Community-University Partnership
for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

Evaluating Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring: Phase I

Evaluation Summary

Final Report

Prepared by the
Community-University Partnership for the Study of
Children, Youth, and Families
University of Alberta

Cheryl Nekolaichuk, St. Stephen's College
Laurie Schnirer, Educational Psychology
Stanley Varnhagen, Academic Technologies for Learning
William Maynes, Educational Policy Studies
Jose da Costa, Educational Policy Studies
Andrea Magill, Educational Psychology
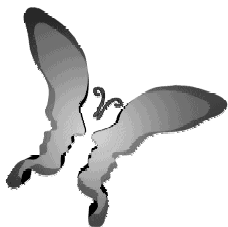Danielle Law, Psychology
Jeffrey Bisanz, Psychology
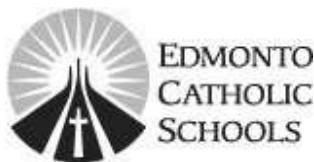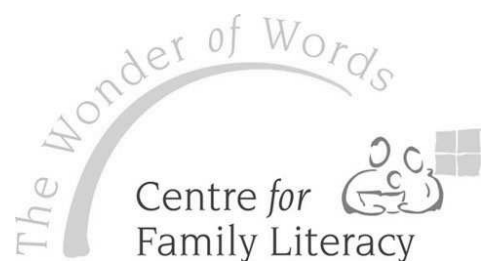
December, 2001

Technical Report #1

Acknowledgement

Preface

In November, 2000, the Edmonton Community Foundation invited the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families to submit a plan for studying the Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring program in Edmonton. The program was beginning a phase of rapid expansion and reorganization, with help from the Foundation, and many of the major stakeholders were interested in determining how well the program was faring during this time of change. The Partnership assembled a team of researchers who undertook the task of examining the operation of the program, in detail, during the first year of restructuring. The research team did not seek to pass judgment on the program, but rather to identify strengths and challenges as seen by the people—mentors, teachers, principals, coordinators, and others—who make the program work. Indeed, when participants in the study raised issues, they seemed to do so primarily in the spirit of wanting to improve a program they already viewed as very valuable.

Our investigation was quite thorough, and the results are described at length in this report. A summary of the issues, methods, and findings is provided in the Summary on pp. 1-7. The intent of the research team was to provide both details and summaries so that readers can reflect on the findings and draw their own conclusions. If the outcome is a thoughtful discussion that leads to informed decisions about the course and direction of this interesting and important program, then the research team will have done its job.

Laurie Schnirer, Research Associate & Assistant Director
Jeffrey Bisanz, Director

Community-University Partnership
  for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

List of Tables and Figures Continued

Tables

vi

Summary

The Edmonton-wide Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM) program was developed in response to the increasing demand for and expansion of school-based, in-school mentoring in the Edmonton area. Partners in promoting mentoring (schools, funders, and related agencies) formed the Coalition for Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring to investigate alternative models. In September, 2000, Big Sister and Big Brother Society of Edmonton and Area (BSBB), and the Centre for Family Literacy (CFL) formed a partnership for the delivery of a coordinated, city-wide ISM program with a literacy focus.

The Community-University Partnership (CUP) for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families was asked to plan a comprehensive evaluation for this program. The evaluation plan was divided into two phases: Phase 1 on implementation and Phase II on "mentoring-in-practice" and outcomes. The findings in this report are limited to the implementation phase. Phase 1 evaluation goals were to assess the impact of the increased focus on literacy, administrative changes, and growth in the number of student-mentor matches.

The CUP evaluation team developed the evaluation design in collaboration with various stakeholders for the ISM program, which was funded in part by the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). Evaluation team members met individually with representatives from ECF, BSBB, and CFL to obtain background information about the program and to identify specific questions for inclusion in the evaluation study. Six key participant groups were targeted: senior stakeholders (ECF, BSBB, CFL); BSBB caseworkers; the CFL literacy trainer; principals; teachers; and mentors. Information was collected in a variety of ways, including surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and a review of documents. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, as appropriate, to identify patterns and themes.

Summary of Results

The evaluation involved careful analyses of information in six areas identified as important by stakeholders and CUP researchers: program design; program goals; program delivery; relationships and communication; program changes and impact; program improvements; overall satisfaction; and evaluation of outcomes.

Program Design

The growing ISM program is quite diverse and fairly complex, and the first step was to integrate the many facets of the program in a coherent description. Based on program documents and interviews, a conceptual model of the program was developed that provides an overview of the design of the program and the roles of various stakeholders.

Program Goals

Literacy is the predominant focus in the proposed objectives for the city-wide, ISM initiative. More than 90% of the mentors, teachers, school administrators, and caseworkers rated the literacy component of the ISM program as either important or very important. Most survey participants also rated social development as either important or very important. Participants varied, however, in their perceptions of emphasis on these two program components. For some, literacy was the predominant focus, whereas for others social development and relationship skills were the primary focus and literacy was secondary. Still others had difficulty separating social and literacy skill development, suggesting that they were equally important or that the two need to be combined to enhance effectiveness. In a few cases, participants did not seem to be aware of any literacy focus in the program.

Program Delivery

Based on the insights provided by participants, delivery of the ISM program was separated into six key components: mentor recruitment and screening; identifying "at risk" students; mentor orientation and training; mentor-student matching; mentoring relationship; mentoring session; and program support.

Mentor recruitment and screening. BSBB coordinated the processes of recruiting and screening mentors. At the time of this study, BSBB had developed a variety of different strategies for recruitment aimed at different age groups (e.g., students, retired, employed). BSBB caseworkers were responsible for screening all new mentors. The four key components to the screening process were an annual criminal record check, a child welfare information system check, four references, and an in-depth interview with an assigned caseworker.

Identifying "at risk" students. Identification of "at-risk" students occurred at two levels: school and classroom. At the school level, BSBB received referrals from a variety of sources such as individual schools, school boards, and special community programs. Once a school was accepted into the program, BSBB staff negotiated the number of potential matches with the school. Each school had its own system for selecting students, which varied considerably across schools and teachers. Ultimately, teachers selected students in their classes for enrollment in the program.

Mentor orientation and training. BSBB and CFL offered four different types of orientation and training sessions to the mentors: (a) child safety training (received during the interview with a caseworker); (b) initial orientation to the program; (c) introductory training (self-esteem and literacy); and (d) supplemental literacy training (e.g., targeting specific age groups). At the time of the study, mentors' attendance at these sessions was inconsistent. The majority of mentors surveyed (92%) reported that they had attended the initial orientation session. About half had attended the introductory training sessions (39% for self-esteem and 51% for literacy). Despite the purported emphasis on literacy, only about 10% had attended the supplementary literacy training sessions. When comparing novice with experienced mentors, rates of

attendance at the introductory literacy training sessions were similar. When asked to rate the importance of literacy training, most survey participants (greater than 80%) reported that the training was "important"' or "very important." A small portion of teachers (about 6%) and mentors (1.4%) surveyed did not consider literacy training to be important. This view was also voiced in the teacher focus group, where some teachers expressed a concern about training, suggesting that mentors might become more like "teachers," rather than being "natural."

Mentor-student matching. The BSBB caseworkers were responsible for matching mentors with students. In some cases, the school staff had also assisted with this process. BSBB caseworkers identified the following criteria for matching mentors and students: personality, interests, student needs (academic, social), age, gender, location of school, time of day mentor would be available for volunteering, and experience of mentor. Mentors' satisfaction with the success of their matches varied.

Mentoring relationship. Mentors described a number of different roles in their mentoring relationship, including being a "special friend," acting as a role model, and being flexible. About one-third of mentors surveyed reported having difficulties in their relationships. The two most common difficulties were getting students to focus on tasks and inadequate input and feedback from classroom teachers. Other difficulties reported by mentors were knowing whether or not they were being helpful, understanding the goals of the program, motivating the students, dealing with student absences, and handling incompatible matches.

Mentoring session. Mentors met with their students on a regular (weekly) basis, either during class time or over lunch. The average length of each session was about one hour. Fifty-nine percent of the mentors who completed a survey reported that they devoted more than half of each session to literacy-based activities. The nature of these sessions varied widely, including activities such as reading, writing, spelling, drawing, socializing, playing games, doing crafts and working on math problems (homework). The amount of direction within the sessions from mentors, teachers, and students also varied widely, ranging from being totally directed by mentors to being totally directed by teachers. On average, however, mentors and teachers reported that mentors had the most input in directing a mentoring session. A number of mentors, particularly in the focus groups, emphasized the importance of being flexible and structuring the sessions to the student's needs. Although most mentors felt welcomed in the school, individual experiences varied considerably, ranging from being a "part of the school culture" to not being noticed at all. Some of the mentors surveyed reported there was a lack of adequate space (15%) and resources (about 8%) in the school for the mentoring sessions. Only a small proportion of mentors (about 7%), teachers (about 8%), and administrators (about 6%) reported that mentoring sessions were disruptive.

Program support. The nature of program support varied across stakeholder groups. Caseworkers provided ongoing support to mentors once they were matched with their students, and mentors described a variety of supports within the school setting from support staff, teachers, and principals. The majority of mentors surveyed (60%) reported

that more training or support would help them deal better with their students. The caseworkers and literacy trainer stated that they felt well supported in the program.

Relationships and Communication

Relationships. The caseworkers and literacy trainer provided important links between the senior stakeholders (e.g., BSBB, CFL), the schools, and the mentors. The caseworkers and school administrators all believed strongly that the caseworkers were part of the school culture. The level of agreement was somewhat lower for teachers (80%). Mentors and teachers generally agreed that caseworkers were available and helpful, although one-third of the teachers were either neutral or disagreed. About one-third of the mentors reported that more contact and support from caseworkers would have been helpful. The majority of teachers and mentors surveyed were not aware of the literacy trainer's role in the program. The literacy trainer acknowledged the challenge in connecting with all of the people in the program, particularly teachers.

Communication. Formal communication patterns among the different stakeholder groups varied considerably. Teachers and mentors reported that, on average, they communicated with each other most often, with less frequent contact with caseworkers and the literacy trainer. They also reported that, on average, communication between them (i.e., mentors and teachers) was adequate. However, there was considerable variability in responses. About one-quarter of mentors and one-fifth of teachers surveyed reported that the communication between teachers and mentors was less than adequate, whereas one-quarter of teachers and mentors reported that communication was more than adequate. Both teachers and mentors indicated a need for more frequent contact and support from the literacy trainer. The literacy trainer also cited a need for increased contact. Mentors and caseworkers also expressed a desire for increased contact with parents. Participants also were asked about their communication with the senior stakeholders in BSBB and CFL. Mentors, teachers, and administrators communicate with BSBB and CFL less than once per month. Administrators are satisfied with the frequency of communication, but both teachers and mentors would like more contact with the CFL, and teachers would like more communication with BSBB. In addition to formal patterns of communication, participants also described a variety of informal communication patterns within the school setting.

Program Changes and Impacts

The organizational structure for the ISM program changed in September, 2000, when the program shifted from an individual, school-based focus to a collaborative, city-wide initiative. The perceptions of the nature and impact of this change varied considerably across the stakeholder groups, with the most apparent changes and impact occurring at the administrative level. Some participants expressed a concern about the extent to which a common vision for the program exists, especially with respect to literacy. In terms of program delivery, most caseworkers reported that they had not experienced any major changes, although, administratively, there were more demands. In contrast,

the literacy trainer, who was hired in October, 2000, was affected by these changes, as she developed her new role in the program. Principals, teachers, and mentors appeared to have experienced less of an impact from the organizational change. However, some did describe a number of notable differences in the program, such as more mentors, fewer resources and space, and more paperwork. Consistent with the change in the program's goals, teachers and administrators often reported that the emphasis on literacy was greater during the current than during the previous year. Perhaps surprisingly, the people most intimately involved with the delivery of the program (mentors and caseworkers) were less likely than teachers and administrators to judge that the emphasis on literacy had increased.

Program Improvements

Suggestions for improving the program were directed toward different components of the program. These ranged from general suggestions for enhancing the uniformity of the program and simplifying administrative procedures to very specific thoughts about increasing support and communication, particularly with mentors. When asked about which aspects of the program are most important for implementation, participants who work closely with children cited the relationship between mentors and children, whereas those who work at more administrative levels cited structural characteristics of the program.

Overall Satisfaction

The majority of study participants (over 90%) were generally satisfied with the program. Most school personnel reported that they were comfortable having mentors in the school and the majority of survey participants believed that students were benefiting from the program. More than 90% of mentors, teachers, administrators, and caseworkers viewed the ISM program as an important part of the school. About 95% of principals and 80% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funds were available. Participants who were interviewed or attended focus groups also expressed satisfaction with the program. The CFL stakeholders were generally pleased with the program, but expressed some concerns around the need for appropriate mentor training and follow-up.

Evaluation of Outcomes

Participants who were interviewed or attended focus groups were asked for ideas about how outcomes of the ISM program might be evaluated. They generated a lengthy list of outcomes that might be assessed in children and in the adults associated with the program. Some participants expressed concerns about using measures that might be insensitive, inappropriate, or unnecessarily narrow. These insights may prove useful in designing an outcome evaluation.

Issues for Discussion

The findings from this evaluation study provide numerous insights into the design and delivery of the Literacy-Based ISM program. Overall, most participants were satisfied with the program and acknowledged its potential to help "at-risk" students.

- Over 90% of the stakeholders are satisfied with the ISM program, with the strongest advocates being the principals and the caseworkers.

- Approximately 90% of the mentors and teachers believe that the students are benefiting from their time in the program.

- Eighty percent of teachers and 95% of principals would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funding were available.

- The majority of mentors (85%) and teachers (55%) viewed the caseworkers as being helpful and available.

Caseworkers and administrators believed strongly that the caseworkers were part of the school culture. Beyond the student level, participants described additional benefits for themselves (for example, as mentors), the schools, and the community. Participants also shared personal observations about the program and offered numerous suggestions for improvement.

The high level of satisfaction with the expanded ISM program notwithstanding, the challenges of merging previously disparate projects and growing rapidly appear to have created some stresses. Such an outcome is not surprising in the expansion of any program. In the present case, some specific points of stress may deserve careful consideration as the ISM program evolves:

- General acknowledgement of the importance of literacy and social skill development for students, without a clear consensus regarding the manner in which to achieve these goals;

- An inconsistent emphasis on literacy across, and in some cases within, participant groups, despite an overwhelming endorsement of its importance;

- Some inconsistencies in implementing the program, particularly with respect to program goals, mentor training, identification of "at risk" students, and the nature of the mentoring relationships and sessions;

- An expressed need for enhanced communication across different stakeholder groups;

- Some problems with resources, as a result of rapid expansion of the program; and

- Diverse and potentially conflicting views about the nature of future evaluations that would be focused on outcomes for children in the program.

In general, implementation of the revised and expanding ISM program during the 2000-2001 academic year was quite successful in many respects. Some potentially significant challenges have emerged, however, that will require the attention of the participants who are responsible for the continued effectiveness and evolution of the program.

8

Evaluating Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In-School Mentoring (ISM) has been taking place in various schools across Edmonton for several years. Until recently, each school obtained funding separately and coordinated its own program. The increasing demand for mentoring programs and the likelihood that the number of available programs will expand considerably in the near future have prompted stakeholders to think about developing a new model for in-school mentoring.

Partners in promoting mentoring (schools, funders, and related agencies) formed the Coalition for Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring to investigate alternative models. It was decided that a more collaborative model with a focus on literacy would better serve the goals of the stakeholders. For the 2000-2001 school year, Big Sisters and Big Brothers Society of Edmonton and Area (BSBB) and the Centre for Family Literacy (CFL) formed a partnership for the delivery of a coordinated, city-wide ISM program. In the original proposal, approximately 300 student-mentor matches were to be added to mentoring programs each year for the next three years, achieving a target goal of 1200 matches by the third year of the program.

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families was asked to plan a comprehensive evaluation and research project focused on this mentoring program. The goal was to provide useful information about (a) the benefits and costs of changing the program, (b) how mentoring is practiced within the program, and (c) the effectiveness of the program for children and mentors over a significant period of time. Because 2000-2001 was the transition year for the new literacy-based program, the researchers and stakeholders decided that the evaluation would consist of three components (Implementation, Mentoring-in-Practice, and Outcomes) and that it would proceed in two phases, with the first phase focussed on implementation. This decision was made so that we could understand the "new program" before evaluating the mentoring sessions and specific outcomes. Some senior stakeholders were concerned that undertaking outcome research too early in the development of the program would be counterproductive. After Phase 1, stakeholders would evaluate whether it would be the appropriate time to pursue Phase 2 (Mentoring-In-Practice and Outcomes). Research on the implementation and operations of a large-scale mentoring program would provide information not only to the local community but also contribute to a growing body of knowledge on in-school mentoring.

The first phase (Implementation) began in March 2001. Phase 1 evaluation goals were to assess the impact of the following program changes: (a) an increased literacy focus, (b) administrative changes, and (c) growth of student-mentor matches.
The research evaluation team gathered information to address a range of questions, including the following:

- How has the program changed?
- What effect has this change had on the services provided?
- What kinds of benefits (e.g., better communication among coordinators) or costs (e.g., loss of local input and control) have emerged for caseworkers, principals, teachers, mentors, and students?
- How do schools organize their mentorship programs?

Some of the questions raised through the first phase could potentially be researched further in subsequent components.

The next three sections of this report provide an overview of the evaluation methods, key results, and critical issues. A variety of methods (surveys, focus groups, interviews, document reviews) were used to obtain a diversity of perspectives across six key stakeholder groups (ECF, BSBB, CFL, school administrators, teachers, mentors) (Section 2.0). The evaluation plan involved careful analyses of the following areas: program design; program goals; program delivery; relationships and communication; program changes and impact; program improvements; overall satisfaction; and evaluation of outcomes. Key findings were organized according to these eight categories (Section 3.0). A number of issues were identified for consideration in the delivery of the ISM program (Section 4.0).

2.0 METHODS

2.1. Overview of the Evaluation Design

The CUP evaluation team developed the evaluation design in collaboration with the various stakeholders for the ECF-funded ISM program.[1] Evaluation team members met individually with representatives from ECF, BSBB, and CFL to obtain background information about the program and delineate specific questions for inclusion in the evaluation study. Six key participant groups were identified for inclusion: senior stakeholders (ECF, BSBB, CFL), BSBB caseworkers, the CFL literacy trainer, principals, teachers and mentors. A variety of sources were used for data collection, including surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and document reviews. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively for common patterns and themes. An overview of the ISM program, highlighting the key stakeholders, appears in Figure 2.1.

---

[1] The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta (for ethical clearance), as well as the Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards.

Figure 2.1. In-School Mentoring Program Overview

Funding	Development & Delivery	Evaluation

ECF
- Senior management

BSBB
- Senior management
- Caseworkers (4)
- Self-esteem trainer

CFL
- Senior management
- Literacy trainer

University Evaluation Team
-   Phase I
-   Phase II

Corporate Sponsors
-   Alberta Learning
-   Other corporations

Other Evaluators

ECF Funded Schools
-   Edm Public (15)
-   Edm Separate (7)

ECF Non-Funded Schools
-   Norwood,, Abbott
-   Elk Island Public (1)
-   Elk Island Sep (2)
-   Parkland (8)

United Way Partners/Kids

Mentors (259)*

Schools
-   Principals
-   Teachers
-   Students (259)*

Parents

* excluding Norwood & Abbott

Evaluating Literacy-Based ISM: Phase I Final Report/December 2001

2.2. Participants

The following six key stakeholder groups were included in the evaluation study:
- senior stakeholders (in ECF, BSBB, CFL)
- BSBB caseworkers
- CFL literacy trainer
- principals/school administrators
- teachers
- mentors

The schools included in this phase of the evaluation were limited to those elementary schools with programs funded by ECF. Thus, there were 15 Edmonton Public Schools and seven Edmonton Catholic Schools included in the evaluation. Schools in the Parkland and Elk Island School Districts with ISM programs were excluded, as these programs were being funded from other sources (see Appendix A for a list of schools included in study).

In addition, students enrolled in the ISM program and their parents were not included in this evaluation phase, given the focus of the evaluation and a limited time frame for completion of the project.

2.3. Data Collection

Four primary sources were used for data collection:
- surveys
- focus groups
- individual interviews
- documents/reports

2.3.1. Surveys

Surveys were developed[2] and distributed[3] to the participants involved in the ECF-funded ISM program as of May 1, 2001[4]:

- all mentors (n[5]=259)
- all teachers who had students participating in the ISM (n=91)
- all principals at schools in the ISM program (n=22)
- BSBB caseworkers in the ECF-funded ISM program (n=4)
- CFL literacy trainer (n=1)

Samples of the surveys for all of the survey groups are included in Appendix B. A description of the participants in each of the survey groups appears in Appendix C.

Response rates[6], based on the number of surveys distributed and returned for each of the survey groups are summarized in Table 2.1. The overall response rate for the surveys (55.4%) was in the acceptable range. Of the five survey groups, the teachers' group had the lowest response rate (42.9%). There are a number of factors which may have contributed to this decreased response: (a) timing of survey distribution,[7] (b) delay in obtaining administrative approval for conducting the study in the Edmonton Catholic School system,[8] and (c) incorrect page ordering for some surveys.[9] A more detailed

---

[2] Individual surveys were developed for each group. There were three subsets of questions: (1) core questions that were included in all surveys, with changes in wording where appropriate; (2) group-relevant questions that were common across some but not all of the survey groups; (3) group-specific questions that were unique to a specific survey group and only included on a particular group's survey.

[3] Mentor surveys were distributed by mail. Teacher, principal and caseworker surveys were hand delivered to the respective schools. All surveys contained a stamped addressed envelope for return by mail. Alternately, surveys could be returned by e-mail, if participants desired.

[4] Survey distribution lists were based on BSBB mail-out and information lists.

[5] "N" or "n" refers to the number of people who either participated in the survey or who answered a specific question.

[6] The response rate can be used as an estimate of the number of participants who answered each question. However, the sample size fluctuates on almost every question. For example, even though we may have had 18 principals return the survey, invariably, some skip or miss questions. Sample size also changes when we then look at program changes (i.e., only a portion of the 18 have participated before the "new program", and even some of those people miss or skip questions).

[7] Surveys were distributed to teachers in the Edmonton Public School System in the third week of May.

[8] Surveys were distributed to teachers in the Edmonton Catholic School System at the end of May, since administrative approval for this study was not received from the Edmonton Catholic system until May 29, 2001.

[9] Of the 60 surveys that were distributed to teachers in the Edmonton Public system, some had pages that were incorrectly ordered. All of the surveys that were distributed to teachers in the Edmonton Catholic system (n=30) were correctly ordered.   We analyzed the questions in the teachers' surveys that were most likely to be answered differently because of the incorrect order. Of the 23 questions, only 5 questions were identified as possibly being

summary of response rates based on school division and survey groups appears in Appendix D.

Table 2.1. Response rate (%) of distributed surveys by survey group.

Survey Group	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Response Rate (%)
mentors	259	147	**56.8**
teachers	91	39	**42.9**
principals	22	18	**81.2**
caseworkers	4	4	**100.0**
literacy trainer	1	1	**100.0**
TOTAL	**377**	**209**	55.4

2.3.2. Focus Groups

Focus group participants were limited to people who were involved with the ISM program prior to September, 2000, to ensure that participants could provide information about the impact of changes in the program. A total of four focus groups were conducted with the following participant groups:[10]
- mentors (Group 1, n=5)
- mentors (Group 2, n=5)
- teachers, Edmonton Public (n=4)
- BSBB caseworkers (n=4)

The mentor and BSBB caseworker focus groups were held at BSBB House, and the teacher focus group was held at the Centre for Education, Edmonton Public Schools. Due to a limited time frame, teachers from the Edmonton Catholic system were unable to participate in a focus group.[11]

Focus group guides were developed for each group (i.e., mentors, teachers, caseworkers), covering the following five topics: program description, program transition, communication, satisfaction with the process, outcome evaluation. (See Appendix E for a sample of each guide.)

---

affected by being presented in an incorrect order. These questions are indicated with an asterisk throughout the document.

[10] Participants for the mentor and teacher focus groups were selected with the assistance of the BSBB staff. For the mentor focus groups, the BSBB staff extended invitations to a subgroup of mentors who represented a diversity of ISM experiences (e.g., different ages, gender, number of years mentoring, geographic location of the school). For the teacher focus group, all teachers in the Edmonton Public School system who had been involved in the ISM program prior to September, 2000, (n= 18) were invited to attend. A total of five teachers responded to the invitation. Due to scheduling difficulties, however, only four of the five teachers were able to attend the focus group.

[11] A member of the evaluation team facilitated the focus groups. In addition to the facilitator, an additional evaluation team member attended and took summary notes. All of the encounters were audiotaped, but not transcribed.

2.3.3 Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with the following people:

- senior stakeholders for ECF (n=2), BSBB (n=1), and CFL (n=1)
- two members from the ECF Distribution Committee
- CFL literacy trainer (n=1)
- five principals and one ISM school liaison worker[12] (n=6)

Various members of the evaluation team conducted a total of 11 interviews.[13] Interview guides were developed for the individual interviews, using similar categories to the focus group guides. (See Appendix F for sample of each guide)

2.3.4. Documents and Reports

A variety of documents and reports were reviewed to assist with the development of the evaluation design and provide supplemental information to the other data collection methods. (See Appendix G for list of documents)

2.3.5. Summary

In summary, there were four primary sources for data collection: surveys, focus groups, individual interviews and documents. The use of a variety of data collection methods with multiple stakeholders provided an opportunity to gather information from a diversity of perspectives across the ISM program. Table 2.2 summarizes the data collection methods involving participants, highlighting the number of participants by stakeholder group and method.

---

[12] The principals and school liaison worker were selected with the assistance of the BSBB staff to represent a diversity of ISM characteristics: geographic location, number of matches, growth in program, level of need, degree of change in program, previous involvement in ISM programs funded through other sources. All of the schools had been involved in the ISM program prior to September, 2000.

[13] Nine of the eleven interviews involved only one participant. For the remaining two interviews, two participants were interviewed at the same time. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriber.

Table 2.2. Number of participants involved in the evaluation study by stakeholder group and method of data collection.

Stakeholder Group	Method of Data Collection		
	Surveys	Focus Groups	Interviews
1. ECF			
• senior stakeholder	--	--	2 [c]
• distribution committee	--	--	2 [c]
2. BSBB			
• senior stakeholder	--	--	1
• caseworkers	4 [a]	4 [a]	--
3. CFL			
• senior stakeholder	--	--	1
• literacy trainer	1 [b]	--	1 [b]
4. Administrators	18	--	5
5. School Liaison	--	--	1
6. Teachers	39 [a]	4 [a]	--
7. Mentors	147 [a]	10 [a]	--
TOTAL	**209** [a]	**18** [a]	**13** [c]

[a] Some participants may have completed surveys AND participated in focus groups.
[b] The literacy trainer completed a survey and participated in an individual interview.
[c] A total of 11 interviews were completed with 13 participants. For the interviews with ECF stakeholders, two interviews were conducted with two participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed descriptively for common trends and differences across the five survey groups. The qualitative data for the focus groups and individual interviews were analyzed for common themes, using the summary notes and transcribed interviews. To assist in the identification of themes, focus group and interview data were initially summarized according to questions included in the focus group and interview guides. Additional themes were included in the summaries, when appropriate (see Appendix H for samples of summaries for teachers and principals).

Three strategies were included to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings: (a) involvement of stakeholders throughout the evaluation design process; (b) inclusion of multiple data collection methods; and (c) inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives within the findings of the report.

3.0 RESULTS

In this section of the report we highlight the findings from the study within the following eight subsections:

3.1. Program Design
3.2. Purpose (Goals) of the Program
3.3. Program Delivery
3.4. Relationships and Communication
3.5. Program Changes and Impact
3.6. Program Improvements
3.7. Overall Satisfaction
3.8. Evaluation of Outcomes

3.1. Program Design[14]

The design of the Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM) program was evident in documents and in comments made in interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The program was described as being community-based within the Edmonton Public and Catholic elementary school settings. The intent of the program was to identify "at risk" students (Kindergarten to Grade 6), who then would be matched with a safe and caring adult, to support and enhance literacy development. This collaborative, city-wide program evolved from a number of community-based initiatives targeting in-school mentoring. In an effort to address the growing interest and demands of individual school-based programs, a coalition[15] was formed to explore more efficient and effective methods of program delivery. Based on recommendations from a consultant,[16] BSBB and CFL formed a joint partnership for city-wide program delivery, which was initiated in September, 2000. A conceptual model of the ISM program, highlighting primary goals, program components, and anticipated outcomes, appears in Figure 3.1.

---

[14] Information for this section was obtained from the ECF application for funding, as well as preliminary interviews with senior stakeholders conducted in April, 2001.

[15] This coalition included representatives from BSBB; CFL (Prospects Literacy); ECF; United Way of Alberta Capital Region; Ma'mowe Capital Region Child & Family Services; Edmonton Public Schools; Capital Health Authority; Norwood, High Park, St. Patrick & R. J. Scott Elementary Schools; YMCA; Nellie McClung and Oliver Schools.

[16] The coalition engaged Carr Leiren and Associates to undertake a review of the ISM program and to recommend a framework for the "sustainable delivery of in-school mentoring in the Edmonton region" a summary appears in their final report (See Appendix G).

Figure 3.1: A conceptual model of the Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring Program
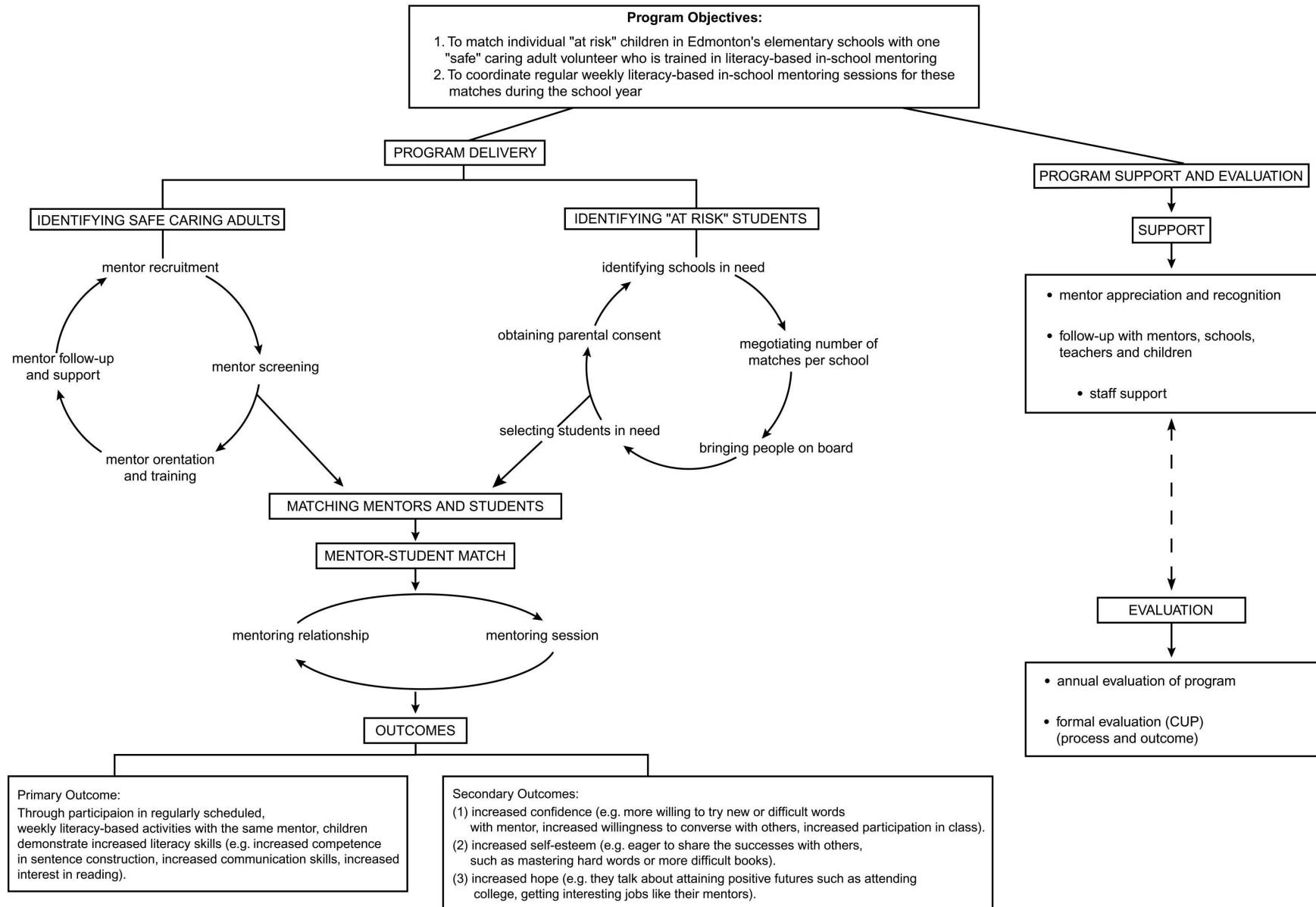
3.2. Purpose (Goals) of the Program

Synopsis

The proposed objectives for the city-wide ISM initiative emphasized a predominant literacy-focus. The majority of survey participants (greater than 90% for mentors, teachers, school administrators and caseworkers) rated the literacy component of the ISM program as either important or very important. Most survey participants also rated the social development component as either important or very important, though fewer teachers did so (79%) than mentors (92%), school administrators (94%), and caseworkers (100%). In spite of this overwhelming endorsement, study participants, particularly those in focus groups and interviews, varied in their perceptions of emphasis on these two program components. For some, literacy was the predominant focus, whereas for others social development and relationship skills were the primary focus and literacy was a secondary focus. Still others had difficulty separating social and literacy skill development, suggesting that they were equally important. In some cases, participants did not seem to be aware of any literacy focus in the program.

Detailed Analysis

In the original proposal BSBB submitted to ECF for funding the In-School Mentoring program (Appendix G), there was a clear vision to have the program incorporate a literacy component. Four specific objectives were identified for the city-wide ISM program:

(a) to match individual "at-risk" children in Edmonton's elementary schools with one safe and caring adult volunteer who is trained in literacy-based in-school mentoring;
(b) to coordinate regular, weekly, literacy-based, in-school mentoring sessions for these matches during the school year;
(c) to promote long-term relationships within these matches (one year or more) through careful recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteers; and
(d) to provide ongoing training to volunteers on the techniques designed to enhance literacy development in children.

The coalition of stakeholders identified the following primary outcome for the program: for children to demonstrate "increased literacy skills (e.g., increased competence in sentence construction, increased communication skills, increased interest in reading)." They also identified three secondary outcomes for the child: increased confidence, self-esteem, and hope, all of which reflect different aspects of social development. All examples of the social indicators were within a literacy framework (e.g., "more willing to try new or difficult words with mentor", "they talk about attaining positive futures such as attending college"). Survey participants were asked to rate the importance of the literacy and social development components of the ISM program, from their perspective as well as their perceptions of other people's perspectives.

In terms of their **personal perceptions**, most survey participants (greater than 90% for mentors, teachers, administrators, caseworkers, and the literacy trainer) rated the

literacy component as "important" or "very important" (Table 3.1a). Twenty percent of mentors, 29% of teachers, and 17% of administrators rated literacy higher than social development (Table 3.1c). Most participants rated the *social development component* as either "important" or "very important," and approximately 12% of mentors, 21% of teachers, and 50% of the caseworkers rated social development higher than literacy (Table 3.1c). Except for caseworkers, ratings of importance were somewhat lower for social development than for literacy. For example, three teachers (9%) rated the social development component of the program as "not at all" important.

Table 3.1a. Comparison of frequency (%) of **personal rating** of importance of **literacy**

Table 3.1a	Stakeholders	Not at All		Somewhat		Very	M[17]	N
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
*How important do **you** think it is to have a **literacy** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	0	0	4.9%	23.1%	72.0%	4.67	143
	Teachers	0	0	8.8%	20.6%	70.6%	4.62	34
	Administrators	0	0	0	22.2%	77.8%	4.78	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	50.0%	50.0%	4.5	4

Table 3.1b. Comparison of frequency (%) of **personal rating** of importance of **social development**.

Table 3.1b	Stakeholders	Not at All		Somewhat		Very	M	N
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
*How important do **you** think it is to have a **social development** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	1.4%	0.7%	5.8%	25.4%	66.7%	4.55	138
	Teachers*[18]	8.8%	0	11.8%	17.6%	61.8%	4.24	34
	Administrators	0	0	5.6%	33.3%	61.1%	4.56	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	0	100.0%	5.0	4

Table. 3.1c. Comparison of frequency (%) of participants' ratings of literacy to their social development ratings.

Stakeholders	Rated Literacy Higher than Social Development	Rated Literacy and Social Development the Same	Rated Social Development Higher than Literacy	N
Mentors	19.6%	68.1%	12.3%	138
Teachers*[19]	29.4%	50.0%	20.6%	34
Administrators	16.7	83.3	0	18
Caseworkers	0	50.0%	50.0%	4

In terms of **perceptions of other people's perspectives**, the majority of survey participants rated the *importance of literacy* by other people in the program as either

---

[17] "M" is the average or mean score

[18] When comparing the pattern between incorrect-order versus correct-ordered surveys, the teachers who had the correctly ordered ("good") surveys rated social development as less important.

[19] When comparing the pattern between incorrect-order versus correct-ordered surveys, the teachers who had the correctly ordered ("good") surveys rated social development as less important.

very important or important, though these frequencies were not as high as their personal rating of importance (Table 3.2a). Similarly, most participants rated the importance of social development (to teachers, school administrators, and parents) as very important or important, though these frequencies were generally lower than the ratings for literacy (Table 3.2b).

Table 3.2a. Comparison of frequency (%) of **perceptions of other people's ratings** of importance of **literacy**.

Table 3.2a	Stakeholders	Not at All (1)	(2)	Somewhat (3)	(4)	Very (5)	M	N
*How important do you think it is to the **teachers** to have a **literacy** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	3.8%	1.5%	15.8%	37.6%	41.4%	4.11	133
	Administrators	0	0	11.1%	16.7%	72.2%	4.61	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	25.0%	75.0%	4.75	4
*How important do you think it is to the **school administrators** to have a **literacy** component in the ISM program?*	Teachers	0	3.2%	3.2%	19.4%	74.2%	4.65	31
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	25.0%	75.0%	4.75	4
*How important do you think it is to the **parents** to have a **literacy** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	0.8%	2.5%	13.9%	32.0%	50.8%	4.30	122
	Teachers	0	7.1%	0	50.0%	42.9%	4.29	28
	Administrators	0	0	16.7%	22.2%	61.1%	4.44	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	25.0%	0	75.0%	4.5	4

Table 3.2b. Comparison of frequency (%) of **perceptions of other people's ratings** of importance of **social development**

Table 3.2b	Stakeholders	Not at All (1)	(2)	Somewhat (3)	(4)	Very (5)	M	N
*How important do you think it is to the **teachers** to have a **social development** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	2.3%	2.4%	16.9%	36.3%	41.9%	4.13	124
	Administrators	0	0	16.7%	22.2%	61.1%	4.44	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	50%	50%	4.5	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	0	0	100%	5.0	1
*How important do you think it is to the **school administrators** to have a **social development** component in the ISM program?*	Teachers[*20]	10.0%	3.3%	6.7%	26.7%	53.3%	4.10	30
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	75.0%	25.0%	4.25	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	0	0	100.0%	5.0	1
*How important do you think it is to the **parents** to have a **social development** component in the ISM program?*	Mentors	1.7%	5.0%	18.5%	35.5%	39.5%	4.06	119
	Teachers	0	3.6%	7.1%	50.0%	39.3%	4.25	28
	Administrators	0	0	22.2%	38.9%	38.9%	4.17	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	4.25	4

Despite this overwhelming endorsement of the literacy and social components of the program, study participants, particularly those in focus groups and interviews, varied in

---

[20] Teachers with the correctly ordered surveys perceived school administrators to value social development less than teachers who had the incorrectly ordered surveys.

their perceptions of emphasis on these two program components. For some, literacy was the predominant focus (Table 3.1c). For others social development and relationship skills were the primary focus and literacy was a secondary focus (Table 3.1c). For example, most of the principals who were interviewed emphasized the importance of relationship building and social skill development, particularly for students in the inner city. Although literacy was important, it was considered secondary. Relationship building was viewed as the means and literacy improvement the desired endpoint.

A connection with the outside world. I've put that first because a lot of our kids are very narrow. Some of our kids have never been to the zoo. Some of our kids have never been downtown. . .When I ask the older kids 'What are you going to take at university?' nine out of ten would say 'I'm not going to university.' . . . That's [broadening their horizons] number one. Once they understand that, they start to understand how important literacy is and how that opens up doorways" (Principal, Interview).

Being an inner city school, literacy was important, but life skills were very important. So there was a little bit more of an emphasis on the emotional perspective. [Then later in the interview] Literacy is also very important and so literacy is a big part of this program. (Principal, Interview).

Most, though, had difficulty separating social and literacy skill development, suggesting that they were equally important.

It's an opportunity for volunteers to work with elementary aged children and I see sort of having two components that aren't separable in my view. So there's the relationship building part of it and there's the literacy part of it. And I guess I don't see them as separate, I see them as going together. (Literacy Trainer, Interview)

We often try to sell it as a two-fold program….a literacy based program with a self esteem component, a social component because I think the two have to work together. (Caseworker, Focus Group)

In some cases, participants did not seem to be aware of the literacy focus in the program.

I was not aware that there is a literacy component to the program. All I have ever seen my students do with their mentors is crafts, art and other non-curricular activities. (Teacher, Survey)

"I still don't understand why my students go with their mentors or what they do there. " (Teacher, Survey)

A more detailed listing of participants' perceptions of the goals of the ISM program appears in Appendix I.

3.3. Program Delivery

This section provides an overview of program delivery, based on the evaluation findings, highlighting the following key components:

- Mentor Recruitment and Screening
- Identifying "At-Risk" Students
- Mentor Orientation and Training
- Mentor-Student Matching
- Mentoring Relationship
- Mentoring Session
- Program Support

3.3.1. Mentor Recruitment and Screening

> [Recruitment of mentors] "is a constant moving target." (BSBB Senior Stakeholder)

Mentor recruitment was coordinated by BSBB.[21] At the time of this study, BSBB had developed a variety of different strategies for recruitment aimed at different age groups (e.g., students, retired, employed). Some of the external recruitment strategies included television, radio and journal advertisements; special interest stories; on-site recruitments at three post-secondary institutions (University of Alberta, NAIT, Grant MacEwan Community College); and corporate recruitment of employees (e.g., Alberta Learning, Telus). Internal recruitment strategies included an increased awareness of opportunities for cross-promotion of programs (e.g., mail-outs).

BSBB also coordinated the screening of mentors. The BSBB caseworkers were responsible for screening all new mentors. At the time of the study, there were four key components to the screening process: an annual criminal record check, a child welfare information system check, four references and an in-depth interview with an assigned caseworker. The screening process was mandatory for all new mentors recruited into the program. Similarly, for those schools with existing ISM programs that merged with ECF funded programs in the fall, 2000 (e.g., R. J. Scott), mentors were brought up to BSBB screening standards.

---

[21] At the time of the study, there were 259 successful matches for the ECF-funded ISM program. To meet the growing demands of the program, BSBB had targeted 410 total matches for the upcoming school year (i.e.,2001 – 2002) (excluding Norwood and Abbott schools). By the third year of the program (2002 – 2003), the original targeted goal was 1200 successful matches. At the time of this report, the 2002-2003 goal of 1200 was being reconsidered. A new goal had not been established.

3.3.2. Identifying "At -Risk" Students

> We're being asked to help far more kids than we're ever going to have the capacity to
> help. And at the end of the day, when you've got principals or teachers advocating on
> behalf of the number of students, even when you've got limited resources, it's so
> natural for us to say how do we make this happen? (BSBB Senior Stakeholder)

Synopsis

The identification of "at-risk" students occurred at two levels: school and classroom. At the
school level, BSBB received referrals from a variety of sources such as individual
schools/principals, school boards and special community programs (e.g., inner city school
initiative). Once a school was accepted into the program, BSBB staff negotiated the number of
potential matches with the school. Each school had its own system for selecting students, which
varied considerably across schools and teachers. Ultimately, teachers selected students in their
classes for enrollment in the program.

Detailed Analysis

To assist in the identification of "at risk" students, BSBB staff identified a number of
criteria that they used as a general guide (Table 3.3). There were no formal guidelines
for the identification of "at risk" children. At the time of the study, BSBB had been able to
accommodate all of the school requests for the ISM program.

Table 3.3. General guidelines for the identification of "at risk" children

Unit of Focus	Guideline
Children	• below Grade level of achievement in reading ability • general decrease in achievement • special learning needs • geographic isolation
Family	• single parent • minimal parental support • lower family income
School	• volunteers not readily accessible

Within each school, teachers selected students in their class to participate in the
program. BSBB caseworkers provided some guidance in this selection process. As one
caseworker commented, she suggested that teachers choose students who "require
additional help in school, literacy, social (development), self-esteem." Another
caseworker commented that students with severe behavioural problems were to be

excluded. In some schools, such as R. J. Scott, the school liaison worker also assisted with the selection of students.

The criteria for selection of "at risk" students varied considerably across schools and teachers. In some schools, such as Sacred Heart, there was a policy or goal to match every child with a mentor. At the time of the study, all students from Kindergarten through Grade 3 at Sacred Heart had been matched, with the goal of expanding the program in the Fall, 2001, to include all students in Kindergarten to Grade 4. In other schools, teachers used a variety of criteria revolving around family situations, literacy needs, and social skills:

- "Home situation. Students needing one-on-one time with an adult."
- "Ability to communicate"
- "Need for extra assistance in L.A. [language arts] especially literacy"
- "Same gender, trouble with reading comprehension, some trouble associating with peers"
- "Low self-esteem/single parent"

In addition, some teachers commented that they had acquired students who had been matched in previous years, without being given a specific reason for the match.

Mentors who completed the survey were asked to indicate whether they thought their students had any difficulties in the following areas: social skills, behavioural problems, literacy, or other. Seventeen percent reported that their students had no specific difficulties, whereas 42% reported difficulties in two or more areas.

Of the four areas, mentors reported difficulties in literacy skills most frequently (about 66%). However, about one-third of the students being seen by mentors surveyed also had some sort of social or behavioural problem, as reported by the mentors (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Frequencies (%) of student difficulties, as reported by mentors.

Table 3.4: Type of Difficulty				
None	**Social Skills**	**Behavioural Skills**	**Literacy Skills**	**Other**
17.0%	31.5%	30.6%	65.5%	20.7%

Note: Numbers do not add up to 100% as some students may have had more than one area of difficulty.

Some of the problems that mentors listed in the "other" category, included anger management, attention deficit and hyperactivity, as well as difficulties with math, self-esteem and personal hygiene. Further, mentors indicated that some students in the program were learning English as a second language.

3.3.3. Mentor Orientation and Training

Synopsis

BSBB and CFL offered four different types of orientation and training sessions to the mentors: (a) child safety training (received during the interview with a caseworker); (b) initial orientation to the program; (c) introductory training (self-esteem and literacy); and (d) supplemental literacy training (e.g.,targeting specific age groups). At the time of the study, the mentors' attendance at these sessions was inconsistent. The majority of mentors surveyed (92%) reported that they had attended the initial orientation session. About half had attended the introductory training sessions (39% self-esteem and 51% literacy). Only about 10% had attended the supplementary literacy training sessions. When comparing novice with experienced mentors, rate of attendance at the introductory literacy training sessions was similar. When asked to rate the importance of literacy training, most survey participants (greater than 80%) reported that the training was 'important' or 'very important.' A small portion of teachers (about 6%) and mentors (1.4%) surveyed did not consider literacy training to be important. This view was also voiced in the teacher focus group, where some teachers expressed a concern about training, suggesting that mentors might become more like "teachers," rather than being "natural."

Detailed Analysis

BSBB and CFL offered four different types of orientation and training sessions to the mentors:
(1) Child safety training (received during the interview with a caseworker);
(2) initial orientation to the program;
(3) introductory training (self-esteem and literacy);[22]
(4) supplemental training (e.g.,targeting specific age groups).

At the time of the study, the mentors' attendance at these sessions was inconsistent. Not all mentors had attended the self- esteem and literacy training sessions prior to being matched with and meeting with their students.

Table 3.5 summarizes the percentage of mentors that reported completing the different types of orientation and training sessions. As shown in this table, about half of the mentors surveyed reported attending the introductory literacy training. Contrary to expectation, mentors involved in the ISM program after September, 2000, were no more likely to have received literacy training than those trained in previous years (based on survey findings).

---

[22] The formats for the introductory self-esteem and literacy training sessions have changed over the years. In the fall, 2000, the self-esteem and literacy training sessions were offered at the same time, within a 3-hour time frame, by two different people (a social worker and the literacy trainer). More recently, the self-esteem and literacy sessions were being offered in a three-hour block by the literacy trainer alone.

Table 3.5. Frequency (%) of mentors' attendance at different types of ISM training sessions

Table 3.5: Type of ISM Training							
Mentors	**Orientation**	**Self-Esteem**	**Literacy (intro)**	**Literacy (suppl)**	**Other**	**None**	**N**
Experienced Mentors (before Sept 2000)	94.8%	38.3%	50.0%	11.7%	11.7%	3.3%	59
New Mentors (Sept 2000-June 2001)	90.8%	39.1%	51.7%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	87
All Mentors	92.4%	39.0%[a]	51.4%[a]	9.6%	9.6%	6.2%	146

[a] Some mentors attended a combined literacy and self-esteem training session

According to the literacy trainer, between October, 2000, and June 1, 2001, 128 mentors had attended the new introductory literacy training session and 42 had attended supplemental training.[23]

Across the different survey groups, over 80% rated literacy training as 'important' or 'very important' (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Frequency (%) of ratings of importance of mentor literacy training across survey participants.

Table 3.6	**Stakeholders**	**Not at All** (1)	(2)	**Somewhat** (3)	(4)	**Very** (5)	**M**	**N**
How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	Mentors	0.7%	0.7%	16.7%	27.1%	54.9%	4.35	144
	Teachers	0	5.9%	11.8%	17.6%	64.7%	4.41	34
	Administrators	0	0	5.6%	22.2%	72.2%	4.67	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	25.0%	75.0%	4.75	4

This view was supported by one teacher who commented "an awareness of the importance of literacy is crucial, and that training (if effectively delivered) is always beneficial." Similarly, when asked about literacy training, one mentor stated that she hadn't been trained, but that it certainly sounded like a good idea and that she was sure it would be helpful.

Everyone did not share this view, however. A small portion of teachers (about 6%, n=2) and mentors (1.4%, n=2) did not consider literacy training to be important (see Table 3.6). This perspective was also voiced in the teacher focus group, where some teachers expressed a concern about training, suggesting that mentors might become more like "teachers," rather than being "natural."

> "Having mentors trained in literacy is pivotal to the project" – (Principal, Survey)

---

[23] A number of those attending introductory (n=128) and supplemental (n=42) literacy training sessions, were experienced mentors (i.e., involved in the program prior to September, 2000) or involved with non-ECF funded programs. The exact proportions of ECF-funded new mentors (i.e., enrolled in program as of Sept, 2000) and experienced mentors who had completed the introductory and supplemental training sessions were not available at the time of this report.

In terms of the adequacy of training, 66% of mentors surveyed felt that they had been adequately trained to address the challenges in the mentoring sessions. However, some mentors also reported that their training had come from their previous personal or professional experiences and not from the training they had received for the program. Some commented that the introductory training session was useful as it taught them ways of building trust and respect with their student, whereas others indicated that the training was not adequate for dealing with social skills or literacy. Further, several mentors stated that they had not undergone any training.

3.3.4. Mentor-Student Matching

The BSBB caseworkers were responsible for matching mentors with students. In some cases, the school staff had also assisted with this process (e.g., the ISM school liaison at R. J. Scott). According to some teachers who participated in the surveys and focus group, they did not have a prominent role in the selection of matches.

BSBB caseworkers considered the following characteristics in matching mentors and students:
- personality of mentor and student
- interests of mentor and student
- student needs (academic, social)
- age of student
- gender of student and mentor
- location of school
- time of day mentor would be available for volunteering
- experience of mentor

The mentors' perceptions of their matches varied. Some of the mentors in one of the focus groups stated that they were very pleased with their match, describing it as the "perfect match." Others described concerns about their match, suggesting that they had difficulty connecting with their students and finding some common interests.

3.3.5. Mentoring Relationship

> If the volunteer and the child don't get along and they don't like each other and there's no relationship there,. . . it's all based on relationship. If there's no relationship, they're not going to work together. (Caseworker, Focus Group)

Synopsis

Mentors described a number of different roles in their mentoring relationship, including being a "special friend," acting as a role model and being flexible. About one third of mentors surveyed reported having difficulties in their relationships. The two most common difficulties were getting students to focus on tasks and inadequate input and feedback from classroom teachers. Other difficulties reported by mentors were knowing whether or not they were being helpful, understanding the goals of the program, motivating the students, dealing with student absences, and handling incompatible matches.

Detailed Analysis

Mentors described a number of different roles in their relationships with students:

- being a special friend or "buddy" whom the student can trust

    It's giving them encouragement. . .and letting them know that they are special. . . They know that they are special because they have a special friend. (Mentor, Focus Group)

- acting as a role model

    You're really a bit of a role model for the children, and it's an opportunity for them to have some individual attention outside of the teacher or outside of a parent, so it's another adult for them to be able to relate to, but you're also working through some things with them as well. . . . It's helping them to develop some social skills. (Mentor, Focus Group)

- being flexible and adapting to the child

    I think the key to the program is being really flexible and really gearing [to] where your child is at because some days they just aren't in (Mentor, Focus Group)

One-third of mentors surveyed reported having difficulties in their role as a mentor. The two most common difficulties were:

1) Mentors experiencing problems getting their students to concentrate and focus on the task at hand

    "My student finds it hard to focus and complete a single task, we constantly have to be switching activities" (Mentor, Survey)

2) Mentors not receiving enough input from teachers about what they should be working on and about the progress being made by the student.

    "My greatest need is input and feedback from the classroom teachers" (Mentor, Survey)

Other difficulties reported by mentors surveyed were in knowing whether or not they were being helpful, understanding the goals of the program, motivating the students, dealing with student absences, and handling incompatible matches. Mentors participating in one of the focus groups also described concerns about incompatible

matches. An additional concern that was expressed in the group was difficulty dealing with loss issues (e.g., termination of student-mentor relationships when students complete Grade 6).

3.3.6. Mentoring Session

Synopsis

Mentors met with their students on a regular (weekly) basis, either during class time or over lunch. The average length of each session was about one hour. Fifty-nine percent of the mentors who completed a survey reported that they devoted more than half of each session to literacy-based activities. The nature of the sessions varied widely including activities such as reading, writing, spelling, drawing, socializing, playing games, doing crafts and working on math problems (homework). The amount of direction within the sessions from mentors, teachers and students also varied widely, ranging from being totally directed by mentors to being totally directed by teachers. On average, however, mentors and teachers reported that mentors had the most input in directing a mentoring session. A number of mentors, particularly in the focus groups, emphasized the importance of being flexible and structuring the sessions to the student's needs. Although most mentors felt welcomed in the school, individual experiences varied considerably, ranging from being a "part of the school culture" to not being noticed at all. Some of the mentors surveyed reported there was a lack of adequate space (15%) and resources (about 8%) in the school for the mentoring sessions. Although the majority of survey participants did not consider the sessions to be disruptive to classes, a small proportion of mentors (about 7%), teachers (about 8%) and administrators (about 6%) reported that they were disruptive.

Detailed Analysis

The mentor and student met once a week at the student's school. Mentors reported spending an average of one hour per session, although the range was from 30 minutes to two hours. In most cases, students were removed from their regular classes to spend time with their mentors, though some students and mentors met over the lunch break.

Fifty-nine percent of the mentors who were surveyed reported that they spent more than half of their time with their students on literacy-based activities (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7. Frequencies (%) of percentage of mentoring session time devoted to literacy by mentors.

Table 3.7	Stakeholders	1 – 25%	26 – 50%	51 – 75%	76 – 100%	N
What percent of each session do you spend on tasks directly related to literacy?	Mentors	11.6%	29.5%	32.2%	26.7%	146

The nature of the sessions varied widely including activities such as reading, writing, spelling, drawing, socializing, playing games, doing crafts, and working on math problems (homework). Some examples found on mentor surveys include:

- "Word games, crafts, drawing, reading picture books, talking about the story, writing, spelling, we socialize a lot!"
- "Read about for 20 min. and discuss what was read. Various counting activities. Every other week a craft or fun activity. Participate with other mentors and their student."

- "Math: quizzing my student on her times tables, adding subtracting, telling time, counting money. I used to read with her, but my teacher has me focusing on math now. Reading comprehension of math problems"

- "Practical applications of literacy. (All have literacy focus.) Baking cookies (following directions), planning a trip (using travel guides), doing crafts (following directions), pen pal in Africa (letters), newspaper assignments"

The amount of direction within the sessions from mentors, teachers and students also varied widely, ranging from being totally directed by mentors to being totally directed by teachers. One mentor explained her sessions were less directed by the teacher: At the beginning of the year, the teacher filled in a brief needs assessment indicating what would be helpful to the student and the mentor then tried to include her comments about each session. In contrast, another mentor commented, "The teacher gives me all the work she (the student) needs to do and it more than fills up the hour".

In spite of this wide diversity, on average, both mentors and teachers reported that mentors had the most input in a mentoring session (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8. Estimation of amount of input by mentors, teachers and students into mentoring session.

Table 3.8		Stakeholders	M	Min.	Max.	SD	N
In general, estimate the amount of input (in percent) each of the following people has in determining what goes on in a mentoring session:	Mentors' View	Mentors	48.6%	0	100	23.5	146
		Teachers	22.1%	0	100	24.5	146
		Students	31.0%	0	98	16.8	146
	Teachers' View	Mentors	44.8%	15	100	19.8	38
		Teachers	29.3%	0	80	23.5	38
		Students	26.6%	0	60	14.5	38

Some mentors stated that they needed more direction from the teachers.

> "Ultimately I can determine what is done during mentoring, but the student dictates by what they are interested in and by their ability to stay on task. More specific activities related to the child's needs (as directed by the teacher) need to be done. Mentors could then be given specific activities to work on in specific areas of difficulty. Too often the time spent is playtime and although very important to the development of the child and to their self-esteem, it is a very unproductive use of time for me as a paid professional"

Others would have preferred more flexibility in the sessions, as one mentor described her role primarily as a "homework monitor." A number of mentors, particularly in the focus groups, emphasized the importance of being flexible and structuring the sessions to the student's needs.

Most mentors reported that they felt welcomed in the school (97% of mentors surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I feel welcome in the school.") Individual experiences varied considerably, however, particularly those reported in the focus groups, ranging from being a "part of the school culture" to not being noticed at all. Most mentors also reported that there were adequate space and resources in the school. One mentor commented that the school made a huge effort in making attractive areas for reading and activities. About 15% of mentors, however, reported there was a lack of adequate space. Some mentors indicated that they needed quieter areas with fewer distractions to help the students concentrate. Further, 7.6% of mentors surveyed stated that resources were inadequate for the mentoring sessions (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9. Frequencies of adequate space in the school and resources for the mentoring sessions.

Table 3.9	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
There is adequate space in the school for meeting with my student	Mentors	1.4%	13.6%	5.4%	50.3%	29.3%	3.93	147
There are adequate resources in the school for the mentoring sessions	Mentors	1.4%	6.2%	7.6%	55.2%	29.7%	4.06	145

One mentor suggested that "more activity sheets, plasticine, glue, scissors, crayons, etc. would be helpful." Another commented that there were limited educational activities to assist them in helping the students with their reading skills.

Fewer than eight percent of mentors, principals, teachers, and caseworkers who were surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the mentoring sessions were disruptive to classes (Table 3.10). One principal admitted that the program can disrupt classes, but that "we must find ways where the program isn't disruptive." Other teachers and mentors indicated that their classes were not affected because the sessions were held during the lunch hour. The literacy trainer had some concerns about class disruption, although she indicated that it was more disruptive for some teachers than for others.

Table 3.10. Frequencies of level of agreement regarding disruptiveness of ISM program to classes.

Table 3.10	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
The ISM program is disruptive to classes	Mentors	29.1%	43.3%	20.9%	6.7%	0	2.05	134
	Teachers	33.3%	35.9%	23.1%	5.1%	2.6%	2.08	39
	Administrators	22.2%	55.6%	16.7%	0	5.6%	2.11	18
	Caseworkers	0	75.0%	25.0%	0	0	2.25	4

3.3.7. Program Support

Synopsis

The nature of program support varied across study participants. Caseworkers provided ongoing support to mentors once they were matched with their students. The nature and frequency of this support varied across mentor and participants. In the focus groups, mentors described a variety of supports within the school setting, including support staff, teachers and principals. Again, the nature of this support varied across the mentors' experiences. The majority of mentors surveyed (60%) reported that more training or support would help them deal better with their students. The caseworkers and literacy trainer stated that they felt well-supported in the program.

Detailed Analysis

Mentors

Caseworkers provided ongoing support to mentors once they were matched with their students. The nature and frequency of this support varied across mentor participants. (See Section 3.4: 'Relationships and Communication,' for a more detailed analysis.) In addition to caseworkers, mentors in the focus groups described a variety of support people within the school setting, including support staff, teachers and principals. Some of the types of support that they described included the following:

- mentor appreciation events (e.g., breakfasts, special dinner for mentors and students prepared by the teachers, luncheon); and
- mentor recognition (e.g., thank you notes, sign-in books, special notices for mentors, school calendars outlining activities).

Some of the mentors in the focus groups also identified the supplemental literacy training sessions as a useful support.

The majority (60%) of mentors surveyed reported that more training or support would help them deal better with the student. More specifically, the most common types of training or support desired were in:

- dealing with behaviour problems;
- helping the children develop stronger social skills;
- keeping the students motivated and focused;
- receiving more specific ideas, activities and exercises to use in session with their student;
- meeting more often with mentors to share experiences and "tricks";
- learning more about the student's background;
- having more regular contact and increased feedback from the teacher, caseworker and literacy trainer; and
- developing a better understanding of realistic expectations relative to the student's abilities;

Caseworkers and Literacy Trainer

Caseworkers reported having a very good support system made up of co-workers, supervisors, and school staff. The literacy trainer also indicated that she felt supported by different stakeholders in various ways, from facilitating trainings to receiving moral and professional support. Further, she felt that she received guidance when needed.

3.4. Relationships and Communication

3.4.1. Relationships

Synopsis

The caseworkers and literacy trainer provided important links between the senior stakeholders (e.g., BSBB, CFL), the schools, and the mentors. The caseworkers and school administrators all believed strongly that the caseworkers were part of the school culture. The level of agreement was somewhat lower for teachers (80%). Mentors and teachers generally agreed that caseworkers were available and helpful, although one-third of the teachers were either neutral or disagreed. Despite the mentors' positive responses about the caseworkers' availability, about one-third reported more contact and support from the caseworker would have been helpful. The majority of teachers and mentors surveyed were not aware of the literacy trainer's role in the program. The literacy trainer acknowledged the challenge in connecting with all of the people in the program, particularly teachers.

The caseworkers and literacy trainer provided important links between the senior stakeholders (e.g., BSBB, CFL), the schools and the mentors. To assess these links, participants were asked to respond to specific questions about the roles of caseworkers (Table 3.11) and the literacy trainer (Table 3.12).

The caseworkers and administrators all agreed that the caseworkers were part of the school culture, as did most teachers (Table 3.11). One dissenting teacher commented, "She was never around and was unavailable" and another explained that the caseworker worked with the vice-principal of the school, who then passed on the information to the teachers. Mentors and teachers generally agreed that caseworkers were available and helpful, although one-third of the teachers were either neutral or disagreed. Despite the mentors' positive responses about the caseworkers' availability, about one-third reported more contact and support from the caseworker would have been helpful (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11. Nature of the caseworkers' relationships with teachers, mentors and administrators.

Table 3.11	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
The **caseworker** (coordinator) fits into the school's culture	Teachers	0	6.9%	13.8%	17.2%	62.1%	4.34	29
	Administrators	0	0	0	29.4%	70.6%	4.71	17
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	75.0%	25.0%	4.25	4
The **caseworker** is helpful and available when I need her	Mentors	1.4%	1.4%	12.4%	40.7%	44.1%	4.25	145
	Teachers	0	17.4%	17.4%	17.4%	47.8%	3.96	23
Increased contact and support from the **caseworker** (coordinator) would help improve my skills in the mentoring session	Mentors	3.5%	17.7%	45.4%	27.0%	6.4%	3.15	141

When asked whether the **literacy trainer was part of the school culture,** only nine teachers answered the question (Table 3.12). The majority indicated that they did not know that there was a literacy trainer or who this person was: "I have no idea what this 'literacy trainer' refers to," commented one teacher. All of the comments spontaneously written by teachers indicated that they were unaware of the literacy trainer's role in the program. A similar pattern was noted for responses to the statement, "The literacy trainer is helpful and available when I need her." Only 10 teachers responded to this question. The majority of mentors surveyed (about 60%) were either neutral or disagreed with this statement. Most mentors who provided comments wrote that their lack of knowledge about the literacy trainer prevented them from answering questions relating to her position.

Table 3.12. Nature of the literacy trainer's relationship with teachers, administrators, mentors and caseworkers.

Table 3.12	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
The **literacy trainer** fits into the school's culture	Teachers	11.1%	0	11.1%	44.4%	33.3%	3.89	9
	Administrators	0	0	0	18.2%	81.8%	4.82	11
The **literacy trainer** is helpful and available when I need her	Mentors	3.6%	2.4%	54.8%	19.0%	20.2%	3.50	84
	Teachers	0	0	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	3.90	10
Increased contact and support from the **literacy trainer** would help improve my literacy techniques in the mentoring session	Mentors	2.6	11.2%	41.4%	28.4%	16.4%	3.45	116

The literacy trainer described an initial challenge of developing relationships in the program, there were so many people to get to know and especially because her position was only part-time (3.5 days per week). She identified her main focus as having contact with mentors, which she would like to continue to develop. She also described her

contact with teachers as "almost non-existent." Recognizing this situation as deficient, she commented:

> [The caseworker] and I need to go to schools and speak with the people who are involved, whether that's like I said classroom teachers and or principals, whatever, and get some more. . . feedback and know whether they want that or not.

3.4.2.Communication

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Synopsis[24]

Formal communication patterns among the different participant groups varied considerably. Teachers and mentors reported that, on average, they communicated with each other most often, with less frequent contact with caseworkers and the literacy trainer. They also reported that, on average, communication between them (i.e.,mentors and teachers) was adequate. However, there was considerable variability in this response. About one quarter of mentors and one fifth of teachers surveyed reported that the communication between teachers and mentors was less than adequate, while one quarter of teachers and mentors reported that communication was more than adequate. Both teachers and mentors indicated a need for more frequent contact and support from the literacy trainer. The literacy trainer also identified a need for increased contact. Mentors and caseworkers also expressed a desire for increased contact with parents. Participants also were asked about their communication with the senior stakeholders in BSBB and CFL. Mentors, teachers, and administrators communicate with BSBB and CFL less than once per month. Administrators were satisfied with the frequency of communication, but both teachers and mentors would like more contact with the CFL, and teachers would like more communication with BSBB. In addition to formal patterns of communication, participants also described a variety of informal communication patterns within the school setting.

</div>

Survey participants were asked about the frequency and adequacy of communication with different stakeholders. The results are summarized in Figure 3.2. It appears that, on average, teachers communicated most often with mentors and vice versa, whereas their contact with caseworkers and the literacy trainer were less frequent. They also reported that, on average, communication with mentors and teachers was adequate. However, there was considerable variability in this response. About one quarter of mentors and one fifth of teachers surveyed reported that the communication between teachers and mentors was less than adequate, whereas one quarter of teachers and mentors reported that it was more than adequate. Both teachers and mentors indicated a need for more frequent contact and support from the literacy trainer, whereas the literacy trainer also identified a need for increased contact. Mentors and caseworkers also expressed a desire for increased contact with parents. However, some mentors indicated that they did not think the program allowed them to have contact with the family.

---

[24] Some caution is warranted in interpreting these findings, due to the variable response rates across stakeholder groups for some of the questions. For some questions, if the participants were unfamiliar with the stakeholders, they would skip the question and indicate they did not know who the stakeholders were**.**

These findings were further reinforced in the focus groups with mentors. One mentor suggested that contact with parents would be helpful to get feedback about children's progress.

Participants were also asked about their communication with the senior stakeholders in BSBB and CFL (see Figure 3.2). Mentors, teachers, and administrators communicate with BSBB and CFL less than once a month. Administrators are satisfied with the frequency of communication, however both teachers and mentors would like more contact with CFL, and teachers would like more communication with BSBB.

In addition to the survey findings, participants in interviews and focus groups described informal patterns of communication among different stakeholder groups. These included casual conversations in different settings within the school (e.g., hallways, library, administrative office, teacher's classroom) or phone conversations.

Figure 3.2: Frequency and Adequacy of Communication

Below is a summary of **how often**, on average, the **participants communicate with other stakeholders**. (See Appendix J, Tables J-3.2a, J-3.2b for specific questions and response rates). We also asked them whether the frequency of communication was adequate. Those who indicated that their communication with a particular stakeholder is **inadequate**, have been **circled**[1].

Legend

M = Mentors	**L** = Literacy
T = Teachers	**B** = BSBB
A = Administrators	**CF** = CFL
C = Caseworker	**P** = Parents

Teachers

(1) never   (2) < once a month   (3) 1 to 4 times a month   (4) >4 times a month

CF L, B, P, C, A, T, M

Mentors

(1) never   (2) < once a month   (3) 1 to 4 times a month   (4) >4 times a month

CF L, P, B, M, A, C, T

Principals

(1) never   (2) < once a month   (3) 1 to 4 times a month   (4) >4 times a month

A L, CF, B, P, C, M, T

Caseworkers

(1) never   (2) < once a month   (3) 1 to 4 times a month   (4) >4 times a month

CF, P, M, L, A, T, B, C

Literacy Trainer

(1) never   (2) < once a month   (3) 1 to 4 times a month   (4) >4 times a month

P, B, A, T, M, C, CF

[1]The cutoff for "inadequacy" is M < 1.5. Please note that participants may have indicated that the rarely communicate with a stakeholder (based on Table J-3.2a) but are satisfied with infrequent communication (based on Table J-3.2b).

3.5. Program Changes and Impacts[25]

Synopsis

The organizational structure for the ISM program changed in September, 2000, when the program shifted from an individual, school-based focus to a collaborative, city-wide initiative. The perceptions of the nature and impact of this change varied considerably across the stakeholder groups, with the most apparent changes and impact occurring at the administrative level. In terms of program delivery, most caseworkers reported that they had not experienced any major changes, although, administratively, there were more demands. In contrast, the literacy trainer, who was hired in October, 2000, was affected by these changes, as she developed her new role in the program. Principals, teachers, and mentors appeared to have experienced less of an impact from the organizational change. However, some did describe a number of notable differences in the program, such as more mentors, fewer resources and space, and more paperwork. The emphasis on literacy, which was one of the specific objectives of the program, was inconsistent, particularly from the mentors' perspectives.

Detailed Analysis

The organizational structure for the ISM program changed in September, 2000, when the program shifted from an individual, school-based focus to a collaborative, city-wide initiative (see Section 3.1 for more detailed description). Those participants (stakeholders) who had been involved in ISM prior to September, 2000, were asked to describe what if any changes had occurred and the impact of these changes on themselves and the program[26].

Of the total number of mentors, teachers, and administrators surveyed (n=204), 84 participants had been involved in the ISM program prior to September, 2000, including 41% of mentors (n=60), 28% of teachers (n=11), and 72% of the principals (n=13). Due to this relatively small subsample (n=84), caution is warranted in interpreting survey findings in this section of the report. All of the participants in the mentors' focus groups (n=10) and teacher's focus group (n=4) had been involved prior to September, 2000.

Senior Stakeholders' Perspectives

Senior stakeholders (i.e., ECF, BSBB, CFL) were asked to comment on three specific themes relating to program changes: (1) impact on staff and the organization; (2) identification of efficiencies and/or effectiveness of scale; and (3) impact on quality and/or equity of program delivery. A summary of these themes and the respective perspectives from the senior stakeholders appears in Table 3.14.

---

[25] Information for this section of the report was obtained from three primary sources: interviews, focus groups and surveys. For the survey portion, only those participants who had been involved in the ISM program prior to September, 2000, responded to the part of the survey focusing on program changes (n=84). Depending upon the question in this section of the survey, the number of respondents per question ranged from 19 to 83. Due to these low response rates, some caution is warranted in the interpretation of the survey findings.

[26] Some of the people were involved in ISM programs that were funded from sources other than ECF. With the change in organizational structure, these programs were merged with the ECF-funded programs. The literacy trainer was also included in this discussion, as her position and role in the program was created as a result of the changes.

From **ECF's perspective**, the major impact on the organization had been a shift in roles, moving from a "reactive" to "proactive" stance for grant recruitment and the funding of "programs" rather than "projects." Although the development of the city-wide ISM initiative was not necessarily any more efficient for the Foundation's internal operation, it did assist with the centralization of fund distribution. In terms of equity and quality of program delivery, it was the Foundation's hope that there would be equity in terms of reaching "at risk" children, as opposed to equity in terms of number of matches per school (regardless of the nature or location of the school).

From **BSBB's perspective**, the city-wide ISM program affected the organization in a number of ways: (1) staff changes; (2) the need for transition time for program mergers (e.g., High Park, Brightview); (3) increased numbers of matches and schools; and (4) increased number of intake calls by other BSBB staff. The relocation of BSBB caseworkers to school sites in the fall, 2001, was not part of the original proposal, but had become a necessary change with the continuing growth of the program. In terms of efficiencies and/or effectiveness of scale, two specific areas were identified: (1) decreased costs of the program for an individual school and (2) standardization and centralization of recruitment, screening, training, supervision, and placement.

From **CFL's perspective,** the major impact on the organization was an increase in administrative time without any compensation, as well as the lack of funding for infrastructure support. Some efficiencies and/or effectiveness of scale included being able to bridge with other internal programs at the Centre, the potential to link with other programs through Edmonton Public, and the standardization and training of mentors. In terms of quality and equity of program delivery, a number of inconsistencies across schools were identified, including level of mentor training, selection criteria for identifying and matching "at risk" students, length of mentoring sessions, and teacher expectations.

Both BSBB and CFL participants stated that the program had created a greater workload in their respective organizations, within a larger framework of overall organizational growth.

Table 3.14. Impact of program changes on senior stakeholders

Category of Change	Stakeholder's Perspective		
	ECF	**BSBB**	**CFL**
impact on staff and organization	• proactive stance for grant recruitment • increased amount of money allocated per grant • funding programs as opposed to projects • enhanced role of impacting community programming	• staff changes • transitions for program mergers (e.g.,High Park, Brightview) • relocation of coordinators to school locations (as of Sept, 2001) • increased number of matches, schools • increased number of intake calls by other BSBB staff	• more administrative time with no compensation • no infrastructure support
efficiencies and/or effectiveness of scale	• centralization of distribution of funds • not necessarily anymore efficient for Foundation's internal operation	• decreased cost of program per school • standardization and centralization of recruitment, screening, training, supervision and placement	• being able to bridge internal programs (e.g.,adult tutoring and ISM) • potential for further development with other programs with Edmonton Public • standardization & centralization of training
impact on quality and equity of program delivery	• not necessarily equity in distribution across schools, rather equity in terms of meeting target group ("at risk" children)	• differences across similar types of schools (e.g.,St. Pat's vs. Sacred Heart) • differences across schools in terms of resources (e.g.,reading materials)	• inconsistencies across schools in terms of mentor training, selection criteria for matches, length of mentoring sessions, teacher expectations

In addition to these three specific themes, senior stakeholders were also asked whether or not there was a common understanding about the program amongst the key stakeholders. Both ECF and BSBB stated that they thought there was. In contrast, CFL had some concerns about the vision for the program, suggesting that there had not been an opportunity to clearly articulate what that vision might be.

> To be quite honest I don't think we did have a common vision. That part of the problem was that there wasn't that acknowledgement that we didn't have a common vision. So then it becomes difficult to deal with. Oh yes, we all understand what this is about – but I don't think we really did. We never really had that discussion.

One of the suggestions offered for this inability to articulate a common vision was a philosophical difference.

> For us literacy is the focus and we do the self esteem and the building confidence through literacy as a vehicle. And I'd say the emphasis is a little bit more…..Bigs perspective…I can't speak really for them but this is how I see it – that they work on the relationship itself and then out of that hope that the literacy will develop. It's a subtle difference but it is a difference.

Although CFL described a lot of progress in this area over the past few months, there was a need expressed to meet and discuss the vision for the program in more detail.

> We haven't quite defined exactly what it is we're trying to do here, I think between all the different partners. I feel we've come a long way in the last few months. I think certainly there's a better appreciation…..[for] what Shirley [the literacy trainer] is doing now, the kind of training and the depth that she brings to it in terms of the literacy background. And I think that's a result of feedback from the mentors as well, they've [realized] their training [is] useful. So I'd say….we're getting closer to a common vision. But I think we probably still need to sit down and actually talk about that and just have a really good discussion about what exactly we're trying to do here.

BSBB Caseworkers' Perspectives

The caseworkers' perceptions of the program changes varied, though most had not experienced any major changes. One of the caseworkers stated that she had not experienced any change, whereas another described primarily administrative differences (e.g., more paper work, more structured standards and procedures) with the core foundation of the program (e.g., matching one student with one mentor) remaining the same. Another caseworker described the impact of these changes on some of the schools that had their own programs originally, particularly one school in which there were some issues around role confusion and adapting to different screening procedures. Some organizational changes with respect to job descriptions and roles were also identified in the group.

Literacy Trainer's Perspective

The literacy trainer identified a number of challenges in her role in the program. Initially, she stated that she spent a lot of her time focusing on relationship building, as there were many people to know in the program. She described some philosophical differences, as well as the need to "get people on board," as presenting further challenges. She expressed a major concern about the lack of standardization of training, suggesting that "there is yet no program." She also emphasized the importance of "getting everybody on the same page," so that everyone has "the same idea of what the program is and it hopes to achieve and . . . how it should work."

Mentors' Perspectives

Most (75%) of the surveyed mentors were involved in the program prior to September, 2000, indicated that they had noticed changes in the program compared with the previous year(s). Mentors described the following changes:

- More mentors in the schools;
- More difficulty finding resources and spaces to meet with students;
- New restrictions on gift giving;
- More paperwork (social service's check, more references, annual police check);
- More information being given on the program and on literacy techniques through newsletters, training sessions and meetings;
- More rules, structure and organization in place to help deal with the increase in volunteers; and
- Less checks/follow-up by the BSBB caseworker.

Teachers' Perspectives

Seventy-three percent of teachers surveyed who were involved in the program prior to September, 2000, observed changes in the program. They described the following types of changes:

- restrictions on gift giving;
    The mentors were asked not to give gifts at any time (except a book at Christmas or year-end if desired). This has positively affected the classroom in that the other kids do not feel left out and the other mentors do not feel obligated to bring a gift for their child.
- more space and resources for mentors outside the classroom;
    We made more spaces available for mentors and students and also set up an area where mentors could access supplies and materials. This really cut down on classroom interruptions.
- more mentors around and more matches;
- more of a focus on literacy;
- more efficient program now that it is centralized; and
- concern over losing "wonderful senior mentors" due to lengthier screening process and an increase in paperwork for mentors[27].

The teachers who participated in the focus group noted that they had not noticed any changes organizationally. They agreed with the statement one of their colleagues made that "the specific mentors seem to make more of a difference than the organizational structure change" to the children and to the classroom teacher. Two of the teachers thought that more mentors were available in the 2000-2001 school year than in the past. A third teacher thought that the mentors this school year "…had better training because they come more prepared, with a bigger bag of goodies. Maybe they are receiving more guidance."

---

[27] BSBB checked their files and not one has been lost.

Principals' Perspectives

Almost all of the surveyed principals (92%) noticed changes in the program. Most principals who were interviewed, however, experienced these changes as "seamless." As one principal described it, "Not even a hiccup. Everything just kind of continued to move along as it had been". Another principal was not even aware of any changes, commenting, "I don't know how it's changed from other years, I just know that it's worked very well this year". Principals who noticed the following changes:

- An increased number of mentors;
- Increased and improved communication between school and mentors as well as between teachers and mentors;
- As the number of schools involved increases, the number of mentors per school decreases; and
- There is less mentor recruitment without a coordinator on-site.

General Perspectives

Participants in the survey were asked how the current program compared with the previous program in a number of areas that reflect delivery and effectiveness. Negative reactions to the "new" program were infrequent (see shaded portions of Table 3.15a), and in most cases the majority of participants indicated that these indicators of delivery and effectiveness had not changed. Clearly most participants were not affected negatively by changes in the program. A notable exception was emphasis on literacy. Consistent with the change in the program's goals, teachers and administrators often reported that the emphasis on literacy was greater during the current than during the previous year. Perhaps surprisingly, the people most intimately involved with the delivery of the program (mentors and caseworkers) were less likely than teachers and administrators to judge that the emphasis on literacy had increased.

Table 3.15a. Survey comparison of program changes (2000-2001) with the previous program.

Table 3.15a						
Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 2000 to June 20001)…						
Question	**Stakeholders**	**Less (1)**	**Same (2)**	**More (3)**	**M**	**N**
… how difficult is it to contact the caseworker (coordinator)?	Mentors	12.0%	86.0%	2.0%	1.90	50
	Teachers	8.3%	91.7%	0	1.92	12
	Administrators	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	2.00	8
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	4
… how much time does the ISM caseworker spend in the school?	Teachers	18.8%	37.5%	43.8%	2.25	16
	Administrators	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	2.30	10
	Caseworkers	33.3%	66.7%	0	1.67	3
…how much space available to accommodate the number of mentors in the school?	Mentors	12.1%	70.7%	17.2%	2.05	58
	Teachers	10.0%	60.0%	30.0%	2.20	10
	Administrators	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	2.18	11
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	4
…how many resources are available to accommodate the number of mentors in the school?	Mentors	3.4%	69.0%	27.6%	2.24	58
	Teachers	0	66.7%	33.3%	2.33	9
	Administrators	0	45.5%	54.5%	2.55	11
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	4
…what are the demands on the teacher(s)' time with respect to the ISM program?	Mentors	12.5%	80.0%	7.5%	1.95	40
	Teachers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	10
	Administrators	0	90.9%	9.1%	2.09	11
…what are the demands on the school administrator(s)' time with respect to the ISM program?	Teachers	25.0%	75.0%	0	1.75	8
	Administrators	0	90.9%	9.1%	2.09	11
…how disruptive is it for the teacher and the class to have students in the ISM program?	Mentors	14.9%	80.9%	4.3%	1.89	47
	Teachers	30.0%	70.0%	0	1.70	10
	Administrators	9.1%	90.9%	0	1.91	11
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	4
…how much emphasis is there on literacy?	Mentors	10.7%	67.9%	21.4%	2.11	56
	Teachers	0	50.0%	50.0%	2.50	10
	Administrators	0	45.5%	54.5%	2.55	11
	Caseworkers	0	75.0%	25.0%	2.75	4
… how much time does the ISM caseworker (coordinator) spend with the mentors?	Mentors	23.2%	69.6%	7.1%	1.84	56

Compared to previous years, the majority of survey participants rated the quality of the 2000-2001 program as either the 'same' or better' than previous years (Table 3.15b). One of the comments from a principal was that there were more and better mentors. Although most participants rated the quality of the program favorably, one principal and one mentor reported that the program quality was worse in 2000-2001 than in previous years but neither elaborated further.

Table 3.15b	Stakeholders	Worse (1)	Same (2)	Better (3)	M	N
Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 2000 to June 20001)… *…how would you rate the overall quality of the ISM program?*	Mentors	1.8%	75.4%	22.8%	2.21	57
	Teachers	0	55.6%	44.4%	2.44	9
	Administrators	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	2.70	10
	Caseworkers	0	25.0%	75.0%	2.75	4

3.6. Program Improvements

Stakeholders participating in focus groups and interviews were asked two specific questions to help identify specific areas for improvement in the program:

1. If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?

2. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

A summary of the responses to these two questions appears in Table 3.16a and 3.16b respectively.

In Table 3.16a suggestions are organized according to different components of the program. The range is extensive, from general suggestions for enhancing the uniformity of the program and simplifying administrative procedures to very specific thoughts about strategies for enhancing support and communication, particularly with mentors.

Table 3.16a. Suggestions for program improvement from study participants.

Program Area	Suggestions for Improvement
General	• ensuring more uniformity in the program (Literacy Trainer, Interview) • simplifying administrative demands (Caseworker, Focus Group) • expanding the program to accommodate more students (Principal, Interview) • increasing funding for infrastructure costs (e.g.,CFL) (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • convening an ISM advisory committee in the fall, 2001, to talk about program (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview)
Vision/Goals	• establishment of an advisory committee to the program to provide guidance and support
Program Delivery	
- recruitment and screening	• need to develop easier ways to recruit volunteers (BSBB Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • increasing the number of mentors (Caseworker, Focus Group)
- mentor training	• need to ensure that all mentors get appropriate training and support (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • making training programs mandatory (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • development of hands-on school based literacy training sessions (Principal, Interview) • offering mentors more training sessions (Mentor, Focus Group) • setting training dates further ahead of time, if possible[28] (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • conducting training sessions at CFL office (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • developing components of training programs that focus on cultural issues (e.g.,Aboriginal children, ESL children) (CFL Senior Stakeholder, Interview)
- identifying "at risk" children	• selecting children based on literacy needs (Literacy Trainer, Interview)
- mentoring relationship	• articulating roles of mentors (Literacy Trainer, Interview)
- mentoring session	• more frequent meetings (i.e.,more than once a week) with students, if appropriate (Teacher, Focus Group)
- monitoring and support	• regular meetings between teachers and mentors to share expectations, discuss student's progress, provide mentors with feedback (Teacher, Focus Group) • meetings/sharing sessions for mentors to meet with other mentors and share ideas (Teacher, Focus Group; Mentor, Focus Group) • establishment of a mentor resource area at BSBB (Teacher, Focus Group) • matching a new mentor with an experienced mentor (Mentor, Focus Group) • obtaining more feedback, for example, from caseworkers and/or teachers to know more about what is happening in the classroom (Mentor, Focus Group)
Relationships & Communication	• being more visible and accessible (literacy trainer) (Literacy Trainer, Interview) • finding ways to build relationships at all levels (BSBB Senior Stakeholder, Interview) • developing a system to let mentors know when their students are absent (Teacher, Focus Group • opportunities for social interactions between teachers and mentors (Teacher, Focus Group) • finding ways to improve communication (Caseworker, Focus Group) • having the caseworker full-time in the school or at least be based in the school (2 Principals, Interviews) • obtaining feedback from parents (Mentor, Focus Group) • offering ISM information sessions to teachers (CFL Senior Stakeholder and Literacy Trainer, Interview) • more dialogue between mentors and teachers (Literacy Trainer, Interview)

[28] BSBB currently has, and has always had, this policy.

The responses to the second question reflect the complexity of the program and the need to address a diverse set of needs across many of the stakeholder groups (Table 3.16b). Participants who work closely with children cited the relationship between mentors and children as most important, and those who work at more administrative levels cited structural characteristics of the program as most important.

Table 3.16b. Responses to the question, "What do you think is most important for the program at this time?"

Stakeholder	Comment
ECF	• recruitment, orientation and training of qualified mentors • finding appropriate matches for "at risk" students • cooperation, ongoing commitment and continuity from the schools • retaining the program's energy
BSBB	• support from teachers and principals
CFL	• developing a common vision
Caseworkers	• relationship between the mentor and the child
Literacy Trainer	• contact with mentors
Mentors	• helping children in need, gratifying relationships with children
Teachers	• the special social relationship that forms between a child and a "reliable, loving, mature" adult role model
Principals	• a positive caring relationship between mentors and students

3.7. Overall Satisfaction

3.7.1. Synopsis

The majority of study participants (over 90%) were generally satisfied with the program. Most school personnel reported that they were comfortable having mentors in the school and the majority of survey participants suggested that students were benefiting from the program. The majority of participants who were surveyed (i.e.,greater than 95% of mentors, administrators, and caseworkers, as well as the literacy trainer) viewed the ISM program as an important part of the school. The level of agreement for teachers was slightly lower (i.e.,90%), with three teachers responding either neutrally or disagreeing with the statement. About 95% of principals and 80% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funds were available. Participants who were interviewed or attended focus groups also expressed satisfaction with the program. The CFL stakeholders were generally pleased with the program, but expressed some concerns around the need for appropriate mentor training and follow-up.

3.7.2. Detailed Analysis

The great majority of mentors, teachers, administrators, and caseworkers who were surveyed reported that they were satisfied with the ISM program (Table 3.17). The strongest advocates were the administrators. One administrator stated that it was an excellent program and that the mentors were very friendly with all of the students and staff . A small number of mentors (5), one teacher, and one administrator, however, were not satisfied with the program. Nearly all school personnel also reported that they felt comfortable having the mentors in their school, working with the students (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17. Level of program satisfaction and comfort with having mentors in the school across survey participants.

Table 3.17	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
I am satisfied with the ISM program	Mentors	0.7%	2.8%	4.1%	54.5%	37.9%	4.26	145
	Teachers	0	2.6%	2.6%	52.6%	42.1%	4.34	38
	Administrators	0	5.6%	0	16.7%	77.8%	4.67	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	50.0%	50.0%	4.50	4
I am comfortable having mentors spending time with students at the school	Teachers	0	2.6%	0	23.7%	73.7%	4.68	38
	Administrators	0	0	0	5.6%	94.4%	4.94	18

Overall, there was a strong belief that students were benefiting from their time in the ISM program: Over 90% of survey participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that students were benefiting from their time in the program (Table 3.18). About 10% of teachers and mentors responded with either a neutral response or disagreed with the statement. Some mentors commented that they had difficulty

determining student benefits due to limited feedback from teachers and others at the school (Table 3.18).

Table 3.18. Level of agreement about students benefiting from their time in the ISM program across survey participants.

Table 3.18	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
The students are benefiting from their time in the ISM program.	Mentors	0	0.7%	9.2%	57.0%	33.1%	4.23	142
	Teachers	0	2.6%	7.7%	20.5%	69.2%	4.56	39
	Administrators	0	0	0	5.6%	94.4%	4.94	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	0	100%	5.0	4

The majority of participants who were surveyed viewed the ISM program as an important part of the school (Table 3.19). The level of agreement for teachers was slightly lower than for other participant groups. About 95% of principals and 80% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funds were available.

Table 3.19. Indicators of importance of program.

Table 3.19	Stakeholders	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	M	N
The ISM is an important part of the school	Mentors	.7%	0	2.8%	37.1%	59.4%	4.55	143
	Teachers	0	2.6%	5.1%	33.3%	59.0%	4.49	39
	Administrators	0	0	0	38.9%	61.1%	4.61	18
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	50.0%	50.0%	4.50	4
I would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funding was available	Teachers	0	5.3%	15.8%	23.7%	55.3%	4.29	38
	Administrators	5.6%	0	0	16.7%	77.8%	4.61	18

Stakeholders who participated in focus groups and interviews were also asked about their satisfaction with the program. Most participants offered a favorable response. For example, the five principals who were interviewed were unanimous in reporting a very high level of satisfaction with the program. They noted that teachers were happy and supportive, and that children eagerly anticipate visits from their mentors (see comments below). In a tangible demonstration of his satisfaction with the program, one principal had created an office and devoted resources to supporting the caseworker.

"I can't say enough about it … I just think it's one of the most positive programs I've ever seen"

"All the teachers who have been involved with the mentoring program have been extremely happy with what's happened. Their only issue is that there are not enough mentors"

[Students] involved in the program are really enjoying it, really loving it. I don't know how many children come up to me in a week and say 'When's my mentor coming?'"

"I'm extremely satisfied in the sense that it provides at-risk children with opportunities that sometimes they would not get"

Similarly, the four teachers who participated in the focus group were unanimous with respect to their satisfaction with the program. The caseworkers were equally satisfied although they suggested some areas that needed improvement including communication and the simplification of administrative tasks.

The CFL stakeholders were generally satisfied with the program, but acknowledged the need for program improvement in some areas. They expressed some concerns around the need to ensure all mentors were trained appropriately and to develop appropriate methods to ensure continuing follow-up with mentors. A senior member of the CFL declared:

> [Are you satisfied with the program?]. I'm happy and satisfied that we've got someone who really knows what she's doing in terms of literacy training. I feel very confident in her ability to do that training and give people what they need in the area of literacy.

The literacy trainer also emphasized training.

> I think what I would be dissatisfied with is not having enough contact with enough mentors. And that would be both initial contact with people coming to trainings and then people who have been to trainings and know about me….I think one thing I've heard from…the program has definitely been a positive for a lot of the people who are being mentors. They're getting a lot out of it. And it's really working for them. Of course I don't have access to the kids, so I don't know what the kids are saying, but I've heard a lot of mentors who are just…I mean they just love their kids to bits. I can remember one man saying do we have to wait until the third week of September? Couldn't we start right away, that kind of thing. So obviously there's some very powerful stuff happening.

3.8. Evaluation of Outcomes

Participants who were interviewed or attended focus groups were asked for their input regarding the possibility of evaluating the outcomes of this program. This information could subsequently be helpful in the development of an outcome evaluation design for this program (see Table 3.20 for summary).

Table 3.20. Proposed outcomes for the evaluation of ISM by study participants.

Target group	Outcome
Children	Behaviorial • increased confidence – reading more books, taking more books out of the library, willingness to read aloud in class • better school attendance • changes occurring in child's home life Cognitive/Academic • developing better literacy skills • grade level increments in growth Attitudinal/Affective • happier • increased self-esteem • better attitude toward reading • increased desire to read • increased enthusiasm • emotional growth
Mentors	• satisfaction with their role • commitment to the program
Teachers & Principals	• commitment to the program • satisfaction with the program
Schools	• showing the program is beneficial to the school
Community	• help employers understand why this is a good investment in their community • increased community awareness of the importance of literacy • evidence of commitment from the community
Administrative	• degree of fit between BSBB, CFL, and schools

Despite the ability to identify particular outcomes, some of the participants expressed concerns about doing an outcome evaluation study. As one principal noted, "although it's a literacy focus … that may be very difficult to measure because it [depends on] so many different things". Another said "If you relate [it] to students' reading scores and students' writing scores, then are you saying that it's only the mentor that's making the difference? What about the program in the school? And what about the parents? There are so many factors that go into making something work". These principals were

acutely aware of the difficulties associated with trying to disaggregate the effects of ISM from the effects of other literacy activities. However, most of the principals agreed with the one who said "What I think you probably can get some real clear information about is just generally how kids feel and their confidence and what types of things the mentors have taught them".

One participant expressed concerns about using achievement tests as an outcome measure.

> One thing I would not like to see is using standardized test scores or even achievement exam results as a measure of the program because I don't think that's what we're about. And I don't for sure want to ever have to place that kind of responsibility on mentors. And I've said I mean you cannot teach reading in one hour a week, even if you were a highly trained professional. It doesn't happen that way. And so I'm encouraging mentors to focus on the more difficult to measure things like confidence. I guess in some ways unfortunately it would probably fall on teachers to kind of measure, you know, if the child reading more books. Are they taking more books from the library? Are they more willing to stand up and read in the class? Those kinds of things, that would be sort of more checklists kinds of things (Literacy Trainer, Interview).

Yet another participant spoke about the importance of looking at qualitative differences, as opposed to quantitative differences.

> I personally do not want to see you have to have a 95% success rate with all the children. And to me it's not based on the volume, it's based on the quality of . . .the difference that you've made in X number of children. (ECF Distribution Committee, Interview)

This idea was reinforced by a caseworker who emphasized the importance of capturing the stories of students.

Acknowledging the difficulty in doing an outcome evaluation, one participant hoped that an outcome evaluation study would provide enough information to show that ISM is a good program and that it is making a difference.

> We may not know how many children graduated from whatever. . . what grade they were at, or how they improved. But if we have sort of a feel that it is making a difference and it is a good program. . .so that we can get further funding for the program. (ECF Distribution Committee, Interview)

Another participant expressed her discomfort with suggesting outcomes in isolation. She stressed the need to approach this task as a collective, to clarify the goals and outcomes of the program.

> I think this is something we really need to talk about. I don't think each of us individually should be talking about what we think the outcomes should be. I think we should all be talking about it in a group. What is it we're trying to do here and what outcomes do we want to see. Do we want to see kids happy, because that's one thing. Do we want to see them turned onto books and now really more focused and with a better capacity maybe for developing…going onto develop better literacy skills. Or do we want to actually see if a grade level increments in growth, which I don't think we're going to see. (Literacy Trainer, Interview)

4.0 ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

The findings from this evaluation study provided numerous insights into the design and delivery of the Literacy-Based ISM program. Overall, most participants were satisfied with the program and acknowledged its potential to help "at risk" students:

- Over 90% of the stakeholders are satisfied with the ISM program with the strongest advocates being the principals and the caseworkers.

- Approximately 90% of the mentors and teachers believe that the students are benefiting from their time in the program.

- Eighty percent of teachers and 95% of principals would increase the number of students participating in the program if more funding were available.

- The majority of mentors (85%) and teachers (55%) viewed the caseworkers as being helpful and available.

- Caseworkers and administrators believed strongly that the caseworkers were part of the school culture.

Beyond the student level, participants described additional benefits for themselves (for example, as mentors), the schools, and the community. Accompanying this endorsement, participants readily shared personal observations about the program and offered numerous suggestions for improvement.

In this final section of the report, a number of issues emerging from the study findings are presented for consideration and discussion. These issues are presented under the following themes:
- program design
- program goals
- program delivery
- relationships and communication
- program changes
- outcome evaluation

Program Design

The collaborative, city-wide ISM program is a complex operation involving multiple stakeholders with diverse needs. A major efficiency of this initiative is the centralization of services through BSBB and CFL, with a movement toward standardization of the program in terms of recruitment and screening, literacy training, mentor-student matches, and supervision and support. The challenges of program mergers and the rapid growth appear to have created some stresses within the design, which are described more fully below.

Program Goals

The dual goals of enhancing students' literacy skills and contributing to social development appear to have created noticeable tensions within the program. Although the importance of these two goals is generally well recognized among the stakeholders, notable discrepancies exist in the perception of which goal is or should be dominant. Creating a shared vision for the relation between literacy and social development may have implications for the ways in which mentors are trained and for the activities mentors undertake with students.

Program Delivery

The delivery of this program is a complex process, involving the need for innovative recruitment strategies, in-depth screening processes and literacy training programs for mentors, selective identification of "at risk" students, and adequate monitoring and follow-up. A number of factors have contributed to this complexity:

- limited understanding about program goals for some stakeholders and participants;

- inconsistent attendance at literacy training programs by mentors;

- inconsistent criteria for the selection of "at risk" students;

- variability across schools regarding the extent to which the ISM program fits within the school culture;

- some inconsistencies in program delivery across schools;

- wide variability in the nature of the mentoring relationship and sessions; and

- greater demand for the program than is possible to provide.

These factors merit attention as the program continues to expand and evolve.

Communication

The complexity of the program is reflected in many of the stakeholders' expressed needs for enhanced communication at a number of levels:

- Administrative: Re-establishment of Coalition Committee, as well as establishment of an advisory committee to the program

- School: Development of information sessions for school personnel, as well as enhancement of teacher-mentor communication

- Mentoring: Development of mechanisms for feedback from teachers, clearer delineation of program expectations and roles

- Program support: Enhanced support from caseworkers and the literacy trainer

Program Changes

The complexity of implementing this literacy-based, city-wide initiative is further reflected in the apparent limited changes at the program delivery level. Despite the enhanced literacy focus and overwhelming endorsement of the importance of literacy, the implementation of these changes is still in transition. For example, a substantial portion of mentors have not yet attended literacy training sessions. The demands of rapid program growth with limited resources, as well as the challenges of program mergers, may be adding some additional strain to the program (e.g., fewer resources and less space in some schools, inconsistent attendance at literacy training sessions by new and experienced mentors, challenges of recruiting sufficient numbers of mentors, inadequate administrative infrastructure).

Outcome Evaluation

The wide variability of views about outcome evaluation and possible measures of success further reinforces the complexity of the program and the nature of the mentoring relationship. Stakeholders expressed concerns about using enhancement of literacy skills as a measure for their primary outcomes. The fact that the program is in transition, as well as the lack of clarity around program goals and a common program vision, could impede the success of an outcome evaluation study at this time.

A summary of these issues for consideration in the delivery of the ISM program is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Summary of Issues for Discussion.

Theme	Issue
Program design	Challenges of implementing a complex program with multiple stakeholders and diversity of needs
Program goals	General acknowledgement of the importance of literacy and social skill development for students, without a clear consensus regarding the manner in which to achieve these goals
Program delivery	Inconsistent standardization of program, particularly with respect to program goals, mentor training, identification of "at risk" students, and the nature of the mentoring relationship/sessions
Communication	Stakeholders' expressed need for enhanced communication across different stakeholder groups
Program Changes	Inconsistent emphasis on literacy, despite an apparent overwhelming endorsement of its importance Rapid program growth which may be taxing limited resources Challenges of merging different programs
Outcome Evaluation	Premature at this time, due to transitional nature of implementation changes and lack of clarity around program goals/vision

Considerations for Future Evaluation

This evaluation study was limited by time frame and resources. Some additional considerations for further evaluation studies include the following:

- in-depth analysis of how ISM programs operate in specific schools (e.g., using a case study approach);
- analysis of how the literacy training program and mentoring sessions fit within the school curriculum;
- increased understanding of the ISM program's impact on the school;
- increased understanding of the ISM program's impact on the community;
- increased understanding of how a literacy-based ISM program becomes a part of the school culture;
- increased awareness of what transpires within mentoring sessions;
- increased understanding of the process for making program mergers successful; and
- investigation of the involvement of students and parents.

Appendix A

Schools Involved in the Evaluation Study

Participating Edmonton Public Schools

1. Athlone Elementary School
2. Brightview Elementary School
3. Eastwood Elementary School
4. Garneau Elementary School
5. High Park Elementary School
6. John A. McDougall Elementary School
7. Kensington Elementary School
8. King Edward Elementary School
9. McArthur Elementary School
10. McCauley Elementary School
11. McKee Elementary School
12. Mill Creek Elementary School
13. Parkdale Elementary School
14. R.J. Scott Elementary School
15. Rundle Elementary School

Participating Edmonton Catholic Schools

1. Sacred Heart Elementary School
2. St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary School
3. St. Martha's Elementary School
4. St. Michael's Elementary School
5. St. Patrick's Elementary School
6. Ben Calf Robe Catholic Elementary/Jr. High School
7. St. Teresa's Elementary School

Appendix B

Surveys

1. Mentor Survey
2. Teacher Survey
3. School Administrator Survey
4. Big Sisters & Big Brothers Society Caseworker Survey
5. Centre for Family Literacy - Literacy Trainer Survey

ID. No. _____

Evaluating Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM)

Survey for Mentors

This survey is divided into four separate sections. The first three sections refer to different components of the In-School Mentoring program: *program description, program changes and communication issues*. The final section of this survey includes *background information* about you and your role as a mentor.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential and your name will not be attached to the information that you give. As completing this survey is voluntary, your completion and return of this survey will indicate that you have given your consent to participate.

As you are completing the survey, you may want to include additional comments. Please feel free to do so in the spaces provided, as needed.

Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided by <u>June 4th, 2001</u>. If you are using the e-mail option, then please send your response to <u>xxxx@ualberta.ca</u> by <u>June 4th, 2001.</u>

If you have any questions about the items or the survey, then please contact Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Laurie Schnirer or Jeff Bisanz at 492-6177.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Part 1: Program Description

1.1.   The following items describe the **CURRENT** In-School Mentoring (ISM) program. Please indicate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.** Feel free to note any remarks under the "Comments" section to the right of each question.

	Program Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer (N/A)
1	The ISM program is an important part of the school.	1	2	3	4	5	0
2	The student with whom I am matched is benefiting from his/her time in the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0
3	The ISM program is disruptive to classes.	1	2	3	4	5	0
4	I feel welcome in the school.	1	2	3	4	5	0
5	Mentoring is an enjoyable activity for me.	1	2	3	4	5	0
6	I feel that, as a mentor, I am making a difference in my student's life.	1	2	3	4	5	0
7	I feel that, as a mentor, I am making a useful contribution.	1	2	3	4	5	0
8	The ISM caseworker (coordinator) is helpful and available when I need her.	1	2	3	4	5	0
9	The literacy trainer is helpful and available when I need her.	1	2	3	4	5	0
10	Increased contact and support from the ISM caseworker (coordinator) would help improve my skills in the mentoring session.	1	2	3	4	5	0
11	Increased contact and support from the literacy trainer would help improve my literacy techniques in the mentoring session.	1	2	3	4	5	0
12	There is adequate space in the school for meeting with my student.	1	2	3	4	5	0
13	There are adequate resources in the school for the mentoring sessions.	1	2	3	4	5	0
14	I am satisfied with the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

1.2.   For the next set of items, please indicate the **IMPORTANCE** OF each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

	Program Description	Not at all		Somewhat		Very	No Answer (N/A)
15	How important do you think it is to **your student's teacher** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
16	How important do you think it is **to your student's teacher** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
17	How important do **you** think it is to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
18	How important do **you** think it is to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
19	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
20	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
21	How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

22. Did you become involved in the ISM prior to September 1st, 2000?

_____ Yes   **If yes, then please complete Part 2 of this survey.**

_____ No   **If no, then you may skip Part 2 and go directly to Part 3 of the survey.**

Part 2. Program Changes

The next set of items relates to **changes** that occurred in the implementation of the ISM program as of September, 2000.

2.1   What, if any, changes do you think have occurred in the ISM program as of September,   2000? How, if at all, have these changes affected you?

2.2   For each item, please circle the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS   AT THIS TIME.**

	Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)……				No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
23	…how much time does the ISM caseworker (coordinator) spend with you?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
24	…how difficult is it to contact the ISM coordinator (caseworker)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
25	…how much space do you have in the school for the mentoring sessions with your student?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
26	…how many school resources do you have to use in the sessions with your student?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
27	…what are the demands on your time with respect to the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	

Part 2. Program Changes (continued)

Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)….				No Answer (N/A)
28	…how much emphasis is there on literacy?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
29	…what are the demands on the teacher's time with respect to the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
30	…how disruptive is the ISM program for the teacher and students in the classroom?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
31	…how would you rate the overall quality of the ISM program?	1 worse	2 same	3 better	0 N/A

Comments:

31a. Please explain your response to question #31.

Part 3. Communication

3.1   **During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?**

		Never	Less than once a month	From 1 to 4 times a month	More than 4 times a month
32	Other mentors in the program	1	2	3	4
33	Caseworker (coordinator) assigned to you and your student	1	2	3	4
34	Your student's teacher	1	2	3	4
35	The school administrator(s)	1	2	3	4
36	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	4
37	Centre for Family Literacy (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	4
38	Big Sisters Big Brothers (BSBB) staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3	4
39	Your student's parent(s)	1	2	3	4

Comments:

3.2.   **During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?**

		Less than adequate	Adequate	More than adequate
40	Other mentors in the program	1	2	3
41	The caseworker (coordinator) assigned to you and your student	1	2	3
42	Your student's teacher	1	2	3
43	The school administrator(s)	1	2	3
44	Literacy trainer	1	2	3
45	Centre for Family Literacy staff (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3
46	Big Sisters Big Brothers staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3
47	Your student's parent(s)	1	2	3

Comments:

74

In general, estimate the amount of input (in percent) each of the following people has in determining what goes on in a mentoring session:

48. The teacher   _____

49. Yourself   _____

50. The student   _____

              TOTAL: 100%

3.3. If you have any additional comments or suggestions about the ISM program, then please feel free to include them in the space below.

Part 4: Background Information

General Information

51. What is your occupation? _____

52. What is your gender?

_____ female

_____ male

53. In which of the following age ranges does your age fall?

_____ 18-25
_____ 26-35
_____ 36-44
_____ 45-54
_____ 55-64
_____ 65 or older

Mentoring History

54. When did you begin as an In-School Mentor in Edmonton? _____/_____
(Month/Year)

55. How did you get involved with the ISM program?

_____

_____

56. In how many schools have you volunteered as a mentor? _____

57. How many children have you mentored? _____

58. For which Grade level(s) have you been a mentor? _____

59. What type of training have you had through the ISM program? Please check off ALL responses that apply.

_____ Orientation
_____ Self-Esteem (introduction)
_____ Literacy (introduction)
_____ Literacy (supplemental)
_____ Other (please specify) _____
_____ None

Current Mentoring Role (September, 2000 to June, 2001)

60. In which school district is the school where you are volunteering as a mentor located?

_____   Edmonton Public

_____   Edmonton Separate

61. What is the name of the school where you are currently volunteering as a mentor? _____ (optional)

62. In what Grade is your student? _____

63. What is the gender of your student?

_____   female

_____   male

64. Based on your understanding, what was the major reason the student you are mentoring was enrolled in the ISM program?

_____

65. About how many minutes do you spend with your student in a mentoring session?

_____

66. What activities do you typically do in a session? Please be specific. Please indicate with an asterisk, which of these activities have a literacy focus.

_____

_____

_____

67. What percent of each session do you spend on tasks directly related to literacy?

_____

68. Are you encountering any difficulties in your role as a mentor?   Yes   No
If yes, then please specify.

_____

_____

69. In which of the following areas (if any) does your student have difficulties? Please circle ALL responses that apply.

Social Skills   Yes   No
Behavioural Skills   Yes   No
Literacy Skills   Yes   No

Other (please specify) _____

If you answered YES to any of the items listed in Question #69, then please answer Questions #70 and #71.

If you answered NO to Question #69, then you may go directly to Question #72.

70. Do you feel your training prepared you for dealing with the kinds of difficulties your student is encountering?

Yes   No

Please explain _____

71. Would more training or ongoing support help you better deal with your student's difficulties?

Yes   No

If yes, then what type of additional training or support might be helpful?

_____
_____
_____

72. Are you planning to volunteer as an in-school mentor again next fall?   Yes   No

Why or why not? _____
_____

73. Has volunteering as a mentor been beneficial to you?   Yes   No

Why or why not? _____
_____

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided (or by e-mail to xxxx@ualberta.ca) by June 4th, 2001.

ID. No. _____

Evaluating Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM)

Survey for Teachers

This survey is divided into four separate sections. The first three sections refer to different components of the In-School Mentoring program: *program description, program changes and communication issues*. The final section of this survey includes *background information* about your classroom and yourself.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential and your name will not be attached to the information that you give. As completing this survey is voluntary, your completion and return of this survey will indicate that you have given your consent to participate.

As you are completing the survey, you may want to include additional comments. Please feel free to do so in the spaces provided, as needed.

Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided by <u>June 4th, 2001</u>. If you are using the e-mail option, then please send your response to <u>xxxx@ualberta.ca</u> by <u>June 4th, 2001.</u>

If you have any questions about the items or the survey, then please contact Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Laurie Schnirer or Jeff Bisanz at 492-6177.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Part 1: Program Description

1.1.   The following items describe the **CURRENT** In-School Mentoring (ISM) program. Please indicate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.** Feel free to note any remarks under the "Comments" section to the right of each question.

	Program Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer (N/A)
1	The ISM program is an important part of this school.	1	2	3	4	5	0
2	The student(s) in my class are benefiting from his/her (their) time in the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0
3	The ISM program is disruptive to my class.	1	2	3	4	5	0
4	I would increase the number of students in my class participating in the program if more funding was available.	1	2	3	4	5	0
5	I am comfortable having the mentors spending time with my students.	1	2	3	4	5	0
6	The ISM caseworker (coordinator) fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0
7	The literacy trainer fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0
8	The ISM caseworker (coordinator) is helpful and available when I need her.	1	2	3	4	5	0
9	The literacy trainer is helpful and available when I need her.	1	2	3	4	5	0
10	Communication between our school and the Edmonton Community Foundation needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
11	Communication between our school and Big Sisters and Big Brothers Society needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
12	Communication between our school and the Centre for Family Literacy needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
13	I am satisfied with the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

1.2.   For the next set of items, please indicate the **IMPORTANCE** OF each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

	Program Description	Not at all		Somewhat		Very	No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
14	How important do you think it is to **your school administrator(s)** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
15	How important do you think it is to **your school administrator(s)** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
16	How important do **you** think it is to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
17	How important do **you** think it is to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
18	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
19	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
20	How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	1	2	3	4	5	0	

21. Did you become involved in the ISM prior to September 1st, 2000?

_____   Yes   **If yes, then please complete Part 2 of this survey.**

_____   No   **If no, then you may skip Part 2 and go directly to Part 3 of the survey.**

Part 2. Program Changes

The next set of items relates to **changes** that occurred in the implementation of the ISM program as of September, 2000.

2.1   What, if any, changes do you think have occurred in the ISM program at your school as of September, 2000? How, if at all, have these changes affected you and your classroom?

2.2   For each item, please circle the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS   AT THIS TIME.**

	Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)……				No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
22	…how much time does the ISM caseworker (coordinator) spend in your school?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
23	…how difficult is it to contact the ISM coordinator (caseworker)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
24	…how much space do you have to accommodate the number of mentors in your school?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
25	…how many resources do you have to accommodate the number of mentors in your classroom?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
26	…what are the demands on your school administrator(s)' time with respect to the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	

82

Part 2. Program Changes (continued)

	Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)….				No Answer (N/A)
27	…how much emphasis is there on literacy?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
28	…what are the demands on your time with respect to the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
29	…how disruptive is it for you and your class to have students in the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
30	…how would you rate the overall quality of the ISM program?	1 worse	2 same	3 better	0 N/A

Comments:

30a. Please explain your response to question #30.

Part 3. Communication

3.1 **During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?**

		Never	Less than once a month	From 1 to 4 times a month	More than 4 times a month	**Comments:**
31	Mentors assigned to your classroom	1	2	3	4	
32	Caseworker (coordinator) assigned to your school	1	2	3	4	
33	Other teachers in your school who are involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	
34	Your school administrator(s)	1	2	3	4	
35	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	4	
36	Centre for Family Literacy (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	4	
37	Big Sisters Big Brothers (BSBB) staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3	4	
38	Parent(s) of your students in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	

3.2. **During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?**

		Less than adequate	Adequate	More than adequate	**Comments:**
39	Mentors in your classroom	1	2	3	
40	Caseworker (coordinator) assigned to your school	1	2	3	
41	Other teachers in your school involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	
42	Your school administrator(s)	1	2	3	
43	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	
44	Centre for Family Literacy staff (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	
45	Big Sisters Big Brothers staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3	
46	Parent(s) of your students in the ISM program	1	2	3	

In general, estimate the amount of input (in percent) each of the following people has in determining what goes on in a mentoring session:

    47. Yourself   _____

    48. The mentor   _____

    49. The student   _____

            TOTAL: 100%

3.3. If you have any additional comments or suggestions about the ISM program, then please feel free to include them in the space below.

Part 4. Background Information

50. To which school district does your school belong?

_____ Edmonton Public _____ Edmonton Catholic

51. What is the name of the school where you teach? _____ (optional)

52. How many students do you have in your classroom? _____

53. How many students in your classroom are currently matched with a mentor this year (September, 2000 to June, 2001)? _____

54. What criteria did you use to select students for the ISM program this year?

_____

_____

55. How many of your students who are not matched could benefit from a mentor this year? _____

56. How many students in your class were matched with a mentor last year (September, 1999 to June, 2000)? _____

57. How many years have students in YOUR class(es) been participating in an ISM program? _____

58. Are there any other programs (other than ISM) that you offer for "at risk" students in your class? Yes No If yes, then please list _____

_____

59. What grade(s) are you currently teaching this year? _____

60. How many years have you taught at this school? _____

61. How many years of teaching experience do you have? _____

62. How many years have you been personally involved in the ISM program? _____

63. In which of the following age ranges does your age fall?

_____ 18-25
_____ 26-35
_____ 36-44
_____ 45-54
_____ 55-64
_____ 65 or older

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided (or by e-mail to xxxx@ualberta.ca) by June 4th, 2001.

ID. No. _____

Evaluating Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM)

Survey for School Administrators

This survey is divided into four separate sections. The first three sections refer to different components of the In-School Mentoring program: *program description, program changes and communication issues*. The final section of this survey includes *background information* about your school and yourself.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential and your name will not be attached to the information that you give. As completing this survey is voluntary, your completion and return of this survey will indicate that you have given your consent to participate.

As you are completing the survey, you may want to include additional comments. Please feel free to do so in the spaces provided, as needed.

Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided by <u>June 4th, 2001</u>. If you are using the e-mail option, then please send your response to <u>xxxx@ualberta.ca</u> by <u>June 4th, 2001.</u>

If you have any questions about the items or the survey, then please contact Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Laurie Schnirer or Jeff Bisanz at 492-6177.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Part 1: Program Description

1.1 The following items describe the **CURRENT** In-School Mentoring (ISM) program. Please indicate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.** Feel free to note any remarks under the "Comments" section to the right of each question.

	Program Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer (N/A)
1	The ISM program is an important part of this school.	1	2	3	4	5	0
2	The students are benefiting from their time in the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0
3	The ISM program is disruptive to classes.	1	2	3	4	5	0
4	I would increase the number of students in our school participating in the program if more funding was available.	1	2	3	4	5	0
5	I am comfortable having the mentors in this school.	1	2	3	4	5	0
6	The ISM caseworker (coordinator) fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0
7	The literacy trainer fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0
8	Communication between our school and the Edmonton Community Foundation needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
9	Communication between our school and the Big Sisters and Big Brothers Society needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
10	Communication between our school and the Centre for Family Literacy needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0
11	I am satisfied with the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

1.2 For the next set of items, please indicate the **IMPORTANCE** OF each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

	Program Description	Not at all		Somewhat		Very	No Answer (N/A)
12	How important do **you** think it is to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
13	How important do **you** think it is to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
14	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
15	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
16	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
17	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
18	How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

19. Did your school become involved in the ISM prior to September 1st, 2000?

_____ Yes **If yes, then please complete Part 2 of this survey.**

_____ No **If no, then you may skip Part 2 and go directly to Part 3 of the survey.**

Part 2. Program Changes

The next set of items relates to **changes** that occurred in the implementation of the ISM program as of September, 2000.

2.1   What, if any, changes do you think have occurred in the ISM program at your school as of September, 2000? How, if at all, have these changes affected your school?

2.2   For each item, please circle the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS   AT THIS TIME.**

	Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)……				No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
20	…how much time does the ISM caseworker (coordinator) spend in your school?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
21	…how difficult is it to contact the ISM coordinator (caseworker)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
22	…how much space do you have to accommodate the number of mentors in your school?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
23	…how many resources do you have to accommodate the number of mentors in your school?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
24	…what are the demands on your time with respect to the ISM program?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	

Part 2. Program Changes (continued)

Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)……				No Answer (N/A)
25 …how much emphasis is there on literacy?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
26 …what are the demands on the teachers' time (for those teachers with students involved in ISM)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
27 …how disruptive is it for the teachers in their classrooms (for those teachers with students involved in ISM)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A
28 …how would you rate the overall quality of the ISM program?	1 worse	2 same	3 better	0 N/A

Comments:

28a. Please explain your response to question #28.

Part 3. Communication

3.1 **During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?**

		Never	Less than once a month	From 1 to 4 times a month	More than 4 times a month	**Comments**
29	Mentors in your school	1	2	3	4	
30	Caseworker (coordinator) assigned to your school	1	2	3	4	
31	Teachers in your school who are involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	
32	Administrator(s) from other schools involved in ISM	1	2	3	4	
33	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	4	
34	Centre for Family Literacy (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	4	
35	Big Sisters Big Brothers (BSBB) staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3	4	
36	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program in your school	1	2	3	4	

3.2. **During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?**

		Less than adequate	Adequate	More than adequate	**Comments**
37	Mentors in your school	1	2	3	
38	Caseworker (coordinator) assigned to your school	1	2	3	
39	Teachers in your school involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	
40	Administrator(s) from other school(s) involved in ISM	1	2	3	
41	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	
42	Centre for Family Literacy staff (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	
43	Big Sisters Big Brothers staff (other than the caseworker)	1	2	3	
44	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program in your school	1	2	3	

3.3. If you have any additional comments or suggestions about the ISM program, then please feel free to include them in the space below.

Part 4. Background Information

45. To which school district does your school belong?

_____ Edmonton Public   _____ Edmonton Catholic

46. What is the name of your school? _____ (optional)

47. How many students are enrolled in your school? _____

48. How many students in your school are participating in the ISM program this year (September, 2000 to June, 2001)? _____

49. How many students in your school participated in the ISM program last year (September, 1999 to June, 2000)? _____

50. For how many years has your school been involved in the ISM program? _____

51. Are there any other programs (other than ISM) that your offer for "at risk" students in your school?   Yes   No

If yes, then please list _____

_____

52. What administrative position do you currently hold in the school?

_____

53. How many years have you held an administrative position at this school?

_____

54. How many years have you held an administrative position overall?

_____

55. How many years, as an administrator, have you been involved in the ISM program?

_____

56. In which of the following age ranges does your age fall?
    _____   18-25
    _____   26-35
    _____   36-44
    _____   45-54
    _____   55-64
    _____   65 or older

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed envelope provided (or by e-mail to xxxx@ualberta.ca) by June 4th, 2001.

Evaluating Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM)

Survey for Big Sisters & Big Brothers Society (BSBB) Caseworkers

---

This survey is divided into four separate sections. The first three sections refer to different components of the In-School Mentoring program: *program description, program changes and communication issues.* The final section of this survey includes *background information* about you and your role in the program.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential and your name will not be attached to the information that you give. As completing this survey is voluntary, your completion and return of this survey will indicate that you have given your consent to participate.

As you are completing the survey, you may want to include additional comments. Please feel free to do so in the spaces provided, as needed.

If you have any questions about the items or the survey, then please contact Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Laurie Schnirer or Jeff Bisanz at 492-6177.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Part 1: Program Description

1.1 The following items describe the **CURRENT** In-School Mentoring (ISM) program. Please indicate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.** Feel free to note any remarks under the "Comments" section to the right of each question.

	Program Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
1	The ISM program is an important part of the schools that I coordinate.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
2	The students are benefiting from their time in the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
3	The ISM program is disruptive to classes.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
4	I feel that I fit into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
5	The literacy trainer fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
6	Communication between the schools and the Edmonton Community Foundation needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
7	Communication between the schools and Big Sisters and Big Brothers Society needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
8	Communication between the schools and the Centre for Family Literacy needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
9	I am satisfied with the ISM program in the schools that I coordinate.	1	2	3	4	5	0	

1.2   the next set of items, please indicate the **IMPORTANCE** OF each item, by circling the
response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

	Program Description	Not at all		Somewhat		Very	No Answer (N/A)
10	How important do **you** think it is to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
11	How important do **you** think it is to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
12	How important do you think it is to **school administrators** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
13	How important do you think it is to **school administrators** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
14	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
15	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
16	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
17	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0
18	How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	1	2	3	4	5	0

Comments:

Part 2. Program Changes

The next set of items relates to **changes** that occurred in the implementation of the ISM program as of September, 2000.

2.1   For each item, please circle the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

Compared to previous years, in this school year (September 1st, 2000 to June, 30th, 2001)……				No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
19 …how much time do you spend in each of your assigned schools?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
20 …how difficult is it for other people in the program (e.g. mentors, teachers, administrators) to contact you?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
21 …how much space is there to accommodate the number of mentors in the schools that you coordinate?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
22 …how many resources are there to accommodate the number of mentors in your assigned schools?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
23 …how much emphasis is there on literacy?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
24 …what are the demands on the teachers' time (for those teachers with students involved in ISM)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
25 …how disruptive is it for the teachers in their classrooms (for those teachers with students involved in ISM)?	1 less	2 same	3 more	0 N/A	
26 …how would you rate the overall quality of the ISM program?	1 worse	2 same	3 better	0 N/A	

Part 3. Communication

3.1 During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?

		Never	Less than once a month	From 1 to 4 times a month	More than 4 times a month	**Comments**
27	Mentors in your assigned schools	1	2	3	4	
28	Teachers who are involved in the ISM program at your assigned schools	1	2	3	4	
29	Administrator(s) from schools that you coordinate	1	2	3	4	
30	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	4	
31	Centre for Family Literacy (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	4	
32	Other BSBB Caseworkers	1	2	3	4	
33	BSBB staff (other than caseworkers)	1	2	3	4	
34	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program in your assigned schools	1	2	3	4	

3.2. During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?

		Less than adequate	Adequate	More than adequate	**Comments**
35	Mentors in your assigned schools	1	2	3	
36	Teachers involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	
37	Administrator(s) from the school(s) that you coordinate	1	2	3	
38	Literacy trainer	1	2	3	
39	Centre for Family Literacy staff (other than the literacy trainer)	1	2	3	
40	BSBB caseworkers	1	2	3	
41	BSBB staff (other than caseworkers)	1	2	3	
42	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program at the schools you coordinate	1	2	3	

Part 4. Background Information

43. How many schools have been assigned to you to coordinate the ISM program?
_____

44. How many mentor–student matches do you have in your caseload?
_____

45. Is your position as a caseworker full-time or part-time?   _____

46. How many years have you been involved in the BSBB ISM program?   _____

47. How many years have you been involved in other ISM programs, other than BSBB?
_____

48. What training, if any, did you receive for this position?

49. What criteria do you use for selecting mentors for the ISM program?

50. What criteria are used to screen and select students for the ISM program?

51. What criteria are used to match mentors and students?

52. What kind of support do you receive in your position?

_____

_____

_____

53. Do you feel the support that you receive is adequate?   Yes   No

54. If no, then please explain.

_____

_____

_____

55. In which of the following age ranges does your age fall?

    _____   18-25
    _____   26-35
    _____   36-44
    _____   45-54
    _____   55-64

Thank you for completing this survey.

ID. No. _____

Evaluating Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring (ISM)

Survey for Centre for Family Literacy (CFL) Literacy Trainer

This survey is divided into three separate sections. The first two sections refer to different components of the In-School Mentoring program: *program description, and communication issues*. The final section of this survey includes *background information* about you and your role in the program.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential and your name will not be attached to the information that you give. As completing this survey is voluntary, your completion and return of this survey will indicate that you have given your consent to participate.

As you are completing the survey, you may want to include additional comments. Please feel free to do so in the spaces provided, as needed.

Please return the survey in the self-addressed envelope by June 15, 2001. Alternately, you can return the survey by e-mail to xxxx@ualberta.ca by June 15, 2001.

If you have any questions about the items or the survey, then please contact Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Laurie Schnirer or Jeff Bisanz at 492-6177.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Part 1: Program Description

1.1 The following items describe the **CURRENT** In-School Mentoring (ISM) program. Please indicate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.** Feel free to note any remarks under the "Comments" section to the right of each question.

	Program Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
1	The ISM program is an important part of the schools.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
2	The students are benefiting from their time in the ISM program.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
3	The ISM program is disruptive to classes.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
4	I feel that I fit into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
5	The Big Sisters and Big Brothers (BSBB) caseworker fits into the school's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
6	Communication between the schools and the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
7	Communication between the schools and Big Sisters and Big Brothers (BSBB) Society needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
8	Communication between the schools and the Centre for Family Literacy (CFL) needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
9	Communication between the CFL and BSBB society needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
10	Communication between the CFL and ECF needs to be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	0	
11	I am satisfied with the ISM program in the schools.	1	2	3	4	5	0	

1.2   For the next set of items, please indicate the **IMPORTANCE** OF each item, by circling the response that **BEST REFLECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME.**

	Program Description	Not at all		Somewhat		Very	No Answer (N/A)	**Comments:**
12	How important do **you** think it is to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
13	How important do **you** think it is to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
14	How important do you think it is to the **BSBB caseworkers** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
15	How important do you think it is to the **BSBB caseworkers** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
16	How important do you think it is to **school administrators** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
17	How important do you think it is to **school administrators** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
18	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
19	How important do you think it is to **teachers** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
20	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *literacy* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
21	How important do you think it is to **parents** to have a *social development* component in the ISM program?	1	2	3	4	5	0	
22	How important do you think it is that mentors be trained in literacy techniques?	1	2	3	4	5	0	

Part 2. Communication

2.1 **During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?**

		Never	Less than once a month	From 1 to 4 times a month	More than 4 times a month	**Comments**
23	Mentors	1	2	3	4	
24	Teachers who are involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	
25	Administrator(s) from schools that are involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	
26	Other staff at the Centre for Family Literacy	1	2	3	4	
27	BSBB Caseworkers	1	2	3	4	
28	BSBB staff (other than caseworkers)	1	2	3	4	
29	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	4	

2.2. **During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?**

		Less than adequate	Adequate	More than adequate	**Comments**
30	Mentors	1	2	3	
31	Teachers involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	
32	Administrator(s) from the school(s) that are involved in the ISM program	1	2	3	
33	Other staff at the Centre for Family Literacy	1	2	3	
34	BSBB caseworkers	1	2	3	
35	BSBB staff (other than caseworkers)	1	2	3	
36	Parent(s) of students involved in the ISM program at the schools you coordinate	1	2	3	

Part 3. Background Information

37. How many initial literacy training sessions have you provided for mentors since you were hired as a literacy trainer for the ISM program (i.e. since October, 2000)?

_____

38. How many mentors have attended the initial literacy training sessions since October, 2000? _____

39. How many supplemental training sessions have you provided for mentors since October, 2000? _____

40. How many mentors have attended the supplemental training sessions since October, 2000? _____

41. With which schools have you had direct contact in terms of literacy training?

42. What kinds of training, if any, have you provided within the individual schools?

43. What kind of support do you receive in your position?

44. Do you feel the support that you receive is adequate?   Yes   No   If no, then please explain

45. In which of the following age ranges does your age fall?
    - _____   18-25
    - _____   26-35
    - _____   36-44
    - _____   45-54
    - _____   55-64

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the survey in the self-addressed envelope (or by e-mail to xxx@ualberta.ca) by June 15, 2001.

Appendix C

Description of Survey Participants

Survey Participants

Mentors

There is no "typical" profile for a mentor except that the majority of mentors (86%) are female. Almost half (44%) are between 36 and 54 years of age. Eleven percent of mentors are students, 17% are retired, 6% are homemakers, and the rest are in a wide range or professions from business (e.g., insurance administrator, bank manager), the arts (e.g., photographer, graphic designer), education (e.g., teacher, librarian), and health (e.g., pediatric nurse).   The vast majority of mentors are involved in one school although 9 mentors are in two schools and 2 are in three schools. Sixty-seven percent of them have only mentored one student.

Ages of **Mentors**	18-25	26-35	36-44	45-54	55-64	65 <	N
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	12.9%	15.6%	20.4%	23.8%	19.0%	8.2%	147

Percentage of Mentors in each Age Category
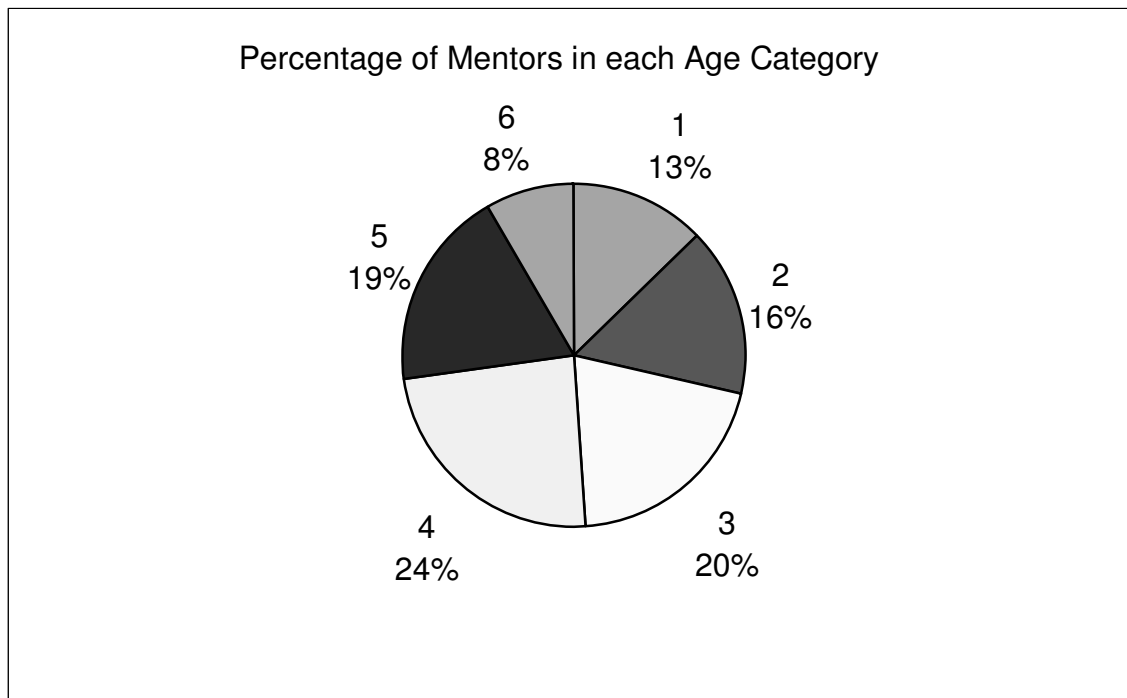
Students

The ISM program involves primary school students from kindergarten to Grade 6. Fifty-seven percent of the students being mentored are female and almost half of the students are in Grade 2 and Grade 3.

Percentage of Students Participating in each Grade						
Kindergarten	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**	**Grade 4**	**Grade 5**	**Grade 6**
7.5%	17.7%	24.5%	20.4%	10.2%	9.5%	12.2%

Teachers

Over half (55%) of the teachers involved in the ISM program teach grades 1, 2, or 3. On average, they have approximately 14 years of teaching experience, with the range being from 1 to 29 years. However, 87% of teachers have only been involved in the ISM program for 2 years or less.

Administrators

The principals participating in this program have been administrators for an average of six years. However, the range in experience was from 1 to 22 years. Further, 72% of principals have been involved in the ISM program for 2 years or less.

Caseworkers

The BSBB caseworkers have, on average, five schools and 72 student-mentor matches on their caseload. Their involvement in the program ranges from 6 months to 3 years, the average being 1.75 years.

Appendix D

Supplemental Table (Methods)

Table D-2.1. Response rate (%) of distributed surveys by survey group and school division.

Survey Group	Number Distributed			Number Returned			Response Rate (%) (Overall)
	Edm Public	Edm Catholic	Total	Edm Public	Edm Catholic	Total	
mentors	-	-	**259**	-	-	**147**	**56.8**
teachers	60	31	**91**	29	10	**39**	**42.9**
principals	15	7	**22**	11	7	**18**	**81.2**
caseworkers	-	-	**4**	-	-	**4**	**100.0**
literacy trainer	-	-	**1**	-	-	**1**	**100.0**

Appendix E

Focus Group Guides

1. Mentor Focus Group Guide
2. Teacher Focus Group guide
3. Big Sisters & Big Brothers Society Caseworker Focus Group Guide

ISM Evaluation Questions
Focus Group Guide for Mentors

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the focus group**
Program Description	**Tell me about the In-School Mentoring (ISM) program and the mentor's role within it.** • What is your impression of how mentors are to spend time with their students? • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is meeting the needs of "at risk" students? Why or why not?
Program Transition	In September, 2000, the organizational structure for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding. Have you noticed any differences in the program since then? If so, what? How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected mentors? • **One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. Based on your experience, how do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills?**
Communication	There are a number of different people involved in the ISM program: yourself, your student, the student's parent(s), the teacher, school staff, caseworker (coordinator), literacy trainer. • With whom do mentors feel most connected? Do mentors feel welcome in the school? • What kinds of support have mentors received? • How, if at all, do mentors keep people informed about their sessions with their students? How, if at all, do other people keep mentors informed about the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As a follow-up to the evaluation of the implementation process, we will be designing a second phase focusing on outcomes. What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Focus Group Guide for Teachers

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the focus group**
Program Description	**Tell me about the In-School Mentoring (ISM) program in your school.** • What do you think the focus of this ISM program is? Tell me about the focus of the ISM program in your school. • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping teachers meet the needs of the "at risk" students at your school? Why or why not?
Program Transition	In September, 2000, the organizational structure for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding. Have you noticed any differences in the program since then? If so, what? How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you and your students? • **One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. How do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills?** • **Has the program helped some of the students in your school improve in literacy? If so, please tell me about these students.**
Communication	There are a number of different people involved in the ISM program. • Tell me about the teacher's role in program. • Tell me about the roles of the different people involved in the program at your school (i.e. mentors, children, parents, caseworker, literacy trainer, your school administrator(s))? • How do you maintain communication with the different people involved in the program at your school?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As a follow-up to the evaluation of the implementation process, we will be designing a second phase focusing on outcomes. What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Focus Group Guide for BSBB Case Workers

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the interview**
Program Description	**Tell me about the In-School Mentoring (ISM) program within the schools that you coordinate.** • What do you think the focus of this ISM program is? Tell me about the focus of the ISM program in the schools that you coordinate. • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping meet the needs of the "at risk" students in the schools that you coordinate? Why or why not?
Program Transition	• As you may be aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. Have you noticed any differences in the program since then? If so, what? How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you? the programs in the schools that you coordinate?
Communication	There are a number of different people involved in the program, such as yourself, the administrators, the teachers and children in the schools, the parents, the mentors, the literacy trainer and the three program partners (i.e. Edmonton Community Foundation, Big Sisters Big Brothers, Centre for Family Literacy). • Tell me about your role in the ISM program. • Tell me about the roles of the different people involved in the program in the schools with which you work. • How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As a follow-up to the evaluation of the implementation process, we will be designing a second phase focussing on outcomes. What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

Appendix F

Interview Guides

1. Individual Interview Guide for School Administrators
2. Interview Guide for BSBB Senior Stakeholder
3. Interview Guide for CFL Senior Stakeholder
4. Interview Guide for ECF Senior Stakeholder
5. Interview Guide for CFL Literacy Trainer

ISM Evaluation Questions
Individual Interview Guide for School Administrators

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the interview**
Program Description	**Tell me about the In-School Mentoring (ISM) program and how it came into being in your school.** • What do you think the focus of this ISM program is? Tell me about the focus of the ISM program in your school. • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping you meet the needs of the "at risk" students at your school? Why or why not?
Program Transition	• As you may be aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. Have you noticed any differences in the program since then? If so, what? How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected the program at your school?
Communication	There are a number of different people involved in the program, such as yourself, the teachers and children in your school, the parents, the mentors, the caseworker assigned to your school, the literacy trainer and the three program partners (i.e. Edmonton Community Foundation, Big Sisters Big Brothers, Centre for Family Literacy). • Tell me about your role in the ISM program. • Tell me about the roles of the different people involved in the program at your school. • How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program at your school?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As a follow-up to the evaluation of the implementation process, we will be designing a second phase focusing on outcomes. What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Interview Guide for BSBB Senior Stakeholder

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the interview**
Program Description	• **What do you think the focus of this ISM program is?** • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping meet the needs of "at risk" students in the schools? Why or why not?
Program Transition	• As you are aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. • How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you and your staff at BSBB? • Have you observed any efficiencies in the delivery of the program as a city-wide initiative? Please explain. • Do you think the new funding process has affected the quality and equity of program delivery? Why or why not? Are there some standard elements that need to be incorporated across all schools? If so, what might these standard elements be? • Do you think the key stakeholders (CFL, BSBB, ECF) have a common understanding of the recent changes in the program? Why or why not? • One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. • How do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills? Do you think the program is achieving this goal? Why or why not? • What types of literacy training programs are currently being offered? Do you think these programs are adequate? Why or why not? • What, if any, challenges have there been in introducing the literacy training component since the Fall, 2000?
Communication	• How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As you are aware, we will be designing a second evaluation phase focusing on outcomes. What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Interview Guide for CFL Senior Stakeholder

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the interview**
Program Description	• **What do you think the focus of this ISM program is?** • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping meet the needs of "at risk" students in the schools? Why or why not?
Program Transition	• As you are aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. • How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you and your staff at the CFL? • Have you observed any efficiencies in the delivery of the program as a city-wide initiative? Please explain. • Do you think the new funding process has affected the quality and equity of program delivery? Why or why not? Are there some standard elements that need to be incorporated across all schools? If so, what might these standard elements be? • Do you think the key stakeholders (i.e. CFL, BSBB & ECF) have a common understanding of the recent changes in the ISM program? Why or why not? • One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. • How do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills? Do you think the program is achieving this goal? Why or why not? • What types of literacy training programs are currently being offered? Do you think these programs are adequate? Why or why not? • What, if any, challenges have there been in introducing the literacy training component since the Fall, 2000?
Communication	• There are a number of different people involved in the program, such as you and your staff at the CFL, the Edmonton Community Foundation, Big Sisters & Big Brothers, the BSBB caseworkers, school administrators, teachers and children in the schools, the parents, and the mentors. • How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Interview Guide for ECF Senior Stakeholder

Introduction	Introductions, purpose of the interview
Program Description	• **What do you think the focus of this ISM program is?** • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping meet the needs of "at risk" students in the schools? Why or why not?
Program Transition	• As you are aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. • How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you and your staff at ECF? • Have you observed any efficiencies in the delivery of the program as a city-wide initiative? Please explain. • Do you think the new funding process has affected the quality and equity of program delivery? Why or why not? Are there some standard elements that need to be incorporated across all schools? If so, what might these standard elements be? • Do you think the key stakeholders (CFL, BSBB, ECF) have a common understanding of the recent changes in the program? Why or why not? • One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. How do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills?
Communication	• How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Outcome Evaluation	• As you are aware, we will be designing a second evaluation phase focusing on outcomes. • What are some of the outcomes that you think should be assessed in the outcome evaluation phase of this program evaluation? How might these outcomes be assessed? • If the outcome evaluation were to show no improvement in students' literacy skills, then would the ISM program still be funded?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

ISM Evaluation Questions
Interview Guide for CFL Literacy Trainer

Introduction	**Introductions, purpose of the interview**
Program Description	**Tell me about the In-School Mentoring (ISM) program and your role within it.** • What do you think the focus of this ISM program is? Tell me about the focus of the ISM program in the schools where you have provided literacy training. • One of the intended goals of this program was to match individual "at risk" elementary school children with a "safe" caring adult volunteer. Do you think the current program is helping meet the needs of "at risk" students in the schools? Why or why not?
Program Transition	As you are aware, the funding for the ISM program changed from individual school-based to city-wide funding in September, 2000. How, if at all, has this change in organizational structure affected you and your role within the program? One of the intended changes in the program was to enhance the literacy component of the mentoring relationship. • How do you think mentors can best go about increasing students' literacy skills? Do you think the program is achieving this goal? Why or why not? • What types of literacy training programs are currently being offered? Do you think these programs are adequate? Why or why not? • What, if any, challenges have you encountered in introducing the literacy training component since the Fall, 2000?
Communication	There are a number of different people involved in the program, such as yourself, the BSBB caseworkers, school administrators, teachers and children in the schools, the parents, the mentors, and the three program partners (i.e. Edmonton Community Foundation, Big Sisters Big Brothers, Centre for Family Literacy). • Tell me about the roles of the different people involved in the program. • How do you maintain communication with all of the different people involved in the program?
Satisfaction with the Process	• Are you satisfied with the process of implementing the current program? What do you think needs to be changed or addressed? If you could change one thing about the way the program is being implemented, then what might that be?
Closure	• Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is most important for the current implementation of the ISM program?

Appendix G

List of Documents

List of Documents

Big Sister & Big Brother Society of Edmonton & Area. (2000, July). <u>Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring.</u> Funding proposal submitted to the Edmonton Community Foundation, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Bisanz, J., da Costa, J., Maynes, W., Schnirer, L., & Varnhagen, S. (2001, Februry 21). <u>Request for Ethical Review</u>. Application submitted to the Faculties of Arts and Science (Psychology), University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Carr Leiren & Associates.   (2000, March 30). <u>Literacy-Based, In-School Mentoring in Edmonton.</u> Edmonton, AB: Author.

Carr Leiren & Associates. (2000, March 23). <u>Building a Sustainable Model for Literacy-Based In-School Mentoring</u>. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Appendix H

Teacher & Principal Summaries

1. Summary of the Teachers' Perspectives

2. Summary of the Principals' Perspectives

Summary of the Teachers' Perspectives

1. Program Description

a) Mentoring Session

b) Stakeholders and Participants in Program (e.g., roles, training)

The focus group participant teachers (a total of four) identified parents (or guardians) and mentors, in addition to themselves, as participants in the mentorship program.

Teachers were divided regarding their own roles in the mentorship program. Some argued that they had very little, if any, work as a result of the program, for example one teacher stated: "there is no extra work required as there wasn't any planning to do for the session." Others argued that the program did add to their workload, as noted in the following, "the contact from Big Sisters/Big Brothers said that the teacher would provide activities. I don't like being asked to provide things for them." Teachers did agree that a new and additional role resulting from the mentorship program included facilitating communication between "the parents and mentors..."

Parents were not seen, by teachers, as playing active roles in the mentorship program. Typically parents' roles consisted of, and ended at providing consent for their children to participate. One teacher described parents as "very supportive but they are not directly involved." Some parents have told teachers that they would like to meet and thank mentors for their work. "They [the parents] write cards and are very appreciative" of the mentors. A second teacher described some parents as being very proactive in seeking out the program for their children because they perceived that their children would benefit from such a relationship.

Regarding training for mentors, the teachers in the focus group interview agreed that formal training is not desirable. One teacher stated, "keep it natural, so that they can decide what to do together. Training might spoil it and make them more into teachers."

2. Purpose

a) General

Teachers agreed that the stated purpose of the mentorship program, as defined by the project organizers, was literacy. However, in practice teachers saw the social aspects of the mentoring relationships to be even more important to the development of the children participating in the mentorship program.

In operation most of the teachers agreed that they had not been given much information about the mentorship program, what was received came through "e-mail and staff meeting" overviews. Mentor-mentee matches were typically made without teacher input. This was not seen as problematic by at least one teacher who thought that the matches were "perfect." Teachers in the focus group interview were in agreement that the manner in which the mentoring activities were carried out was not disruptive to classroom activities; on the contrary, many benefits of mentoring were cited by the teachers as described in the sections below.

Teachers noted that there is still a very large group of students without mentors. Many of these students need mentors but cannot get them. Other students would like to have mentors but cannot get them. The need for caring adults to serve as mentors far outstrips the available number of mentors.

b) Matching at-risk student with safe and caring adults (social development

The teachers interviewed agreed that typically the students needing mentors have difficult home lives, or even come from dysfunctional families. One teacher shared "I teach grade two and have 21 children in my class where 8 have mentors. Most of the children have a difficult home life and mentors help address their individual needs." For children such as these the mentors model acceptable and appropriate social behaviours as well as work with the children in the areas of literacy and numeracy. One teacher believed that "good matches may have to do with the age of the mentor…older is better." Another argued, "Age hasn't been a factor in the matches I have seen; although gender has played a role. It depends on the needs of the child." A third teacher added that having a mentor who meets with the child regularly is most important. She stated,

> I teach grade four students with special needs in a class of 15. They have difficulty reading, writing, processing and also have social difficulties. They are at-risk students…. The student with a mentor has parents who are deaf. The child has little self-control, no social skills. The child has recently been taken to live in foster care. I am disappointed in the mentor because the person does not come on a regular basis; often cancels. Last year the mentor was like clockwork and that was very beneficial for the student, very rewarding. This year it is frustrating because the mentor lacks credibility.

Later in the interview another teacher asserted, "consistency really makes a difference."

Yet despite the disappointment with the inconsistency of this mentor's meeting schedule with the mentee, and perhaps the disappointment with the mentor's commitment to the child, teachers were still very positive about the overall success rate of the matches. When teachers were asked "Do you feel that the program is meeting its intended goal to match at-risk students with safe and caring adults?" Teachers responded with a resounding, "Yes!" One added, "yes, definitely, more could be matched." Teachers were careful to point out that the matching process was seen as critical for successful mentor-mentee relationships to form and flourish.

c) Literacy

For the teachers participating in the focus group interview, literacy seemed to consist primarily of reading, with a secondary focus on writing. Most of the teachers agreed that the mentors helped the children to read and write better. One teacher emphasized "the mentoring program made a big difference for one student that had a lot of trouble with reading and writing. They [the mentor and child] were writing stories together and the mentor was transcribing the story at the end. I noticed a difference in his reading and writing, [this was likely because] he had good teaching!" Teachers generally agreed that "the children who are most in need are children who are weak in reading, have no parental support, come from single parent families with many siblings…" The mentors serve to provide some of the support these children lack.

One teacher did, however, disagree with the notion that mentors were making a great difference in students' reading and writing abilities. She argued, "I don't think one a week would be enough to really help with reading, unless it was more structured with reading lists for example."

3. Relationships and communication

The teachers participating in the focus group interview shared five main aspects of developing relationships and communication they perceived to be important.

There was unanimous support for the notion that students all look forward to meeting with their mentor because of a special personal connection that develops with the relationship. Teachers asserted "attendance isn't a problem on mentor days" due to the fact that "all the students feel some attachment to the mentors." One teacher shared that one of the pupils in her class who had been matched with a mentor was not well nurtured in his home environment "and was very isolated, his match was everything he needed." Another teacher shared that one of the mentors had "…phoned in September wanting to see the student again. The student felt special and missed." Another teacher echoed "one [mentor] sent post cards and letters while she was away." Further, a teacher articulated "the children see the mentors as friends to confide in, it makes them proud."

Students are not the only ones excited about spending time with another person who is special in their individual lives. Mentors are also gratified by the time they spend with their mentees. One teacher made it clear that "the mentors share in the excitement of the child's learning." The mutually beneficial relationships are also helped by the accepting attitudes of the mentors which centre on "total acceptance of the child, zone in on individual needs, no judgement, unconditional acceptance."

The outcomes of the mentoring relationships manifest themselves in many ways. The teachers shared that students feel happier and more confident in their abilities. One teacher perceived that for children with mentors "some academics were better, such as reading and math progress." Another teacher shared that she perceived the mentored students to "…have more confidence in reading out loud."

When teachers were queried about how they communicated with the mentors there seemed to be general agreement that most of the communication occurred in the form of notes shared in a mentoring binder, folder, or box. One teacher shared that "mentors keep record in the binder of what they do in each session, the binder is kept in the classroom." Another teacher described a mentorship box in much the same way. However, she suggested that she didn't always read the contents of the messages left by the mentor: "it is hard for the teacher to always look in the box." In general, teachers identified a lack of time as a leading cause of poor communication with mentors.

In return, poor communication between teachers and mentors made it difficult to ensure that mentors knew they were appreciated. Although all of the teachers appreciated greatly the work that the mentors were doing with various children in their classrooms, sometimes the hectic pace of modern teaching caused teachers to forget that they should tell mentors that they were valued for what they do with children. "Teachers may need to let the mentors know how much they appreciate them"; this requires consciously setting aside time to communicate with mentors.

4. Program Changes and Impact

To explore the evolution of the mentorship program over the past few years, teachers in the focus group were asked, "Have you noticed any changes in the program since the change in organizational structure in September 2000?" Teachers shared that they had not noticed any changes organizationally. Teachers agreed with the statement one of their colleagues made that "the specific mentors seem to make more of a difference than the organizational structure change" to the children and to the classroom teacher. Two of the teachers thought that more mentors were available in the 2000/01 school year than in the past. A third teacher thought that the mentors this school year "…had better training because they come more prepared, with a bigger bag of goodies. Maybe they are receiving more guidance."

5. Overall satisfaction

The four teachers participating in the focus group interview were unanimous with respect to their satisfaction with the mentorship program as operated up until the time of the interview. They saw the program as "very beneficial" and they were "very satisfied" with the operation and the outcomes of the mentorship program.

6. If there was one thing you could change what would it be?

When teacher were asked about what they would change in the mentorship program, they listed seven points:

a. There is a need to develop a system to let mentors know that their mentee is absent.
b. Teachers should meet regularly with the individual mentors to keep apprised of what is happening in the mentoring relationship (e.g., academically and socially).
c. Teachers and mentors need to meet to share their expectations of the mentoring relationship.
d. Opportunities need to be made available to teachers and mentors to interact socially.
e. Opportunities need to be made available to mentors to be able to meet and exchange ideas regarding mentoring.
f. Mentors should be encouraged to meet with their mentees more frequently than once per week.
g. A mentor resource area (i.e., with materials and ideas to supplement those of the mentor) should be established at the Big Sisters/Big Brothers central office

7. What do you think is the most important thing about the program?

Teachers agreed that the most important aspect of the mentoring program was, surprisingly given the program emphasis on literacy, the special social relationship that forms between a child and a "reliable, loving, mature" adult role model. One teacher stated that "reaching out, forming a bond, recognizing worth, doing things together, making them feel special, spending time with an adult" were really at the centre of the mentorship program. Another added that what is most important is developing "social skills, discussing interests, valuing the child's opinion, doing any activity as long as the mentor is spending time listening to the child."

A spin-off of these special, caring relationships that form between mentors and mentees is that a culture of caring begins to permeate the school. One teacher described the benefit of the "lovely atmosphere of people doing things in the library; everyone seems to be benefiting, it creates a lovely tone and the children act so mature." Another positive side effect of the mentoring is that it "gives students experiences and background to write about. It increases their general knowledge so they can relate to other things."

8. Outcome evaluation

In response to the question "Which outcomes do you think would be important to measure in the outcome evaluation?" teachers agreed that parents and students should be surveyed (e.g., interviews, questionnaires).

9. Other

Summary of the Principals' Persepctives

1. Program Description

- **The Mentoring Session**

For the most part, principals described the activities of mentoring sessions only in general terms. They noted that reading was a frequent activity, with several clarifying that this had expanded to include a wider range of literacy activities. One, for example, said "We've expanded into all kinds of language arts activities–Scrabble, sentence building, memory type games with the kids, word finds–anything that has to do with language development". Two of the principals noted that teachers often provided resources to be used in the mentoring session.

Although the principals were clear that reading and other literacy activities were the foci of most mentoring sessions, they also spoke of other kinds of activities. One referred to a mentor helping a student contribute to a school goal of "sharing responsibility". Another referred to "child directed" activities, offering an example of a mentor and child who, in response to the child's interests and strengths, "are always building something". The principals observed that, in such situations, "the child is really leading their literacy activities." Another principal referred to a special circumstance in which "pet therapy" had become the focus of mentoring sessions with a child. Yet another simply noted that "a lot of mentors come with their little bag of goodies, and they'll be doing a craft project".

- **Stakeholders and Participants**

Teachers

In some cases, principals reported that teachers were initially somewhat apprehensive about ISM. One, for example, commented: "We knew that there would be challenges and hiccups but we knew also that this was a wonderful opportunity for our children". Another explained that "as teachers, we're all very caring and committed, so you get a little territorial and say 'Where's my little guy going?' ". The same principal noted that any early apprehension seems to have been replaced by overwhelming support for the program: "The feedback from the teachers has been very positive." Another simply observed that "all the teachers who have been involved with the mentoring program have been extremely happy".

Principals saw teachers as having an important role to play in consulting with mentors about the nature of the mentorship activities, and in providing resources for mentors to use. As one commented: "The mentor's job is to complement the program that the teacher is providing. … So to me the key person is the teacher and the mentor talks to them, finds out what they need".

Teachers played a key role in selecting children to participate in the mentoring program. In one case, the principal noted that teachers also were involved in making the matches with the mentors: "Teachers identify kids who they feel would benefit from a mentor." … "Sometimes [the caseworker] will meet with the teacher and talk about the mentor coming on board".

Mentors

Principals reported that the mentors were professional, committed and very reliable. One, for example, noted that "the mentors that we have had have been absolutely excellent with great backgrounds in school curriculum". And another simply commented that "the mentors are wonderful". Only one principal reported a problem with a mentor who became "too involved," to the point of meddling in school operations.

Several principals commented on the importance of BSBB screening the mentors. One, for example, said "I feel very comfortable with the sense that the volunteers are all screened. … Because as a school, we are entrusted by the parents, so I have to make sure it is a safe program".

Two of the principals seemed to be aware of the existing literacy training program for mentors. One noted that "They're very well trained before they come in". The other felt that "the training they receive, it's good training. … Although they say 'well I'm not doing anything out of the ordinary,' the fact is they are following a method and it is a proven and effective method." This principal noted that the method "reinforces what the teacher is doing in class because they follow the same methods that the teacher is using." The other three principals seemed to know little of the training received by mentors prior to their placement in the schools. One of these three, who felt strongly that training for mentors was important, observed that "we've done different things with our mentors that have helped them [learn about teaching literacy] and Big Brothers and Sisters have continued some of the focus," but did not seem to be aware of the current literacy training program for mentors. This principal went on to comment that "I think there needs to be some type of improvement in communication between the people who are going to be training or working with our mentors and training them in the area of literacy and the schools where they're working." The principal's point was that literacy training should be in place and it should be designed to reflect the nature of the school in which the mentor would be working.

Parents

Parents are involved in ISM when the school is seeking permission to match their child with a mentor. One principal's approach was to "make a personal call to each parent … and then the letter goes home". Another noted that "we've never had a refusal". After that, parents seem to play a minimal role in ISM, and there is little formal communication with parents about ISM. One principal explained that "I think the parents just go on what the students say". One referred to a lot of informal communication through "chats" in the hallway. Another explained that, although there was no formal means of communicating with parents about ISM, "every once in a while, in the newsletter, I'll tell them how great things are going with the mentorship program". Only one principal observed that "a lot of my parents like to meet the mentors … the kids have invited their mentors to different thing and the parents and mentors get to meet." The same principal speculated that "sometimes the parents feel threatened because the mentors have got the relationship with their child that they would like to have".

Support Staff

The principals acknowledged the important role played by support staff in keeping mentors informed of the activities of the school. One principal offered this example: "Our secretary keeps them informed. … like if Tuesday is our in-school mentoring day for this student and they're on a field trip, we make sure we call them". Another observed that "a lot of communication occurs … about when the school is open or closed and we have a PD day, or we have a volunteer luncheon, or room 4 is not available today … that kind of stuff. And that's the office staff.. He felt this was crucial to ISM running smoothly.

Principals

Principals saw their roles as complementing, supporting, encouraging and recognizing the successes of others involved in ISM. One said this directly: "I'm trying to complement their program. … I think my role is being the promoter, supporter and advertiser for it. Let the mentors recognize they are doing good work". Much of this they seemed to do through informal conversations (often hallway chats) with mentors, teachers, and parents. They were very clear that their work lives would not allow them to coordinate the ISM program in their schools. One commented that "you can get anything started, it's maintaining it and keeping it going over a long period of time [that's difficult]". They recognized the key role played by their caseworker: "The key component is that it's run by somebody else". "I get so busy. I mean not that I don't want to, I would love to be the coordinator, but what happens is I'm at meetings, life happens. Professionally, it's such a busy place".

Caseworker

Principals were very satisfied with their caseworkers and with BSBB, generally. They noted the key role played by caseworkers in finding and briefing mentors. One said it this way: "She's done all the work in terms of getting people, the right people, for the job. She has been a wonderful resource. … She does all the preparatory work." The same principal observed that the caseworker "spends a lot of time at the beginning. … They [the mentors] are very well prepped before they come into the school". Another commented that, more generally, "the support is always there whenever we need it" And he saw this as support of a very high quality.

The principals saw their caseworkers as important members of their school communities. They had developed very positive relationships with the caseworkers. One commented that "we have such a comfort level now she doesn't have to make an appointment ahead of time. If I'm here, I'll make time". Another described his caseworker as "the type of person who fits in very well." This principal felt that one of the reasons that the caseworker did fit in so well was that she didn't "make demands of me or the teachers." It may be that one of the key functions of the caseworker is to ensure that ISM is not experienced as an "add-on" by staff in schools who are already working to their capacities.

134

- **Purpose**

Consider the following comments made by principals when they were asked to speak about the purpose of ISM in their schools:

- "to connect and build relationships with students and hopefully increase their achievement through that".
- "a connection with the outside world. I've put that first because a lot of our kids are very narrow. Some of our kids have never been to the zoo. Some of our kids have never been downtown. … When I ask the older kids 'What are you going to take at university?' nine out of ten would say 'I'm not going to university.' … That's [broadening their horizons] number one. Once they understand that, they start to understand how important literacy is and how that opens up doorways".
- "The mentors listen with their hearts. And they're there for the child. It's not just a reading program. … It's meant to enhance all of the skills that provide the child with confidence to be a good learner".
- "I just can't emphasize the power of having an uninterrupted time with someone who cares, someone who is not directing, someone who is not busy, but someone who's there for you. Pretty incredible!"
- "Being an inner city school, literacy was important, but life skills were very important. So there was a little bit more of an emphasis on the emotional perspective." Then, later: "Literacy is also very important and so literacy is a big part of this program".
- "First of all, it's to build a positive relationship with an adult and we also use it to encourage and to improve our kids' school achievement".
- With respect to at-risk students: "Absolutely! [They pick up] practical skills and social skills; self confidence. … [They develop] a feeling that I belong or somebody cares about me and I'm not falling through the cracks, and there's a sense of team. There's also a sense that my mentor is counting on me".

The principals seemed to see the building of relationships and related social outcomes as the primary purpose of ISM; literacy outcomes were seen as important, but secondary. However, they did see the two purposes as closely related, with literacy (achievement, generally) as an "end" and relationships with mentors as a "means."

- **Relationships and Communication**

Principals expressed general satisfaction with communication among the various ISM participants. Some of the communication was handled formally. One principal referred to a bulletin board on which ISM information is posted. All of them referred to a "book" and formal sign-in procedures for mentors. In one case mentors "get the book, they sign in, put on their name tag, they say hello to the office person." This principal noted that these procedures were in place "for safety reasons … but also for communication". Other principals had in place procedures for support staff to contact mentors to inform them of circumstances which would require changing meeting times with students. Most of the communication, however, was handled informally, through "hallway chats" or conversations between mentor and teacher at a classroom door.

As noted above, principals felt that caseworkers were "extremely accessible" and they had developed very positive, even congenial, relationships with their caseworker. Principals also spoke of positive relationships with mentors and between mentors and teachers. Principals endeavored to make mentors feel comfortable in their schools. Much of this was done through informal personal exchanges. One principal, for example, spoke of trying "to visit as many as I can. If I see them leaving, I'll stop and find out what they're reading, find out what's going on". Another felt it was up to her to "make sure they feel comfortable in the school," noting that "there's nothing worse than volunteering in a school and nobody knows who you are, nobody says hi to you. … You have to be approachable and friendly and ask if there are any questions". One principal spoke of a "sense of belonging": "I think that's one of the things they can say, 'I belong to [name of school] school'".

All of the principals spoke of gatherings in the form of orientations or celebrations organized to recognize the contributions of the mentors.

The one area in which the principals did not report effective communication was in relation to the literacy trainer. In fact, they did not seem to know that there was a literacy trainer!

- **Program Changes and Impact**

All of the principals reported that they experienced the organizational changes to ISM as "seamless." One principal, for example, said "I don't know how it's changed from other years, I just know that it's worked very well this year". This principal attributed the smooth transition to the efforts of the caseworker. Another principal offered that there was "not even a hiccup. Everything just kind of continued to move along as it had been".

- **Overall Satisfaction**

The following comments capture the principals' level of satisfaction with ISM:

1. "I can't say enough about it … I just think it's one of the most positive programs I've ever seen".
2. "All the teachers who have been involved with the mentoring program have been extremely happy with what's happened. Their only issue is that there are not enough mentors".
3. [Students] involved in the program are really enjoying it, really loving it. I don't know how many children come up to me in a week and say 'When's my mentor coming?'".
4. "I'm very pleased with it and I hope it continues".
5. "The kids know to within a second when that mentor will be arriving. They're usually already looking out the door".
6. "I'm extremely satisfied in the sense that it provides at-risk children with opportunities that sometimes they would not get".

They were unanimous in reporting a very high level of satisfaction with ISM. They noted that teachers were happy and supportive, and that children eagerly anticipate visits from their mentors. In a tangible demonstration of his satisfaction with the program, one principal has created an office and devoted resources to supporting the caseworker.

- **If there was one thing you could change, what would it be?**

Just as the one who said, "I would have it [the mentoring program] in the school more often" , all the principals wished that the program would expand. In one case, the principal wanted mentors for all the children in the school.

Even though they had not perceived any problems with the change to caseworkers serving a number of schools, two of the principals commented that they would like the caseworker to be full-time or at least based in their schools.

One principal who did not seem to be aware of the current literacy training program for mentors commented: "I think our mentors would have to be trained in what literacy means … and perhaps those training sessions for our school should be running at noon hour, when our mentors are here working with the kids. … I think that hands on coaching and mentoring of our mentors is a better way of looking at training them". Her major point was that hands-on, school-based literacy training for mentors would ensure that the training reflects both the context of the school and the methods used in the school for teaching literacy.

- **What do you think is the most important thing about the program?**

See the notes above under the heading of "Purpose." The principals felt that mentors having positive, caring relationships with students was the most important part of the program. They saw this as very much connected to literacy and other dimensions of academic achievement. They believed that the positive social outcomes for children in mentoring relationships translated into better attention to achievement tasks, and thus better academic performance.

- **Outcome evaluation**

Principals saw confidence, enthusiasm and emotional growth as key outcomes. Consider the comments of these two principals:
1. "You can see the confidence in the classroom improve. It's not just the literacy skills, it's a whole bunch of different things. It's the can do attitude, it's I can deal with problems, I have the skills, I have the confidence to do it".
2. "Where do I see the success of the program? I see it in the enthusiasm. I see it in the confidence, I see it in the children watching for these fine people to come in and wanting to be there and show off that these people are theirs. There's a sense of bonding that occurs".

Generally, principals' assessments of the outcomes of the program were based on their personal observations of the children involved in the literacy program. Often, they told brief "success stories" to make the point. One, for example, told of a student who had moved from another school, having experienced serious problems there. This student was paired with a mentor with whom he connected. The principal observed that "the child has just made incredible growth, not only from the academic perspective, but also in terms of grounding and feeling part of a community".

One of the principals referred to tests used in conjunction with the Reading Recovery program as a possibility for assessing gains in literacy. Others, however had serious reservations. As one noted, "although it's a literacy focus … that may be very difficult to measure because it [depends on] so many different things". And another: "If you related to students' reading scores and students' writing scores, then are you saying that it's only the mentor that's making the difference? What about the program in the school? And what about the parents? There's so many factors that go into making something work". These principals were acutely aware of the difficulties associated with trying to disaggregate the effects of ISM from the effects of other literacy activities.

However, most of the principals agreed with the one who said "What I think you probably can get some real clear information about is just generally how kids feel and their confidence and what types of things the mentors have taught them".

Appendix I

Program Goals: Sample Quotes

CFL	….help children be more successful in school…..helping them feel better about what they're doing, helping them to feel more successful so that they then become more successful. And that's through all of the soft skills, the building self esteem and feeling more confident and all of those kinds of things. I would like to push it a little bit further and actually see the beginnings of some growth in literacy as well having some impact on literacy also.
ECF	Ideally of course what we're looking for is literacy improvement on the part of the children who are participating in the program. That's the ultimate outcome. We are hopeful of course that greater numbers of children will be involved as a result of our participation and our funding of this program and our hope is that twelve hundred children will eventually be involved by year three. And that those children will demonstrate or be able to demonstrate improved literacy skills. Literacy is important. The model of mentorship is…..it's been flaunted all over the place but this is a particular interest in the area of literacy.
BSBB	And so what we got into was if this makes a difference and kids do better and end up participating in terms of their marks are better, participating in school because they've got better relationships, they trust adults more, there's better peer interaction, then how do we grow that? .....people wanted to see does it really work. Well, you could only see if it really worked if there was a volume. And so in some ways, that kind of moved the process along, maybe more quickly than if there hadn't been that external interest in terms of does this really make a difference. And so I think for us, what we're trying to achieve is a better fit for kids in terms of feeling better about being in school, feeling supported in school and learning at a higher rate. That's what…at the end of the day if someone came back and said kids feel better about the school environment, kids feel that they've got good trusting relationships with folks, and kids are doing better in school in terms of their reading, their writing, their math, their interactions, then I'd say we did something good and important here The main focus is literacy but also…..there are some self-esteem issues that some of these kids have and I strongly believe that if you don't have good self-esteem you're not going to do good in whatever you try.

Principals	to connect and build relationships with students and hopefully increase their achievement through that". "The mentors listen with their hearts. And they're there for the child. It's not just a reading program. … It's meant to enhance all of the skills that provide the child with confidence to be a good learner". "I just can't emphasize the power of having an uninterrupted time with someone who cares, someone who is not directing, someone who is not busy, but someone who's there for you. Pretty incredible!" "First of all, it's to build a positive relationship with an adult and we also use it to encourage and to improve our kids' school achievement". With respect to at-risk students: "Absolutely! [They pick up] practical skills and social skills; self confidence. … [They develop] a feeling that I belong or somebody cares about me and I'm not falling through the cracks, and there's a sense of team. There's also a sense that my mentor is counting on me".
Teachers	"Most of the children have a difficult home life and mentors help address their individual needs." "Literacy skills are important but social/emotional needs are equally important."
Mentors	"I think you need some consistency or follow through with social [skills] and literacy."

Appendix J

Supplemental Tables (Results)

Table J-3.2a. *During the school year, how often do you communicate about the ISM program with the following people or groups of people?*

Question	Stakeholders	never (1)	< once a month (2)	From 1 to 4 times a month (3)	>4 times a month (4)	M
mentor(s) *in the program*	Mentors	37.0%	30.8%	26.7%	5.5%	2.01
	Teachers	10.3%	17.9%	53.8%	17.9%	2.79
	Administrators	6.7%	46.7%	33.3%	13.3%	2.53
	Caseworkers	0	75.0%	0	25.0%	2.5
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	100%	0	3.0
teacher(s) *in the program*	Mentors	12.2%	27.9%	50.3%	9.5%	2.57
	Teachers	31.6%	39.5%	15.8%	13.2%	2.11
	Administrators	0	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	2.93
	Caseworkers	0	50%	25.0%	25.0%	2.75
	Literacy Trainer	0	100%	0	0	2.00
principals/school administrators *in the program*	Mentors	29.7%	37.9%	29.7%	2.8%	2.06
	Teachers	33.3%	38.5%	15.4%	12.8%	2.08
	Administrators	73.3%	26.7%	0	0	1.27
	Caseworkers	0	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	2.75
	Literacy Trainer	0	100.0%	0	0	2.0
your ***caseworker(s)*** *in the program*	Mentors	6.9%	72.4%	19.3%	1.4%	2.15
	Teachers	42.1%	42.1%	13.2%	2.6%	1.76
	Administrators	6.7%	66.7%	20.0%	6.7%	2.27
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	100.0%	4.0
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	100.0%	0	3.0
the ***literacy trainer*** *in the program*	Mentors	74.3%	25.0%	0.7%	0	1.26
	Teachers	80.6%	19.4%	0	0	1.19
	Administrators	57.1%	42.9%	0	0	1.43
	Caseworkers	0	25.0%	75.0%	0	2.75
the ***Centre for Family Literacy***	Mentors	93.0%	7.0%	0	0	1.07
	Teachers	93.8%	3.1%	0	3.1%	1.13
	Administrators	85.7%	14.3%	0	0	1.14
	Caseworkers	75.0%	25.0%	0	0	1.25
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	0	100.0%	4
Big Sisters and Big Brothers	Mentors	72.1%	25.9%	1.4%	0.7%	1.31
	Teachers	86.1%	13.9%	0	0	1.14
	Administrators	40.0%	60.0%	0	0	1.60
	Caseworkers	0	0	0	100.0%	4.0
	Literacy Trainer	100.0%	0	0	0	1.0
the ***parent(s)*** *in the program*	Mentors	89.7%	9.7%	0.7%	0	1.11
	Teachers	28.9%	57.9%	10.5%	2.6%	1.87
	Administrators	13.3%	73.3%	6.7%	6.7%	2.07
	Caseworkers	75.0%	0	25.0%	0	1.5
	Literacy Trainer	100.0%	0	0	0	1.0

Table J-3.2b. *During the school year, how adequate is the communication about the ISM program with the following people or groups?*

Question	Stakeholders	Less than adequate (1)	Adequate (2)	More than Adequate (3)	M	N
***mentor(s)** in the program*	Mentors	33.6%	59.0%	7.5%	1.74	134
	Teachers	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	2.00	36
	Administrators	0	46.7%	53.3%	2.53	15
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.00	4
	Literacy Trainer	100%	0	0	1.00	1
***teacher(s)** in the program*	Mentors	22.7%	58.2%	19.1%	1.96	141
	Teachers	20.0%	62.9%	17.1%	1.97	35
	Administrators	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%	2.40	15
	Caseworkers	0	100.0%	0	2.0	4
	Literacy Trainer	100.0%	0	0	1.0	1
***Principals/school administrators(s)** in the program*	Mentors	20.9%	64.0%	15.1%	1.94	139
	Teachers	20.6%	58.8%	20.6%	2.00	34
	Administrators	33.3%	58.3%	8.3%	1.75	12
	Caseworkers	25.0%	75.0%	0	1.75	4
	Literacy Trainer	100.0%	0	0	1.00	1
***caseworker(s)** in the program*	Mentors	17.0%	65.2%	17.7%	2.01	141
	Teachers	35.5%	48.4%	16.1%	1.81	31
	Administrators	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%	2.40	15
	Caseworkers	0	50.0%	50.0%	2.50	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	100.0%	0	2.00	1
*The **Literacy trainer** in the program*	Mentors	59.5%	38.8%	1.7%	1.42	116
	Teachers	76.2%	23.8%	0	1.24	21
	Administrators	30.8%	61.5%	7.7%	1.77	13
	Caseworkers	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	2.00	4
*The **Centre for Family Literacy***	Mentors	59.8%	39.3%	0.9%	1.41	107
	Teachers	80.0%	20.0%	0	1.20	20
	Administrators	30.8%	61.5%	7.7%	1.77	13
	Caseworkers	75.0%	25.0%	0	1.25	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	0	100.0%	3.00	1
Big Sisters and Big Brothers	Mentors	33.1%	62.1%	4.8%	1.72	124
	Teachers	57.7%	38.5%	3.8%	1.46	26
	Administrators	0	73.3%	26.7%	2.27	15
	Caseworkers	0	50.0%	50.0%	2.5	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	100.0%	0	2.0	1
*the **parent(s)** in the program*	Mentors	53.6%	43.6%	2.7%	1.49	110
	Teachers	29.4%	67.6%	2.9%	1.74	34
	Administrators	7.1%	71.4%	21.4%	2.14	14
	Caseworkers	75.0%	25.0%	0	1.25	4
	Literacy Trainer	0	100.0%	0	2.00	1