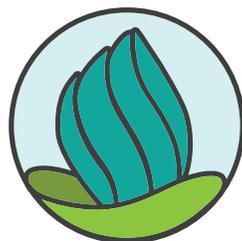


Supporting Deaf Youth Through Mentoring



NDC
National Deaf Center
on Postsecondary Outcomes



Overview

Mentoring programs improve personal development and academic outcomes for youth.¹ The relationship between the mentor and mentee is at the heart of what makes mentoring programs successful.

“Mentoring relationships provide valuable support to young people, especially those with disabilities, by offering not only academic and career guidance, but also effective role models for leadership, interpersonal and problem-solving skills.”²

Students with disabilities often lack access to academic and social role models.^{3,4} Deaf youth are an underserved population that could benefit from improving skills such as self-determination and independent living through mentoring programs. This document summarizes the importance of mentoring programs for deaf youth.

Benefits of Youth Mentoring Programs

Mentoring programs enable youth to interact with, learn from, and form connections to role models or individuals who can offer guidance and support. Mentoring can contribute to positive outcomes for youth in the following ways:

- Role models can help build important connections to community resources.⁵
- Culturally sensitive mentoring programs can improve students’ participation in education and expectations for their future educational path.⁶
- Mentoring and role modeling programs can improve academic outcomes (e.g., grade-point average, standardized test scores).^{7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13}
- Mentoring programs can increase students’ self-confidence, self-determination, persistence, personal development, and social development.^{10, 11, 12, 13, 14}
- Mentoring programs can help improve knowledge of and planning for employment and education after high school.¹⁴

Importance of Mentoring for Deaf Youth

Mentoring is important for deaf students for several reasons. Many deaf students attend mainstream schools where all of their peers are hearing, making academic and social settings difficult. Deaf youth often lack access to deaf role models who can provide focused attention, support, and guidance. Deaf mentors are able to share what they have learned from their shared experience of navigating the world as a deaf person. Mentoring relationships in which the mentee and mentor have a similar culture and background are particularly impactful.^{15,16} Mentoring programs are beneficial for deaf youth, but also for their family members. Mentoring deaf family members can take many forms, such as hearing parents of deaf youth supporting other hearing parents of deaf youth and deaf adults supporting hearing parents of deaf youth.

DEAF MENTORS + DEAF YOUTH

- Deaf youth who participate in mentorship programs develop greater confidence, self-worth, and deaf identity,^{15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21} which can in turn build self-esteem.²²
- Deaf youth who work with deaf mentors develop better social relationships.^{19, 23, 24} These relationships can increase participation in the community and access to resources that are important for the success of deaf youth.²⁵
- Deaf youth who participate in mentoring programs build stronger independent living and coping skills,¹⁵ which can be used in unfamiliar social and professional situations.²⁵
- Deaf youth can improve their language skills through mentoring by a deaf adult.²⁶ Expressive and receptive language skills are often critical to learning in a school setting.²⁷

DEAF MENTORS + PARENTS



- After working with deaf mentors, parents are more optimistic about their deaf children's futures.^{20, 26, 28} Optimism is important because parent expectations can positively affect deaf youth employment, pursuit of postsecondary education, and independent living.²⁹
- The language skills of deaf children improve when their parents work with deaf mentors to create more accessible language environments at home.²⁶ Better access to robust language models improves learning outcomes.³⁰

Building Effective Mentoring Programs for Deaf Youth

Mentoring programs are structured in a variety of ways (e.g., school-based, employment-based, community-based). There is no one-size-fits-all formula for developing an effective mentoring program. However, when developing a program or strengthening an existing program, it is important to consider the following with regard to recruitment, training, program structure, and evaluation.

RECRUITMENT

- Plan to spend sufficient time and energy recruiting mentors, deaf youth, and their families.
- Recruit mentors with diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Recruit mentors who have connections to social or professional networks that would benefit deaf youth.
- Recruit mentors who are willing and able to emotionally connect with deaf youth and share their life experiences.³¹
- Clearly describe the mentoring program structure, time commitment, and goals when recruiting mentors, youth, and families.³²
- Screen prospective mentors, mentees, and families for safety issues and personal qualities.³²

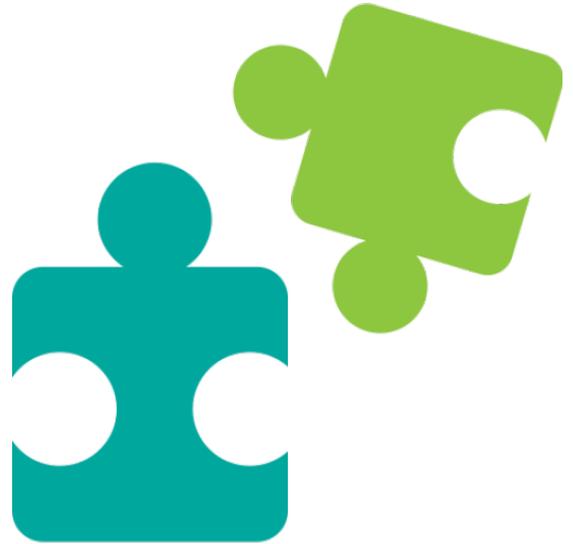


TRAINING

- Train mentors, deaf youth, and their parents (or legal guardians or responsible adults) in the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build an effective and safe mentoring relationship using culturally appropriate language and tools.³²
- Focus mentor training on key skills, such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and active listening.³³
- Provide mentors with training and access to support services beyond the scope of their expertise or programs focus.³⁴ For example, support from a social worker is beneficial in cases of abuse or trauma.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Seek input from deaf youth in the design phase of the program.³⁵
- Plan for the mentoring program to last for at least 6 months with structured and regular contact between mentors and mentees.¹⁴
- Thoughtfully match mentors and mentees and use initial strategies to increase the odds that the mentoring relationships will be lasting and impactful.³²
- Create a flexible program structure that mentors and youth can adapt to best meet their needs.³⁵
- Include networking opportunities in the program structure to give youth the opportunity to make connections beyond their mentor.³⁵
- Provide ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of each mentoring relationship.^{32, 35}
- Plan for closure of the mentor-youth relationship in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and mentee and offers them the opportunity to prepare for the closure and assess the experience.³²



EVALUATION

- It is important to monitor mentoring relationships to assess youth safety.³²
- Create a channel for ongoing participant feedback to improve the program and evaluate its effectiveness.^{32, 35}
- Identify what you are measuring by examining program goals (e.g., outcomes, behaviors, relationships).
- Decide how to collect data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups). Consider data-collection approaches that are most accessible for a range of deaf youth and take a reasonable amount of time.

References

- ¹ Eby, L. T., Allen, T., Evans, S. C., Ng, T. W. H., & Dubois, D. L. (2008). Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and non-mentored individuals. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 72*(2), 254–267.
- ² Office of Disability Employment Policy. (n.d.). *Cultivating leadership: Mentoring youth with disabilities*. Retrieved from www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/cultivate.htm
- ³ Hampton, N. Z., & Mason, E. (2003). Learning disabilities, gender, sources of efficacy, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic achievement in high school students. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*(2), 101–112.
- ⁴ Wiseman, R., Emry, R., Morgan, D., & Messemer, J. (1987). A normative analysis of able-bodied and disabled person's communication. *World Communication Journal, 16*, 137–155.
- ⁵ Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- ⁶ Aschenbrenner, C., & Johnson, S. (2017). Educationally-based, culturally-sensitive, theory-driven mentorship intervention with at-risk Native American youth in South Dakota: A narrative review. *The Journal of Child and Family Studies, 26*, 14–27. doi:10.1007/s10826-016-0537-z
- ⁷ Gill, W. (1991). *African American males: Leaving the nightmare*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED334296>
- ⁸ Berry, Z. (1992). *Black male achievement handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Board of Education, Prince George's County Maryland, Equity Assurance Program.
- ⁹ Thompson, L. A., & Kelly-Vance, L. (2001). The impact of mentoring on academic achievement of at-risk youth. *Children and Youth Services Review, 23*(3), 227–242.
- ¹⁰ Chester, A., Burton, L. J., Xenos, S., & Elgar, K. (2013). Peer mentoring: Supporting successful transition for first year undergraduate psychology students. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 65*, 30–37.
- ¹¹ Collings, R., Swanson, V., & Watkins, R. (2014). The impact of peer mentoring on levels of student wellbeing, integration and retention: A controlled comparative evaluation of residential students in UK higher education. *Higher Education, 68*(6), 927–942.
- ¹² Bone, J., & Slate, J. R. (2011). Student ethnicity, teacher ethnicity, and student achievement: On the need for a more diverse teacher workforce. *Journal of Multiculturalism in Education, 7*, 1–22.
- ¹³ Haycock, K. (2001). Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Leadership, 58*(6), 6–11.
- ¹⁴ Lindsay, S., Hartman, L. R., & Fellin, M. (2016). A systematic review of mentorship programs to facilitate transition to post-secondary education and employment for youth and young adults with disabilities. *Disability & Rehabilitation, 38*(14), 1329–1340.
- ¹⁵ Rodgers, K. D., & Young, A. M. (2011). Being a deaf role model: Deaf people's experience of working with families. *Deafness and Education International, 13*(1), 2–16.
- ¹⁶ Parasnis, L., Samar, V. J., & Fischer, S. D. (2005). Deaf college students' attitude toward racial/ethnic diversity, campus climate, and role models. *American Annals of the Deaf, 150*(1), 47–58.
- ¹⁷ Bat-Chava, Y. (1994). Group identification and self-esteem of deaf adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20*(5), 494–502. doi:10.1177/014616729420500
- ¹⁸ Selwood, J. (2005). *Perspectives on a deaf mentoring programme: Does it make a difference?* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/2867>

- ¹⁹ Covell, J. A. (2006). *The learning styles of deaf and non-deaf preservice teachers in deaf education* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (3260507)
- ²⁰ Hamilton, B. (2017). *The Deaf Mentor program: Benefits to families and professionals* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (10634208)
- ²¹ Foster, S., & MacLeod, J. (2004). The role of mentoring relationships in the career development of successful deaf persons. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 9(4), 442–458.
- ²² Garberoglio, C. L., Schoffstall, S., Cawthon, S., Bond, M., & Ge, J. (2014). The role of self-beliefs in predicting postschool outcomes for deaf young adults. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 26(6), 667–688. doi:10.1007/s10882-014-9388-y
- ²³ Nikolarazi, M., & Hadjikakou, K. (2006). The role of educational experiences in the development of deaf identity. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 11(4), 477–492.
- ²⁴ Listman, J. D. (2013). *Nature of deaf mentoring dyads: Role of subjugated knowledge* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd/149
- ²⁵ Cawthon, S., Johnson, P., Garberoglio, C. L., & Schoffstall, S. (2016). Role models as facilitators of social capital for deaf individuals: A research synthesis. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161(2), 115–127. doi:10.1353/aad.2016.0021
- ²⁶ Watkins, S., Pittman, P., & Walden, B. (1998). The deaf mentor experimental project for young children who are deaf and their families. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 143(1), 29–34.
- ²⁷ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. *Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects: Appendix A*. Retrieved from www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
- ²⁸ Henderson, R., Johnson, A., & Moodie, S. (2014). Parent-to-parent support for parents with children who are deaf or hard of hearing: A conceptual framework. *American Journal of Audiology*, 23, 437–448. doi:10.1044/2014_AJA-14-0029
- ²⁹ Cawthon, S., Garberoglio, C., Caemmerer, J., Bond, M., & Wendel, E. (2015) Effect of parent involvement and parent expectations on postsecondary outcomes for individuals who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. *Exceptionality*, 23(2), 73–99. doi:10.1080/09362835.2013.865537
- ³⁰ Humphries, T., Kushalnagar, P., Mathur, G., Napoli, D., Padden, C., & Rathmann, C. (2014). Ensuring language acquisition for deaf children: What linguists can do. *Language*, 90(2), e31–e52. doi:10.1353/lan.2014.0036
- ³¹ Lester, A. M., Goodloe, C. L., Johnson, H. E., & Deutsch, N. L. (2018). Understanding mutuality: Unpacking relational processes in youth mentoring relationships. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 1–16. doi:10.1002/jcop.22106
- ³² Garringer, M., Kupersmidt, J., Rhodes, J., Stelter, R., & Tai, T. (2015). *Elements of effective practice for mentoring: Research-informed and practitioner-approved best practices for creating and sustaining impactful mentoring relationships and strong program services* (4th ed.). Retrieved from www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Final_Elements_Publication_Fourth.pdf
- ³³ Wesely, J., Dzoba, N., Miller, H., & Rasche, C. (2017). Mentoring at-risk youth: An examination of strain and mentor response strategies. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 42, 198–217. doi:10.1007/s12103-016-9353-7
- ³⁴ Lyons, M., & McQuillin, S. (2019). Risks and rewards of school-based mentoring relationships: A reanalysis of the student mentoring program evaluation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 34(1), 76–85. doi:10.1037/spq0000265
- ³⁵ MacCallum, J., & Beltman, S. (2002). *Role models for young people: What makes an effective role model program*. Tasmania, Australia: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.



Office of
Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education



This document was developed under a jointly funded grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, #H326D160001. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the federal government.