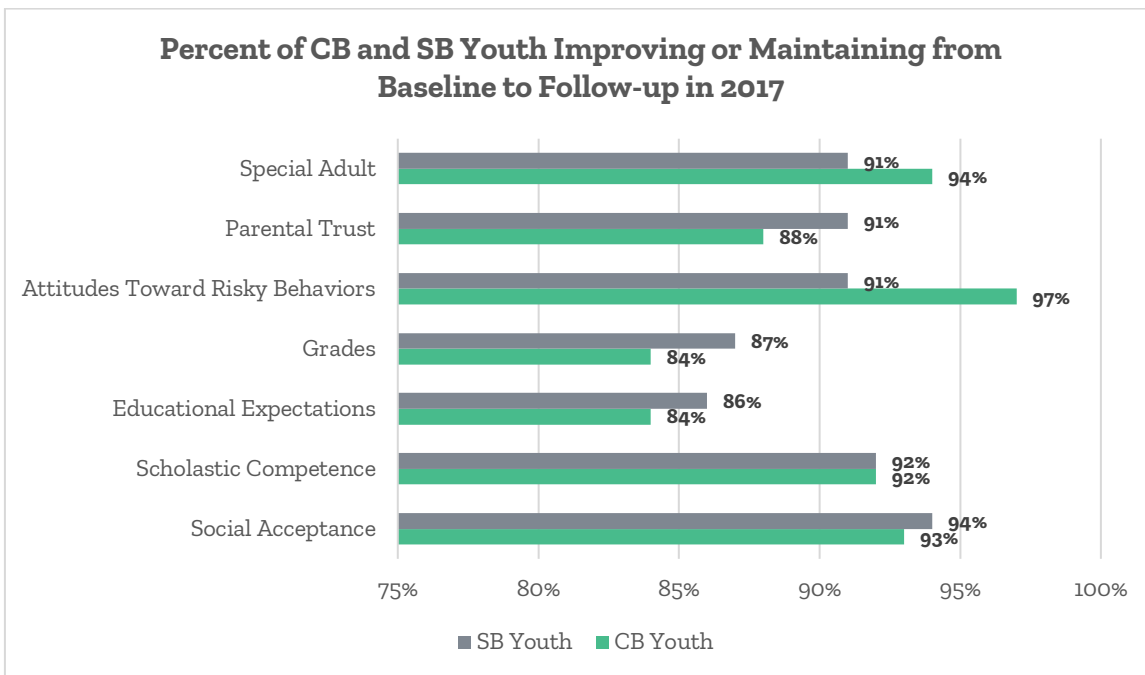
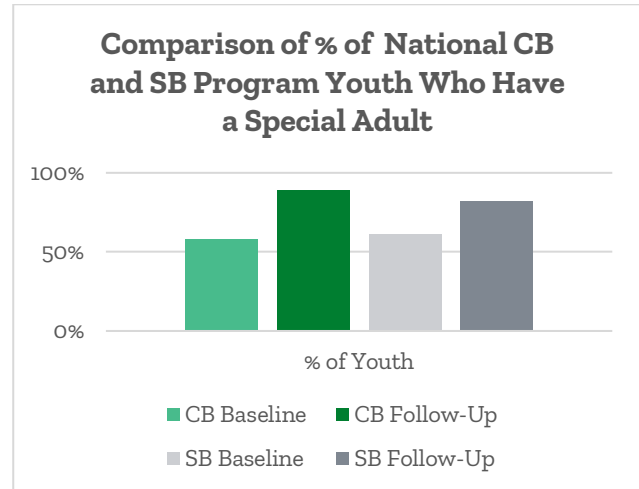
Consists of four questions using a 4-point response scale (1=not at all true; 4=very true).



Special Adult

This single question asks if the child has a special adult in their life. The presence of a special adult is associated with improved school attendance and competency, parental trust, mental health, and overall promotion of pro-social behaviors and decreased delinquency.

Consists of a single question with a yes/no response.



Statistically significant improvements were made in all categories measured for youth in both Community-Based and Site-Based Mentoring Programs who completed a follow-up YOS in 2017. Furthermore, 100% of youth enrolled in our Community-Based Mentoring Programs showed improvement or maintenance in at least three outcome areas, and 100% of youth in our Site-Based Mentoring Programs showed improvement of maintenance in at least two outcome areas.

OUR FUTURE

BBBSA and a number of agencies have embarked on the second year of developing and piloting an updated YOS that will be more sensitive to change over time and capture more of the positive outcomes that occur earlier on in the mentoring relationship and lead to a long-term success. A complementary Child Outcomes Survey (COS) is also being developed and tested to gather baseline data and capture outcomes for youth who are under 9 years old. These new outcomes surveys will be available to the network in February 2019 in conjunction with the release of our new match management system.

BBBSA has also developed and piloted a tool called the Risk and Protective Inventory (RPI), which identifies the strengths and needs of a child and their family. BBBSA has piloted the RPI for over three years and used this data to better understand the needs our families have and what partnerships we need to make in the communities we serve, as well as training for Bigs, staff, and parents in a variety of areas, including trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, and prevention of justice involvement.

Among the 66 agencies that were using the RPI in 2017 and 5,223 families surveyed this year, we found that the top 20 items endorsed by parents were all strengths, illustrating the potential our families already have to support their children. Among the risks or needs identified by parents or guardians, the top five were: single-parent household (65.6%), poverty/total annual household income less than \$20,000 (49.4%), bullying in the past year (40.7%), difficulty controlling feelings/emotion regulation (35.3%), and mental health/one or more family members with mental health problems (34.7%). **Of particular interest is that over 30% of youth have lost contact with an important adult role model in the last 12 months – demonstrating the critical need for BBBS mentoring.** We look forward to offering this tool to the entire network with its integration into the new match management system in 2019.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Dr. Jessica Mitchell, Associate Director of Research & Evaluation, at Jessica.Mitchell@bbbsa.org.