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Minneapolis Kinship Mentoring Program: A Descriptive and Exploratory Study

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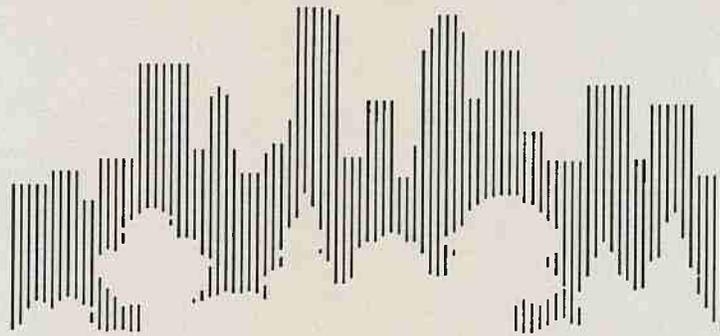
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MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK THESIS

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Minneapolis Kinship Mentoring Program:

A Descriptive and Exploratory Study

by

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

MINNEAPOLIS KINSHIP MENTORING PROGRAM:
A DESCRIPTIVE AND EXPLORATORY STUDY

PROGRAM EVALUATION

SUSAN J. KRAMER

APRIL 20, 1995

Children are growing up with a diminished level of adult contact that affects their social and emotional well-being. Structured adult-to-youth mentoring programs provide stable, caring adult mentors for youth in need of additional adult support. This qualitative study describes the Kinship Program, its program population and explores the nature of mentoring relationships between children and mentors from the Minneapolis Kinship Program. For this thesis, personal interviews were conducted with parents whose children were matched with mentors from the Kinship Program. Fourteen interviews were completed; this was a 47 percent response rate. Interview results indicated that parents believed mentors developed trust with children, introduced children to new activities and skills, and acted as a positive role-model. The findings are discussed in relation to other research on mentoring.

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Chapter One

Overview

This chapter contains six sections. Sections one and two, "Introduction" and "Description of the Program," introduce the research and describe the program to be evaluated. Section three, "The Concept of Mentoring," traces the history of mentoring to its current status. Section four, "The Statement of Need," states that many youth are increasingly at risk for problems such as school failure and/or substance abuse. Section five, "Purpose and Significance," discusses the relevance of this study and its implications for program, policy, and research. The final section, "The Need for Mentoring," examines why mentoring is especially important for children.

Introduction

This research explores the nature of mentoring relationships between children and their mentors from the Kinship of Greater Minneapolis Program (Kinship). A secondary goal describes the program and the population it serves. In defining the rationale for this study, the Kinship program goals (established in 1994-95) were examined.

The first goal sought to establish successful relationships between children and adult volunteers. There were two objectives within this first goal. The first Kinship program objective was to carefully match the volunteers with children based on their interests, personalities, and geographic location. This objective was measured by looking at the number of matches lasting one year. The program defines a successful match as one that continues throughout the year, with the mentor and child meeting weekly. Factors such as volunteers moving

and family changes with child or volunteer were considered out of the program control. Kinship sought to have a 90% success rate for matches.

The second Kinship program objective was to provide ongoing support in the form of follow-up calls, newsletters, and program activities for participants. This was measured by a year-end survey of both volunteers, children, and parents that explored program satisfaction.

The second goal sought to establish a solid financial basis upon which to build this program. The development committee focused on this goal of increased contributions through individuals, churches, neighborhood groups, and grants.

The focus of this study is on the first goal of developing successful relationships and exploring the nature of those relationships on the children. Information about the program was retrieved through discussions with the Program Director and Coordinator in addition to the researcher's experience working as a Coordinator since October, 1994.

This study developed out of an interest in the program's ability to meet the mentoring needs of children and the impact relationships have on children. This evaluation attempts to add to the body of research looking at mentoring programs and the nature of relationships between children and their mentors.

Description of the Program

History of Kinship

Kinship of Minneapolis is a small, non-profit, Christian mentoring program that serves children in the Minneapolis and surrounding suburb area in need of additional adult support. In 1955, the program began when a group of seminary students formed the "Kinsmen Program" to establish supportive one-on-one relationships with troubled boys. The program's rationale has remained the same

throughout the years: Kinship seeks to establish successful relationships between adult volunteers and children who are seeking adult mentors.   Until 1988, the Kinship program was a part of a large neighborhood organization. During that year, the organization's board decided to redirect the agency's focus to serve the immediate neighborhood in which it was located. After this period a group of people dedicated to continuation of the program formed a new organization, Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, which became an autonomous non-profit organization with 501 (c) (3) designation on February 1, 1989.

Kinship is the second largest adult to child mentoring program serving the Minneapolis area, next to the Big Brother/Big Sister Program (BB/BS). Kinship differs from BB/BS in three main ways: 1) Kinship works with children 5-15 years old (these are younger children than most programs); 2) Kinship works with couples and families interested in volunteering (in addition to the typical one-to-one mentoring); and 3) Kinship recruits many volunteers through churches although it is not affiliated with any one particular church.

There are ten Kinship programs in Minnesota and several others throughout the Midwest. The Minneapolis office serves as the national headquarters which hosts national meetings and sends out the national newsletters.

Population Served by Kinship

The children served in the program are 5-15 years old and live in Minneapolis and many of the surrounding suburbs. They come from single-parent families, foster homes, and other living situations. Children are enrolled in the program through the parent or guardian who has been referred to the program by a social worker, friend, or therapist.   Parents complete an application for their child and then a Kinship staff person meets the family in their home. During the home visit

the areas discussed are the child's interests and activities, personality styles, behavior, and health concerns. After the home visit, the child is put on the waiting list until a mentor is found for him/her. As of February, 1995, there were approximately 131 children matched with mentors in the program and 78 children waiting for service (Kinship database).

Kinship Screening Process

Prospective volunteers learn about Kinship through their church, radio/bench advertising, and co-workers. All prospective volunteers go through a lengthy process to be considered for the program. First, they fill out an application which includes background information and a request of three references. References may come from family members, co-workers, friends, and employers. Once the references are received, volunteers must attend an orientation at the office. At the orientation, the volunteers receive a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) background check that they must get notarized and send back to Kinship. Volunteers also receive an extensive questionnaire which they need to complete. The last step after receiving the BCA results and the questionnaire is an in-home interview with two Kinship staff. The average amount of time to complete this process is eight weeks. Completion of this process is mandatory before any match can be made. Matches are based on age, interests, abilities, activities, learning styles, personalities, and location. The commitment length for volunteers is one year with the expectation of a weekly interaction between the child and mentor(s). The screening process serves to examine the prospective volunteer's history, motivation, and commitment to the program.

Concept of Mentoring

The term "mentor" stems from Homer's epic, <u>The Odyssey</u>. Odysseus chose his friend Mentor to guard, guide, and teach his son Telemachus before he set off on his journey (Torrance, 1984). Mentor was a trusted and wise advisor over the long period of time during which Telemachus grew into the responsibilities of adulthood (Haensly & Parsons, 1993). These qualities of guarding, guiding, and teaching are common examples of mentoring today.

Although mentoring has existed for centuries, it has not been extensively researched. A majority of the research has been associated with the business world (Flaxman, 1988). In the last 5-10 years there has been a renewed interest in mentoring as a way of reaching out to youth. Marc Freedman's well documented book <u>The Kindness of Strangers: Adult mentors, urban youth, and the new volunteerism</u> (1993), illustrates the recent popularity of mentoring. Flaxman (1988) conducted an extensive literature review and found that mentoring can be a powerful connection to youth who are isolated from adults in their community, home or school (Walsh, 1989). This renewed interest in mentoring has the ability to affect individuals, families, and communities.

Statement of Need

"It is not clear whether growing up now is riskier business than it once was, or whether we are simply doing a better job of naming and counting problems that have existed before. It does not really matter, what matters is that there are too many casualties, too many wounded, too many close calls. Our highest national priority should be to mobilize our collective energy, commitment, and ingenuity to ensure a bright future for each and every child" (Benson, 1990, p.1)

In a report prepared for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Dryfoos (1990) found that nearly one out of four of the 28 million young people (10-17 years old) is in serious jeopardy of multiple risks such as substance abuse and school failure (Saito & Blyth, 1993, p. 14). Another 7 million are at moderate risk. This means there are about 138,000 young people in Hennepin and Ramsey County of which 69,000 are at serious or moderate risk (Saito & Blyth, 1993). Looking at poverty, the greatest risk factor for the development of nearly all problem behaviors, the *Minnesota Kids Count* statistics show that 30.2 percent of the children in Minneapolis live in poverty and 26.5 percent of the children in St. Paul live in poverty (Saito & Blyth, 1993).

Peter Benson (1990) of Search Institute conducted an extensive study looking at assets and deficits in youth development. He concluded that youths in single parent families are, on the average, at more risk than youth in two-parent families (Benson & Roehlepartain, 1993). Benson's study sampled over 47,000 students and measured twenty risk behaviors for single and two-parent children. This difference remained after controlling for race and maternal differences. This study is relevant to this evaluation because Kinship works primarily with single-parent families. Equally important research findings reported that many children thrive in single-parent homes (Benson, 1990). Saito & Blyth (1993) note that "all youth need mentors--however, some [children] have more naturally or informally occurring mentors available to them, others do not" (p. 11) Structured programs try to work with the children who do not have a "mentor-rich" environment.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this program evaluation is to explore the nature of mentoring relationships on children which Kinship establishes. It also seeks to identify the program population and what percentage of matches last one year. The evaluation will be summative in nature examining consumer satisfaction of the mentoring relationship and the program itself. This information will benefit the program by providing feedback about the mentoring relationship and how the relationship has developed. It will also benefit families who receive services because the program will be made aware of it strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation is important to potential funders who need to be confident that they are supporting an effective youth program. On a larger scale, this study can provide information to policy makers who assess areas of problem-solving in youth development.

This type of research is important because little is known about the effects of mentoring (Flaxman, 1992). Rhodes (1994) concluded that drawing confident conclusions regarding the effects of mentoring remains very limited. Further information will benefit children, programs, and the development of other interventions for youth.

Mentoring has become a popular topic in the last 5-10 years with more assumptions than actual findings highlighted in the literature. These major assumptions include: positive behavior change, increase in self-esteem, and improved interactions with peers (Flaxman, 1992). This evaluation attempts to add to mentoring research by exploring the nature of relationships between children and their mentors.

The Need for Mentoring

Haensly and Parsons (1993) believe that in earlier times there was more of an extended family that assisted parents in a child's development of independence and autonomy. Currently, those responsive individuals are much less evident in children's lives. Haensly & Parsons (1993) note that "it has become apparent that we must find ways to introduce children to adults who might service this role of extended family" (p. 211). Hence, the need for mentors. Along with this finding there is also significant research that points "to the risks to children associated with our nation's high divorce and separation rates" (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 6). These two factors, decreasing involvement of extended family and increasing rate of divorce and separation, reinforce the fact that children have diminished access to "natural" mentors.

Other trends also reflect the need for mentoring now more than ever. As reported by Walsh(1989), Public/Private Ventures formulated these three trends in their survey of mentorship programs. First, they found that two decades ago half of all American households had at least one adult, in addition to the parent/s. These adults were family members, friends, and they offered children variety in adult contact. Second, their survey discovered a prolonged period of adolescence which has become a time of uncertainty for youth. Third, the current work force offers little opportunity for youth to learn from adults in experiences such as apprenticeships. Most youth spend their time working with peers (Walsh, 1989). It is because of these changes that mentoring plays an increasingly important role in many children's lives.

Chapter two: Literature Review

<u>Overview</u>

This chapter has two main sections: "Theoretical Framework" and "Research on Mentoring." The first section is divided in four parts: strengths perspective, concept of resiliency, social learning theory, and Erikson's psycho-social theory. The combination of these theories promote the role mentoring plays in youth development. Examples from agency records were used to illustrate theoretical concepts and names have been changed to maintain client confidentiality. "Research on Mentoring" examines the impact of mentoring on different populations, the different types of mentoring programs, and programs evaluated thus far. The goal of this section is to inform the reader what is known about the impact of mentoring and which programs have been successful.

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

<u>Strengths Perspective</u>

The strengths' perspective takes into consideration the personal characteristics of the individual, family, and community as possible assets in the client's life (Germain, 1991).

A case file example of this perspective is "Timmy," who is 8 years old. His father lives in another city and his mother works everyday until 5:30 p.m. After school, he goes over to "Mrs. Simms" to play games or bake cookies until his mother comes home from work. This relationship serves as a protective factor for Timmy because he isn't alone at this time and he has developed a positive relationship with another adult. Recognizing the value of this relationship is part

of the strength's perspective. It is a strength for Timmy and his mother to have a neighbor like Mrs. Simms (Kinship case file).

In the previously noted study by Benson & Roehlkepartain (1993), assets were examined in youth who were the children of single parents at low risk (0-1 at-risk behaviors). The study discussed thirty assets that promote health and serve as protective factors for all young people. Examples of assets included: extracurricular activities, community organizations, and religious involvement. The difference between youth at low or high risk points to support systems around the families that aid in the development of children. Benson & Roehlkepartain (1993) note that "it may be that this external network of support is key to success in single-parenting. And it certainly suggests that communities and institutions that serve families and youth can have a positive impact on the health of the family" (p. 9).

Rhodes (1994) noted that several researchers have focused specifically on the social networks of children and have examined the prevalence of youth's relationships with non-parental adults (Bryant, 1985; Coates, 1987; Galbo, 1986). Blyth, Hill & Theil (1982) found that non-parental adults comprised 25.8 percent of male adolescents' network and 27.2 percent of female adolescents' network (Rhodes, 1994). Rhodes (1994) concluded that "these relationships serve an important role in providing both emotional and tangible support" (p. 189). This research emphasized the important role of non-related adults in children's development.

The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research which is a part of the Academy for Educational Development (AED) also views youth development from a strengths' perspective. The phrase "problem-free is not fully prepared" has become their slogan which reflects the "belief that we must want more for our young people than the absence of problems" (AED, 1993). This perspective is

much more holistic, focusing on all youth, not just disadvantaged youth. Flaxman (1992) also reminds us that mentoring is needed for all youth, not just "at-risk" youth (Saito & Blyth, 1993). He believes it is also important for youth who have relatively few problems but who may lack resources or opportunities to achieve (Saito & Blyth, 1993). This holistic perspective promotes the strengths in youth development instead of the reduction of youth problems. This represents a whole paradigm shift in organized interventions. The AED takes an ecological perspective in viewing youth development. Family, peers, adult friends, and community organizations serve as a bridge between formal and informal institutions (AED, 1993). This youth-centered view of community support sees community organizations and programs "engage young people voluntarily with an eye toward developing the whole person" (AED, 1993). Adult mentors are a part of this ecological perspective and they serve to nurture and support youth development.

Concept of Resiliency

In the last twenty years, the development of research on "resilience" has supported the idea of mentoring relationship as a strength in the healthy development of children (Masten, 1992). Werner (1992) defines resilience as successful adaptation in an individual who has been exposed to stressful events and/or biological, psychological risk factors. Other researchers have emphasized the importance of at least one significant adult, usually outside the family, in the healthy development of youth (Freedman, 1993).

Masten (1994) examined the similarities of parents and mentors in supporting youth development:

> First by their consistent nurturing behavior, parents and mentors both make a person feel worthwhile and valued and, at the same time, engender trust in people as resources. Children who are turned off to adults as resources and social references may lose opportunities and valuable sources of information. Second, competent adults model competent behavior. Third, they provide information and access to knowledge. Fourth, they coach competent behavior, providing guidance, and constructive feedback. Fifth, parents and mentors steer children away from wasteful or dangerous pitfalls, both by advice and by proactive buffering. . . Finally, they provide opportunities for competence and confidence building experiences (p. 19-20).

Mentoring has been described as a protective factor which promotes resilience (Masten, 1992). This protective factor modifies an individual's reaction to a certain situation that would normally lead to a maladaptive outcome (Werner, 1992).

The concept of resilience offers an explanation of how competence is fostered (Masten, 1993). This concept relates to mentoring by showing "researchers that competence, confidence, and caring can flourish if children encounter persons who provide them with the secure basis for the development of trust, autonomy, and initiative" (Werner, 1992, p. 209). Masten (1993) believes that with "this knowledge we can better design education, treatment and social programs to try and foster successful development in children" (p. 27) . She concluded that effective mentors function in many ways to promote healthy adaptation, ranging from belief in children to helping them make healthy choices (Masten, 1993).

It is important to remember that resilience remains a concept and although several studies have been conducted, more research is needed. Rhodes (1994) reminds us that it is still unclear whether mentor relationships promote resilience,

or if resilience and having a mentor are part of a third unknown factor. Developmentally, certain youth may already be resilient and "seek out" the support they need. Rhodes (1994) further concludes that "some researchers imply that the mentor is an essential factor, others focus more on predisposition and instrumentality of the youth" (p. 192). In either situation mentoring seems to be a resource supportive of healthy youth development.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Alfred Bandura developed his theory of learning in the early 1970's. He proposed that new behaviors can be acquired by simply watching a model (Miller, 1983). This concept of modeling is a central theme in social learning theory. This modeling went beyond the basics of behaviorism where a subject needed reinforcement for learning to take place. Through modeling, the learning is dimensional and takes place on an interpersonal, cognitive, and behavioral level (Miller, 1983). Moreover, the child's imitation of the model's behavior continues on after the model is no longer present (Miller, 1983). The "mentor" becomes the model to the child: the child has the opportunity to not only learn new skills from the mentor, but also to see how the mentor deals with disappointment or accepts a challenge.

Similar to this modeling process is the social cognitive theory which proposes "that children can acquire internal standards and rules by imitating models and by understanding socializers' explanation of moral behavior" (Eisenbern & Mussen, 1989, p. 28). A case file example of this theory is "Ben" who is 10 years old. He has matched up with "Gary" for 1 1/2 years. Once a month they work on their "homework" together. Gary would bring some work from the office and they would work at Gary's house. One week Gary had an important presentation and he shared this with Ben. His determination in doing well gave Ben an example of

working towards a goal. Ben's mother shared before this relationship began Ben wasn't very interested in school and now he looks forward to working on his math with Gary. He may not understand this process of goal-setting right now, but this behavior has been modeled and explained to him.

The social learning theory addresses the relevance of the role-model research question. If the mentor shares positive behaviors and attitudes with the child, then important learning may be taking place.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

According to Erikson as reported by Haensly & Parsons (1993), the major goal in life is two-fold: constructing independence and autonomy in thought and actions on one hand and being a self-sufficient adult who interacts productively with others on the other. In order to accomplish this goal, an individual progresses through various stages. Within each stage there is a period of physical, social, and psychological change, known as a "normal crisis" (Germain, 1991, p. 448). Haensly & Parsons (1993) state that trust, autonomy, and initiative begin with parents then continue with teachers who serve as early mentors. They believe that the continuing development of industry and competence can be enriched through other caring adults.

Two specific stages are pertinent to this study: the first, trust versus mistrust and the fourth, industry versus inferiority. This first stage usually takes place in the first year of life. During this time children come to trust the world, and the people in it; this depends on the quality of care that they receive (Hetherington & Parke, 1981). Since all of the children in the program are at least 5 years old, the completion of this stage would be expected, but "it should be said at this point that the problem of basic trust versus mistrust is not resolved once and for all during the first year of life; it rises again at each successive stage of

development. There is both hope and danger in this" (Hetherington & Parke, 1981, p. 352).

This brings up an important point from a developmental perspective. For instance, if a child was raised in a supportive, healthy, and positive environment it is important for this development to continue or the level of trust may weaken as the child gets older. On the other hand, if the child developed a sense of mistrust in the early stages, it is possible for an older individual to help the child develop trust later on in life. In both cases it is important for individuals who work with children to nurture trust at all stages. The research question which examines the trust level between child and mentor examines this issue specifically as an important factor in child development.

Stage four, (industry vs. inferiority) is relevant to this study because roughly 80 percent of children in the program are going through this developmental stage. It suggests that successful experiences instill in the child a sense of industry, a feeling of competency and mastery over their world (Miller, 1983). Lack of this feeling of mastery can cause feelings of worthlessness and inferiority. Children are very task oriented during this stage and they want to create, finish, and feel proud of their accomplishments.

As reported by Masten (1992), Bandura believes that mastery experiences are an effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy in children. These mastery experiences show children that they can be successful. With a strong sense of efficacy, children are able to adapt and persevere in adversity and quickly rebound (Masten, 1992). An important aspect of this stage is the idea that "the child who had this sense of industry derogated at home can have it revitalized at school through a sensitive teacher. Whether a child develops a sense of industry or inferiority no longer depends solely on the caretaking efforts

of the parents but on the actions and offices of other adults as well" (Hetherington & Parke, 1981, p. 354).   Mentors can play an important role in fostering industry.

This stage reflects the research question dealing with new activities and skills the child may have learned during the relationship.   Mentors sharing productive activities with children can reinforce their feelings of competency and success.

Research On Mentoring

Research has been conducted looking at the impact of mentorship.   Perhaps the most general finding which relates to evaluation is a concluding statement by Saito & Blyth (1992) who conducted a special report focusing on understanding different types of mentoring relationships. This qualitative approach examined five different types of mentoring programs in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and focused on the different processes and outcomes of mentoring relationships (Saito & Blyth, 1992). Saito & Blyth (1992) interviewed parents, children, mentors and teachers from each of the five mentoring programs. They concluded that "regardless of the particular type of program, mentoring is a win-win situation. Within just the five programs participating in the study, more than 1,000 volunteers are working with more than 1,800 young people in significant, beneficially, and most certainly, cost-effective relationships. Young people win; adult volunteers win. In the end, society at large is the real winner" (Saito & Blyth, 1992 p. 1). While this conclusion supports the benefits of mentoring, it does not answer many important questions. What makes mentoring effective? What are important factors in the mentoring relationship? How can we use mentoring effectively as a strategy in working with youth? These questions offer a few reasons for the need of further research.

Research has supported the importance of mentoring for youth development. Walsh (1989) concludes that "enhancement of self-concept, self-esteem, and

self-confidence are particularly evident outcomes of mentorship (Edlind &
Haensly, 1985; Kaufman, Harrell, Milam, Woolverton & Miller, 1986; Torrance,
1984). Ainsworth, studying attachment, believes that unrelated adults can play
an essential role in the lives of youth, particularly when they are not getting the
type of security they need from the parental relationship (Freedman, 1993).

Urban anthropologists have also studied the benefits and functions of
mentors, especially in the lives of inner-city youth (Freedman, 1993). As reported
by Freedman (1993), Williams and Kornblum followed 900 teenagers and
explored various pathways communities offered their young people to get out of
poverty. They concluded that the common denominator among those who
succeed is the presence of caring adults: "the probabilities that a teenager will
end up on the corner or in a stable job are conditioned by a great many features
of life in their communities. Of these, we believe the most significant is the
presence or absence of adult mentors" (Freedman, 1993, p. 64). This conclusion
offers support for mentoring, but it is important to note that it is difficult to isolate
the mentoring component within children's lives. This is a limitation of several
mentoring studies. Each child has a different combination of families, friends,
schools, teachers, and communities which impacts development. While the
mentoring relationship appears to be a valuable asset for a child, it is important to
have realistic expectations for the relationship.

As reported by Walsh (1989), Lefkowitz interviewed 500 at-risk youth to
determine what made the difference for those who succeeded; he found
relationships with caring adults at the top of the list. As reported by Walsh
(1989), Gordon found similar results when he interviewed African-American men
and women who overcame racism and poverty. He concluded, "To overcome the
odds, a strong relationship with another person who acts as a model, a provider

or a mentor is essential" (p. 10). These studies place significant value on children's relationships with caring adults.

The recent interest in mentoring has produced a wide variety of research on the evaluation of many mentoring programs. There are three main bodies of mentoring evaluation research: educational, business and youth studies. The focus of this study is on youth studies because the program being evaluated serves youth. Discussion of evaluations on mentoring is limiting to a certain extent because findings are suggestive in nature and relative to the particular program. Each program has its own goals and takes specific actions needed to meet those goals. Mentoring may often be only a part of a program designed to improve children's lives. Such was the case in the evaluation of the Career Beginning's program that was designed to assist "tenacious" juniors from low-income families to complete high school and go on to college (Flaxman, 1992). The program consisted of a variety of services--from involvement of a community mentor to workshops and jobs in the summer. Students were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. The results showed that program participants attended college at a greater rate and had higher educational aspirations (Flaxman, 1992).

Similar to Career Beginnings is Project RAISE, in Maryland, which strives to reduce the rate of drop-out students, starting in middle school, with the help of community members as mentors (Flaxman, 1992). An evaluation conducted by McPartland and Nettles (1991) showed that compared with a control group, the program strongly improved the students' attendance and grades in English. However, students still had attendance and academic problems which put them at risk for dropping out of school.

There is a valuable lesson in the Project RAISE evaluation. This program focused specifically with an at-risk population. Many mentoring programs choose

not to serve the most at-risk youth because the intervention is too weak to make much of a difference (Freedman, 1993). Bi-monthly meetings between child and mentor cannot change poverty, dangerous neighborhoods, or youth violence. Programs choosing to work with this population need to start early and be prepared to deal with issues beyond the mentoring relationship. After recognizing that sixth grade was too late for some children, RAISE II began working with children in the 2nd-3rd grades and continues with them for 6 years (Freedman, 1993). Prevention is an important aspect for programs working with a younger population.

Benefits of short-term impact was studied by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP). Buman & Cain (1992) studied the impact of short-term, work-oriented, mentoring on the employability of low-income youth (METP,1992). In 1986, 137 mentors were arbitrarily assigned to the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) workers. The control group was randomly selected from more than one thousand workers and the two groups were matched on all socio-economic factors. A follow-up study in 1990 revealed that the group with mentors was more employable as of October, 1990, based on a questionnaire designed to reflect employability (Buman & Cain, 1992). A correlation of records was obtained from the Minneapolis Public School System, Hennepin County Public Assistance, and Minneapolis Police Department, which showed that 14.03 percent more of those with mentors had graduated from high school and 15.58 percent fewer of those with mentors received food stamps (Buman & Cain, 1992). Buman & Cain concluded that even with a brief mentorship there is evidence which supports positive impact mentors have on low-income youth (Buman & Cain, 1992).

While these results reveal the positive influence that mentoring can have, they also show that mentoring cannot be sold as the solution to fix "risky" kids.

Shayne Schneider, Director of Mentoring Inc., believes that if mentoring is pursued as a solution for "at-risk youth, it will fail to meet that mission, funding will dry up, people will lose their enthusiasm and programs will wither and be replaced by the next buzzword solution" (Freedman, 1993, p. 76). Mahoney (1983) echoes this belief by concluding that mentoring is a relationship that encourages and supports personal growth and "it is not an alternative to social welfare programs" (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990, p. 15). It is of utmost importance to accurately discuss the benefits and value of mentoring; it is detrimental to portray it with unrealistic expectations. Further research is needed to learn how mentoring works in order to use this strategy appropriately and effectively.

Thus, in order to employ mentoring as an effective tool (rather than a solution) we must recognize the gaps and limitations in what is known about mentoring. The first limitation lies in the term itself. Mentoring is so broadly used that it is difficult to come up with some general findings. There is a tendency to call many program initiatives "mentoring" (Flaxman, 1988). One-to-one mentoring remains very different from other short-term community efforts. This is important to keep in mind while reviewing mentoring literature.

Isolating the mentoring component is the second limitation in mentoring research. Mentoring is only one intervention among several others such as tutoring, program activities, and additional classes. Each study is unique because of its own objectives and the way in which mentoring is used in the program.

The third limitation is that many evaluations have generated only vague conclusions. This remains a limitation because it is difficult to draw conclusions based on descriptive data and anecdotal findings (Flaxman, 1988).

Further areas to explore within mentoring are cross-race, cross-gender, and cross-class mentoring relationships. How do these differences play a role within

the relationship? What are the longitudinal effects of mentoring? These aspects of the mentoring relationship remain virtually unexplored.

A major gap in the research of mentoring is that many evaluations are outcome vs. process based. A process evaluation examines specific processes within a program (Flaxman, 1988). Studying the matching process between child and mentor is an example of a process, and would benefit programs by highlighting significant factors important to the matching process. Process evaluations can answer many questions about the program with the major one being "which causes or processes working alone or together bring into being a mentoring relationship that provides the necessary social and developmental opportunities for at-risk youth" (Flaxman, 1992 p. 2).

Common to mentoring evaluation is the fact that most programs show some positive effects. Career Beginnings found that participants attended college at a greater rate while Project RAISE improved the students' attendance and grades in English. Buman & Cain (1992) concluded that even with a brief mentorship period there is evidence which supports the positive impact mentors have on youth. These findings reinforce the benefits of mentors, yet there remains many questions. Research is needed to examine the gaps and limitations of mentoring. This research will serve as a resource to assure that the mentoring concept will not be portrayed as a solution to societal problems.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Overview

This chapter has two sections. The first section, " Operational Definitions," defines and operationalizes terms used in this study. The second section, "Research Design" explains elements of the evaluation. This section contains two parts, the "Program Description Methodology" and "Interview Methodology." These parts explain the data collection, analysis, and sampling procedures used in the study.

Operational Definitions

Key terms for this research are: mentor, trust, role-model, activities, and match. These terms are defined as:

Mentor

An individual, 21 - 65 years old, committed to working with a child for one year. This research looks specifically at three roles of the Kinship mentor: supporter/friend (trusting relationship), teacher (new activities and skills), and guide (role-model influence).

The mentors have all gone through a screening process. They have been matched with a child in the program for at least six months. They meet with their Kinship friend at least three times a month if they are in their first year or, at least, two times a month after their first year.

Trust

A feeling of dependability and reliance on another person. The ability to stay or go with someone or do something without fear or misgiving is also included in definition of trust. This is pertinent because children in the program go with their mentors to various places and do a variety of things.

Role Model

An individual whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially younger children (Random House, 1987). This definition will be shared with parents during the interview.   Serving as a role-model appears to be an important role of a mentor (Haensly & Parsons, 1993).

Activities

This term is used generally because mentors and their Kinship friends do a variety of things together. Some partnerships rake leaves, bake cookies or paint the house while others may go to the movies, to the zoo or to Camp Snoopy. This term includes a variety of child and mentor experiences.

Match

A mentor and child who have committed to spend time together for a year. There is extensive discussion between program staff, the mentor, and the parent before a match is made.   Parents have final approval of the match.

Research Design

This research was an exploratory descriptive study that used a combination of quantitative and qualitative information gathered from personal interviews and existing agency records.

Program Description Methodology

Agency records were used to examine the following questions:

1. Who is served in the program? This included demographics of children, family stressors, and reasons for program participation.
2. What percentage of matches continue to meet throughout a year? In addition to examining the length of matches, reasons for match termination were also examined.

Data Collection and Analysis

As of February, 1995, there were 131 children matched with mentors from the program. Demographic information was obtained through the Kinship program's database which had complete records of children's age, race, location, and gender. The database was also used to examine the percentage of matches lasting one year. Matches made between January 1, 1993, and December 31, 1993, were used to calculate the program success rate. The program success rate was defined by the percentage of matches lasting one year in which the child and mentor met weekly.

In addition to the program success rate, reasons for match termination were explored and placed in two separate categories: internal factors and external

factors. The program has defined internal factors as reasons for termination due to program staff responsibilities. Examples of internal factors were lack of information to the parent or volunteer, lack of interest by volunteer or child, and inappropriate match of volunteer and child. External factors were defined as extraneous circumstances outside of program's responsibilities. Examples of external factors included: volunteer/child moving and family changes of volunteer/child. The Kinship program sought to have a 90 percent success rate for matches lasting one year not including terminations based only on external factors.

Family stressors were explored through agency records. A stressor was defined as a physical, chemical or emotional factor which exceeds normal developmental and family changes. The following coding system was developed:

1. First level: No significant stress noted. Example: Parent noted that the child was well-adjusted, but lonely and wanted a buddy.

2. Second level: One significant stressor noted. Example: Parent noted economic concerns and/or school problems for the child.

3. Third level: At least 2 significant stressors noted. Example: Child has been physically abused and the parent has drug dependency problems.

4. Fourth level: Three or more significant family stressors noted. Example: Child has been sexually abused, testified in court, one parent is in prison, and the other parent is an active alcoholic.

Interview Methodology

Personal in-home interviews were used to examine the following questions:

1. Is the Kinship mentor able to develop a trusting relationship with the child? If so, how has this relationship influenced the child?

2. Has the child benefited from new activities or skills experienced with mentor? If so, how?

3. Does the parent/guardian believe that the Kinship mentor has been a role-model for the child? If so, how has this influenced affected the child?

4. Did the program meet parent's expectations?

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the parent's perspective?

The study participants for the research were parents/guardians involved in the program who fit the following criteria:

1. Their child has been matched with a mentor from the Kinship program for at least six months.

2. Their child and mentor met at least 3 times a month within the first year or at least, twice a month after the first year.

3. The parent/guardian must live in the north or west metro area.

Rationale for these criteria was based on three different aspects of the program. First, the program's expectation is weekly interaction with the child. This research sought to sample families where the mentor met this expectation. Second, six months was chosen as a minimum time together because this would allow time for a child and mentor to become familiar with each other. Third, the program service area is divided into three geographic locations: North, South, and West. The South metro area was not included because of the researcher's previous relationship with families in that area. Prior to the initiation of this study, approval was given by the Institutional Review Board of Augsburg College and the Kinship Program (See Appendix A).

Sampling Method

Sample selection was done blind to the researcher by the North and West Coordinators at the Kinship Program using their follow-up logs. Thirty families met the criteria for the sample.   A cover letter which described the research and invited parents to participate was sent to the entire sample (See Appendix B). A follow-up call by the North coordinator was made to each parent to answer any questions. Participants responded directly to the researcher to schedule an interview.

Protection of Subjects

Parents participation in the study was kept confidential from other program staff. Prior to administering the questionnaire the researcher asked informed consent questions to assure that parents understood the research project and had their questions answered (See Appendix C). In the cover letter it was made clear that participation was voluntary and subjects could stop the interview at any time. Parents were asked to sign consent forms before participation and an additional signature was required for the audio-taping of the interview (See Appendix D). Questionnaires were kept in a locked file in the researcher's home. Data were destroyed following the completion of the research project by July 1, 1995.

Instrument Design

The data collection instrument had five sections. It consisted of 22 close-ended questions and 11 open-ended questions. Parents were asked for examples to explain their answers throughout the interview. The first section, general information, included the age of the child(ren), frequency of meetings, and the parent's/guardian's rating of the success of the relationship. The second section, development of a trusting relationship, explored the different aspects of trust defined earlier. The concept of trust was operationalized by creating questions based on several dictionary definitions of trust. For example, parents were asked if their children were willing to go with volunteers without fear or hesitation. This definition represented one aspect of trust within the trust section. Section three, activities and skills, examined these areas: activities prior to the mentoring relationship, current mentor and child activities, and the impact of new activities/skills on the child. Section four, role-model influence, explored the idea of the mentor as a role-model for the child. The final section, overall impression of the program, discussed these areas: expectations, strengths and weaknesses of the program. Using the questionnaire, the personal interview was designed to last approximately 30 minutes.

Data Collection

Cover letters were mailed to the entire sample (30) on January 31, 1995. A follow-up call was made on February 7 by the North Coordinator. Fifteen participants responded. Interviews were conducted from February 6 through February 28. Due to a cancellation by a parent, one interview was not completed. Fourteen interviews were completed for a 47 percent response rate.

Interview responses were audio-taped and then transcribed using a computer to organize data.

Data Analysis

Findings are presented in narrative form and illustrated with tables. The unstructured responses were listed in their original form to convey the unique quality of the parents' thoughts and/or feelings. These personal narratives add to the depth of the research. Descriptive statistics were used throughout the findings. Content analysis was done locating themes in the research.

Chapter four: Findings

Overview

This chapter has two main sections. The first section, "Program Description," includes demographics, reasons for program participation, and family stressors. This section also includes the duration of matches which presents the success rate of matches and reasons for match termination. The second section, "Interview Findings", contains five parts: general information, trust level between mentor and child, activities and skills, role-model influence, and overall impression of the program. This section relates to the different aspects of the data collection instrument and provides qualitative information on the nature of the mentoring relationship between child and mentor.

Program Description

Population Served

One hundred thirty-one children were matched with a mentor in the Kinship program as of February, 1995. Table 4.1 presents the ethnic backgrounds of the participants:

Table 4.1

Program Population of Kinship Participants

Children	#	%
Caucasian	67	51%
African American	30	23%
Bi-racial	25	19%
Native American	7	5%
Hispanic	2	2%
	131	100%

Girls and boys represented 53 percent and 47 percent of the population, respectively. Sixty-one percent of the children lived in suburban areas and 39 percent lived in Minneapolis. The age range included: 6-9 years at 29 percent, 10-12 years at 41 percent, and 13-15 years at 30 percent. The mean was 10.5 years old. Parental reasons for program participation, listed from highest to lowest, included: positive, female or male role-model, special friendship with an adult, stability and trust in someone, positive opportunities (social skills), problems at home and/or school, and low self-esteem.

Children Waiting

The program has a waiting list for children who have completed the intake process but have not been matched with a mentor. The intake process includes a phone intake, initial application, and a home visit. Children remain on this list until a mentor is found for them. The waiting period is between two months and two years, with an average of 9-12 months.

The program service area is divided into three geographic areas (North, South, and West) and each area has their own waiting list. The following table presents the demographics of the complete waiting list (78 children):

Table 4.2

<u>Demographics of the Waiting List for the Kinship Program</u>

<u>Gender</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Male	18	17	24	59	76%
Female	1	11	7	19	24%
Total	**19**	**28**	**31**	**78**	**100%**

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Caucasian	10	14	14	38	49%
Afr/Amer.	9	10	14	33	42%
Bi-racial	-	4	3	7	9%
Total	**19**	**28**	**31**	**78**	**100%**

<u>Location</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Urban	-	21	20	41	53%
Suburban	19	7	11	37	47%
Total	**19**	**28**	**31**	**78**	**100%**

<u>Family Stressors</u>

The program frequently works with families experiencing significant stress. The coding system previously discussed was used to organize different levels of familial stress recorded for the 131 participant families. Level one represented no significant stress, level two represented one significant stress, level three represented two stressors while level four represented three or more significant family stressors.

Fifteen percent (n=20) of the families were designated at level one. Twenty-seven percent (n=35) of the families were designated at level two. Thirty-four percent (n=45) were designated at level three and twenty-four percent (n=31) were at the fourth level.

Duration of Matches

Fifty-eight matches were started between January 1, 1993 and December 31, 1993. Thirty matches (52%) were active as of February, 1995. Twenty-eight matches (48%) were terminated.

Of those that terminated, fourteen (24%) were within the first year. Reasons for termination were examined in the 14 matches and placed in two separate categories: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors were reasons for termination within program control while external factors were extraneous circumstances outside program responsibility.

Seven out of fourteen match terminations were a result of internal factors and seven were due to external factors. Seven matches (12%) ended within one year due to internal factors. This left the program with a 88% success rate based on factors within program control.

Interview Findings

Sample Population

Fourteen personal in-home interviews were completed. Participants were all female and lived in suburban areas. Responses were kept in their original form and names were changed to protect the identity of parent, child, and volunteer. Twelve of the interviews lasted 25-30 minutes, the remaining two were 20 minutes and 45 minutes.

Table 4.3 compares the sample population to the general population of the entire program:

Table 4.3

<u>**Comparison of Sample Population with Program Population**</u>

Children	Program Population (N=131)		Sample Population (N= 14)	
	#	%	#	%
Caucasian	67	51%	8	57%
African-American	30	23%	2	14%
Bi-racial	25	19%	3	22%
Native American	7	5%	1	7%
Hispanic	2	2%	-	-

The following information was collected in the first section of the data collection instrument. Boys and girls represented 57 percent and 43 percent of the sample population, respectively. The age range was 7-15 years old with a mean of 10.8 years. The youngest mentor relationship was 8 months, while the oldest relationship was over 8 years old. The average match length was 2.2 years. The average frequency of meetings per month was 3.6. Seventy-nine percent of the parents rated the match "very successful" and the remaining 21 percent rated it "successful."

Trust Level Between Child and Mentor

Parents were asked about their children's behavior before and after an activity with the Kinship mentor.   These questions related to the definition of trust discussed earlier.   One-hundred percent of the parents stated that their children always looked forward to going on activities with their Kinship mentor. The majority of children (86%) were described as "excited' prior to leaving for an activity. Other responses included: "she looks forward to going, she's always ready", "she acts proud of the activities they do together" and "sometimes he's nervous when they are going to do something for the first time."

Regarding follow-through on the volunteer's part, 100 percent of the parents stated that volunteers followed through with proposed activities. All subjects (100%) reported that their children believed that the volunteer would call/pick up at the proposed time. One parent noted that her child "completely trusted" that the volunteer would be there for her.

Additional comments relevant to the child and parent's unique situation were shared: "his father would continually disappoint him and let him down, it was important that he be with consistent people in his life. . . this has given him a basis for seeing people following through with their promises". Another parent shared that she had a difficult year emotionally and experienced some significant losses. She expressed that the "volunteer has been so helpful in working with 'Mary' to help her understand what I'm going through. . . she has helped emotionally and basically there's nothing that my daughter can't speak to her about."

Seventy-nine percent of the parents said their children talked with them after each meeting with the Kinship mentor. The remaining 21 percent shared that

children sometimes talked with parent. "She tells me everything" noted one parent. Several parents shared specific examples:

> *He also shares the stuff he learns. He is interested in electronics; he has learned more about "electronic stuff" from his volunteers. He shares this with me.*

> *She likes the volunteer a lot. She has gone to the volunteer about personal issues and then the volunteer shares this with me and we all talk about it. I totally trust the volunteer. The volunteer makes me aware of the feedback she has shared with my daughter.*

One parent believed this time with the mentor was her child's private time and she didn't want to pry: "'Joanne' has respect for me and always runs future plans by me. I totally trust her with my child. She has worked with me to help me let go, so I could trust more".

Ninety-three percent (n=13) of the respondents stated that their child was very comfortable around the volunteer(s); the remaining 7 percent (n=1) stated that the level was between very comfortable and comfortable. One-hundred percent of the subjects believed that their child appeared to trust the volunteer(s). One parent noted that "it took awhile in the beginning because of this experience with his father." On a Likert scale between 1 and 5, with 5 being the most trusting, 86 percent rated the trust level 5, and the other 14 percent rated it a 4. Several examples were offered to demonstrate the trust level between the child and the volunteer:

> *They keep their word with him and they stay on schedule. If they can't do something, they explain and "John" understands. They are responsible and dependable people. My son depends on them to do what they say they are going to do. I like that.*

> *It's been so good all along. My child can confide in them, just like another parent, whether it good or bad.*

One parent shared how the volunteer helped her as well as her child:

> *I have never had any outside help with my kids and on top of that*
> *someone you could trust, this was way too much for me. . . my daughter*
> *goes to the volunteer with personal issues. . . she [daughter] became*
> *more compassionate when I was taking care of my own mother and*
> *helped me emotionally.*

One final example involved a situation where the child and the volunteer both

experienced alcoholism by their father:

> *'John' knows what it feels like to have a father who drinks because his*
> *father drank when he was growing up. 'Michael', my son, was able to*
> *share his feelings with them because he understood and shared their*
> *experience.*

Activities and Skills

Parents were asked to recall their child's involvement in activities with adults

prior to the mentoring relationship. These activities included at least one adult

and some examples were: girl scouts, community programs, and sporting

activities. The different activity levels were divided into three separate

categories: no involvement, limited involvement (1-2 activities), and active

involvement (3+ activities). Twenty-nine percent of the children (n=4) had no

involvement in activities with adults (besides attending school). Forty-two

percent (n=6) had limited involvement and 29 percent (n=4) had active

involvement with three or more activities.

This level was compared to the current activity level at the time of the

interview. Forty-nine percent of the parents stated that their child's activity level

with adults increased after the match began, while the remaining 51 percent

noted the activity level remained the same.

There was a wide range of activities that children did with their mentors. The following table highlights the most popular activities:

Table 4.4
Child and Mentor Activities in the
Kinship Program

Activity	n	%
Sporting Activities	14	100%
Entertainment	14	100%
Community places	9	64%
Mentor's house	8	57%
Domestic Activities	6	43%

Text: % equal more than 100% because respondents were able to check all applicable items.

All of the participants reported that their children and mentors did sporting activities, i.e. basketball, roller-skating, and sliding. Several children and mentors went to community places such as the science museum, libraries, bookstores, and childrens' museum.   Activities like baking, gardening and washing the car were listed as domestic activities. Entertainment included watching movies, eating out, and going to the Mall of America. Many children liked to "hang out" at the volunteer's house and play board games, pool, computer games, or card games.

One parent noted that her daughter's volunteer introduced her to different types of reading, poetry and philosophy. The volunteer and her spouse took 'Tina' to the Nutcracker and the Opera. They also shared musical interests, especially the piano, and attended her piano recitals. Eighty-six percent of the

parents (n=12) stated that they were very satisfied with the activities, the remaining 14 percent (n=2) were satisfied.

Eighty-six percent of the parents (n=12) reported that their children had learned new skills from volunteers. Of the other two parents, one chose not to respond and the other answered that her child learned "some skills". Some examples of new skills included: baking, gardening, ice skating, fishing, swimming, arts and crafts, woodcarving, downhill skiing, drawing, and riding a motorcycle. The impact of these activities and skills revealed significant experiences:

> *She has improved in art tremendously; now she draws all the time. Volunteer challenges her to read quality books. My daughter has learned to get along better with other children because she has been around the volunteer's children. When friends come over, they get along better. She is more open to others and offers solutions; this is something new.*

> *This relationship has made him a calmer person, he understands the concept of trust. He was let down by his father and how he understands his father's condition.*

> *Volunteer helps child in the way that I can't, he helps him with self-esteem, and gives him confidence. "Steve" is very hard on himself. He places high expectations on himself, the volunteer lets him know that it's ok to make a mistake.*

> *These experiences have been good for him. He has the opportunity to do things he never would otherwise. Testing out new interests, seeing things from the beginning to end has helped 'Pat" with follow-through. He see his mentor with a goal and then going for it.*

Role-Model Influence

One-hundred percent of the parents responded that the volunteer had qualities that made him/her a positive role-model. A great variety of qualities were listed as attributes of the volunteers; they were patient, reliable, kind, caring, honest, sensitive, hardworking, straight-forward, able to set boundaries--

yet have a good sense of humor, good Christian values and independent. One parent noted that her daughter "looks up to the volunteer because she is a working single-parent, a good mother, a positive role-model and she also does a lot of volunteer work". Another parent explained that "We [volunteers and parent] have a similar sense of morals and basis values. They reinforce things like 'women can work' and that staying school is important'". The volunteers demonstrated these qualities in several ways:

> *Just by the way the boys smile, whenever there's a problem, they take the time to talk about it, they act as my back-up, the conflict breakers, and mediators. The boys trust them and continue to trust and what they talk about is private.*

> *Before this, 'Barbara' didn't want to grow up because she was afraid. Now she sees her volunteer with a job and an apartment and she isn't frightened anymore.*

> *Modeling is a big thing. She sees them work hard. She has been to both of the volunteers' work.*

> *Volunteer is able to do some coaching. Volunteer demonstrates the process of saying no and shows 'Daniel' the process of decision-making.*

One hundred percent of the parents shared that this role-model influence has affected their child/ren's life. Influence was defined in several ways:

> *This relationship has enriched my daughter's life and reinforced my role as a parent.*

> *It's given her more independence, she is not as clingy with me. This is her way of getting out to do things. I don't have the money or the transportation to do these things.*

> *I don't look at it as a social relationship, anybody can do activities with him. I think the volunteers are sincere and caring, and they want to make an impact on his life. They have been a friend to him; friendships can last forever.*

> *No matter what, the boys will feel that these are safe people and they can always go to them.*

Overall Impression of the Program

Three main themes emerged after examination of parental expectations.
The first theme noted that parents wanted their child to experience other family systems:

> I wanted "Mary" to see a functional family interact and one that was making it. Also she has never had any experience with men who are not loud, obnoxious, and who can problem-solve without getting angry.

> I wanted a male-role originally, but in working with a couple, "Joseph" saw a positive relationship in addition to the male influence.

> I didn't know the Kinship volunteer would spend so much quality time with my child. I wanted "Barbara" to be matched up with a single-parent who was working so she could see that single-parents can make it.

The second theme emerged when parents talked about how the program exceeded their expectations:

> The program went beyond my expectations. I didn't think anyone could be so consistent and come up with original ideas for things to do.

> Better than I thought, volunteers are very committed, it was a good match from the very beginning.

> It's more than a relationship. "Michael" gets to do activities that he never would have been able to do, free tickets to things, he went to fishing camp, picnics, etc.

> I think this will be a lifetime friendship, not a short-term one.

> This relationship has been so important. The volunteers have worked miracles.

The third theme reflected the concern parents had for the prospective

volunteer working with their child:

> *I was nervous in the beginning, but I felt more comfortable learning more about the program, being interviewed, and then I realized the effort that was put into making a good match.*

> *I was concerned about who was working with my daughter. We had a family gathering and everyone met each other. Her [the volunteer] value system coincides with mine.*

> *This program relieved apprehensions by placing high priority on making a good match.*

> *It wasn't a rush process, while my son was waiting to be matched up we were included in activities and had ticket opportunities. I thought that was very nice.*

Ninety-three percent (n=13) of the parents stated that the program met their

expectations, while the remaining 7 percent (n=1) stated that she "didn't really

have expectations."

Fifty percent of the parents (n=7) noted a strength based on the idea that the

program "brings kids together with people who care." Figure 4.1 lists other

strengths shared by subjects:

Figure 4.1

Strengths of the Kinship Program

Supportive to parents as well as children.

Shows children that people care about them.

Time and energy that the program places kids with the right volunteer.

Smaller, more personal program.

Provides role-models for children.

One parent shared that "it gives kids a chance to have 'real' friends, all kids go through stages that are difficult for parents. Volunteers have worked with the boys so they understand me better and they have done it so smooth." This parent reinforced how the program has been a support for her as well as her child: "this program takes a family approach, it takes the parent into consideration as well as the child. It is excellent for the parent too." Another parent agreed, "it's hard for a single-parent to be 'everything' to a child, a friend, a disciplinarian, etc. . . this [program] is an opportunity for children and adults to bond together. It was a god-send, which came at the right time. I was pregnant and running the house by myself."

Thirty-six percent of parents (n=5) did not note a weakness in the program. Lack of program publicity was listed as a weakness by twenty-eight percent (n=4) of the parents. Other responses included a long waiting list and the possible disappointment for the children (or volunteer) if the match doesn't work out. One parent shared "some relationships have to end" as a part of the program that is difficult for children, parents, and mentors.

One-hundred percent of the parents stated that they would recommend the program to another parent. A majority (70%) had already done so. A wide variety of reasons were given to explain their recommendations:

> The world is really bad, and there's a lot of ugliness in it, but I feel that there's good in everyone. Sometimes it takes special people to find that and show them how to use that. They have brought out the good in them, and also important, they have accepted the bad as well.

> Kinship has a great foundation about how they care about kids. I let people know it was a god-send for me.

> The staff are trying to make an impact on children's lives.

> Kids would have a role-model, someone to talk to and listen to them. . . sometimes that's all the kids want is someone to listen to them.

The program helped me spend more quality time with my other child.

The boys don't fight anymore. It's like the caring and the love and the sharing are a part of our house. When my kids are grown I want to volunteer.

It's exciting to watch the excitement in the children. . . to see their self-esteem grow. If you're looking to make a difference--this is the program.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Overview

This chapter has three main sections. The first section, "Brief Summary," summarizes the results. The second section, "Limitations," presents the study limitations. The third section, "Significance of the Study," discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and literature review. This section is divided into the four corresponding parts of the data collection instrument.

Brief Summary

The program serves a wide variety of youth in the Minneapolis and Greater Minneapolis area. There are an equal number of girls and boys matched in the program, but a majority of the waiting list is boys living in Minneapolis. A majority of children (58%) have dealt with moderate or serious stress (i.e. abuse, alcoholism, and lack of opportunities).

The success rate of matches was determined by examining matches within one year (1993). The program had a 88 percent success rate for that particular year. This rate is higher than other mentoring programs where average success rates lie between 40-50 percent (Freedman, 1993, p.77-78).

Seventy-one percent of the children (n=10) had limited or no involvement in activities with adults (besides school) prior to the mentor relationship. Fifty-eight percent of the parents (n=8) noted an increase in their child's activity level with adults after the mentor relationship began. Overall, parents were satisfied with the activities that program mentors did with their children. Parents reported that

their children gained positive experiences in relationships with program mentors through activities and the acquisition of new skills.

Parents felt that their child had developed a trusting relationship with his/her mentor. They unanimously believed that the mentor had qualities to make him/her a positive role-model and thought that this role-model influence made a positive difference in their child's life. Many examples were offered to demonstrate the mentor's influence on the child.

Parents responded positively in regards to the mentor(s), the mentoring relationship, and the program itself. A majority of parents have recommended the program to other parents because of their good experience and their belief that the mentor relationship has been beneficial for their child.

An important finding focused on the involvement of the parent in the relationship. While, in some cases, the parent chose to remain distant from the volunteer, a majority of parents (63%) noted how supportive the volunteer had been for them. One parent believed that "this relationship has enriched my daughter's life and reinforced my role as a parent". Similar to this supportive nature was the finding that the mentor(s) assisted the parents in their role:

> *This program has helped me parent both my children, but at different levels.*

> *The volunteer has acted as a go-between, with 'Steve" and myself.*

> *They [the volunteers] act as my back-up, the conflict breakers and mediators.*

The program's goal of setting up relationships between mentors and children is enriched when this supportive relationship is beneficial to the parent as well. This relationship remains an important issue for mentoring programs because the success of the match depends on the interconnectedness of parents, children, and mentors.

Limitations

There are two different types of limitations; methodological limitations and general limitations. Both categories will be discussed here.

Methodological Limitations

First, there was no formal pre-test done on the data collection instrument with families. The instrument was tested with co-workers at the Kinship program and further revision came from consultation with faculty at Augsburg College. Grinnell (1988) believes that a pre-test helps establish the clarity of the questions. This remains a limitation because nothing is known about the reliability or validity of the instrument.

Second, study findings were based solely on parent reports. This is a limitation because it can not be compared with information from the child, mentor(s), or a teacher. Additional sources of information would help establish reliability and help portray the complexities of the mentoring relationships.

Third, purposive sampling made it difficult to generalize within and beyond the program. Fourteen interviews were completed, drawing from a population of thirty families. While the sample had diversity in ethnic backgrounds, it did not include any children in the Minneapolis area. This point will be further discussed in the Discussion section.

Study Limitations

This first limitation is common to mentoring studies. It is difficult to isolate the dimensions of the mentoring relationship as a variable. It is also difficult to operationalize concepts such as trust and role-modeling. The mentoring relationship does not occur in a vacuum (Flaxman, 1988). There are many other

variables such as school, community, and friends that influence a child. The study results are based on the parent's belief that the influence on the child was due to the mentor, and not some other variable.

Selection bias, the second limitation, refers to the possibility that only people who had positive experiences would consent to be part of the study. This would positively skew the results. Because the researcher was blind to sample selection, comparative analysis could not be done between participants and non-participants.

Study Significance

This section contains four parts which correspond to the description of the Kinship program and the interview findings. The results are discussed in the context of the research questions and literature review.

Program Description

Results showed that the program served a diversity of children. There was a balance of girls and boys served in the program. The program population was represented by children in urban and suburban areas and it included a wide age range. There is no typical child in the program, he/she may come from any of several neighborhoods and a variety of backgrounds. The common factor is that a majority of children come from single-parent families. Regardless of economic status, certain needs appear to be met for children by providing an adult mentor. This need for additional adult support crosses all gender, race, and class barriers confirming Flaxman's (1992) belief that all youth could benefit from adult mentors.

Participation in the program enhanced assets previously noted in Benson's (1990) study, looking at healthy youth development. Positive role-models, caring adults, and opportunities for new experiences were noted as assets in supporting

children.   This information could provide more guidance for mentors in the relationship and affect their training and preparation.

When family stress was explored through agency records, 58 percent of the children were found to be at moderate or serious risk.   Family stress is a significant factor for the program because mentors will require additional training when dealing with issues of abuse, drug dependency, and family violence. Family stress also relates to Dryfoo's (1990) study which found that one out of two young people (10-17 yr.) were at serious and moderate risk in areas of substance abuse and school failure.   This statistic is similar to the Kinship Program population.

Duration of Matches

The success of a match was based on the commitment that the child and mentor met regularly and continued throughout the year. The success rate, 88 percent, is significant in comparison to other programs. Freedman (1993) notes that success rates of most programs are between 40-50 percent (p.77-78). It is important to recognize that each program has their own definition of success. Areas to explore could be program support, training, and recruiting the right "type" of mentor. Why do some matches continue beyond one year?   What are some effects of long-term (3-5 years) matches?   These questions require further exploration.

Trusting Relationships

All of the study participants believed that their child/ren trusted the program mentor. This development of trust relates to the concept of resiliency. Werner's (1984) longitudinal study found that children can flourish if they encounter people who provide them with a "secure basis for the development of trust, autonomy,

and initiative (p. 209). This development of resilient qualities is important for children in the program because many have experienced moderate or significant stress. Garmezy (1972) looked specifically at children in W.W.II (Rhodes, 1994). He observed that "such adults provide for the children a representation of their efficacy and demonstrate the ability to exert control in the midst of upheaval" (Rhodes, 1994, p. 191). Stable adults seem to help children deal with the stress in their lives; this is valuable for many children involved in the program.

Resilient qualities are valuable for all children. This belief reaffirms the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) philosophy that "problem-free is not fully prepared" and "we must want more for our young people than the absence of problems" (AED, 1993). Attention needs to focus on all youth, not just those with warning signs. Attention to all youth remains a worthy cause yet, many children slip through the cracks of large classrooms, limited funding, and long waiting lists. If mentoring is beneficial for all youth then why do most programs serve only single-parent families. What about the child with the "absent" parent who works 60+ hours a week? It seems that many children from single and two-parent families could benefit from having mentors. While structured adult-to-youth mentoring programs attempt to provide additional adult support for children, there is usually criteria for children to be involved in the program which may exclude children in need of mentors.

Several personal examples demonstrated the quality of the partnerships. A commonalty among them was the idea that the children believed that somebody cared about them. One parent shared,"I think it was important to my daughter that the mentors really wanted to be with her. They weren't getting paid, and they weren't related, but they truly cared about her." Mosqueda and Palaich (1990) believe that the mentoring relationship not only benefits the child, but the entire community, "when there are more opportunities for more young people to

conclude that somebody does indeed care, the net benefit is to the community; the strength of the community is enhanced" (p. 14). Through a systems' framework of individual, family, and community, mentoring can have an expansive impact beyond the individual.

The successful development of a trusting relationship relates to Erikson's first stage (trust versus mistrust). Many parents shared that their child had been lied to, let down, and/or disappointed by other significant adults in their life. These experiences inhibit children from reaching out to those who might help them. Forming positive, trusting relationships can help the child learn to trust and become a trustworthy person. This type of modeling relates to the social cognitive theory which proposes that children can learn internal standards and rules by imitating models (Eisenbern & Mussen, 1989). The mentoring relationship also benefits the youth who have already developed a healthy sense of trust because "it rises again at each successive stage of development" (Hetherington & Parke, 1981, p. 352).

While these results support the healthy benefits of developing trust, how does this relationship impact children's interactions with siblings, friends, and their parents? Does a feeling of trust "carry over" to other relationships besides the mentor? These mentoring relationships may affect children's interactions with other adults. For instance, they might listen better in school or follow a coach's direction. These topics remain unexplored in mentoring research.

Activities and Skills

Seventy-one percent (n=10) of the parents reported that their children had no involvement or limited involvement in activities with other adults. This finding relates to the trend in which children spend less time with extended family or other non-related adults (Haensly & Parsons, 1993). These adults were

supportive in assisting parents in a child's development. What is the long-term impact as more children have <u>less</u> contact with adults? This topic will require further research in order to understand the effects on children.

Parents reported a wide range of mentor and children activities which reflected the interests of both volunteers and children. Parents shared that children learned to play basketball, create art projects, and bake cookies. A majority of children in the Kinship Program (80%) are going through Erikson's developmental stage of industry vs. inferiority. During this stage it is important for children to have successful experiences which make them feel competent and give them a sense of control over their lives (Miller, 1983). One participant shared that her son learned to change the oil in his volunteer's car. They also changed a flat tire together. To many adults these tasks are bothersome, but children are very task oriented during this stage and they need to feel proud of their accomplishments. As reported by Masten (1992), Bandura believed that through these mastery experiences children developed a strong sense of efficacy. Through mastery experiences children learn what it takes to be successful and then, in times of adversity, they are able to be resourceful and quickly rebound (Masten, 1992). Children who have not developed this sense of industry at home may have it revitalized through a teacher or a neighbor (Hetherington & Parke, 1981). This is an important issue for people in youth-serving positions.

Role-Model Influence

Parents unanimously believed that the mentors had positive role-model qualities and served as role-models for their children. Patience, reliability, kindness, and honesty were a few of the qualities listed. Flaxman (1988) concluded "that as a role-model, mentors give mentees an opportunity to

evaluate their attitudes, values, behavior, or beliefs" (p. 4). Role-modeling is successful because of the emotional attachment of the younger person to the older person and the quality of the relationship (Flaxman, 1988). This emotional attachment remains difficult to measure, but further research would help identify factors necessary for emotional attachment.

Applying Bandara's social learning theory, the mentor is the model for the child and demonstrates qualities listed by the parents. New behaviors can be acquired by watching a model and the learning takes place on an interpersonal, cognitive, or behavioral level (Miller, 1983). Do these new behaviors continue after the mentoring relationship is over? How is modeling related to the quality of emotional attachment? For instance, if children are closely attached with mentors, will they be more likely to model their behavior. Once again, further exploration would provide insight into this domain of the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring can be described as a process of social and psychological identification (Flaxman, 1988). As reported by Flaxman (1988), Bandura defines this identification process in which "mentees pattern their thoughts, feelings, or actions after another person who serves as a model" (p. 5). This identification is an important aspect of both instrument and psychosocial mentoring (Flaxman, 1988). Through this identification process, "young learner's adopt the mentors or models' patterns of behavior; the match behavior is then maintained by internal reward or intrinsic reinforcement" (Flaxman, 1988, p. 5). As reported by Rhodes (1994), Garmezy & Neuchterellin explored attributes of competent children and found "there was at least one significant adult who was able to serve as an identification figure. In turn, achieving youngsters seemed to hold a more positive attitude towards adults and authority figures" (p. 191).

This concept of identification raises several questions for future research: what makes children identify with mentors, do mentors need similar backgrounds as the children for identification, and how can the program facilitate this process?

In addition to this role of identification figure, mentors play other roles as well. Flaxman (1988) believes mentors function as coaches because they "enhance the mentees' knowledge and understanding of how to navigate or negotiate particular situations, for accomplishing objectives, for making decisions, and for achieving aspirations" (p. 3). One parent shared similar thoughts, "'Mark' [mentor] is able to do some coaching. He demonstrates the process of saying no and shows 'Daniel' the decision-making process". These roles offer support to parents and serve as "reinforcers", "challengers", and "teachers" for children.

Chapter Six: Implications

Overview

This chapter includes five sections. The first section, "Implications for Program Development," relates the evaluation findings within the context of the program. The second section, "Implications at the State Level," offers suggestions for state involvement in mentoring movement. The third section, "Implications for Practice," discusses valuable information for social workers. Section four, "Future Study Questions," identifies future research topics that would be beneficial and supportive to existing literature. The final section, "Conclusions," summarizes the research and discusses what is important for the future of mentoring.

Implications for Program Development

Several strengths in the program have been previously identified. This feedback for the program comes from two main sources, parental input and research on mentoring. This first section focuses on parental input from the interview process.

Parental Input

Several parents believed that the program lacks publicity among the general population. Many parents shared they had never heard of the program, except through a neighbor or friend. Lack of publicity also affects the number of prospective volunteers needed to serve the children waiting for service. This lack of publicity is common to many small, non-profit programs who struggle to provide a quality program with a low budget.

A similar concern shared by parents was the long waiting list. Parents believed that the waiting list discouraged many people from getting involved in the program. This is a reality for not only mentoring programs, but other social services as well. Areas to explore include: strategies for recruiting mentors, defining program population, and screening children and prospective mentors.

Two aspects of the program parents appreciated dealt with support and access to activities before and after the match began. A majority of parents liked the fact that they were included in program activities and ticket opportunities before their child was matched with a mentor. One parent felt that she was able to go on special outings with her children because of the program activities and ticket events. The importance of this aspect of the program seems well supported by parents.

The second aspect related to the supportive follow-up phone calls with parents after their child was matched with a mentor. Follow-up calling was done by program staff after a match has begun. A call is made to the parent (and child, if available) and mentor on a monthly basis. Parents/guardians believed that this was a valuable connection in getting their concerns or questions heard by program staff.

Research on Mentoring

Program process was not specifically addressed in this evaluation, but there are a few points worth discussing. This researcher believes that studying detailed components of the program would help identify further strengths and weaknesses. Developing criteria for child participation in the program is an example of a program component. The program staff and board of directors are currently working on this issue.

Freedman (1993) stated that many mentoring programs choose not to serve most at-risk youth, because alone, this type of intervention is not able to meet the demands of youth experiencing significant risk. Although this belief is debatable, Freedman, (1993) maintains that there are limits to mentoring. It is not viable for one program to serve every type of child. Organizing program criteria will be valuable because it will allow the program to focus on goals within its capabilities.

There is a demand for African-American and other minority mentors. This is a common occurrence for several mentoring programs (Flaxman, 1988). This issue has not been thoroughly researched, but Freedman (1993) concluded that "successful mentors are commonly individuals who have weathered 'hard lives' growing up the same way as the youth, often coming from the same neighborhoods and able to talk the same language" (p. 98). A variety of opinions exist on this issue. Program operators believe that mentors' motivation is the most important variable, while others conclude that cross-cultural and cross-class relationships serve important functions for youth (Freedman, 1993, p. 98). This is an on-going concern which requires that recruitment techniques be improved to meet this demand. This topic will be discussed in the Future Study Questions section.

Implications at a State Level

Mentoring has many limitations. As noted in Freedman (1993), Dorothy Gillian wrote, "there is, in my view, a dangerous trend to look at mentoring as the be-all, as the solution to a social ill, as the answer to so-called 'at-risk'" (p. 94). This trend is dangerous because many programs are funded and the funding is dropped because the "success" didn't prove to be good enough. The Career Beginnings in Cleveland was dropped by several corporations because it wasn't successful enough according to corporate standards (Freedman, 1993).

Program director, Al Abromovitz shared, "if we don't meet the dream, they'll go on to something else" (Freedman, 1993, p. 93). Mentoring continues to be a popular concept but quality programs require an infrastructure that is consistent and supportive in nature.

The National Mentoring Working Group, which consists of mentoring practitioners, encourages advertising to reflect a new perspective of "mentoring's ability to help some youth in some way, and emphasizing the profound commitment that mentoring requires" (Freedman, 1993, p. 95). A more realistic view of mentoring will support quality programs by informing funders, parents, and mentors of the long-term commitment that is needed for mentoring relationships to be successful.

Quick-fix solutions rarely, if ever, work with such complex problems such as school failure and youth violence. The commercialization of mentoring is detrimental for programs, mentors, and most of all, youth involved. Individual states can become more involved by supporting research that explores several different components of mentoring. New research, along with previous studies, would convey more information about the benefits of mentoring. Mosqueda and Palaich (1990) believe that "if mentoring can improve young people's chances for success, then states would seem to have a clear interest in seeing that mentoring thrives" (p.15).

Mentoring programs are not cost-free (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990). Many programs struggle from a lack of resources required to maintain a quality program. States could get more involved in the support of existing programs. This could lead to stronger, more stable programs.

Walsh (1989) proposed a few strategies for people to get involved with mentoring: 1) Policy makers might look at ways to position mentoring programs more in the mainstream of social programs. 2) Corporation and businesses might

create more opportunities within their organizations. 3) Neighborhood organizations might include accessible information for people interested in mentoring. 4) Churches and schools might include "how to get involved" ideas within bulletins and other communication with people . These represent a few ideas for people to get more involved in the mentoring movement.

Implications for Practice

For social workers, it is important to be aware of the different resources available for youth and families. Mentoring is one of those resources. Natural mentoring occurs in many families through extended families or neighbors. These relationships are valuable for youth, as are relationships through structured programs. It is important to understand that social workers may serve as mentors in many situations. Providing a stable, caring relationship with children is a necessary strength for all people serving youth.

Often social workers are faced with creating solutions to complex problems. Mentoring represents a tool within a solution; it is not the solution. It is important for social workers to provide solutions and programs which work towards lasting change. It is only through this type of change that individuals and communities continue to benefit. The concept of mentoring must be used realistically or the big losers are the children, "robbed again of yet another potential source of support" (Freedman, 1993, p. 93).

Future Study Questions

There are many topics within the mentoring field which require further exploration. This research would serve to educate current programs and add to the growing body of information on mentoring.

Many studies have looked at the impact of mentoring but few have examined what "processes" are important aspects of the programs. Process evaluations focus on the details of how the program works (Flaxman, 1992). For example, each program has it own procedure for matching mentors with children. This specific topic has not been well described or included in research. Flaxman (1988) concluded that little is known about matching individuals. The value of studying the matching process lies in the fact that certain variables may appear crucial in this process. This information would assist programs as they work towards improved program success. Other process evaluations would help locate strong and weak "links" which allow staff to make adjustments within their own program.

Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of mentoring.   Does mentoring have long-term impact? Is impact relative to the time spent with a mentor? This information would be beneficial to existing research; it could also influence changes to support existing mentoring programs.

In addition to longitudinal research, impact studies which explore relationships where children have been matched for 2-3 years, 5 years, and 10 years are almost non-existent in the current research. How is this relationship different from the traditional one year relationship? This particular research would benefit the specific program studies by determining the effects of these long term relationships.

Little is known about cross-cultural, cross-gender mentoring Flaxman (1988). There continues to be more studies which address this issue but currently there remains a variety of opinions. Freedman (1993) believes that "young people need diverse relationships in order to become healthy, bicultural competent adults. . .cross-cultural and cross-class relationship can serve an important function for youth endeavoring to comprehend and navigate the adult world" (p.

98).

Similar to Freedman, Ascher (1986) concluded that research "suggests that students who learn from those of another race through these non-traditional methods are more likely to have other cross-race interactions and friendships" (Flaxman, 1988, p. 33).   Freedman (1993) also notes the important value of mentors coming from similar backgrounds as the youth in the program. These mentors help "provide more accessible and realistic models for the youth" (Freedman, 1993, p. 98). Further research would benefit this specific aspect of mentoring.

There is limited information on mentors themselves. What makes a "good" mentor? This information may help the screening process and also influence ways in which volunteers are recruited. For instance, if similar backgrounds are found to be an important, then increased recruitment strategies are needed for certain populations.

Similar to mentor research, mentee research is also needed. Who benefits the most from mentoring? Freedman (1993) indicated that mentoring is not for all youth. Program's need to be clear about the population they are serving. Research in this area would greatly impact the design of mentoring programs. Those programs serving at-risk youth would need to start at an early stage and recruit mentors willing to make serious commitments. This type of research would clearly benefit individual programs as well as the national mentoring movements by using mentoring most effectively.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore the nature of mentoring relationships between children and mentors from the Kinship program. A secondary goal described the program, its population, and the success rate of matches.

Results showed that mentors developed trusting relationships with the children. Connections with competent adults were noted as the second most important factor in the development of resilience (Masten, 1992). Mentors also introduced children to new activities and skills. These activities and skills reinforce children's feelings of mastery and control over their lives (Miller, 1983). Parents who participated in this study believed mentors served as role-models for their children. This positive role-model influence supported children developmentally and assisted parents in their role.

This research was specifically designed for the Kinship program. Further research is needed for mentoring to be used as an effective program in supporting youth. It is not, however, the solution in "fixing" at-risk youth and there remains several limitations to mentoring. The success of the mentoring movement is dependent upon realistic expectations, further research, and the cooperation of concerned people in the field.

Minneapolis
h Brooklyn Boulevard
lis, MN 55429
6-0406

January 10, 1995

Augsburg Internal Review Board
Augsburg College

To whom it may concern:

Susan Kramer has permission to study and evaluate Kinship of Greater Minneapolis'
service to children and families. She is authorized to examine existing records of the
program participants.

Sincerely,

Daniel Johnson, L.I.S.W.
Executive Director

ID # _____

Structured Interview---Kinship of Minneapolis 1995

Informed Consent Questions: (asked prior to interview)

Have you read about the proposed research project?   yes or no

Do you understand what your participation in the project means? yes or no

Do you have any further questions? yes or no

If yes, what are they? _____

_____

General Information:

Age of the child: _____

Members of family and others in the household:

_____parent/child only   _____siblings/parent _____ other

How many times per month does your son/daughter get together with their Kinship friend?   1   2   3   4

In your opinion, do you consider this to be a successful match?

very successful   successful   somewhat successful   unsuccessful

Development of a Trusting Relationship

Does your child look forward to going on activities with their Kinship friend?

always (1)_____   occasionally (2) _____   rarely (3) _____

What do they act like prior to leaving for an activity?

nervous? Yes or No   excited? Yes or No   hyper? Yes or No

quiet? Yes or No   other? _____

Does the volunteer follow-through with proposed activities?

most often (1) _____   occasionally (2) _____   rarely (3) _____

Does your child believe that the volunteer will call/pick up them at the proposed time?

yes (1) _____   sometimes (2) _____   no (3) _____

What does your child act like after getting home from an activity?

nervous? Yes or No   excited? Yes or No   hyper? Yes or No

quiet? Yes or No   relaxed? Yes or No   Other _____

Does your child talk with you about the activity and/or the volunteer?

yes (1) _____   sometimes (2) _____   no (3) _____

If so, what does he/she say? _____

_____

Based on your observations, how comfortable is your child around the volunteer?

very comfortable   comfortable   somewhat uncomfortable   uncomfortable
     (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)

In your opinion, does your child appear to trust his/her volunteer?   Yes or No

On a scale between 1 and 5 would you rate how much your child trusts the

volunteer?   1   2   3   4   5

Would you please offer examples based on your answer:

Activities and Skills

What activities with adults was your child involved in before this relationship began?

Community _____ Church _____

School _____ Family _____

What are some of the recreational activities your child and Kinship friend currently do together?

Sporting Events
(1)

domestic (baking, eating)
(2)

Games,computers
(3)

Community places (museums, etc.)
(4)

Other _____
(5)

How satisfied are you with the activities they do together?

very satisfied
(1)

satisfied
(2)

unsatisfied
(3)

very unsatisfied
(4)

In your opinion, has your child's activities with adults _____ decreased,

_____ remained the same, or _____ increased since the match began?

Has your child learned any new skills (i.e.. fly a kite, bake cookies) from the volunteer?   Yes or No

If yes, please give examples:

(If answer is no, this question will not be asked) How has the knowledge of new activities/skills affected your child's life?

Parent's perception of the volunteer as a role-model for the child

Working definition of role model: a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be copied by others (esp. younger people) (Random House, 1987)

In your opinion, does the volunteer have qualities to make them a good role-model figure?   Yes or No

If so, what are some of these qualities?
(If not, no more questions will be asked in this section)

Based on your experience, how do you think that the volunteer demonstrates these qualities to your child?

Has this role-model influence affected your child's life? Yes   or   No

If yes, please give examples:

Overall Impression of the Program

Did this program meet your expectations?   Yes   Somewhat   No

Would you explain your answer:

What is the greatest strength of the program?

What is the greatest weakness?

Would you recommend this program to another parent?   Yes   or   No

Why or why not?

Thank you for your time and effort in contributing to this study. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Dear Parent/Guardian,   January 30, 1995

You are invited to participate in a research project evaluating the Kinship of Minneapolis program. You were selected because your child has been matched up in the program for at least six months. This researcher is interested in client satisfaction of the Kinship program. We ask that you read this and feel free to ask questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by me, Susan Kramer, as part of my Masters thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Augsburg College Master's in Social Work Program. I am also a Coordinator for the Kinship program in the South Metro area.

The purpose of this research is to assess if the program is meeting the needs of families. The main question concerns three areas: the development of a trusting relationship between mentor and child, the activities they do together, and the volunteer as a role-model for the child.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with the Kinship program, Augsburg College or this researcher. The proposed research takes the form of a personal interview in your own home. The interview will be tape recorded and last approximately 30 minutes. The two main reasons for recording are to keep accurate records and to focus on the interview versus taking notes. You may choose to answer questions that you are comfortable answering and you may end the interview at any time.

There are no foreseeable risks or direct benefits to you. This project has been approved by the Augsburg College IRB and the Kinship program. If you choose to participate please sign the consent form and send it in with the enclosed envelope. Please note time you would be available to interview. I will call you within two days to set up an interview. I hope to finish all interviews by February 25. You may keep this letter portion for your own records. All data from this interview will be kept confidential in a locked cabinet by me and shared only with my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Curt Paulsen.

There will be no way any program staff other than myself could identify those who choose to participate. Also, any published reports will not include information that could identify you. All data will be destroyed and erased one year from now, or by February 30, 1996.

Your participation is important for the success of this research. The results will suggest improvements for the Kinship program. If you have any questions, at any time, please contact me at 721-2403 or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Curt Paulsen at 330-1621.

Sincerely,

Susan Kramer, MSW student

CONSENT FORM

You will be given a copy of the form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____   _____

    (Signature)   **(Date)**

_____

(Convenient dates and times)

I give permission to have this interview audio-taped.

Signature_____   **Date**_____

Address_____   **Phone**_____

Signature of Research_____

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