



MENTOR is the unifying champion for expanding quality mentoring relationships for America's young people  
[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

## **SNAPSHOT: Youth Mentoring Research and Outcomes**

Mentoring is a youth development strategy that is a proven foundational asset for a young person's successful path to adulthood. It is also effectively used as an intervention strategy to redirect a young person's life toward a healthy and productive future. In both cases, the results save taxpayer dollars and fuel the economy. In fact, recent research demonstrates that **for every dollar invested in effective mentoring programs, there is a return of \$2.72**. This positive return on investment reflects projected increases in lifetime earnings gained by leading at-risk youth down the path to becoming productive adult citizens, as well as dollars saved through evidence-based mentoring-related outcomes, such as reduced juvenile delinquency and crime, improved school attendance, higher graduation rates, and lowered risk of youth involvement in costly behaviors such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

In addition, effective mentoring programs also report significant increases among youth served in self confidence, self efficacy and a positive attitude about their futures.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Dropout Crisis**

Nationwide, nearly one-third of high school students fail to graduate. In total, approximately 1.3 million students drop out each year — averaging 7,200 every school day. Among minority students, the problem is even more severe with almost 50 percent of African-American and Hispanic students not completing high school on schedule.

Experts say that dropping out of high school affects not just students and their families, but also the country overall — including businesses, government and communities. The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that high school dropouts from the class of 2006-07 will cost the U.S. more than \$329 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes. Experts also say that those who drop out are more likely to be incarcerated, rely on public programs and social services and go without health insurance than youth who graduate from high school.

In summary, high school dropouts are:

- Less likely to have a job or earn less, on average, than high school graduates;
- Less likely to have health insurance than those with more education and more likely to depend on Medicaid or Medicare for their coverage;
- More likely to depend on public assistance; and
- More likely to be incarcerated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anton, P., Wilder Research & Temple, Judy, Univ. of Minnesota, "Social Return on Investment in Youth Mentoring Programs," March 2007

<sup>2</sup> *Social and Fiscal Consequences of the Dropout Crisis*. (Updated, 2009). Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.



# MENTOR

THE NATIONAL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

## Quality Mentoring as a Solution

Study after study has shown that quality youth mentoring is associated with positive outcomes in three key areas<sup>3</sup>:

Social-emotional development (higher self-esteem, better relationships with adults and peers); Behavioral/risk-related behavior (avoiding drugs/alcohol/juvenile justice issues, bullying); and Academic performance (truancy, connection to school and adults, dropout indicators, achievement).

Conversely, **non-mentored youth often have declines in areas that predict conditions from involvement with juvenile and criminal justice to school and employment disconnection.** As an intervention strategy, mentoring has the capacity to serve prevention and promotion goals that align with a myriad of governmental objectives.

To reach evidence-based outcomes, it is essential that programs have the capacity and assistance to follow best practices.

According to MENTOR's evidence-based *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*<sup>™</sup>, **quality mentoring programs that employ the best practices:**

Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees by realistically describing the program's goals and expected outcomes;

Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment and personal qualities to be an effective mentor;

Train prospective mentors in the basic knowledge and skills needed to build an effective mentoring relationship;

Match mentors and mentees along dimensions likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure;

Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem-solving support and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship; and

Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and the mentee and offers both individuals the opportunity to assess the experience.

*We look forward to working with our nationwide network of Mentoring Partnerships, mentoring programs, elected officials, policy makers, researchers and other youth-serving organizations to ensure that funding for youth mentoring meets policy goals by investing in quality programs that meet intended outcomes and expand the impact and number of youth in professionally-supported mentoring relationships. Additionally, support of efficient and effective training and technical assistance will help ensure return on public and private investments.*

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<sup>3</sup> Dubois, D.L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J.E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J.C. (2011). *How effective are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence.* Association for Psychological Science, 57-58.