

Behind the Numbers



Go to pages 18, 24,
and 25 for more
discussion.

YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEEDING

The FCFC's approach to achieving the desired community outcomes includes looking “behind the numbers” as part of our effort to move the community indicators in their desired directions (see pages 3-4). For the Young People Succeeding outcome we have looked at School Attendance (2004), Graduation Rate (2006) and Early Care and Education (2007). In this 10th Anniversary Report we revisit and update some of these analyses, and we show how they contribute to ongoing community conversations.

From the discussion of School Attendance in the 2004 Report:

Based on a downward trend in attendance and other data, the Alternative Learning Opportunities Team designed broad responses (including the Mentoring Collaborative) that would benefit the entire county.

From the discussion of Graduation Rate in the 2006 Report:

There are substantial concerns that students experiencing failure on the OGT (Ohio Graduation Test) will become discouraged and leave school at an earlier point than they otherwise would have. Appropriate strategies for retaining ... such students are gaining ground in Montgomery County.

UPDATE:

By going “behind the numbers” of two different indicators, the FCFC touched upon an important strategy for helping young people succeed—mentoring. Mentoring has been gaining in popularity in recent years while drawing increased attention from researchers and policy makers across the nation.¹ Locally, the Mentoring Collaborative (see pages 16-18) has served both to stimulate interest in mentoring and to organize training and agency certification opportunities.

Such a program-level focus, it turns out, is a crucial first step. Researchers are finding that having well-trained mentors engaged in thoughtfully designed and rigorously implemented programs is a key factor determining whether youth from at-risk backgrounds achieve

any benefits at all from a mentoring program, much less positive benefits that are long-lasting.²

Equally important, however, are the dynamics and context of the mentor-mentee match itself, a rich relationship whose complexities are modeled in Fig. 1. This theoretical model³ suggests the enduring value of a mentoring program that supports relationship development. The researchers bemoan the “indiscriminate use of the term mentoring in the prevention field and the focus on the growth and efficiency of mentoring programs at the expense of quality.”

By promoting high quality training and by facilitating agency certification, the Mentoring Collaborative is acting with the best long-term interest of the youth in mind.

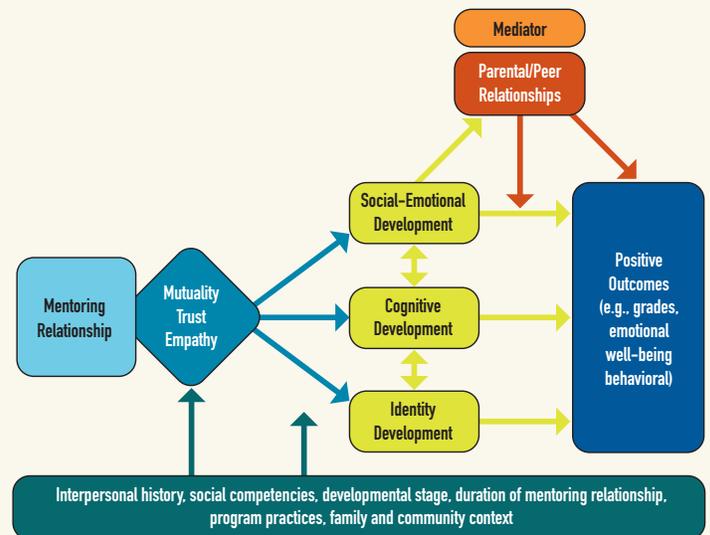


Fig. 1. This theoretical model of youth mentoring shows how important a close and enduring relationship is to achieving positive outcomes in social/emotional, cognitive, and identity development.

¹ MENTOR. (2006). Mentoring in America 2005: A snapshot of the current state of mentoring. Available at http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_333.pdf.

² DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 157-197.

³ Adapted from Rhodes, J.E. and DuBois, D.L. (2008). Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(4), 254-258.