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Alberta  
**Mentoring  
Partnership**  
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# CHILDREN & YOUTH IN CARE AND MENTORING

PROGRAM DESIGN

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# Overview

The role that significant adults can play in the lives of children and youth in government care is at the forefront of trauma-informed practice. The act of building healthy, enduring, long-term relationships and experiences between adults and young people is the essence of practice in youth mentoring. Using trauma-informed and research-based practices from mentoring programs, three project sites in Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer) have developed and implemented approaches to effectively engage, connect and support children and youth in care with adult mentors. The Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Program Design outlines these practices and highlights essential elements when establishing and implementing mentoring programs for children and youth in care.

UNIQUE  
PROGRAM  
ELEMENTS

KEY  
NOTES

## How to use this document

The Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project offers unique program practices, approaches and learnings that have evolved since 2014. This document is intended to help professionals:

- gain knowledge and information about activities and learnings from project sites
- understand essential program design elements for organizations interested in establishing and implementing a mentoring program for children and youth in care
- develop policies and procedures required when mentoring this unique demographic of youth as compared to mainstream mentoring programs.

## Navigate this way

This document is intended to be used with additional tools and resources developed throughout the duration of this project. Links throughout the document provide comprehensive information that can help to establish a mentoring program.



Practices and learnings from this project continually evolve with increased organizational knowledge, research and system-level collaboration. The capacity to effectively engage and support children and youth in care through a mentoring model is advancing; new learnings and knowledge will be articulated through future documents and design.



# 1. Introduction

In 2014, the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project received funding from the Government of Alberta to increase access to and utilize mentors as a support for children and youth in care. The purpose of the project is to:

- support organizations in developing and facilitating mentoring programs for young people with special considerations for working with children and youth in care;
- build the capacity of service delivery staff in providing mentoring programming for children and youth in care;
- help children and youth in care develop meaningful lifelong connections and relationships through formal mentoring relationships; and
- increase the number of mentors for children and youth in care.

Three established mentoring organizations came together to create and pilot a Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Project: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Red Deer and District, and Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area Society. Find out more about the organizations here:



AndersonDraper Consulting Inc. (Evaluator) is leading the developmental evaluation, in collaboration with the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). Their work has resulted in two important deliverables that are intended to be used jointly when designing a mentoring program for children and youth in care:

[The Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Program Design](#) is outlined in this document. This resource is intended to provide program theory. Practical implementation suggestions are highlighted but are provided with more detail in the Mentoring Toolkit.

[The Mentoring Toolkit](#) is intended for programs and organizations working with children and youth in care. This online resource can be accessed below and outlines in-depth best practices for developing and implementing mentoring strategies for children and youth in care.



**See Acknowledgements for a list of those involved in the development of the program design**

## 2. Program Theory

All youth require caring adults to help them develop the resilience they need to face the challenges of life. The presence of healthy, positive adult relationships and experiences in the lives of children and youth contribute to improved future outcomes. One of the most effective interventions for at-risk children and youth is to offer a caring and responsible adult role model who can make positive, lasting impressions.

**Youth in care are at increased risk for poor outcomes.** Over half of young people who enter the intervention system experience challenges with their physical, emotional or cognitive health or behaviour. Youth exiting care are less likely to graduate from high school or to enroll in post-secondary education. Additionally, they experience greater difficulty securing employment, are more likely to be involved in the justice system and have a greater incidence of mental health and substance use problems. **Intervention by a caring adult who can connect with youth and provide mentoring support will lead to positive outcomes for their successful transition to adulthood.** Mentoring can also help to prevent or lessen the involvement of child intervention services.



A cluster of protective factors help to foster psychological resilience in the face of adversities, one of which includes bonds to non-related positive roles models (Rhodes & Lowe, 2008)<sup>1</sup>. Having access to a non-paid mentor helps children and youth develop confidence, self-esteem and skills to be successful in life (AMP, 2017). **Positive outcomes of mentoring include increased high school completion rates, improved attitudes about school, enhanced academic achievement, improved social skills and behaviours, increased resiliency, better peer and family relationships, decreased involvement in risky behaviours and an increased sense of belonging (AMP, 2017).**



**Visit Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Project on Alberta Mentoring Partnership's (AMP) website for more information**

<sup>1</sup>Rhodes, J., & Lowe, R. (2008). Youth Mentoring and resilience: Implications for Practice. *Child Care in Practice*, 14 (1), 9-17.

## Literature Review

A review of literature for youth in care and mentoring was completed as a component of the evaluation and has informed the program design.



[Download the full review here](#)

Key findings include:

- One-on-one and mixed group mentoring provide opportunities for youth to develop strong social bonds with a mentor and provide positive social connections with peers in the community.
- Intentional and enhanced training for mentors and youth should begin at enrollment and continue throughout the duration of the mentoring relationship.
- Mentors often occur naturally in a young person's environment (natural mentors). These relationships may be easier to form and build trust and have a greater likelihood of being maintained due to shared social networks.
- Programs should be inclusive of guardians, caregivers and professionals involved in a young person's life. Effective engagement of these significant adults promotes communication and support especially in the event of changes in care placements and crisis.
- Enhanced monitoring and support should be built into core program structure to effectively deliver youth in care mentoring programs. Compared to mainstream mentoring programs, this will require decreased caseloads, increased funding and additional infrastructure.

## Theory of Change

If children or youth in care receiving government supports are connected to screened, trained and supported mentors, they will engage in a healthy and sustainable mentoring relationship and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood.

# 3. Outcome Measurement and Evaluation

In any successful and effective program design, there must be a robust evaluation plan and measurement framework to examine the outcomes and determine success. Evaluation involves gathering and analyzing data. The resulting information can be used to assess whether the program is effectively carrying out planned activities and the extent to which outcomes are being achieved.



[Find more information on evaluating mentoring programs here](#)

The evaluation approach for the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring program is participatory and developmental in nature as sites continue to work in a complex environment learning how best to implement a mentoring program. Evaluative thinking and activities are embedded into organizational life to generate information and make decisions as opportunities arise. The Evaluator works closely with sites to facilitate dialogue, documentation, data collection and analysis.



As part of the evaluation work, the Advisory Committee developed a comprehensive logic model that outlines the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes for the project.



[See Appendix A for the logic model](#)

## Program Goals and Outcomes

The goals and outcomes for the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project have been identified through logic modelling with the Advisory Committee.

The following short-term outcomes have been identified:

- Stakeholders are aware of the benefits of mentoring and demonstrate support for the mentoring process by working together and contributing time, energy and resources as appropriate to support the needs of children and youth in care;
- Staff report having the necessary experience, skills, training and supports to do this work;
- Organizations learn from each other and share learnings with others;
- Enhanced training and support help mentors to be confident and successful in their role;
- A model and delivery system for mentoring children and youth in care is established, implemented and evaluated;
- Children and youth are regularly supported by mentors, including during times of transition and challenge; and
- Children and youth feel supported and connected to their communities.



The following mid-term outcomes have been identified:

- Children and youth develop and maintain reciprocal, supportive relationships with people in their lives;
- Children and youth develop skills and knowledge related to socio-emotional learning;
- Mentors are a constant and stable relationship in mentees' lives;
- Mentors receive the knowledge and skills they require to support their mentees;
- Mentors are equipped through training and support to encourage and assist mentees development;
- Stakeholders are partners in promoting, recruiting and supporting the program; and
- The model and delivery system for mentoring children and youth in care is continually updated as new promising practices are identified and implemented.

The following long-term outcomes have been identified:

- Children and youth have the skills to form and maintain healthy, meaningful, long-term and enduring mentoring relationships with caring adults while in government care or receiving government supports and throughout transitions; and
- Children and youth develop and strengthen the resilience they need to face the challenges in their lives and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood.



## Indicators

Process measures include the:

- number of youth in care who have access to a mentor.
- number of mentors recruited, screened, selected and trained.
- number of children and youth matched.
- increase in number of children and youth in care having a mentor.

Outcome measure indicators include the:

- number and percent of mentees who agree “My mentor has helped me to feel I am better at handling whatever comes my way.”
- number and percent of mentees who agree “My mentor has helped me to feel more hopeful about my future.”
- number and percent of agency staff, caseworkers, parents/caregivers, and mentors who report regular communication is happening leading to a strong system of support for children and youth in care.
- number and percent of mentees who agree “As a result of being matched, I know more adults that I can go to when I need help.”
- number and percent of mentees who agree “As a result of this mentoring program, I know more about how to access the community resources I need.”
- number and percent of mentors who report feeling confident and successful in their role.
- number and percent of mentors who agree “As a result of volunteering as a mentor, I believe I am making a difference.”
- number and percent of mentors who report enhanced well-being as a result of their role as a mentor.
- number of youth in care who complete their education, have stable housing, gain meaningful employment and are contributing members of society.

## Measurement Tools

Surveys for mentors, mentees, child intervention workers, parents and caregivers along with interview protocols have been developed to support this program. To gather effective evaluation data and encourage survey completion the Evaluator incorporated movie gift card draws for mentors and youth who complete surveys. Tools measure mentorship outcomes in a variety of categories as listed above.

Other data collection conducted throughout the evaluation includes focus groups, observations and document reviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected as part of the evaluation.



**Visit Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring  
Project on AMP's website for more information**

# 4. Program Design

The following outlines the program model implemented by the project sites:



Sites have learned intentional focus is necessary in all aspects of the program model to increase the quality of the mentoring match. Intentional focus means:

- Using a variety of ways to recruit
- Asking additional screening questions
- Carefully considering matching through one-on-one meetings and/or a group setting
- Working closely with referral sources (e.g. child intervention and group home workers) to assess the readiness of children and youth for a mentoring relationship
- Increasing communication with mentors, mentees and caregivers

Project sites highlighted several benefits of the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project being managed under the same roof as other agency mentoring and youth programs:

- Access to other programming and supports for participants (e.g. youth leadership activities; broader organizational and community events)
- An integrated approach where youth in care have opportunities to participate and engage with other mentoring matches at events and programs
- Additional resources and opportunities to build community connections

Additional organizational benefits included access to enhanced professional development for staff and increased collaboration across programs to meet the needs of children and youth.



## Additional resources and training regarding children and youth in care

[National Mentoring Resource Centre](#)

[Alberta Family Wellness Resource Centre: Brainstory Training Certification](#)

[Foundations For Caregiver Support](#)



## Engagement

Enhanced Screening

Natural & Youth-Identified Mentors

Caregivers, Guardians and Children's Services

Youth-Centred

Targeted Recruiting

## Mentor Recruitment and Characteristics

Effective recruitment of mentors is critical for delivering a strong mentoring program. This is further amplified when recruiting mentors for children and youth in care. Sufficient numbers and diversity of mentor participants are required to meet the needs of mentees.

Consistent with mainstream mentoring programs, the first step in recruiting mentors is to establish criteria. A thorough job description should include: position description, time commitment, confidentiality, responsibilities, benefits, eligibility criteria, and qualifications and attributes that mentors should have to be effective in their role. It will also provide unique guidelines given potential complexities and issues children and youth in care may present or encounter.



**See Appendix B for sample  
Mentor Job Description**

Eligibility criteria are the minimum or preferred criteria necessary for an individual to become a mentor. Consider desired skills, characteristics and attributes as part of the eligibility criteria when creating a mentor job description.

Similar to mainstream mentoring programs, individuals with the following characteristics have been found to make the best mentors:

- Comfortable with complexity
- Not mentor focused (e.g. "know it's not about them")
- Flexible and non-judgmental
- Recognize that youth have challenging lives
- Open to supporting the young person interested in engaging in cultural awareness and connections
- Can relate or have faced similar circumstances
- Know when to ask for assistance

**Note: The majority of mentors and mentees in the project are female (86% and 71% respectively), with a shortage of male volunteers. Mentees range between the ages of 5-24 years old, with the most representing youth age 14 years and older. The majority of mentors are between 26-45 years old (70%) with another 21% reporting being 25 or less.**

## Youth in care identified the following important mentor characteristics:

Trustworthy  
Empathy  
Availability  
Affirmation  
Respect  
Virtue  
Authenticity  
Collaboration  
Companionship  
Encouraging  
Reliable  
Life Experience  
Committed

Stable  
Self-Aware  
Flexible  
Can manage expectations  
Approachable  
Youth-centered  
Able to weather rejection or challenges  
Patient  
Resilient  
Open to feedback

Not attempting to fulfill an unmet need  
Able to provide help as needed  
Someone who guides  
Understands and listens  
Verbal and nonverbal communication skills  
Previous mentoring experience

The project also identified unique traits valuable for mentors of youth in care:

- Have strong self-awareness
- May have experienced and overcome their own past adversities and, if so, are at a healthy stage in their own recovery and healing journey
- Can work from a trauma-informed lens

Successful mentors also receive enhanced training and support from the organization.

**A mentor is...  
“Being someone who can work with a youth: being a positive role model, sharing knowledge, offering advice, guidance, emotional support, motivation, who can be there for a young person”**

-Agency Staff Member

Project sites have noted that these characteristics are identified during interviews and reference checks and acknowledged throughout the mentor enrollment process. This helps ensure individuals are a good fit for the program and have the skills and appropriate self-awareness to engage with children and youth in care.

Some sites from the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project have begun to require a 2-year commitment from mentors. Mentoring projects that require longer commitments reinforce the value of long-term, positive, consistent relationships for children and youth in care. Project sites have noted that the average mentoring match length is 1.5 years and the vast majority of mentors make this commitment. It is also worthy of note that long-term average match lengths speak to the validity of screening, orientation and support processes of an organization.



## Mentor Recruitment and Engagement Methods

Many methods of recruitment should be used to increase the number of potential mentors. Carefully plan recruitment activities through a coordinated approach. Utilize a variety of tactics that may include anything from a formal marketing campaign to casual conversations. Keep in mind that recruitment can be a labour-intensive activity and will require time and staffing resources.

Organizations may also want to actively recruit individuals who would not typically seek out mentoring roles. This may include adults who:

- are former youth in care
- have recovered from addiction
- have experienced family discord
- are from marginalized groups/communities ( e.g. Indigenous Peoples, sexual and gender diverse communities and various religious organizations)
- are connected with community groups promoting social good, such as “UBAKA”<sup>2</sup> and other service-type groups.

Some successful recruitment methods are:

- Presentations to distinct groups, organizations, corporations
- Media/Advertising
- Corporate partnerships
- Partnership with organizations and community groups that align with the values and goals of the program
- Personal conversations with those identified as potential mentors

The Ontario Mentoring Coalition also identifies the following beneficial characteristics when recruiting and screening potential mentors:

- A high level of “social interest” - optimism, genuine desire to be helpful, and empathy.
- Positive character traits - for example, approachability, enthusiasm, commitment, availability, trustworthiness, maturity, communication skills, respect, and financial stability.
- Attunement - mentors should possess the quality of attunement, meaning the ability to anticipate a mentee’s needs in an empathetic manner.
- School and/or work performance - there is no evidence indicating high achievers make better mentors. Instead, it is important to look for consistent attendance, positive attitude and participation in other activities.
- Other commitments - consideration should be paid to a potential mentor’s schooling, extracurricular, work, or family responsibilities, which could limit their availability and thus may interfere with their ability to fully engage in the mentoring process special skills - although not necessary, those with special skills (e.g., the ability to speak a second language) can be beneficial to your program (Garringer & MacRae, 2008; Rhodes, et al., 2006; Satchwell, 2006; Spencer, 2007a; Vandenberghe, 2013).



Visit the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Project on AMP’s website for more information

<sup>2</sup>The Urban Bulldogs Against Kids Abuse (UBAKA) is a motorcycle group with 37 chapters worldwide.

## Youth-Identified Mentors

Project sites have noted promising practices with youth who self-identify adults with whom they have a pre-existing connection or relationship and would potentially like to formalize this into a mentoring relationship. Such individuals have been identified as “Natural Mentors”. Sites have included questions pertaining to the identification of such individuals into initial enrollment interviews with youth. Youth-identified and natural mentors can play a key role especially in supporting youth in care where trust and respect already exist. Many of these identified adults are former youth workers, coaches, teachers or relatives. Formal mentoring programs have the ability to engage and support natural mentors and/or youth identified adults in becoming formal mentors by providing them with added professional support, training and guidelines. Sites have noted there is a growing number of these adults who are engaging as formal mentors when contacted and asked.

## Mentor Screening

The sector standard as well as the breadth and scope for mentor screening is well articulated and accessible through AMP’s website. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada practices and standards in addition to enhanced protocols are incorporated into the screening approach used by project sites.

Sites identified individuals during mainstream screening processes who may be qualified for the unique role of mentoring youth in care: those with similar youth backgrounds, previous experience working with children and youth, coaches, former mentors, teachers, and law enforcement professionals. These potential mentors are presented with the option to mentor a child or youth in care.

When supporting youth in care, it is also critical to consider and engage individuals that would not typically be considered for mainstream mentoring approaches. This may include individuals who have recovered from addiction, family discord, care placements or homelessness. All sites have noted that when appropriately screened and supported, these mentors have been highly effective in their roles as mentors for children and youth in care.

Programs should ensure that robust risk management policies and procedures are in place when engaging mentors with complex backgrounds. Additional screening and supports could include increased numbers of reference checks (AA sponsors, therapist, coach or other professionals who can speak to the well-being and character of the individual), formal follow-up conversations with references to determine ongoing stability, more frequent in-person contacts and increased monitoring support of the mentoring relationship.

**Note: Criminal record checks and child intervention record checks should be incorporated, but not used as the sole risk management approach in determining suitability and potential risk.**

**“I do feel this program is strategic in how they choose volunteers and how they work with them, so they are fully prepared and know what our kids struggle with.”**

~Agency Staff

## Youth Engagement

Vulnerable youth, particularly children and youth in care, may carry a belief that they do not have or are not able to have healthy relationships. Project sites have developed tools and protocols that guide and explore readiness, interest, stability and special requirements from the perspective of the youth and guardian to be used at the initial enrollment. This initial engagement and screening provides context, insight and the opportunity for preliminary discussions with the young person. This process also provides further opportunity for program staff to clarify information about the program as well as parameters of the mentoring relationship.

All project sites conduct and assess references provided by other professionals (therapist, psychiatrist, or treatment professionals) if warranted. This reference assessment is an important part of information gathering when determining fit, readiness and ability of the young person to develop a positive relationship with a mentor. This contact also potentially becomes part of the support-web that program staff will facilitate and continue to engage throughout the duration of the mentoring relationship if appropriate.

Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project tips for recruiting mentees:

- Develop a process for accepting referrals from groups homes, child intervention workers, foster parents, and self-referral or interest by the youth themselves.
- Obtain written consent from the legal guardian (may be the child intervention worker or other persons including biological parents).
- When possible, youth should be identified and matched before transition periods. This provides an opportunity for the mentoring relationship to be established and allows enough time to develop trust and authentic connections so that mentors can effectively assist and support the youth with the transition (e.g. graduation, moving to a new foster home, living on their own).
- If it is not possible to match a young person prior to a transition, it is important that program staff stay connected with the youth and establish trust and consistency in contact.

Project enhancements that effectively address the challenges of engagement:

- Increase communication, beyond standardized intervals for contact with significant adults and professionals
- Facilitate one-on-one meetings
- Reach out to and engaging biological parents (if appropriate, and youth desired)
- Work closely with group home, residential treatment and support staff who are also working with the young person
- Engage the network of adults in the young person's life on a regular basis
- Promote the mentor as an advocate for the youth within the web of supports

## Indigenous Children and Youth

In Alberta, Indigenous children and youth comprise a large proportion of intervention cases involving Children's Services. The number of Indigenous children and youth involved in mentoring varies between the three project sites. It is dependent on the location of each organization, the Indigenous population in each program vicinity and the number of Indigenous resources and organizations in each community. The program has developed and embedded specialized training for mentors in the



areas of intergenerational trauma, cultural awareness and reconciliation. Program sites work closely with Indigenous agencies and groups to ensure that children, youth and mentors have access to Indigenous resources, activities and supports that are appropriate and meaningful.

**Note: Voices for Change: Aboriginal Child Welfare in Alberta, A Special Report, highlights the over-representation of children youth in care.**

Close to 70% of children and youth who received services in care are Indigenous (2016). In contrast, Indigenous children make up approximately 10% of the child population in Alberta, speaking to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care (Child Intervention Information and Statistics Summary Update, 2016). More troubling is that First Nations children are 30 times more likely to be involved with the Child Intervention system and they come into care more often, stay longer and are less likely to be returned to their family members (OCYA, 2016).

The increased representation of Indigenous children and families involved are often larger systemic issues stemming from history of residential schooling, loss of culture and identity and more current issues related to poverty, substance use and family violence (OCYA, 2016). The issues and their related results of overrepresentation demonstrate the gross lack of effective supports for Indigenous families by the Child Intervention system (OCYA, 2016).



**Access AMP: Considerations to Mentoring Indigenous Children and Youth Handbook**

**CLICK HERE**



## Waitlist and Group Mentoring

One of the challenges of mentoring children and youth in care is attracting and matching appropriate adult mentors. As recruitment and matching is a consistent and on-going challenge for organizations, children and youth in care tend to wait longer than mainstream youth to be matched. As a countermeasure, project sites have developed intentional, outcome-focused supports, programming and personal development opportunities.

Tips for supporting children and youth on a waitlist:

- Regular individual contact (both in person and through phone calls or text messages)
- Monthly group activities
- Group mentoring
- Leadership camps and summer camps

Connecting with youth on a consistent basis and keeping them engaged in activities while waiting to be matched has been identified as an important component of the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project delivery. Such contact builds relationships, understanding and trust between the mentoring program staff and youth, providing staff with an in-depth context of each youth when identifying potential mentors.

Group mentoring has been developed by the project sites as a main approach to build connections with children and youth waiting to be matched. Just like 1:1 mentoring models, group mentoring models are facilitated by staff or screened mentors who are matched to specific children or youth. Sites offering this approach have provided distinct programming for children (12 and under) and for youth (13+).

Outcomes of group mentoring and/or group programming for children and youth waiting to be matched may include improved:

- Interpersonal and group skills
- Supports by providing stable healthy relationships
- Health literacy
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Leadership skill development

## Guardians, Caregivers, Children's Services and Biological Parent Involvement

Programs should be inclusive and include individuals formally involved and important to the mentees' lives, both in their past and in their current situation. It is important for mentoring program staff to establish strong individual working relationships with each of those involved (biological parents, group homes staff, foster parents, foster kinship caregivers, support workers, child intervention workers and legal guardians). Formal collaboration agreements signed with care agencies about information sharing should also be developed, especially in the event of changes in care placements. Formal agreements and working alliances play an important role in gaining a more in-depth understanding of the young person, their past and current circumstances and their readiness for a mentoring relationship. Such information may also help to determine the type of mentor best suited to the individual's personality and needs.

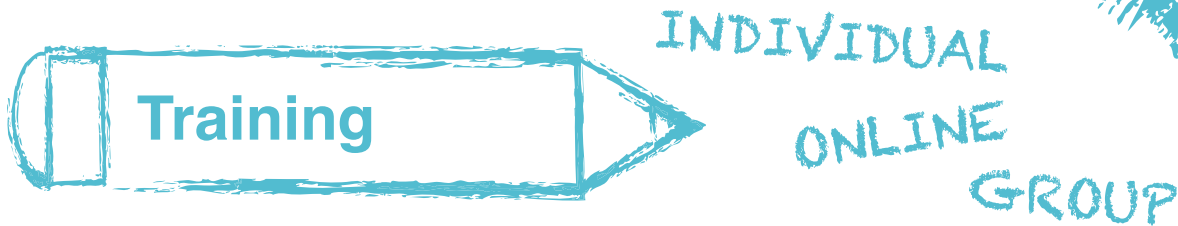
**“Support from the child intervention system is an integral piece to having a strong mentoring relationship. They can provide important information about the young person to agencies to ensure a strong match can be chosen and formed, provide updates on the young person's new placement so the mentoring relationship can be consistent and stable, and be integral in encouraging and nurturing a positive bond between a young person and mentor, especially in challenging times, which can then become a long-term natural support for the young person.”**

-Advisory Committee Member

It is recommended that caregivers be interviewed as part of the mentee recruitment and must be involved in regular contact, pre-match training and meetings throughout enrollment and for the duration of the mentoring relationship for children and youth under the age of 16. When it is the wish of the young person, caregivers should also be engaged and involved for youth ages 16+. This approach fosters a 'web of support' for the young person, and further provides the organization with key supports when establishing and supporting a mentoring relationship. Caregivers play an important role in encouraging the mentoring relationship to succeed and thrive. This has been noted by sites as critical for youth during times of transition or crisis and reduces uncertainty and program drop out.



Visit the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Project on AMP's website for more information



## Pre-Match Training

Project sites created enhanced training to ensure mentors are confident in their role. As part of their pre-match training, mentors complete specially developed curriculum that provides an overview of:

- Program goals
- Brain development
- Types of abuse
- Attachment
- Gender and sexual identity
- Boundaries
- Transitions or times of stress
- Self-care
- Roles and responsibilities
- Impact of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous children and youth
- Cultural awareness
- Fostering a strength-based relationship
- Community resources
- Impacts of trauma experienced and/or witnessed by children and youth and strategies for support
- Supports for youth with mental health concerns
- Children's Services overview

Training is delivered both online and in-person. Depending on the size of the organization, in-person training is offered individually or in group settings allowing mentors to ask questions, seek guidance and further expand their knowledge for this specialized role as a mentor.

## Ongoing Training and Education

Ongoing training and education provided throughout the duration of the mentoring relationship is an important area of support. This helps mentors further understand their role and the unique circumstances and characteristics of the youth they are mentoring. Project sites have brought in experts from community organizations to provide training in areas such as suicide prevention, mental health first-aid, gender identity and sexually diverse youth, family violence, depression and anxiety. Engaging such expertise allows mentors to connect with other community resources available as well as provide tools to support their role. Engagement also further integrates youth in care mentoring awareness amongst community organizations promoting referrals and program integration. Quarterly training events have seen strong attendance and proven to effectively engage mentors, increase knowledge and awareness and connect mentors to staff and one another.

### **Mentoring Training Regarding Gender and Sexually Diverse Children and Youth:**

Project sites understand the importance of recognizing and celebrating all types of diversity within mentoring programs and have engaged expertise from community organizations to provide guidance and training regarding mentoring LGBTQ2S+(Gender and Sexually Diverse) children and youth. These youth are twice as likely to experience childhood maltreatment, PTSD, and more likely to experience substance abuse and homelessness (Rainbow Health Ontario, 2015). Training for mentors regarding sexually diverse children and youth should include:

- Vulnerabilities facing gender and sexually diverse children and youth
- Celebration (not tolerance or acceptance) of diversity
- Inclusive environments and respectful language supporting gender and orientation identities
- Recognition that only some young people are "out" and self-identify as a sexual minority
- The importance of creating "safe spaces" for gender and sexually diverse children and youth to celebrate who they are, be respected, talk honestly and openly and somewhere they know they can go to feel welcome and be safe



# Mentoring Relationships

Youth-centred matching

Supporting Effective Transitions

Enhanced Support

Mentoring Activities

Endings

## Matching Mentors and Youth

Initiating an effective mentoring relationship is a key role for program staff. Project sites engage in highly personalized relationships with both mentors and youth from the initial stages of enrollment through to supporting the match once it has been established. This approach provides a consistent connection to one specific staff for both mentors and youth, resulting in effective communication and working relationships. As staff gain an understanding of the interests of youth and mentors, potential mentoring matches are easily identified.

Staff help to build the mentoring relationship by:

- Investing increased effort and time into building strong relationships with youth from initial referral and engagement through to matching them with a mentor
- Being another positive adult and advocate in young people's lives who is identified as a trusted adult to support youth in telling their story
- Intentionally providing outreach and support to youth
- Using technology, electronic communication and social media (e.g. text messaging, targeted Facebook pages) as an effective mode of communication and engagement with youth

**Note: Youth in care may be more hesitant to commit to a mentoring relationship given their personal circumstances and/or life experiences. It may take several days or require more time, discussion and information for youth in care than other youth to reach a decision or a place of comfort to decide if they would like to proceed. Organizations should pay close attention to the needs of each youth and collaborate with them to determine the best next step before formalizing or not pursuing the mentoring relationship. Potentially allowing the youth and mentor to meet more than once, creating other opportunities for the youth to ask the mentor further questions, or allowing staff to facilitate a group activity for the potential mentor and youth to participate in.**

There are several ways to engage and get to know youth in care. These may vary from ongoing group activities and social media strategies to intentional outreach. Project sites also give opportunities to meet a potential mentor in a controlled setting (e.g. organization office, caregiver home or group activity). **This gives youth a voice and choice.** Staff facilitate the meeting and allow the mentor and youth to spend time getting to know one another. All sites agree that this youth-centered approach is critical, allowing the young person to set the agenda and determine if the process should move forward to a formal mentoring relationship. Sites typically allow at least 24 hours for reflection and consideration for both the mentor and youth before connecting to determine if a mentoring relationship will proceed.

**“One of our youth came from the Middle East and did a lot of transition, they matched her with someone who spoke the same language and somebody who was able to connect with her and have a really good conversation with her that was a success.”**

-Agency Staff Member



## Mentoring Relationship Supports

Children and youth engaged in this project have faced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which can disrupt healthy brain development and create challenges in establishing and maintaining healthy attachments and relationships. Significant emphasis on relationship support is critical to the success of mentoring relationships for mentors and children and youth in care. Sites note the importance of frequent, consistent, meaningful contact and support for mentors and young people from initial engagement through to match closure.



**Learn more information about ACEs**

It is important to ensure the intensity and frequency of support provided to the youth is sufficient to promote and foster opportunities for them to practice relationship skills in a safe, positive reciprocal relationship with an unpaid caring adult. The core goal is to build a strong relationship between the mentor and mentee. The project also aims to establish a network of support for the young person by maintaining consistent open communication with all adults and supports in a young person's life (caregivers, guardians and child intervention workers, group home staff, transition workers, etc.). While this can present challenges given the potential number of adults involved, staff from project sites recognize that frequent communication, connection and involvement in case conferencing is essential for success of the mentoring relationship.

**Note: This intensive support, case management and advocacy for both mentors and youth contributes to the increased workload for staff facilitating these mentoring relationships and should be considered when establishing caseload capacity for this approach.**

Project sites have built the flexibility to increase contact beyond existing standards into their program structure. This flexibility includes the ability to have face-to-face contact versus telephone or electronic contact, and the inclusion of all adults at contact intervals. This team approach has resulted in mentors reaching out to program staff frequently for support, resources, and guidance; as well as meaningful connection and supporting relationships during transitions or crisis.

## Mentoring Activities

Project sites have developed core activities and approaches that recognize the impact of trauma on brain development. Project sites have also recognized the effects of increased social isolation due to disruptions in social networks and relationships for children and youth in care. Activities have been designed for youth to learn important social and life skills and participate in developmental opportunities which may be missing from their lives. These activities also help mentoring relationships evolve naturally.



Project staff encourage activities that allow children and youth to explore key transitions to adolescence and adulthood and may include:

- Learning budgeting, grocery shopping and culinary skills
- Exploring post-secondary and higher education through onsite visits at community colleges, universities and specialty education sites
- Applying for bursaries that remove financial barriers to accessing higher education opportunities
- Developing career and employment skills such as resume building, mock interviews and career exploration.

These stepping stone activities often occur naturally for youth who live with parents and within family units. However, for youth in care, such life experiences may not happen. Project sites acknowledge that the mentor can play a key role in supporting and sharing in these activities, milestones and developmental opportunities with children and youth in care.

## Indigenous Culture and Activities

All sites have paid close attention to the manner in which they recognize and honour the heritage, values and interests of children and youth. Project sites have established mentor training units that provide important information and increase awareness for mentors in local Indigenous culture and reconciliation practices and opportunities. Sites have connected and/or partnered with Indigenous community organizations as well as Children's Services branches to provide access to cultural activities (e.g. sweat lodges, ceremonies, Pow Wows, drumming circles) based on the interest articulated by Indigenous children and youth engaged in mentoring programs. This youth-driven approach honours the interest and values of each young person without pretext or presumption by both program staff and mentors.



## Relationship Evolution, Transitions and Endings

Programs should try to prevent premature match closures whenever possible, and effectively support and manage those closures when unavoidable. When planning for closures, all of those involved in the relationship should know when the match will close. Programs should have guidelines to handle both planned and unplanned closures and should have guidelines about re-matching mentors and mentees. When closures occur, all of those involved in the relationship should be encouraged to participate in reflecting on and celebrating the transition, allowing the relationship transition to happen as positively as possible.

Transitions often occur in natural relationships. Closures should promote youth's growth by encouraging the development of skills to cope when relationships end. Particularly for children and youth in care, memory boxes, and narrative stories of their life journey are often missing, lost or non-existent. Such celebratory souvenirs, tokens and photographs are cornerstones to their life story and should be encouraged to be created as part of the mentoring journey and shared at closures.

Youth in care mentoring relationships can and should mirror natural relationships as they transition over time. Programs may have to adjust their expectations and allow these relationships to evolve beyond the organization as young people reach the age of majority. Such transitions may require the organization to formally close the relationship yet keep connections fluid should mentors or mentees require future support. This can also allow youth to maintain positive connections with the organization and program staff.

Project sites have recorded mentoring relationships based on criteria, age and stage to assess the success of the mentoring. Creating tools to assess the mentoring relationship (e.g. longevity, consistency, positive mentor role) and reasons for closure will assist in determining the effectiveness for programs overtime.

**Note: Staff recognize that although relationships end and change, the mentoring relationship closure might be the first time that an ending or transition of a relationship can be a positive experience for children and youth in care. Sites have enhanced their practices to include the following activities that help to foster the healthy ending of a positive relationship:**

- **Revising closure letters that provide ongoing program support through an "Alumni Program"**
- **Providing the opportunity to re-engage with the program in the future, should the mentor or the relationship require support**
- **Encouraging mentors and mentees to take the time to create a story or memory album that captures this period of time for the young person**
- **Including an emphasis on positive closure as part of training and throughout the relationship**



# Resources & Supports

Professional Specialized Staff

Relationship-Focused Work

Community Partners & Stakeholders

## Professional Specialized Staff

To do this work, programs and organizations require professional, experienced and flexible staff with a strong understanding of trauma as well as the needs of children and youth in care. Staff need to be supported with access to ongoing training and compensated in accordance to the additional qualifications they bring to the role.



See Appendix C for sample Staff Job Description

The role of program staff is to foster and establish long-term, meaningful relationships that provide a web of support around the young person well into the future. There is a need for staff with increased experience (a minimum five years' working experience with youth), skills, training and supports to do this work well. Staff should have a strong understanding of children and youth in care, mental health, trauma, loss and grief, as well as child and youth development. They should be aware of available resources and have made connections with other supports and services for ease of referrals.

Staff should be flexible (e.g. able to work evenings; can assess cases on an individual basis to make decisions in the best interest of the child or youth). Flexibility is also required in establishing and working with guidelines or standards. With children and youth in care, staff need to adapt and be creative when it comes to supporting matches. It is ideal if staff are able to make a long-term commitment to the program as staff turnover can disrupt matches. To enhance support, staff should report directly to supportive managers with an understanding of this specific population and the issues they face.

To be successful, caseloads should be smaller in number so that increased individual contact can be made with youth, mentors and significant adults, caregivers and guardians more often than typical community-based mentoring match supports.

Though dependent on the young person, as well as the size and structure of each organization, staff engaged in youth in care mentoring programs ideally are solely dedicated to this specific program approach. Supervision and leadership should be provided by managers with expertise, knowledge and wisdom in mentoring as well as in high risk youth or children and youth in care. This context provides a core shared understanding and approach to positive youth development and resilience.

When hiring and selecting program staff, consider increased qualification such as:

- Related undergraduate or Master's degree in Human Services (e.g. Child and Youth Care, Social Work, Children's Studies)
- Minimum 5+ years work experience
- Extensive experience working with multi-barriered children and youth, including youth in care
- Strong theoretical knowledge and experience working with trauma, loss and grief, child and youth brain development, gender and sexually diverse populations, child intervention, Indigenous children and youth
- Experience with engaging natural supports, supervising volunteers and supporting children and youth through multi-system case management



## Relationship-Focused Work and Caseloads

All sites extensively identified the unique work and role that staff play with youth in care mentoring relationships. This varies depending on the size and location of the organization (e.g. rural, urban communities) as well as the responsibilities and areas of work staff perform. This is a vast and intense role in comparison to mainstream mentoring programs and requires staff to:

- Engage with both volunteers and youth from initial intake through matching and support
- Collaborate within the agency and with community partners
- Oversee enrollment and screening of both volunteers and youth
- Facilitate group activities for youth while waiting for mentors
- Facilitate group events for mentoring relationships
- Provide ongoing individual support for both mentors and youth throughout the duration of their involvement with the program

Staff are also required to play a significant role in multiple relationships. This may include:

- Liaising with multiple potential placements, caregivers, child intervention workers, guardians, parents, etc.
- Advocating for both mentor and youth in stewarding a positive mentoring relationship
- Building strong connections with community resources (e.g. housing subsidies, recreation, transportation, food banks, and other services)

Work intensity varies case by case. While there is no “magic” number of mentoring relationships that one staff member should oversee, sites have identified the ideal caseload to be within 25-35 mentoring matches. Mainstream mentoring program caseloads range from 50-75 mentoring relationships. The range for youth in care mentoring is dependent upon the age, stage and complexity of circumstances surrounding the mentoring relationship, the experience of the mentor and the unique characteristics of each youth.

Sites continue to analyze the workload handled by staff by:

- Completing caseload tracking charts highlighting the extent of the workload
- Tracking time allocations
- Recording unique circumstances and needs

As further knowledge and awareness of this unique work is articulated, ideal caseload management and capacity will become better defined.

**Note: This mentoring approach is intensive, intentional, and carries a higher cost when delivered effectively by highly skilled staff. Resulting in a ratio of 3:1 compared to mainstream mentoring programs (Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring programs ranged from \$2000-\$2200 per year in 2018, compared to mainstream community-based mentoring relationships that averaged \$1000-\$1500 per year in 2018).**

**“We become who we are and realize our full potential in and through strong supportive relationships with people who care about who we are and what happens to us.”**

~Renee Spencer, 2016



**For additional staff training and professional development:**

**Alberta Family Wellness Resource  
Centre: Brain Story Training Certification**

**Foundations For Caregiver Support**

## Community Partners and Stakeholders

A critical component of the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring project has been close relationships with key partners and stakeholders. From the onset of the pilot phase, the Advisory Committee has played a key role in building relationships across sectors and removing barriers for children and youth in care to access the program within communities. The Advisory Committee includes: key contacts within the provincial government, advocacy groups, youth in care experts, executive staff from sites and other organizations

Key findings have noted that there are several ingredients necessary for success in developing a youth in care mentoring program:

- The correct advisory committee (a balance of agency, community, evaluator/professionals, government representatives, mentors and mentees)
- Solid committee structure and the right level of staff on the Advisory Committee
- Individuals with the necessary decision-making authority and influence to promote system change
- Sufficient awareness of the needs of children and youth in care and the landscape of mentoring when building bridges between government and community services

The Advisory Committee has demonstrated success in the following areas:

- Ongoing funding support for the project beyond seed funding for the pilots
- Increased influence and interest across various Alberta Government Ministries to support this work and approach
- Continued building of community awareness pertinent to the needs, and benefits of mentoring for youth in care as an effective community approach

It is imperative that Child Intervention Workers, Family Enhancement Specialists and local Children's Services offices are well informed and aligned with mentoring programs to effectively reach children and youth in their care to receive mentoring.

Tips for partnering and engaging local Child Intervention Worker, Family Enhancement Workers, Kinship Care Workers and Children's Services (CS) are:

- Signed agreement in place with CS
- Program presentations at quarterly CS unit meetings
- Working relationships and alliances with CS Managers, and leads
- Frequent contact with workers regarding youth mentoring relationships and status
- Membership in community advisory and youth placement committees with CS to promote mentoring as a community programming resource

Effective working relationships with other community services play an important role in mentoring children and youth in care. These relationships have included organizations such as:

- National organizations (e.g. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada)
- Supports and organizations for newcomers
- Advocacy groups
- Schools
- Community supports
- Local organizations who support children and youth in care (group homes, treatment programs, shelters)
- LGBTQ2S+ groups and organizations
- Residential treatment programs
- Indigenous supports and organizations

# 5. Conclusion

This document outlined the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring program model, informed through an extensive literature review, stakeholder consultation, evaluation and evidence-informed practice. This work is relational, collaborative, and significant as mentoring relationships positively impact the lives of children and youth in care in Alberta. For more information on this initiative, or mentoring in general, contact AMP.



Contact the Alberta Mentoring Partnership

## Acknowledgments

There has been tremendous collaboration in the goal of improving and implementing mentoring programs for children and youth throughout Alberta. The Evaluator would like to acknowledge the important contributions made in the development of this program design by the three pilot sites and the Children & Youth in Care and Mentoring Advisory Committee. Individual members of the Advisory Committee and others who have contributed to this document include: Amber Syvenky, Eric Storey, Stephan Kaiswatum, Krista Brower, Andrea Anderst and Tracy Luca-Huger. Organizations involved on the Advisory Committee are listed below:



Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Calgary and Area



Boys & Girls Clubs



Big Brothers Big Sisters

Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Edmonton & Area

ANDERSON DRAPER



Community  
Mental Health  
Action Plan



Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Red Deer and District



Alberta  
Mentoring  
Partnership  
*Your Mentoring Resource*  
albertamentors.ca



**ALIGN**  
Association of  
Community Services



OFFICE OF  
THE CHILD AND  
YOUTH ADVOCATE  
ALBERTA

# Appendix A

## Logic Model: Children and Youth in Care and Mentoring (April 2017 – March 2020)

<b>Theory of Change: If children or youth in care or involved in government supports are connected to specifically selected, trained and supported mentors, they will engage in a healthy and sustainable mentoring relationship and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood.</b>				<b>Outcomes</b>		
<b>Situation</b> <i>The current state of related social issue, protective/risk factors, relevant statistics, the organizational capacity and strategic partners</i>	<b>Inputs</b> <i>The manpower, financial, organizational and community resources available</i>	<b>Activities</b> <i>The actions and events that are planned/implemented to help achieve the desired goal.</i>	<b>Outputs</b> <i>The direct, tangible products or services produced.</i>	<b>Awareness</b> <i>The impact on the awareness of access, opportunity and availability of services/resources for individuals/families/communities</i>	<b>Impact on community's capacity building</b> <i>The changes in practices, behaviours, and procedures for community to address/respond to family violence, sexual violence, bullying, mental health, mentoring, early childhood development, diverse population and parenting</i>	<b>Long-Term Impact</b> <i>The ultimate benefits or changes in social and environmental conditions.</i>
<p>Three established mentoring organizations in Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer (sites) have come together to help to expand mentoring for children and youth in care, with funding from Alberta Children's Services.</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to foster meaningful relationships between mentors &amp; vulnerable youth. All youth require caring adults to help them develop the resilience that they need to face the challenges of life. The presence of healthy, positive adult relationships &amp; experiences in the lives of children contribute to improved future outcomes. One of the most effective interventions for at-risk children is to offer a caring and responsible adult role model who can make positive, lasting impressions.</p> <p>Youth in care are at increased risk for poor outcomes. Over half of children who enter the intervention system voice a concern with their physical, emotional or cognitive health or behaviour. Youth exiting care are less likely to graduate from high school or to enroll in post-secondary education. Additionally, they experience greater difficulty securing employment, are more likely to be involved in the justice system, and have a greater incidence of mental health and substance use problems.</p>	<p>Youth in Care &amp; Mentoring Advisory Group Agency leadership and staff Facilitators Policy and procedures Funding and support from Government of Alberta Potential volunteers &amp; mentors Corporate and other partners &amp; key stakeholders Facilities, transportation Promotional materials Training procedures and modules Other agencies and supports (referrals) Guiding principles Evaluation Plan, data collection tools</p>	<p>Engage and educate key stakeholders</p> <p>Promote, recruit, screen, select and train mentors</p> <p>Engage children and youth and assess their readiness for a mentoring relationship, and facilitate activities, match events and group meetings</p> <p>Monitor and support matches (intensity and frequency) and match closures by recruiting, training and supporting skilled staff</p> <p>Facilitate regular communication between Agency staff, caseworkers, parents/caregivers, and mentors who work together to provide a strong system of support for children and youth in care</p> <p>Conduct evaluation and data collection with a focus on continuous improvement</p>	<p># of promotional activities, facilitated discussions, meetings with stakeholders</p> <p># of volunteers recruited, screened, selected &amp; trained</p> <p># of children and youth matched (ages &amp; demographics)</p> <p># of group events held</p> <p># of activities (presentations, discussions &amp; updates) held/participated in to engage and educate child intervention workers and key stakeholders.</p> <p># of Mentor, Mentee &amp; stakeholder surveys completed</p> <p>A measurement tool is selected and incorporated in the evaluation plan and used by sites</p> <p>Outcome-based annual evaluation conducted to assess the results and contribute to improvement of implementation</p>	<p>Stakeholders are aware of the benefits of mentoring and demonstrate support for the mentoring process by working together and contributing time, energy and resources as appropriate to support the needs of children and youth in care</p> <p>Staff report having the necessary experience, skills, training and supports to do this work</p> <p>Agencies learn from each other and share learnings with others</p> <p>Enhanced training and support help mentors to be confident and successful in their role</p> <p>A model and delivery system for mentoring children and youth in care is established, implemented and evaluated</p> <p>Children and youth are regularly supported by mentors, and during times of transition and challenge and post care</p> <p>Children and youth feel supported and connected to their communities</p>	<p>Children and youth develop and maintain reciprocal, supportive relationships with people in their lives.</p> <p>Mentors are aware of community resources and are able to support their mentees in advocating for supports and services to meet their needs</p> <p>Mentors experience enhanced personal well-being</p>	<p>Children and youth form and maintain healthy, meaningful, long term &amp; enduring mentoring relationships with caring adults while in government care or receiving government supports, throughout transitions and post care</p> <p>Children and youth develop and strengthen the resilience they need to face the challenges in their lives and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood</p>

## Logic Model: Children and Youth in Care and Mentoring (April 2017 – March 2020)

Theory of Change: If children or youth in care or involved in government supports are connected to specifically selected, trained and supported mentors, they will engage in a healthy and sustainable mentoring relationship and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood.				Outcomes		
Situation <i>The current state of related social issue, protective/risk factors, relevant statistics, the organizational capacity and strategic partners</i>	Inputs <i>The manpower, financial, organizational and community resources available</i>	Activities <i>The actions and events that are planned/implemented to help achieve the desired goal.</i>	Outputs <i>The direct, tangible products or services produced.</i>	Awareness <i>The impact on the awareness of access, opportunity and availability of services/resources for individuals/families/communities</i>	Impact on community's capacity building <i>The changes in practices, behaviours, and procedures for community to address/respond to family violence, sexual violence, bullying, mental health, mentoring, early childhood development, diverse population and parenting</i>	Long-Term Impact <i>The ultimate benefits or changes in social and environmental conditions.</i>
	Process Measures			Outcomes Measures		
		<p>Evidence of skilled staff in place who regularly monitor and support matches (intensity and frequency), offer training, and facilitate positive match closures to ensure mentors are successful in their role.</p> <p>Evidence of collaboration between professional and natural supports.</p>	<p># of mentors recruited, screened, selected and trained. Target: 50 new mentors across three sites</p> <p># of children and youth matched. Target: 50 new matches across three sites &amp; support for existing matches</p> <p>Increased number of children and youth in care having a mentor</p>	<p>The #/% of mentees who agree "My mentor has helped me to feel I am better at handling whatever comes my way." Target: 80% of mentees agree or strongly agree with the statement</p> <p>The #/% of mentees who agree "My mentor has helped me to feel more hopeful about my future." Target: 80% of mentees agree or strongly agree with the statement</p> <p>The #/% of agency staff, caseworkers, parents/caregivers, and mentors who report regular communication is happening leading to a strong system of support for children and youth in care. Target: Agreement from 65% of agency staff, caseworkers, parents/caregivers and mentors</p> <p>The #/% of mentees who agree "As a result of being matched, I know more adults that I can go to when I need help." Evidence of a strong support network available to mentee. Target: 70% of mentees agree or strongly agree with the statement</p>	<p>The #/% of mentees who agree "As a result of this mentoring program, I know more about how to access the community resources I need." Target: 70% of mentees agree or strongly agree with the statement</p> <p>#/% of mentors who report feeling confident and successful in their role. Target: 80% of mentors who agree or strongly agree with the statement</p> <p>The #/% of mentors who agree "As a result of volunteering as a mentor, I believe I am making a difference." Target: 80% of mentors who agree or strongly agree with the statement</p> <p>The #/% of mentors who report enhanced well-being as a result of their role as a mentor</p>	<p>Number of youth in care who have access to a mentor</p> <p>Number of youth in care who complete their education, have stable housing, gain meaningful employment and are contributing members of society</p>



## Logic Model: Children and Youth in Care and Mentoring (April 2017 – March 2020)

<b>Theory of Change:</b> If children or youth in care or involved in government supports are connected to specifically selected, trained and supported mentors, they will engage in a healthy and sustainable mentoring relationship and are more likely to successfully transition to adulthood.				<b>Outcomes</b>		
<b>Situation</b> <i>The current state of related social issue, protective/risk factors, relevant statistics, the organizational capacity and strategic partners</i>	<b>Inputs</b> <i>The manpower, financial, organizational and community resources available</i>	<b>Activities</b> <i>The actions and events that are planned/implemented to help achieve the desired goal.</i>	<b>Outputs</b> <i>The direct, tangible products or services produced.</i>	<b>Awareness</b> <i>The impact on the awareness of access, opportunity and availability of services/resources for individuals/families/communities</i>	<b>Impact on community's capacity building</b> <i>The changes in practices, behaviours, and procedures for community to address/respond to family violence, sexual violence, bullying, mental health, mentoring, early childhood development, diverse population and parenting</i>	<b>Long-Term Impact</b> <i>The ultimate benefits or changes in social and environmental conditions.</i>
	<b>Data Source</b>			<b>Data Source</b>		
	Document review (financials); interviews with agency staff	File review, site visits, staff, mentor and mentee surveys; focus group with stakeholders (i.e. Child Intervention workers)	File review, site reports	Agency file reviews, mentor and mentee survey, focus groups and interviews with stakeholders		

## Appendix B

### Sample Mentor Job Description.

#### **What is the Youth In Care Mentoring Program?**

Youth In Care connects volunteer mentors to youth in care or youth that are transitioning from care to independence. Evolving into adolescence and young adulthood can be an exciting and challenging time. Having a caring adult providing friendship, guidance and support can go a long way in helping a young person on their journey to a bright future.

#### **Who are the youth?**

The children and youth are between the ages of 7- 24 and are currently under the care of Children's Services or are transitioning into independence. Children and youth are:

- Developing healthy relationships
- Learning socio-emotional, communication and interpersonal skills
- Exploring their own identity

Many youth have minimal natural supports and are interested in exploring the opportunity to build a meaningful, supportive relationship with a mentor.

#### **Mentors are:**

- Committed volunteers with strong communication skills who can offer flexibility and patience to a relationship with a youth.
- Caring individuals who listen, communicate openly, do not judge and will persevere in developing a strong, healthy and enduring relationship.
- Appreciates the youth's individual strengths, respects their experiences, supports their current and future goals.
- Provides perspectives and opportunities that inspire a positive future outlook.

#### **What are your key responsibilities?**

- Minimum two-year commitment
- Participate in initial and ongoing training
- Connect with youth on a consistent basis (minimum of 8 hours per month)
- Keep regular contact with the program coordinator
- Follow policies and procedures set out by the organization
- Uphold the confidentiality of children and youth in the program as outlined in the Confidentiality Statement
- Help youth to build confidence, resiliency, feelings of connection and relationship skills and connections essential for success
- Create a supportive relationship built on mutual respect
- Foster opportunities for youth to experience strength-based interactions and feedback, while gaining new skills, experiences and connections.
- Allow the mentoring relationship to be youth-led, while providing guidance, support and constructive feedback

## Appendix C

### Sample Job Description for Children & Youth in Care Agency Caseworker:

**The key responsibilities of this position include:**

- Providing support and monitoring to youth in care mentoring matches to ensure that children and youth are in safe, constructive, satisfying relationships that are having a positive impact.
- Working to create and foster constructive, strength based and satisfying relationships between youth and volunteers.
- Providing support to youth who have experienced challenges involving marginalization, addictions and delinquency.
- Offering youth an opportunity to engage in indigenous traditions and experiences as a part of their mentoring.
- Working with youth ages 10-19+ to provide positive role modeling and mentorship to achieve outcomes related to reduced substance abuse and youth deviancy.
- Facilitating group programming for youth ages 10-19+ with topics focusing on junior high to high school transition, high school completion and post-secondary engagement.
- Working as a team to communicate the needs of youth who are participating in the program.
- Fulfilling program standards and expectations from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and the agency to support these matches.
- Maintaining up-to-date electronic casework notes, statistics and other required reporting in compliance with relevant standards, policies and processes.
- Building relationships with other service providers and resources to further assist the children, youth, families and the volunteers who support them.

**The successful candidate will have:**

- A degree or diploma in the areas of child and youth care, criminology and/or social work. Preference given for a Master's degree in Human Services (e.g. Child and Youth Care, Social Work, Children's Studies)
- A minimum of 5 years combined experience in a role involved with at risk child and youth, programming, case management and partnership development.
- The ability to work effectively with children and youth ages 10-19+ and has a solid understanding of the circumstances facing child and youth in care.
- Prior experience working with Indigenous communities, high risk youth, youth justice system and children and youth services are key components.
- An understanding of Indigenous practices and awareness of these resources for young people.
- Experience working with volunteers and an understanding of volunteer processes.
- Demonstrated good communication skills (both written and oral)
- Ability to exercise good judgement and sound decision making.
- Demonstrated creativity and innovation in working with youth.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule of evenings and some weekends to accommodate clients.
- A valid driver's license and vehicle.

Candidates must be capable of performing independently as well as part of a team environment and have excellent interpersonal skills.