

The Impact of Youth Mentoring Relationships on Children, Parents, and Mentors

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Abstract

The present qualitative, multiple-case study research (a) explored the relationship processes in youth mentoring relationships with children, mentors, and parents, and (b) explored the perceived impacts of participating in the mentoring relationship on children, mentors, and parents. This study combined the tenets of two current theoretical models of youth mentoring, namely, developmental (Rhodes, 2005) and systemic (Keller, 2005b), in order to obtain a holistic view of mentoring relationships. In-depth, semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 child-mentor-parent triads participating in a formal, traditional mentoring programme, and whose relationships had been established for one or more years. A thematic cross-case analysis was carried out. Nine different themes relating to the system and another nine themes relating to perceived individual impacts emerged. The inter-relatedness of the system throughout the relationships and its impacts on individuals became apparent. Globally, mentoring relationships can provoke positive, life-altering changes in children, mentors, and parents, when placed in the context of a healthy system in which participants work in concert with each other, collaborating in the children's best interests. Participants addressed the complexities of maintaining this positive momentum, and many experienced difficulty adapting and negotiating the new roles they had to play. Misunderstandings on either side may have negative consequences and initiate a negative spiral that could take considerable effort to turn around. Caseworkers play a large role in helping participants maintain their roles and defusing difficulties. The use of matched triads to explore both impacts and relationships in the mentoring process yielded important insights and indicated that multiple perspectives greatly contribute to the understanding of the field of youth mentoring.

Résumé

La présente étude de cas multiples a exploré deux facettes: (a) les processus de relations qui existent entre enfants, mentors, et parents qui participent dans un jumelage de mentorat, et (b) les impacts perçus de la participation au jumelage sur les enfants, mentors, et parents. Afin d'obtenir une vision globale des relations de mentorat, cette étude a tenu compte des principes de deux modèles théoriques actuels sur le mentorat auprès des jeunes, soient le modèle développemental (Rhodes, 2005) et le modèle systémique (Keller, 2005b). Des entrevues semi-structurées ont été menées auprès de 12 triades enfant-mentor-parent qui participaient à un programme formel de mentorat traditionnel. Les relations étudiées étaient établies depuis au moins un an. Une analyse thématique de cas croisés a été réalisée. Neuf thèmes différents relatifs au système et neuf autres thèmes relatifs à la perception des impacts individuels ont émergé. L'interdépendance du système à travers les relations et les impacts sur les individus ont été mis en évidence. Globalement, un jumelage de mentorat peut provoquer des changements positifs chez les enfants, les mentors et les parents, lorsque les relations entre les participants sont saines et lorsque les participants travaillent de concert les uns avec les autres dans le meilleur intérêt des enfants. Les participants ont abordé la complexité et les défis associés à la continuité des relations triadiques positives. L'adaptation et la négociation de leurs nouveaux rôles représentent des défis majeurs. Des malentendus entre participants peuvent entraîner des conséquences négatives sur tous. Ainsi, les intervenants cliniques jouent un rôle important en aidant les participants à maintenir leurs rôles et leurs limites et à désamorcer les difficultés. Les multiples perspectives ont aidé à mieux comprendre les impacts et les relations entre participants, et contribuent à la compréhension globale des relations de mentorat auprès des jeunes.

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Preface

Over the course of the past several decades, the interest in youth mentoring has surged, fuelled by the belief that mentoring is a beneficial tool for the promotion and development of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural competencies in young people (Rhodes, 2002). Researchers from many branches of the social sciences have taken a keen interest in an array of topics in the realm of youth mentoring. Studies have sought to define the roles and types of mentoring, develop theoretical models of youth mentoring, characterise the participants in the mentoring process, describe the impacts of participation in the mentoring relationship, and identify challenges, moderators, and mediators of the mentoring process.

A variety of mentoring programmes have emerged, each catering to specific at-risk populations. Of particular interest are children of single parents. In Canada, 25 percent of all families with children are headed by single parents, of which 81 percent are headed by single-mothers (Statistics Canada, 2001). The data consistently indicate adverse effects of single-parent families on the social, emotional, behavioural, and educational achievement of these children (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Further, due to economic, socialization, and network resources, children from single-parent homes are at a disadvantage when compared to children from intact families (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). The largest, and most well-known mentoring programme developed to meet the needs of children from single-parent families, is called Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) (Rhodes, 2002), and it exists in all major cities in the United States and Canada. In Montréal, Québec, Canada, the Grands Frères Grandes Soeurs du Grand Montréal [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal] programme has existed since 1975, and has paired over six thousand children with mentors since its inception. The organisation states that its mission is to “pair children from single-parent families with a responsible adult whom

they will meet on a regular basis in order to encourage a fulfilling experience for the pair” (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal, 2009, para. 10).

An initial, primary focus of youth-mentoring studies examined programme effectiveness by exploring the impacts of the relationships on development in children. Within the context of American BBBS organisations, mentored children of single parents fared slightly better than their counterparts in the behavioural, familial, and academic areas (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). However, mentees whose mentoring relationships dissolved within six months showed decrements in a variety of areas (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Several important differences between the matches that participated in the BBBS of America study described above and matches from BBBS of Greater Montreal exist with respect to moderating variables such as participant demographics, matching characteristics, and match length. For instance, the average total length of pairings at the time of assessment was 11.4 months in the American BBBS study (Grossman & Tierney, 1998), whereas caseworkers in Montreal report an average dyad length of three to four years (C. l’Heureux, personal communication, August 17, 2005). Thus, although results from the Grossman and Tierney (1998) study are promising, they are not necessarily transferable to the programme in Montreal.

Although much of the focus has been on programme effectiveness, mediators that influence programme effectiveness, such as the mentoring relationship itself and systemic relationships supporting the match, have only recently begun to attract attention. This gap in the literature was highlighted at the National Research Summit on Mentoring, at which scholars highlighted that understanding how mentoring relationships work and investigating relationship processes from both the mentee and mentor perspectives were key research priorities in order to solidify the field’s knowledge base (Rhodes & DuBois, 2004). Moreover, in order to prevent

match dissolutions that unintentionally cause harm to the mentee, it also becomes necessary to explore the factors that mediate mentor and parent motivations to participate in a youth mentoring programme. Finally, even less is known about the impacts of the youth mentoring relationship on mentors and parents.

It is against this backdrop that the following dissertation research has unfolded. The general goals of this qualitative research are twofold. The first objective was to qualitatively explore the relationships between children, mentors, and parents participating in a formal, traditional mentoring programme at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal. The second objective was to qualitatively explore the impacts of participation in the mentoring programme on educational, social, emotional, and behavioural development of children from single-parent homes, as well as to explore impacts on parents and volunteer mentors. The framework of this study and its research questions were based on two theoretical models of mentoring—Rhodes's (2005) multidimensional youth mentoring model and Keller's (2005b) family systems-based youth-mentoring model. This research is unique in that it integrates the two models in order to achieve a holistic perspective of the outcomes of all the people involved in the mentoring relationship.

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

Defining Mentoring

The concept of mentoring dates back almost three thousand years to its namesake character “Mentor” in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Homer, 1991). In this Greek classic, Mentor is a wise and trusted counsellor to Odysseus. The latter leaves his son, Telemachus, in Mentor’s care when he leaves Ithaca to fight in Troy. Today, a variety of definitions exist for mentoring, depending on the people involved and the type of mentoring carried out (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Currently, the term is generally used to designate relationships that differ in length and intensity, and includes both naturally occurring and programmed mentoring relationships, each of which may take place in diverse contexts (Rhodes, Lowe, & Schwartz, 2011; Sipe, 2005). With regards to youth mentoring, Bronfenbrenner (as cited in S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004) has provided a comprehensive definition of a mentoring relationship:

A mentor is an older, more experienced person who seeks to further the development of character and competence in a younger person by guiding the latter in acquiring mastery of progressively more complex skills and tasks in which the mentor is already proficient. The guidance is accomplished through demonstration, instruction, challenge, and encouragement on a more or less regular basis over an extended period of time. In the course of this process, the mentor and the young person develop a special bond of mutual commitment. In addition, the young person’s relationship to the mentor takes on an emotional character of respect, loyalty, and identification. (p. 396)

Although the definition and pathways by which youth-mentoring relationships exert influence differ to varying degrees, agreement exists on three core concepts that form the mentoring relationship: experience, guidance, and emotional bond (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

First, the mentor is a person of experience relative to the mentee. Second, the mentor teaches and guides so as to enable the development of competencies in the mentee. Finally, as the relationship is nurtured over time, feelings of trust and an emotional bond bind the mentor and mentee (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Without these three main elements, the full benefits of a youth mentoring are unlikely to occur (Rhodes, 2002).

Although the mentor has a great deal of responsibility toward the mentee, the mentee also has the responsibility of being an active participant in the mentoring process (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). “Protégé” and “apprentice” are other terms often synonymous with “mentee,” depending on the specific nature of the relationship. For instance, “protégé” comes from the French “to protect” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000) and is used to denote someone whose welfare, career, or training is promoted by an influential person, whereas “apprentice” has been traditionally used in relation to trade instruction (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

Natural and Planned Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships can generally be categorised into two types: nonformal (or natural) and formal (or planned) (Miller, 2002). The above definitions of mentoring relationships and their participants encompass both formal and nonformal types of mentoring.

Natural mentoring. Natural mentors are sometimes not even referred to as mentors by mentees as the relationship is initiated without formal sponsorship or programmatic support (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). They can be nonparental adults, such as extended family members, family friends, teachers, neighbours, religious leaders, athletic coaches, or any other member of a young person’s existing social network who guides and supports him or her. Natural mentoring relationships are formed as a result of the mentor and mentee taking an

interest in each other and both demonstrating a high level of commitment and motivation to remain in the relationship (Fritzberg & Alemayehu, 2004; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005).

Formal mentoring. Formal mentoring relationships are often planned, organised, and supervised by caseworkers or youth workers within an organisational context (Miller, 2002; Miller 2007). Most programmes that exist are geared to serve elementary and high school-aged children and adolescents, and help to build structured and trusting relationships that bring young people together with caring individuals (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Volunteer mentors are often screened through clinical interviews, police background checks, employment records, and personal references (Grossman & Furano, 2002; Roaf, Tierney, & Hunte, 1994). Furthermore, mentors and mentees are frequently encouraged to abide by programme norms relating to frequency, duration, and goals of meetings (Miller, 2002, 2007).

The empirical concepts on which formal mentoring is based stem from attachment research, which has indicated that bonds formed during childhood may define and direct the development and characteristics of children and their future relationships (Bowlby, 1988). For instance, youth who have a secure attachment base may be more likely and comfortable to seek friendship and mentorship from other adults. Youth whose parents also support their relationships with other adults are also more likely to form mentoring relationships than are children whose parents are indifferent or unsupportive (Zimmerman et al., 2005). However, many youth may be uncomfortable or not know how to seek guidance from adults, while others may not know of people in their existing social network willing to serve as mentors. As well, two-parent families, present extended family members, and supportive communities are no longer societal institutions, thus reducing the availability of adults to provide such assistance (Baker & Maguire,

2005). Because of these complexities and the public's positive perception of the benefits of mentoring, formal mentoring programs began to emerge in the early 1900s.

Today, more than 4,500 programmes and agencies in the United States provide mentoring services to youth (Rhodes, 2002). Organizations such as MENTOR—National Mentoring Partnership and the National Mentoring Center propose an array of resources to individuals and groups interested in mentoring and serve as activists for original research and best practices in the field (Rhodes & DuBois, 2004). The oldest and largest youth mentoring movement in North America is the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) organisation. BBBS is a community-based programme and recruits mentors and mentees from similar geographical communities in order to form pairs (Roaf et al., 1994). In existence for over 100 years, BBBS of America and BBBS of Canada have become the major mentoring programmes in both countries, serving over 225,000 children and youth in 470 agencies in the United States (US) (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2005) and over 20,000 children in more than 150 agencies in Canada (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, 2005). The scope and depth of youth mentoring is expanding internationally, as comparable programmes and initiatives are gradually emerging in other countries (Brady & Curtin, 2012; DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Evans, Jory, & Dawson, 2005; Liabo, Lucas, & Roberts, 2005).

Mentoring Contexts and Goals

Both natural and planned mentoring relationships exist in varying configurations of people and contexts (S. F. Hamilton, Hamilton, Hirsch, Hughes, King, & Maton, 2006) [e.g., group mentoring (Gibb, 1994), intergenerational mentoring (Freedman, 1988; Taylor, LoSciuto, & Porcellini, 2005), cross-age peer mentoring (Karcher, 2005)], sites [e.g., schools (Portwood & Ayers, 2005), workplace (M. A. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005), faith-based organisations (Maton,

Sto. Domingo, & King, 2005)], and modes of communication [e.g., internet (Légaré & Trudeau, 2005; Miller & Griffiths, 2005)]. The ways in which mentoring relationships are configured depend largely on the goals set out for the mentee. Generally, the goals of mentoring can be defined as being instrumentally or psychosocially focussed. Instrumental, or goal-focussed, mentoring is extremely popular in the workplace and in corporate settings and is often characterised by working toward specific purposes, such as career development, sponsorship, exposure visibility, coaching, and stimulating assignments (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). For teenagers, participation in instrumental mentoring in a work environment could motivate them to finish high school and succeed academically in order to attain a desired career (Linnehan, 2003).

Psychosocial mentoring behaviour, on the other hand, comprises role modelling, affirmation, counselling, and friendship (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Most mentoring programmes for youth emphasise psychosocial mentoring and have goals such as diminishing engagement in risky behaviour, improving school performance, working on social skills, and developing bonds of trust in relationships (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). In practice, although the instrumental and psychosocial purposes of mentoring often overlap, the conceptual differences help to distinguish the types of mentors and mentoring programmes (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). As well, it is important to keep in mind that the psychosocial and instrumental functions of mentoring fluctuate with the mentee's developmental state and associated needs (Keller, 2005a).

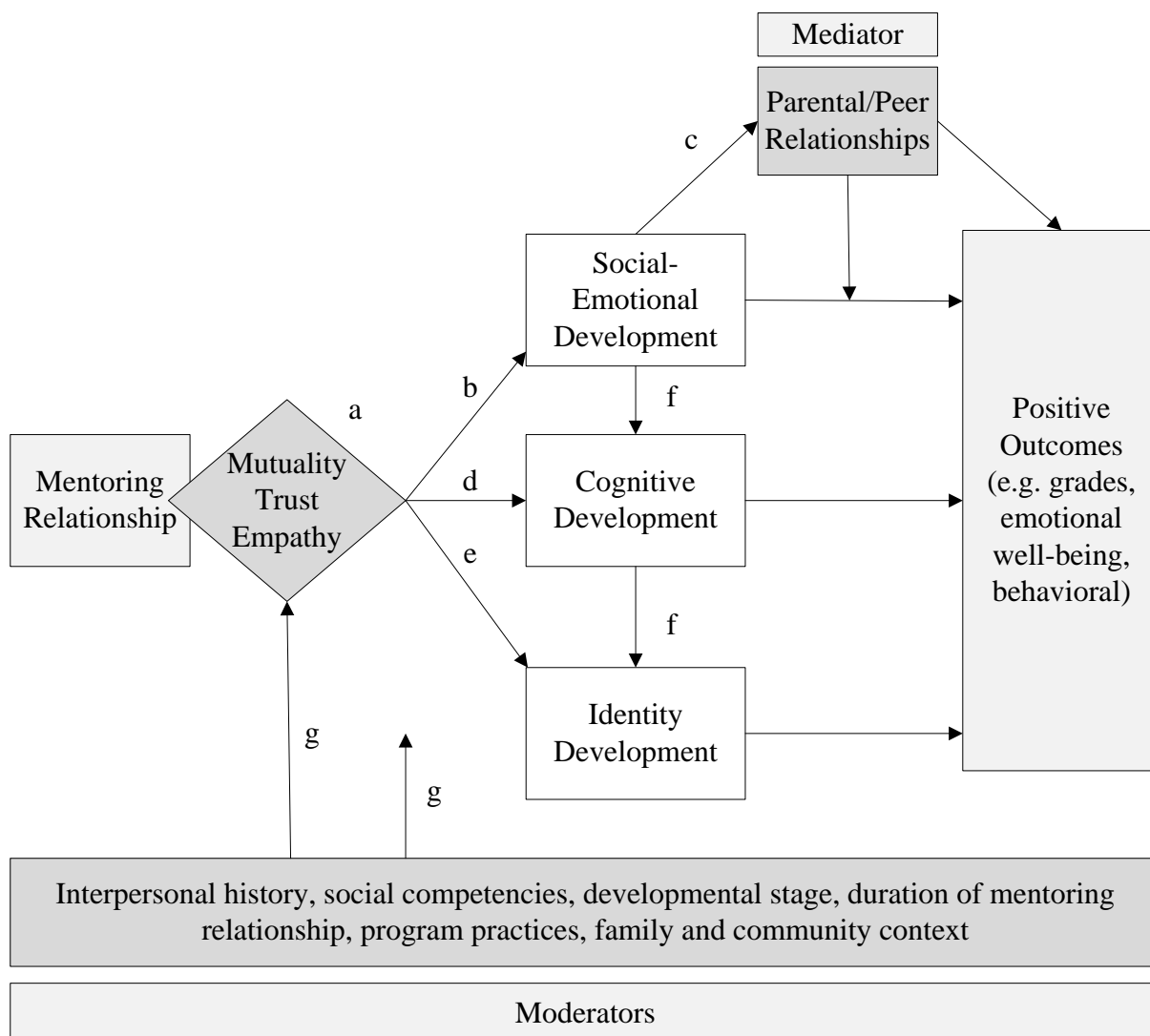
Theoretical Models of Youth Mentoring

Developmental model of youth mentoring. A primary theoretical model of youth mentoring that focuses on youth outcomes has emerged from research (Rhodes, 2002, 2005) (see

Figure 1). The model proposes that mentoring relationships can lead to a range of positive outcomes for youth protégés through a variety of processes. The model posits that engagement in processes that nurture, in particular, social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development, have a positive impact on youth outcomes. The largest effects occur when mentors positively have an impact on all three areas of development.

Figure 1

A Developmental Model of Youth Mentoring (Rhodes, 2005)

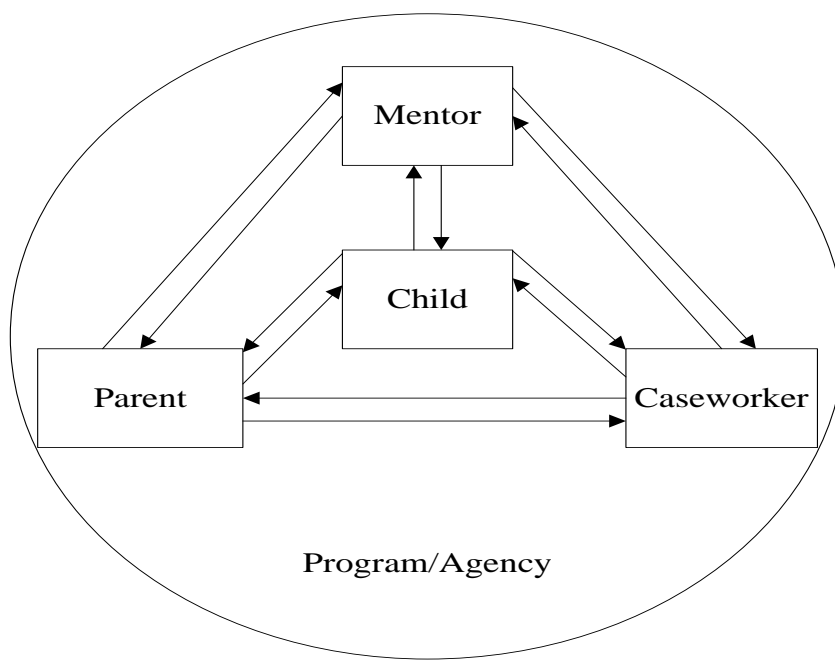


However, before the favourable effects of a mentoring relationship occur, a high level of rapport between mentor and protégé must be created (Rhodes, 2005). Without rapport, which includes feelings of mutuality, trust, and empathy, it is unlikely that the relationship will develop to the point whereby a mentor's influence will promote healthy developmental outcomes. When the mentoring relationship does influence protégé development, however, people close to the protégé may be indirectly affected by the mentoring relationship. Through this process, the child-parent relationship may be affected by the child-mentor relationship, and the former may also mediate the quality of the latter. Thus, an interdependent network of relationships is formed.

Systemic model of youth mentoring. The interdependent network of the youth-mentoring process is especially represented in the systemic model of youth mentoring (Keller, 2005b) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

A Systemic Model of Youth Mentoring (Keller, 2005b)



This model complements Rhodes's (2005); rather than concentrating on youth outcomes, it focuses on the role that relationships play in mediating and moderating the mentoring process. As such, this model focuses on the dynamics that occur between child, parent, mentor, and caseworker, all set within the agency rules and culture. Elaborated from family-systems theory, the systemic model of youth mentoring maintains that the mentor-child relationship should be holistically assessed because the quality of one relationship may influence, and be influenced by, the quality of another relationship. For instance, behaviour acquired in one setting may be transferred over to other settings with other people. As well, a child satisfied with his or her relationship with his mentor may develop a more positive disposition with his or her parent, eventually leading to a higher quality parent-child relationship. Likewise, exchanges between mentors and parents, mentors and caseworkers, and parents and caseworkers may strengthen or weaken the mentee-mentor relationship. In such a manner, although the child is the focus of the intervention, other parties involved may affect, and be affected by, the mentoring relationship. Thus, it is essential to examine the roles and relationships between all participants involved in the mentoring match, as well as explore the impacts of the mentoring process on each.

Mentees

Like mentors, mentees can come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Potential mentees may be encouraged to participate by their parents, their schools, their local authorities, or be self-referred (Dondero, 1997). Many mentoring programmes have been created to help youth deal with specific situations or contexts, such as teenage motherhood (Blinn-Pike, 2005), children of inmates (Goode & Smith, 2005), and children of single-parents (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). In these cases, both the suitable population of children and adolescents and the pool of appropriate mentors are limited (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). A larger body of literature exists with

regard to the impacts of mentoring on mentees; a summary of these impacts follows.

Impacts of natural (nonformal) mentoring on mentees. A limited number of studies have examined nonformal mentoring. In a large-scale study of youth, 52 percent reported having a natural mentor (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Those with natural mentors were less likely to smoke marijuana or be involved in nonviolent delinquency, and had more positive attitudes toward school than those without a natural mentor. However, the presence of a natural mentor had no effect on anxiety or depression in youth. Another sizeable study of natural mentoring relationships in the United States (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005) reported that youth with nonfamilial mentors had more favourable outcomes than youth with familial mentors in the areas of education or work, problem behaviours, and physical health, but not psychological well-being. At the same time, youth from this sample group who reported high levels of closeness with their mentors also reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Therefore, it appears that familial and nonfamilial mentors, while being a generally positive presence in a young person's life, may promote different competencies to varying extents.

Impacts of planned (formal) mentoring on mentees.

Meta-analyses. In a meta-analysis evaluating the effects of youth mentoring programmes in 55 studies from 1970 to 1998, researchers found evidence of only a modest or small benefit of programme participation for the average youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). They found generally positive outcomes in the emotional-psychological, problem and high-risk behaviour, social competence, academic-educational, and career-employment areas most often targeted by youth mentoring programmes. Although positive, these effect sizes were modest, and considered small by norms generally used in meta-analyses, and noticeably smaller than effect sizes described for health, educational, and behavioural interventions used by

professionals (DuBois et al., 2002). However, DuBois et al. (2002) also found that the effectiveness of programmes reaching target goals was significantly increased when they employed empirically-based and theoretically-based best practices and when high quality, lengthy relationships were formed between mentors and protégés. Recommended best practices for mentoring programmes included in-depth screening of potential mentors, caseworker monitoring of matches, regular contact between caseworker, mentor, and mentee, and involvement and validation of parents by caseworkers (Furano, Roaf, Styles, & Branch, 1993; Sipe, 1996). Furthermore, the largest positive effect sizes were found with best practices-abiding programmes that mentored at-risk youth, while poorly implemented programmes appeared to have adverse effects on this same population of youth.

A follow-up meta-analysis of youth mentoring programme impacts, spanning from 1999 to 2010, included another 73 independent evaluations (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). Findings generally supported a modest effect of programmatic goals in helping to improve outcomes across behavioural, social, emotional, and academic domains, as well as helping to simultaneously improve outcomes in two or more areas. The study also examined moderating factors that were related to the effectiveness of programs, and found significant relationships with mentee and mentor characteristics, matching criteria, and programmatic support. More specifically, programs demonstrated high levels of effectiveness when they were oriented toward youth who had individual vulnerabilities, such as being academically at-risk, or who exhibited delinquent behaviour. Effectiveness was found to be greatest with youth who exhibited moderate, as opposed to severe or zero risk levels. High levels of effectiveness also were seen when the background and values of mentor volunteers aligned with the programme goals. Furthermore, matching based on mentors' and youths'

common interests was more effective than matching based on demographic characteristics. Finally, the benefits of participating in the mentoring relationship were visible across developmental stages, from youth children to adolescence, and formats, such as individual, group, or inter-generational mentoring. When follow-up effect sizes were examined between 6 months to 4 years post-intervention, Dubois et al. (2011) found the positive effects of having participated in a mentoring programme had endured.

The DuBois, Holloway, et al. (2002) and the DuBois et al. (2011) meta-analyses both provided general support for the efficacy of youth mentoring programmes, and pointed towards a broad applicability of mentoring contexts. However, another meta-analysis conducted by Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, and DuBois (2008) that was much larger in scope, in that it covered three major areas of mentoring research—youth, academic, and workplace—revealed small effect sizes, the smallest being youth mentoring relationships as opposed to academic and workplace.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America: Traditional formal mentoring. The most comprehensive prospective evaluation of a formal mentoring program was carried out within the traditional mentoring program of BBBS of America. Mentoring programmes may, but not necessarily, have positive emotional, behavioural, and academic impacts on development (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). More specifically, youth in relationships that lasted for one year or more were less likely to begin using drugs and alcohol, less likely to hit others, showed improved attitudes toward school, had better grades and attendance, and reported better relations with peers and family members compared to their counterparts on the waiting list. However, the normative trend for the outcomes measured was negative. Thus, having a mentor slowed down the negative trends somewhat but did not reverse them. Furthermore, at a six-month follow-up, most of these gains were no longer statistically

significant. With regard to the moderating effect of time, progressively fewer impacts emerged among youth who were in relationships that terminated between six months and a year, and some negative effects emerged in youth whose relationship terminated between three and six months (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). These latter children experienced significant declines in their global self-worth and their perceived scholastic competence, and significant increases in their alcohol intake. Furthermore, it remains unknown whether the reported positive impacts of participating in the mentoring relationship were maintained over time.

Although the results of the BBBS of America study (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tierney et al., 2000; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002) are cautiously optimistic, parents of children participating in formal mentoring programmes felt that their children improved with regard to attitudes and behaviours (Frecknall & Luks, 1992). DuBois, Holloway et al. (2002) speculated that the discrepancy between the positive reports of youth outcomes in certain studies, in comparison to the modest effects found in the meta-analysis, were due to the application of best practices and high level of structure involved in the mentoring relationship, particularly with regard to the studies that involve at-risk youth (Keating, Tomishima, Foster, & Alessandrini, 2002).

School-based mentoring. Results of school-based mentoring vary largely, and are likely a reflection of the diversity of programme goals, lengths, and participants. A large-scale random-assignment impact study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's school-based mentoring programme showed that, at the end of the academic year, children who had been mentored fared better academically, had more positive perceptions of their own academic abilities, and were more likely to report having a significant adult in their lives, as compared to nonmentored children (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011). Nevertheless, mentored

children did not differ from their control group counterparts with respect to improvements in classroom effort, global self-worth, relationships with parents, teachers, or peers, and in rates of problematic behaviours. Furthermore, the academic gains made by mentored children during the school year were not sustained into their second year. Another, smaller-scale study evaluating a single-semester mentoring program found no significant benefits in terms of school and teacher connectedness, and a negative effect on reading scores (McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011).

Previous studies found that in-school mentoring increased peer social network, social skills, positive classroom behaviour, school liking, and decreased numbers of visits to the principal's office for mentored children (Herrera, 2004). As well, youth involved in school-based mentoring reported increases in their sense of school membership, community connectedness, goal-setting, and academic performance, and the trend was even stronger for those scoring low on these measures at baseline (Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Waris, & Wise, 2005).

Mentors

Mentors are key participants in the youth-mentoring process. Without their willingness to volunteer and take on the role, mentoring programmes would not exist. Thankfully for these programmes, a majority of North Americans hold the belief that supportive relationships between youth and adults, whether established via programmes or through more informal connections, represent assets vital for positive youth development (Scales, 2003). Models of volunteerism generally focus on three central features: individual attributes of volunteers, their motivations, and the context of the commitment (Keller, 2007). Many adults are attracted to the idea of mentoring because they can think of a person who served as a mentor and guide for them in their youth, and are motivated to pass on part of what they received (Rhodes, 2002). As well, those who feel powerless against many of today's complex issues believe that mentoring may

have a positive influence in shaping a younger generation (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992, 2004).

Mentors may come from a variety of backgrounds, ages, ethnic groups, religions, and possess varying degrees of education (Grossman & Furano, 2002). For instance, senior citizens may be outstanding mentors because they have abundant life experiences and time to devote to a mentee (Dondero, 1997). Similarly, business people may also be terrific mentors by inspiring a young person to work toward educational and career goals (M. A. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005). Regardless of his or her background, a mentor needs to be confident in who he or she is as a person and be open to forming a close relationship with someone who may have a differing value system (Dondero, 1997). For instance, mentors who rate themselves as effective prior to the start of relationships tend to have greater amounts of mentor-youth contact, as well as more positive experiences in the mentoring relationship (Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Pavinelli, 2002).

Impacts on mentors. Little is known concerning the impacts of participating in the mentoring process on mentors. However, it has been suggested that personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment are acquired during the mentoring process (Dondero, 1997). Senior citizens have paradoxically reported positive emotions and feelings of frustration stemming from their experiences as mentors, but have also described the mentoring relationships as reinforcing meaning in their lives (Larkin, Sadler, & Mahler, 2005). As well, mentors reported enhanced self-esteem and enjoyment at a chance to pass on skills and knowledge developed over a lifetime (Dondero, 1997; Freedman, 1988).

In a qualitative study that explored the impacts of a variety of informal youth mentoring relationships, mentors expressed having positive experiences of being identified as a mentor and

of participating in the mentoring process (Philip & Hendry, 2000). Mentors interpreted their gains from the relationship as a form of cultural capital, by helping them to make sense of their own past experiences, gaining insight into the realities of today's youth, providing an opportunity to develop alternative kinds of relationships than they normally would, and by developing competence in exceptional relational skills. Although some mentors spoke positively about the role they played of mediator in helping children and parents communicate while acknowledging the dilemmas it could pose, other mentors felt more confident for future dealings with their adolescent children.

Given that evaluations of mentoring programmes have identified the benefits to the mentors as a major element of successful relationships (Styles & Morrow, 1992), knowing and understanding how, and in which ways, mentors are affected by the relationships is crucial.

Parents of Mentored Youth

Impacts on parents. Parents are an essential, yet overlooked, participant in youth mentoring relationships (Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, & Lewis, 2011). Keller's (2005) systemic model of youth mentoring clearly situates familial and organisational contexts as being directly linked to the child-mentor relationship, yet parental perspectives have largely been absent from the literature. Furthermore, Keller's model suggested that the links between children, mentors, parents, and caseworkers are bidirectional, which implies that there can be impacts on all participants in the process. However, apparently only one study has reported effects of youth mentoring relationships on parents themselves; mothers reported increases in psychological wellness over mothers of children on a waiting list to be matched with a mentor (Campbell & O'Neill, 1985). Perhaps having a mentor leads to an increase in supportive social networks for parents, and this in turn may help reduce the pressure on parent-child relationships

(S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

Relationships in the Youth Mentoring Process

Children in the youth mentoring process. The impacts of participating in mentoring relationships have been the main focus of researchers, and an exploration of the relationship processes from the child's perspective have only been explored as of late. Liang, Spencer, Brogan, and Corral (2008) examined themes present in natural mentoring relationships across three developmental age groups—students in middle school, high school, and college. They found that three main themes emerged across all groups. The first was the importance of spending time with their mentor and engaging in shared activities, which in turn, provided an opportunity to bond and share. The second theme, trust and fidelity, enabled mentees to feel that their mentors were people they could count on. The third theme, role modelling and identification, addressed mentees' desire to emulate the qualities they perceived in their mentors. Two additional themes, balancing connection and autonomy, and empowerment, were present across all three groups, though varied according to age. High school and college students valued a nondirective and nonjudgmental approach from mentors that encouraged autonomy—which distinguished mentors from other adults, while simultaneously desiring approval and validation in their choices. Similarly, these two older age groups of students underscored the importance of mutuality, whereas younger middle-schoolers perceived themselves as recipients in the relationship. Within the second theme, empowerment, middle-schoolers felt empowered through advice, behavioural role modelling, and encouragement. In contrast, high school and college students felt valued by their mentors. They explained that mentors helped to instill confidence in them through skill development, as well as encouraged educational goals by providing support, information, and guidance at the right moments.

Another qualitative study of young adults who had been in foster care identified factors that led to the formation, quality, and duration of mentoring relationships, the vast majority of which were nonformal (Ahrens, DuBois, Garrison, Spencer, Richardson, & Lozano, 2011). Several barriers to initially forming a mentoring relationship emerged: fear of emotional risk or of indebtedness to the mentors, and that the mentors would fail them, as well as being pushed to bond too quickly with the mentors and being resistant to a mentor's directive advice. An additional barrier was that some mentors lacked understanding of the youth's culture or background. Inversely, several characteristics of mentors that facilitated rapport emerged, such as patience and persistence, displays of affection, sharing personal experiences, genuinely caring for the youth, and respecting the youth's past experiences. A mentee's perceived similarities to his or her mentor, and the mentor's supportive presence at a time when the mentee was particularly vulnerable, were two final factors that helped to support the relationship. With respect to challenges, youth mentioned logistical barriers and the fear of not living up to mentor expectations. Facilitators that helped to maintain the relationship were having regular contact through phone calls and activities, helping the youth to understand what to expect, and being responsive to the youths' needs. Youth also gave examples of how the relationships helped in their social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development, as a result of their mentors providing emotional support, guidance in decision-making, and serving as a role model and parental figure.

Another qualitative study explored the process of mentoring with vulnerable youth people (Philip, 2008), and found similar contributors to relationship maintenance, such as mentors accepting the mentee as they were, valuing them, and sharing personal experiences.

Mentors in the youth-mentoring process. Research has more recently shed light on mentors' experiences in the youth-mentoring process, their roles, and factors that lead to mentor

satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. In their recent survey, Martin and Sifers (2012) found that training and confidence were associated with higher levels of mentor satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. Mentors also reported specific challenges with regard to the mentoring relationship. Lack of time and difficulty to schedule meetings with their mentees was the greatest challenge for mentors, followed by difficulties in communication, the mentor-parent relationship, important changes in the mentee's life, difficulty finding affordable activities, the mentee having social, behavioural, or psychological problems, and finally, boundary issues.

A second study that had children, parents, and mentors subjectively rate their views on the match using a Likert scale found that all participants evaluated the match very highly (Pedersen, Woolum, Gagne, & Coleman, 2009). However, the mentors consistently rated the impact of the program on the child, the impact on the program on the mentor, the mentor-child relationship, and the mentor-parent relationship lower than did the parents or children. It was not clearly indicated if the responses came from intact child-mentor-parent triads, or if participants came from differing triads, because participant numbers per group varied substantially.

Parents in the youth mentoring process. The focus of mentoring research has remained almost exclusively on mentees, and to a lesser extent, on mentors. As a result, very little is known about the families of mentored youth, except in the cases where environmental risk is a requirement for participation in a specific mentoring programme.

The limited research data on parental role is reflective of the present stance on best practices for formal youth-mentoring relationships, which encourages supportive, but not active participation from parents (Miller, 2007). Regardless of best practices, both Rhodes's (2005) and Keller's (2005) models demonstrated that parents are an influential factor in mentee outcomes. For instance, outcomes of mentoring relationships, particularly pertaining to school

outlook and performance, are mediated by youths' perception of improved relations with parents (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). As well, long lasting mentoring relationships reduce substance use indirectly through improvements in adolescents' self-perceptions and parental relationship quality (Rhodes et al., 2000; Rhodes, Reddy, & Grossman, 2005). Thus, although a parent may not have a direct influence on the outcomes of their child's mentoring relationship, they certainly have an indirect influence on many areas of development, demonstrating the centrality of parents on child outcomes.

Recently, Spencer et al. (2011) qualitatively explored the role of parents in youth-mentoring relationships. Four major themes emerged from their interview data. First, parents had certain hopes and expectations for the child-mentor relationship and the mentor-parent relationship. Parent hoped the mentor would be a positive role model in the children's lives, as well as provide their children with opportunities and experiences that they were unable to provide to their children. Some parents also hoped to have, at a minimum, open and consistent communication with the mentors, whereas others hoped to develop a friendly or familial relationship. When the mentor-parent relationship closeness matched parental expectations, parents served a collaborative role in the child-mentor relationship. However, when expectations of closeness were not matched, parents had to rely on their children's feedback and had an increased sense of dissatisfaction with the mentoring relationship. The second theme explored in the Spencer et al. (2011) study was trust. Parents experienced increased feelings of trust toward the mentors when they heard mentors commit themselves to the relationship, sensed that mentors genuinely liked their children, and felt respected as parents. The third theme was related to roles within the mentoring relationship. Parents tended to take one, or simultaneously, two, of three role types: collaborator with the mentor, coach to the mentor, or mediator between the child and

mentor. The fourth and final theme was cultural and socioeconomic diversity. Although parents felt more positively toward same-race matches, some chose not to specify this as a criterion because the wait time for their children to match could have been significantly longer. At the same time, some parents also spoke of the richness of two people sharing cultural knowledge and traditions with each other. Parents also saw advantages of their children being matched with mentors from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in the hopes that their children would be exposed to greater opportunities and experiences. On the flipside, some parents felt conflicted and indebted to the mentors when mentors spent money on their children that they could not pay back, and dealt with the discomfort in silence.

The Dyadic Child-Mentor Relationship Process

Only one known study to date has qualitatively explored the mentoring process between mentees and mentors. Spencer (2006) explored four relational processes with mentees and mentors who had been matched for at least one year: authenticity, empathy, collaboration, and companionship. Mentor authenticity was a major component that allowed mentees to place trust in their mentors over time. Mentors, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of responding in an authentic manner, while at the same time, remaining aware of the mentee's needs and reactions. The second process, empathy, was revealed by mentors in many ways. Mentors perceived their protégés in a positive light, even in the midst of strife, and focussed on their overall development. This healthy outlook was, in turn, felt by mentees, who thrived on the positive attention they received from mentors. Mentors also strove to show sensitivity to cultural differences in the mentees' family of origin so as not to drive a wedge between any combination of children, mentors, and parents. The third component, collaboration, evolved over time within the relationships, as a result of iterative communication between mentor and mentee. As the pair

came to know each other, mentors would ask about specific interests, skills, or capacities. Although mentees, at first, did not respond positively to certain inquiries, with time, they gradually began to open themselves to topics of discussion they had avoided. Through this collaborative process, some mentees began to adapt their perspectives, develop new skills, and approach problems in a different way. The final process, companionship, spoke to the deep feelings of attachment and connection youth had for the mentors and vice versa, which gave rise to a long-term outlook on the relationship.

Spencer's study was further examined for gender differences, and specific themes emerged from relationships between adolescent girls and adult women (Spencer & Liang, 2009), and between adolescent boys and adult men (Spencer, 2007a). Adolescent boys stressed the importance of having a positive relationship with a male mentor and that the relationship had helped them to learn new ways of dealing with their anger. The mentors emphasised that they were motivated to be involved and emotionally connected male role models, and strove to be exemplars of positive forms of masculinity. They also wanted to provide a safe place for their mentees to be vulnerable and support them emotionally. However, balancing emotional connectivity and their own sense of masculinity was challenging for some mentors. Both children and male mentors described having built close and enduring emotional connections with one another. An examination of mentoring relationships between adolescent girls and adult women (Spencer & Liang, 2009), on the other hand, revealed three interrelated relational processes that were perceived by both mentee and mentor to support the girls' positive development: engaged and authentic emotional support, development of new skills and confidence through collaborations, and fun, enjoyable companionship.

The Triadic Child-Mentor-Parent Relationship Process

Although the child-mentor-parent triad, along with the caseworker, constitute the basis for Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring, the vast majority of research has been drawn from a developmental framework, and as a result, has neglected the contextual aspects of protégés (Philip & Hendry, 2000). The one study that included all three participants was limited in its scope, in that participants had rated their satisfaction of the match on a seven-point Likert scale (Pedersen et al., 2009). The link between the bidirectional processes between two participants that may, in turn, affect a third participant and vice versa, is clearly evident through quantitative studies that have examined factors that influence certain match processes and outcomes. For example, in a study of college students, Larose, Tarabulsy, Harvey, Guay, Deschênes, Cyrenne, and Garceau (2012) found that academic mentoring improved mentee perception of parental and teacher educational involvement. However, the impact of academic mentoring on perceived parental involvement was found only amongst students who reported a secure relationship with their parents. No qualitative exploration of child-mentor-parent triads was found.

Challenges of the Mentoring Process

Although many studies show moderate improvement in mentee outcomes (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002), many challenges exist in the mentoring process (Rhodes, 2002). It is especially important to address these issues since negative experiences with mentoring may aggravate a mentee's difficulties rather than leaving the difficulties unaffected (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002). Challenges vary enormously, and range from contextual and concrete organisational variables to relational variables. Poorly implemented programmes and mediocre mentor-mentee relationship quality leading to mentor dropout are two major interconnected challenges to successful mentoring relationships (Coyne, Duffy, & Wandersman, 2005; DuBois

et al., 2002). Two main elements have been found to contribute to low quality mentoring relationships. First, a low frequency of contact limits learning opportunities and meaningful exchanges between mentor and mentee (Rhodes, 2002, 2005). Second, low levels of mutuality, trust, and empathy are unlikely to positively impact either mentor or mentee (Rhodes, 2005). Both low frequency of contact and minimal feelings of closeness between mentor and mentee tend to lead to short term mentoring relationships with adverse or few positive outcomes (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Supporting this finding, mentors involved in high quality long-term relationships have a tendency to perceive greater benefits for youth (DuBois & Neville, 1997).

Another challenge of the mentoring process is indirect, albeit of great importance: parental support, involvement, and commitment to the mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2002). Without necessarily knowing, parents may mediate the quality of their child's mentoring relationship. This is reflected in both Rhodes's (2005) multidimensional model and Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring. Thus, although a supportive parent may help the relationship along, an unsupportive parent may indirectly prevent any of the supposed outcomes from occurring (Keller, 2005b). Parents may not be supportive of the relationship because they feel that the mentor will replace their own role as a parent, while others may have other issues in their own lives that they have to deal with before committing to another endeavour (Rhodes, 2002). However, mentors generally complement rather than substitute for parents (Rhodes et al., 2000). An important challenge is thus for parents to remain involved and feel respected throughout the mentoring process.

In a qualitative study of failed youth-mentoring relationships (Spencer, 2007b), both mentors and protégés explored reasons for the relationship's demise. Several children and

mentors described being suddenly abandoned by the other, without warning. A major contributor to match demise was a discrepancy between mentors' initial objectives for wanting to volunteer and the realities of their actual experiences, as well as their inability to tolerate the discrepancy. For instance, some mentors were overwhelmed by their mentees' neediness, and others felt ill-equipped to deal with the difficult life contexts their mentees were faced with. Another important factor in relationship dissolution was that mentors presented with deficient relational skills. Some mentors did not know how to interact with children, while other mentors had unrealistic expectations of their mentees, given their developmental level. For instance, mentors did not feel sufficiently appreciated by their mentees because they did not call them. Other mentors were unable to bridge cultural differences, as misunderstandings and frustrations seemed to stem from their unconscious biases and prejudicial stereotypes. Similarly, some mentors' misunderstanding of socioeconomic differences placed a strain on their relationships. The final two challenges reported by mentors were family interference and inadequate agency support.

Motivation and Negotiating Change

When mentoring relationships are cut short, often by mentors themselves, two fundamental questions regarding the effortful, sustained, and nonremunerative nature of volunteering are raised (Clary & Snyder, 1999): Why do people decide to engage in volunteer activities, and why do some people continue to serve for years while others quit after only a couple of months? Very little is known about the specific reasons for volunteering as a mentor and the factors that mediate mentor motivation, although the discrepancy between mentors' ideal versus actual roles has been shown to be a significant predictor of mentors' expressed intention to remain in the relationship (Madia & Lutz, 2004). Over time, the mentor and mentee may need

to modify their relationship as a result of specific events or circumstances in either of their lives. The way in which the mentoring relationship is affected is contingent on many elements, such as the pair's ability and willingness to adapt and negotiate their relationship to the new context in which they find themselves (Keller, 2005a). Unfortunately, the processes of negotiating change and terminating youth-mentoring relationships has been given little consideration in the light of important consequences of such decisions.

Relationship Style

Mentoring relationship style has been shown to affect relationship quality (Sipe, 1996). A volunteer's approach to the mentoring relationship is critical in determining the type of relationship that develops.

Developmental mentoring. A mentor who takes a more developmental style will hold expectations that vary over time in relation to their perception of their mentee's needs (Morrow & Styles, 1995). Developmental mentors involve the youth in decision-making. They are consistent and dependable in the child's life and offer reassurance and kindness. They recognise that the relationship may be fairly one-sided for some time and take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive. They pay attention to the youth's need for fun. In addition, they respect the youth's viewpoint, family, and culture (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992; Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004).

Prescriptive mentoring. A mentor who has a prescriptive style, on the other hand, views as primary his or her goals for the match rather than the mentee's (Morrow & Styles, 1995). Prescriptive mentors have difficulty meeting with the mentee on a regular and consistent basis and expect an equal role in initiating contact. They also attempt to transform or reform the youth early on and take a parental or authoritative role. They emphasise behavioural changes

more than development of mutual trust and respect. They do not understand the youth's reluctance to trust them and ask the youth to disclose personal information. They attempt to instill a set of values that are different from those at home. As well, they often ignore programme staff recommendations about how to respond to difficulties (Sipe, 1996; Styles & Morrow, 1992). In a study of BBBS matches, only one third of the prescriptive matches were continuing to meet after nine months, compared to 90 percent of the developmental matches, confirming the importance of relationship style on match length (Morrow & Styles, 1995; Sipe, 1996). Thus, a key challenge is how to ensure volunteers take a developmental approach to the relationship.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity, such as differences in race, sex, age, and socioeconomic status between mentor and mentee, has also been shown to play a role in mentoring outcomes (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Some cultural groups such as First Nations Canadians (Bisanz, Cardinal, da Costa, Gibson, Klinck, & Woodard, 2003; Klinck, Cardinal, Edwards, Gibson, Bisanz, & da Costa, 2005) feel that specific practices should be maintained by mentors and caseworkers in order to successfully preserve mentoring relationships with their youth. Arguments for and against matching mentors and mentees based on shared backgrounds have often been based on beliefs rather than research; in fact, few studies have focused on the roles that mentor and youth backgrounds play in moulding the shape and outcomes of the relationship (Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002). Consequently, fundamental questions concerning the impacts of forming matches based on shared (and nonshared) backgrounds remain unanswered.

In the few studies that have looked at the influence of cultural diversity on mentoring matches, results are variable (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). The studies that do exist concentrate

mainly on one aspect of diversity—ethnicity matching. Results from a BBBS study (Rhodes et al., 2002) indicated that minority adolescents in cross-race matches were less likely to report beginning to drink alcohol. Minority boys in cross-race matches reported larger decrements in scholastic competence and self-worth than did minority boys in same-race matches.

Furthermore, minority girls in cross-race matches reported larger decrements in school value and self-worth than did minority girls in same-race matches. Although these results are indicative of better outcomes in same-race matches, qualitative reports of youth and caseworkers differ minimally for both types of matches (Rhodes et al., 2002). Moreover, results of these studies are correlational in nature. Hence, they do not inform us about causal relationships between ethnic matching or non-matching and the reported behaviours. Finally, Rhodes et al. (2002) hypothesised that social distance, in terms of large gulfs in socioeconomic status, may actually be more of a challenge than are issues of race or ethnicity, especially when it causes the mentor to misinterpret the mentee's difficulties, needs, and thoughts.

Critique of the Existing Literature

Although the literature concerning youth mentoring is continually growing, the interrelationship between theory, research, and practice is lacking in many ways (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Considerably more research is required in order for the three areas to inform and facilitate each other's growth.

Two theoretical models of youth mentoring were explored in this literature review. Rhodes's (2005) developmental model of youth mentoring focused primarily on child outcomes, while recognising the impact of moderators and mediators on the relationship process. However, the model does not fully address the possible impacts the mentoring process has on mentors or parents. Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring, on the other hand, focused on the

bidirectionality of processes between the people involved in the mentoring relationship, that is, mentor, mentee, parent, and caseworker. However, Keller's model does not account for specific factors that may influence outcomes, nor does it examine how changes in individual outcomes may, inversely, impact the system. Thus, at present, no comprehensive theoretical model of youth mentoring exists that examines the impacts of the relationship within the system in which it exists.

Most mentoring studies have examined mentee outcomes in a one-dimensional self-report evaluation (Lucas & Liabo, 2003), with some exceptions that used parental reports (Frecknall & Luks, 1992), as opposed to a multidimensional assessment using mentee, parent, and mentor reports. Although valuable information has been gained from these studies, concerns are raised about the sole reliance on self-report data, as mentees may feel social pressure to give desirable answers at follow-up, thus possibly accounting in part for the beneficial effects of mentoring (Lucas & Liabo, 2003). A multidimensional assessment of outcomes would enable researchers to determine convergences and divergences in perspectives on outcomes. For instance, are parental views of mentee outcomes different than those of the mentors? Similarly, parents and mentors may have noticed changes in the mentee that the latter may not necessarily have noticed. Additionally, little qualitative data exists with regard to mentee, mentor, and parent perspectives regarding mentee outcomes, which would enable researchers to better interpret findings in the literature.

Although the mentor-mentee relationship is bidirectional in nature, few studies have examined outcomes in mentors. The studies that are concerned with mentors, although valuable to the advancement of the literature on youth mentoring, are limited in scope in that they have examined mentor demographics, such as level of education, marital status, and socioeconomic

status (Grossman & Furano, 2002), or restrict themselves to specific age groups, such as older adults (Larkin et al., 2005). Other studies have also examined mentor and mentee characteristics in relation to relationship duration (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), and factors such as agency support and training on mentor satisfaction (Martin & Sifers, 2012). Only one set of qualitative studies was found that included both protégés and mentors (Spencer, 2006; Spencer, 2007a; Spencer & Liang, 2009), though it focussed more on relational processes rather than on impacts. The other study focussed on factors leading to the demise of mentoring relationships in already defunct relationships (Spencer, 2007b). However, no studies have qualitatively explored mentors' perceived impacts on themselves as a result of participating in a formal mentoring program, all the while exploring their perception of different processes in the relationship that mediates relationship success and motivation to continue participating within organisational constructs. This knowledge is especially important because more in-depth, qualitative knowledge concerning specific factors that impact mentors leading to an increase or a decrease in mentor motivation could help practitioners improve programme practices and increase mentor retention rates. This specific gap in the literature was highlighted at the National Research Summit on Mentoring, when key scholars pointed to several priority areas for strengthening the field's knowledge base (Rhodes & DuBois, 2004). One of the priority areas included understanding how mentoring relationships work, and investigating relationship processes from both the mentors' and mentees' perspectives.

Furthermore, even less is known about the parents of mentees and the impacts of mentoring on family members and on family dynamics. Only one study, to the best of my knowledge, has been published concerning social adjustment on single-mothers of mentees (Campbell & O'Neill, 1985), while another has examined the role of parents in the youth

mentoring process (Spencer et al., 2011). Given that past research has shown the importance of parents in the mentoring process, it is surprising that such little research has been conducted to examine this issue.

Finally, within the context of the youth mentoring relationship, only subsets of combinations of all participants involved have been explored. To date, no qualitative studies have investigated the processes of formal mentoring relationship using matched triads.

Rationale for the Study

Against this backdrop the following dissertation research has unfolded. The general goal of this qualitative research is twofold. The first objective was to qualitatively explore the relationships between children, mentors, and parents participating in a formal, traditional mentoring programme. The second objective was to qualitatively explore the impacts of participation in a formal mentoring programme on the educational, social, emotional, identity, and behavioural development of children from single-parent homes from child, mentor, and parent perspectives, as well as to explore impacts on parents and volunteer mentors. The framework of this study and its research questions were based on two theoretical models of mentoring—Rhodes's (2005) multidimensional youth-mentoring model and Keller's (2005b) family systems-based youth-mentoring model. This research is unique in that it integrates the two models in order to achieve a holistic perspective of the outcomes of and the relationships between all the people involved in the mentoring relationship. This research aims to answer one of the key areas for future research pointed out by key scholars (Rhodes & DuBois, 2004), that is, understanding how mentoring relationships work, and investigating relationship processes from both the mentors' and mentees' perspectives, while additionally including parental perspective in order to take into account the contextual aspects of young people's lives.

In addition to the two main goals of this research, important differences with regard to programme and participant diversity were noted between the main impact study of Big Brothers Big Sisters organisations (Grossman & Tierney, 1998) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal, Canada, where the present study took place. Few studies on youth mentoring have been conducted in Canada, and those that have been conducted do not have an appropriate control group that allows comparison of data (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, 2000). Moreover, although the findings from mentoring studies in the United States show promise, results are not necessarily applicable to Canada, and particularly the province of Quebec, because aspects of population demographics and culture may differentially influence mentoring outcomes (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). For instance, at BBBS of Montreal, approximately 20 percent of youth are of minority status, of which about half are Middle Eastern or francophone North African (C. l'Heureux, personal communication, August 17, 2005). In the study of BBBS of America, on the other hand, 57 percent of youths were members of a minority group, 71 percent of which were African American and 18 percent Hispanic (Grossman & Tierney, 1998).

Another main difference that may affect outcome is the length of the pairings. The average total length of pairings at the time of assessment was 11.4 months in the American BBBS study (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). At the follow up interview, approximately 40 percent of the matches were no longer meeting; these pairs had met, on average, for a total of nine months. Caseworkers in Montreal, on the other hand, report an average dyad length of three to four years (C. l'Heureux, personal communication, August 17, 2005). These differences in dyad duration may be reflected through differences in organisational structure and functioning, as well as in the specific mandates of each programme offered by BBBS. For instance, perhaps differences exist with regard to volunteer selection criteria, dyad matching, and case-worker

follow-up and evaluation. At BBBS of Montreal, for example, if potential volunteers are unable to fulfill the long term requirement to become a Big Brother or a Big Sister, they are then referred to the less time-demanding, nine-month, school-based Prometheus Project Mentoring programme, also run by BBBS of Montreal (C. l'Heureux, personal communication, August 17, 2005). Perhaps this is not the case in other BBBS entities. Another difference exists with respect to meeting frequency; in Montreal, meetings must take place at least every two weeks, but in the American BBBS study most agencies required weekly visits (Tierney et al., 2000)

Differences with respect to culture, match length and frequency of meetings, among others, lead one to wonder about match outcomes and processes, and if and how some cultural and programmatic differences may act as obstacles while others may be supportive to a successful match. Although not a focal point of this study, these differences were kept in mind in order to remain aware of the role that culture plays in interpersonal relationships, and how personal values shape interpretations and experiences. The following chapter describes the objectives and the methodology of this study.

Chapter 2: The Present Study

The Impact of Youth Mentoring Relationships on Children, Mentors, and Parents

This dissertation qualitatively explored: (a) the relationships among children, mentors, and parents participating in a formal, traditional Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programme, and (b) the perceived impact of participating a formal, traditional Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programme on protégé development, as well as the perceived impact on parents and volunteer mentors. These two global objectives were explored using child, mentor, and parent perspectives. The study of the relationships and perceived impact was based on a thematic analysis of transcripts from in-depth, semistructured interviews conducted with a purposeful sample of matched child-mentor-parent triads, whose relationships had been established for one or more years.

The semistructured interviews were facilitated by the use of an interview guide that was based on the areas highlighted by the two theoretical models on which this research was based, namely Rhodes's (2005) developmental model of youth mentoring and Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring. The interview guide

provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus, the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. . . . Other topics might still emerge during the interview, topics of importance to the respondent that are not listed explicitly on the guide. (Patton, 2002, p. 343-344)

Purposeful sampling in qualitative research focusses on “selecting information-rich cases whose

study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Purpose Statement

The research was designed as a qualitative multiple-case study based in the emergent field of youth mentoring. The framework of this study and its research questions were based on two theoretical models of mentoring—Rhodes’s (2005) developmental youth-mentoring model and Keller’s (2005b) systems-based youth-mentoring model. In combining these two models, the present research explored how relationships and outcomes of the mentoring process were viewed by children, mentors, and parents. Participants reflected on their experiences of the mentoring process, beginning with their motivations for wanting to participate, perceived impact on children and themselves, and the evolution of the relationships among participants in the triad.

I hope that this work will help elucidate the processes and impacts of the mentoring relationship that are not yet fully understood. Holistic knowledge of how all parties are affected could help policy-makers and practitioners more effectively serve children, mentors, and parents so that each may achieve optimal personal benefit from the mentoring relationship.

Rationale for the General Methodology

A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study because its key characteristics aligned with those described by Cresswell (2007, p. 38):

Natural setting. The research was conducted at participants’ location of choice. For the vast majority of participants, this occurred in their most natural of settings, their homes. Some individuals chose other natural field settings, such as their workplace or at BBBS offices with which they were familiar and comfortable. A minority of participants requested to have the interviews in an office at McGill University.

Researcher as key instrument. I gathered the information in this study through

interviews specifically elaborated for this process.

Multiple data sources. Multiple forms of data were gathered, in the form of observations, interviews, journal keeping, and looking at pictures and videos shared by participants. I then reviewed all the data in order to make sense of them and organise the information into themes.

Inductive data analysis. Categories and themes were built from the “bottom-up” in that they emerged from an in-depth examination of the data. A back-and-forth, iterative process of organising the data was undertaken. Thus, although the interview guide was based on theory, instead of organising the data into a pre-existing framework, the data were organised into categories as they emerged from the process.

Participants’ meanings. Consistent with the inductive process, I took the participants’ meanings into account, instead of attributing meaning based on prior research.

Holistic account. I attempted to gain in-depth knowledge of the participants’ experiences in order to gain a holistic view of their complex interactions. Information was also obtained using multiple perspectives, namely, those of children, mentors, and parents.

Research Design

A multiple-case study design was used in this research. Case study research is a “qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 73). Furthermore, Yin (2009, p. 13) identified that the case study method has distinct advantages over other methods when the questions being asked focus on the “how” or “why,” when the focus of

the study is on a contemporary set of events or processes, and when the researcher has little or no influence over these events or processes. Finally, when a study contains more than a single case, a multiple-case design is called for. Yin (2009) argued that multiple-case designs may have distinct advantages in comparison to single-case designs, in that “the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust” (p. 53). Each case in this study consisted of a child-mentor-parent triad. There were 12 distinct cases in all, each with its own unique history and experience. Because each triad represented one case, and the present study satisfied all the above listed criteria, the multiple-case study design proved to be the best fit.

In a multiple-case study design, replication logic is used (Yin, 2009). This logic maintains that because each triad is distinct from the others, a variety of converging and contrasting results may emerge, from which cross-case conclusions can be derived. Although standard general practice in qualitative inquiry with respect to data analysis is to reduce “a volume of qualitative material and attempt to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2002, p. 453), it is important to mention that this study used an adaptation of standard practice. In addition to highlighting the consistencies that emerged across cases, some contrasting results were also considered. The rationale for this adaptive approach was that (a) children, parents, and mentors who served as study participants represented a diverse population, each with their unique histories, (b) the goal of this work was to explore the converging and diverging experiences of participants, and (c) diverging themes may be of clinical significance even though they are represented in a minority of cases. Indeed, with respect to cross-case synthesis, Yin (2009) supported the examinations of themes on a case-by-case basis following cross-case conclusions: “Now, the analysis can start to probe whether different groups of cases appear to

share some similarity and deserve to be considered instances of the same ‘type’ of general case. Such an observation can further lead to analyzing whether the arrayed case studies reflect subgroups or categories of general cases—raising the possibility of a typology of individual cases that can be highly insightful” (p. 160).

Validation in the Case Study Approach

Validation in qualitative research is an “attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 206). Throughout this research, several validation strategies were employed that Cresswell (2007, p. 207-209) focussed on. He recommended that qualitative researchers engage in at least two validations procedures in any given study. The present research used the following five validation procedures.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field. In developing the ideas for this research and designing the present study, the researcher spent an equivalent of at least 10 full days at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montreal. The researcher observed approximately 15 interviews of prospective mentors in order to gain the feel of the interview process of participants. The researcher also had at least four hour-long meetings with the director general in order to explore the research possibilities, and about two full-morning meetings with the clinical director in order to gain insight into the parents, children, and mentors that form their clientele. The researcher also spent two mornings with a caseworker going over the matching process and the steps that are required of participants before and during the match. The researcher also gained understanding of the evaluations meetings that support the matches once they have begun. It is through this engagement in the field that the decision was made to conduct qualitative, in-depth, semistructured interviews with potential participants. In order to

help build trust, the researcher met with potential parents participants prior to the actual interviews at a parenting workshop in order to answer questions. The researcher spoke on the phone and answered any questions with all other participants prior to meeting them.

Triangulation. Multiple sources of data concerning individual outcomes and relationship processes were collected to provide corroborating evidence in order to shed light on the themes that emerged. All participants were interviewed, and some showed pictures, objects, and videos to the interviewers.

Peer review process. The researcher and the interviewer of the children kept written accounts of the interviews, and debriefed each other following the interviews. They discussed their observations and feelings obtained through the interviews so that the researcher could self-reflect and better understand her outlook of the topic.

Member checking. In this process, the researcher “solicits participants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 208). In consideration of the busy and full lives of the single-parents and the mentors, some difficulty was associated with the usual practice of member checks. This issue was addressed in the interviews themselves, in that the interviewers repeated their understanding of the specific issues addressed to the participants in order to validate their understanding. This gave participants the chance to agree, correct, and specify the meaning they wanted to give to their words.

Transferability. The issue of transferability in this study was addressed through the purposeful sampling of participants and the inclusion of thick, rich descriptions of data.

Research Questions

Two broad research questions were explored through an individual, in-depth, semistructured interview with each participant. These were:

1. How are the relationships and the relationship processes among children, mentors, and parents participating in a formal, traditional mentoring programme perceived by the participants themselves?
2. What is the perceived impact of participation in a formal, traditional mentoring programme on mentee development, as well as on parents and volunteer mentors?

Procedure

Participants were recruited from the formal, traditional mentoring programme of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal. In order to participate in that specific programme, children must come from a single-parent family and have little to no contact with their other parent. Regardless of the sex of their parent, girls are matched with women mentors and boys are matched with men mentors. Mentors in this specific programme are encouraged to commit to a relationship with their mentee until the child reaches 18 years of age. If volunteers wish to mentor but are unable to commit to the traditional mentoring programme, they may then be referred to the in-school mentoring programme that spans the school year, or another programme that is a better fit with their availabilities.

During the conceptualisation and design phase of the study, I worked closely with the administrators and caseworkers of the organisation. I formally presented the research to the director and all the caseworkers at a meeting and answered their questions. I subsequently obtained permission from the administrators of BBBS of Greater Montreal to collect data from participants of the mentoring programme. I also obtained approval from the McGill Research Ethics Board. At the time they participated in this study, all participants were involved in a “successful” match, that is, a match lasting one or more years. As the primary interviewer, I was invited to recruit participants at one of the monthly parenting workshops that were given by Big

Brothers Big Sisters of Montreal to parents whose children had been matched, as well as to parents whose children were on the waiting list to be matched. The workshop facilitator introduced the interviewer, who then described the research project and what participation would entail. Interested parents then wrote their name and phone number on a sign-up sheet and were told that the interviewer would call them in order to give detailed information and schedule an appointment if they were still interested. Eight parents signed up (approximately half of the total number of parents present), and of these, five eventually agreed to be interviewed for the study. Interviews were also held with their children, who also assented to participate in the research project. Two of the five parents had two children participating in a BBBS match; hence, seven children were interviewed from this first recruitment method. The remaining parents and children were recruited by another method of recruitment. BBBS of Greater Montreal sent out an invitation to 15 families to participate in this study. The 15 families were chosen by having three caseworkers each select five triads from their caseloads that met the minimum one-year requirement and reflecting a wide range of participants. Five of the 15 parents who received this letter called the interviewer to indicate their interest in participating. Once parents and children consented to participate, BBBS of Greater Montreal sent each child's Big Brother or Big Sister a letter inviting them to participate. All 12 mentors agreed to participate. The instruments used during the data collection activities were (a) the semistructured questionnaire for the interviewer to use as a guide and (b) digital audio recordings of the interviews.

Interviews with all mothers and children were held in their homes. One father and his daughter chose to come to McGill University for the interview, explaining that she was curious to see what the university looked like. Depending on their preference, mentors were interviewed at their homes, BBBS of Greater Montreal offices, at their workplace, or at McGill University.

The author interviewed all parents and mentors. A doctoral student in clinical psychology with significant therapy and interview experience interviewed the children. All interviews were held individually; parents and children were interviewed simultaneously in different rooms, and mentors were interviewed on different dates. Before the interviews began, mentors and parents gave their consent to participate. Parents also gave their parental consent for their children to participate. Children also assented to participate at the time of the interview. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. In order to ensure confidentiality, all participants' names were changed, and numbered from "1" to "12," in the order that the families were interviewed. That is, a child-mentor-parent triad were identified as Child 1, Mentor 1, and Parent 1. All identifying information, such as the names of their neighborhoods, schools, or teachers, were omitted. All of the caseworkers that were named were identified as "Caseworker." The two parents who each had two children participating in the study were asked to reflect separately on each question for each child. Thus, two different sets of answers were obtained from those parents and their answers were considered separately. For the sake of clarity and in order to identify which triad these mothers were referring to, these two parents were identified twice. That, that is, Parents 1 and 2 are actually the same person, and Parents 3 and 4 are also the same person. The responses associated with Parent 1 specifically refer to the Child 1-Mentor 1 relationship, and the responses associated with Parent 2 specifically refer to the Child 2-Mentor 2 relationship. Great care was taken to include information only once and to attribute statements to the triad relationship that the parent was specifically referring to.

Criteria for the Selection of Participants

A purposeful sample of 12 triads was chosen. A purposeful sampling of participants was chosen because "they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and

central phenomenon in the study” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 125). According to caseworkers, the one-year mark is considered an important anniversary because participants have had the chance to experience a range of activities and relationship processes. Additionally, the national Big Brothers Big Sisters of America study found the greatest number of impacts on children who were in relationships lasting at least one year (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). For these reasons, these triads were chosen based on a minimal relationship match length of at least one year. The variety of child-parent participants, all matching on the sole common criteria of being single-parent families, documented diverse variations and identified important common patterns.

Participants

Participants consisted of 12 triads of mentors (Big Brothers or Big Sisters) ($n = 12$), children (Little Brothers or Little Sisters) ($n = 12$), and their parents ($n = 10$). Eight parents had one child enrolled in the programme and two parents had two children enrolled. Thus, including each child’s respective mentor, a total of 34 participants were interviewed for this study. The adult mentors (3 women and 9 men) ranged in age from 27 to 47, the participating children (3 girls and 9 boys) from 10 to 14 years, and their parents (9 mothers and 1 father) from approximately 35 to 45 years. The length of mentoring relationships between the mentors and the children at the time of the interviews ranged from 12 to 60 months. The average length for mentoring relationships was 31.9 months. The interviews were conducted in the language of participants’ choice; interviews for 11 of the triads were in French, and the interviews for one triad were conducted in English. According to the clinical director of the organisation, the demographics provided in Table 1 summarising the description of participants in this study was similar to the demographics of the majority of mentors, children, and parents that were enrolled

in the Big Brothers Big Sisters association. Table 1 summarises the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Description of Participants

Name	Age (Years)	Sex	Cultural Background	Match Length
Child 1	10	Female	French Canadian	24 months
Mentor 1	28	Female	French Canadian	
Parent 1	39	Female	French Canadian	
Child 2	14	Male	French Canadian	20 months
Mentor 2	47	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 2	39	Female	French Canadian	
Child 3	14	Male	Syrian Muslim	28 months
Mentor 3	32	Male	Syrian Christian	
Parent 3	40	Female	Syrian Muslim	
Child 4	13	Female	Syrian Muslim	49 months
Mentor 4	38	Female	French Canadian	
Parent 4	40	Female	Syrian Muslim	
Child 5	13	Male	French Canadian/Algerian Muslim	25 months
Mentor 5	27	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 5	38	Female	French Canadian/Algerian Muslim	
Child 6	13	Male	French Canadian	60 months
Mentor 6	34	Male	French Canadian	

Parent 6	38	Female	French Canadian	
Child 7	13	Male	French Canadian	31 months
Mentor 7	27	Male	French/ French Canadian	
Parent 7	40	Female	French Canadian	
Child 8	14	Male	French Canadian	30 months
Mentor 8	44	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 8	35	Female	French Canadian	
Child 9	13	Male	French Canadian	37 months
Mentor 9	37	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 9	35	Female	French Canadian	
Child 10	10	Male	French Canadian	27 months
Mentor 10	29	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 10	35	Female	French Canadian	
Child 11	13	Female	Inuit/English Canadian	12 months
Mentor 11	38	Female	Czech/English Canadian	
Parent 11	45	Male	French Canadian	
Child 12	13	Male	French Canadian	20 months
Mentor 12	30	Male	French Canadian	
Parent 12	39	Female	French Canadian	

Setting and Data Collection

All parents and mentors were interviewed by the author, and all children were interviewed by a PhD candidate clinical psychology. The author and interviewer of children

were middle-class, fluently bilingual (French and English) Canadian women of Eurasian and European descent, respectively. Both interviewers were trained in interviewing skills as doctoral students in School/Applied Child and Clinical psychology programmes respectively. Both interviewers trained with each other over a two-hour session in order to develop a consistency in their interview style.

Both interviewers strove to establish a certain level of rapport with participants in order to promote a comfortable atmosphere even before the interview began. The interviewers made extra effort to engage the children in the process before the actual interview, by making small talk with their parents, and asking them about their hobbies and special interests. Following Eder and Fingerson's (2001) recommendations, all but one of the interviews with children took place in their homes. This permits children to be at greater ease in the interview process because they are in their surroundings. Interviews with parents and mentors lasted from one to two hours, and interviews with children lasted from 20 to 40 minutes. Participants were informed that the interviews were completely confidential and that they could choose to not answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. The interviewers also explained that there were no right or wrong answers, and in no way would their responses be reported to their caseworkers or other people in the mentoring triad. All interviews were digitally recorded.

The interviews themselves were in-depth and semistructured in nature. Participants were asked to view the interview more as a conversation. The semistructured nature meant that the interview protocol was used more as a guide. Topics were expanded upon as the participants brought them up.

Rationale for the Interview Questions

The child, mentor, and parent interviews were developed from the main tenets of the two

theoretical models on which this study is based. All participants were asked to reflect on three interacting developmental processes that had been proposed by Rhodes (2005) as contributing to positive youth outcomes in well-established mentoring relationships: cognitive-academic, social-emotional, and identity-related. After caseworkers suggested also addressing behavioural impacts, this fourth theme was added to the interview guide. Questions that explored processes that mediate the effects of the mentoring relationship on youth, such as connection between child and mentor, the role of time, and the structure or mentoring style that is present in the relationship were included, as were individual, family, and contextual influences. The purpose of asking all participants about child outcomes was to obtain a triangulated view of each child's development.

A series of questions was elaborated based on Keller's (2005b) position that all mentoring relationships are bidirectional, that both parents and mentors can be influenced by the relationship as much as children, and that a relationship between two people (e.g., child and mentor) can impact a third party member (e.g., parent). Questions probed how parents and mentors had been impacted by the relationship. They were asked to think if and how their view of themselves as parents or mentors, their level of social support, and their relationship with their child or mentee had changed since being matched. Children were also asked to reflect on their parent and mentor and if they observed any changes in them since their match.

Children, parents, and mentors were also asked to reflect on the process of the mentoring relationship. For instance, they were asked about what they found enjoyable and difficult about the relationship, what increases and decreases their motivation to remain in the relationship, and how their relationship with one member of the triad affects their relationship with another. They were also asked to describe something (e.g., photo, image, song, anecdote) that represented the

mentoring relationship.

The Semistructured Interview with Children

1. Why did you want a Big Brother (BB) or a Big Sister (BS)?
2. What have you learned from your BB/BS? (Did you learn to do something—like a sport, etc.? Learned something about yourself—like a quality, etc.?)
3. Are you different now that you have a BB/BS compared to when you didn't? If so, how?
4. Has being matched with a mentor made you feel any differently about your:
 - a. Attitudes toward school?
 - i. How you feel about going to school?
 - ii. What you like/dislike about school?
 - iii. Teachers? What you think of teachers? What teachers think of you?
 - b. Academic achievement?
 - i. What your grades are like? Have they changed? Effort you put into your schoolwork?
 - c. Social-emotional development
 - i. Relationships with friends? Who are your friends, what are they like? How
 - ii. Would your friends describe you?
 - iii. Relationships with family members?
 - iv. Mother/father (your relationship with him/her)? Brothers/sisters? How would your mother/father describe you? How would you describe your mother/father?
 - v. Your self-confidence? Your problem-solving skills?
 - d. Identity development

- i. How would you describe yourself?
 - ii. How you feel about yourself? (qualities, faults, things you like more/less about yourself)
 - iii. Your future?
- e. Behaviour?
 - i. Better behaved? or Get in trouble?
 - ii. Do things you are (not) supposed to do? For example?
- 5. How do you imagine yourself in five years? (How do you see yourself/ how will you be different/ what you will have learned/ new qualities?)
- 6. What do you want to be when you grow up? or Where do you see yourself after you finish high school?
- 7. What does your BB/BS mean to you? (Who is he/she for you? What place does he/she take in your life? Role he/she plays? Important in your life?)
- 8. How would you describe your mentor? How would your mentor describe you?
- 9. What makes you want to see your mentor more?
- 10. What makes you want to see your mentor less?
- 11. What do you like most about having a BB/BS?
- 12. What do you like least about having a BB/BS?
- 13. How do you, your parent, and your BB/BS get along together?
- 14. Is there something (image, story, photo, etc.) that best represents the relationship?
- 15. Is there a question that you would have liked me to ask you? Is there anything else I should know?

The Semistructured Interview with Mentors

1. Why did you want to become a mentor?
2. Do you feel your mentee has changed since you first met him/her? If so, how?
3. How do you think being matched with a mentee has affected him/her in terms of:
 - a. Attitudes toward school?
 - i. How he/she feels about going to school?
 - ii. What he/she likes/dislikes about school?
 - iii. Teachers? What he/she thinks of teachers? What teachers think of him/her?
 - iv. Academic achievement?
 - v. What his/her grades are like? Effort he/she puts into schoolwork?
 - b. Social-emotional development
 - i. Relationships with friends?
 - ii. Who are his/her friends, what are they like? How would friends describe him/her?
 - iii. Relationships with family members?
 - iv. Mother/father? Brothers/sisters? How would mother/father describe him/her?
How would he/she describe mother/father?
 - c. Identity development
 - i. How he/she feels about himself/herself?
 - ii. How would he/she describe himself/herself?
 - iii. Self-confidence?
 - iv. Problem solving/ doing things by himself/herself?
 - v. His/her future?
 - d. Behaviour development

- i. Better behaved? or Gets in trouble?
 - ii. Does things he/she is (not) supposed to do? For example?
4. How would you imagine him/her in five years?
5. What he/she wants to be when grown up?
6. What does your mentee mean to you?
7. How would you describe your LB (Little Brother)/LS (Little Sister)? How would your LB/LS describe you?
8. What have you found enjoyable about the mentoring relationship?
9. What have you found difficult about the mentoring relationship?
10. Is there anything that increases your motivation to participate in the mentoring relationship?
If so, what?
11. Is there anything that decreases your motivation to participate in the mentoring relationship?
If so, what?
12. How do you feel that your initial reasons/objectives for wanting to be a mentor have been met?
13. How do you feel you have changed since you have been a mentor? If so, how?
14. Has participating in a BBBS mentoring programme changed how you see yourself as a mentor?
15. How do you, your LB/LS and his/her parent get along together?
16. Is there something (image, story, photo, etc.) that best represents the relationship?
17. Is there a question that you would have liked me to ask you? Is there anything else I should know?

The Semistructured Interview with Parents

1. Why did you want your child to have a BB/BS?
2. Has your child changed since being matched with a BB/BS? If so, how?
3. How do you think being matched with a mentor has affected your child in terms of his or her:
 - a. Attitudes toward school?
 - i. How he/she feels about going to school?
 - ii. What he/she likes/dislikes about school?
 - iii. Teachers? What he/she thinks of teachers? What teachers think of him/her?
 - iv. Academic achievement?
 - v. What his/her grades are like? Effort he/she puts into schoolwork?
 - b. Social-emotional development
 - i. Relationships with friends?
 - ii. Who are his/her friends, what are they like? How would friends describe him/her?
 - iii. Relationships with family members?
 - iv. Mother/father? Brothers/sisters? How would you describe him/her? How would he/she describe you?
 - c. Identity development
 - i. How he/she feels about himself/herself?
 - ii. How would he/she describe himself/herself?
 - iii. Self-confidence?
 - iv. Problem solving/ doing things by himself/herself?
 - v. His/her future?
 - d. Behaviour?

- i. Better behaved? or Gets in trouble?
 - ii. Does things he/she is (not) supposed to do? For example?
4. How would you imagine him/her in 5 years?
5. What he/she wants to be when grown up?
6. What does your child's mentor mean to him/her?
7. How would you describe your child's relationship with his/her BB/BS?
8. What have you found enjoyable about the mentoring relationship?
9. What have you found difficult about the mentoring relationship?
10. Is there anything that increases your motivation for your child to participate in the mentoring relationship? If so, what?
11. Is there anything that decreases your motivation for your child to participate in the mentoring relationship? If so, what?
12. How do you feel that your initial reasons/objectives for seeking mentoring have been met?
13. How do you feel you have you changed since your child was matched with a BB/BS?
14. How has participating in a BBBS mentoring programme changed how you see yourself as a parent?
15. How you feel that participating in a BBBS mentoring programme has affected the level of social support in your life?
16. How do you feel that your relationship with your child has changed since he/she has a BB/BS?
17. How do you, your child, and his/her BB/BS get along together?
18. Is there something (image, story, photo, etc.) that best represents the relationship?
19. Is there a question that you would have liked me to ask you? Is there anything else I should

know?

Data Analysis

Interviews were analysed following the major traditions of qualitative inquiry (Cresswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim by an outside transcriptionist, previously unknown to the researcher. Nonverbal cues, such as pauses and gestures, were also indicated in the transcripts. Each transcript was verified by listening to the recording in full while reading the transcript, and making any necessary corrections. After this verification process, the interviews were entered into NVivo, qualitative software designed to store the data and organise the codes provided by the researcher during the analysis phase. Furthermore, after each interview, the interviewers wrote a log about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and took the time to debrief. Prior to data analysis, the researcher familiarised herself with the data and read each individual participant's transcript several times. The researcher strove to keep an audit trail, or a record of analysis, in order to explicitly follow the evolution of the analysis.

The researcher followed a process for multiple-case analysis suggested by several qualitative experts (Cresswell, 2007; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009). First, each participant's transcript was analysed. Categories and themes emerged from the data. They were then integrated in to a cross-case analysis, in which data was placed into a theme by case matrix, from which emerged converging cross-case themes, and themes unique to certain cases.

In order to analyse the data, an adaptation of the constant comparative method was used. The constant comparative method

combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared

to all other units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorized and coded) with similar units of meaning. If there are no similar units of meaning, a new category is formed. In this process there is room for continuous refinement; initial categories are changed, merged, or omitted; new categories are generated; and new relationships can be discovered. (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001, p. 134)

Whereas normally in this approach only themes common to all cases are typically retained, an adapted approach to the methodology was chosen so as to allow themes to be noted even if they were common to only a subset of participants. This adapted approach to the analysis was followed because of the diversity of participants, the exploratory nature of this study, and the clinical significance of some themes addressed by only a minority of participants. An adapted approach was supported by Yin (2009) in cross-case analysis in order to examine subgroups or subcategories of general cases, or contrasts that may be insightful. Stake (2006) also supported considering findings that occur in single cases but judged worth mentioning.

The first step in the constant comparative process was to unitise the data by identifying preliminary emergent categories from participants' narratives. This initial coarse-grained approach tentatively highlighted passages without decontextualising them, placing the units into broad categories and assigning temporary names. The process was iterative, in that the researcher worked back and forth, expanding and contracting the categories as needed. Tentative rules of inclusion were created for membership in each category. After four cases of three participants had been unitised, two peer-auditors familiar with qualitative analysis each reviewed one, and three, cases respectively. The peer auditors provided a first reliability check of the inductively-derived categories and the unitisation process. As a result of this first reliability check and ensuing discussion, new categories emerged and existing rules of inclusion became

more precise. The initial four cases were reviewed to take these changes into account. A second reliability check further ensured the trustworthiness of the data in a process known as inter-rater reliability. Transcripts of interviews with two triads (children, mentors, and parents) were given to a post-doctoral psychology fellow familiar with qualitative analysis. She independently coded the interviews using the rules of inclusion for each category. Coded interviews were then compared, participant by participant, and discrepancies between the researcher's codes and her colleague's codes noted. Between 80 to 85 percent of codes matched. Based on the resulting discrepancies, the inclusion rules were further clarified, and the transcripts were reviewed and reclassified until consensus was reached. The remaining interviews were coded using this final coding system. Units of data were then decontextualised by reassembling them into their categories without changing the words of the participants.

A fine-grained data analysis followed in a cross-case analysis. During this granular categorisation, units of data were aligned in categories with other participants. A participant group (child, mentor, and parent) by category matrix, inspired by Stake (2006), was created. This permitted the researcher to compare across individuals and make associations among participants' responses. As the researcher became more and more immersed in the data, cross-case themes emerged, as did subthemes unique to some participants.

Chapter 3: Results

The study of the relationships and perceived impact was based on a thematic analysis of transcripts from in-depth, semistructured interviews conducted with a purposeful sample of matched child-mentor-parent triads, whose relationships had been established for one or more years. In this qualitative, multiple-case study, themes emerged inductively after in-depth, iterative, and recursive analysis. A cross-case analysis was then carried out. The thematic analysis was adapted from the constant comparative method, in that in addition to reporting consistencies that emerged across cases, some contrasting results were also considered. Therefore, not all themes represent conceptual categories. However, they do represent the narrative of the participants and additional information was included about the actual number of participants associated with each category that was isolated.

The structure of this chapter follows Yin's (2009) format for reporting a multiple-case study: "There may be no separate chapters or sections devoted to the individual cases. Rather, your entire report may consist of the cross-case analysis, whether purely descriptive or also covering explanatory topics. In such a report, each chapter or section would be devoted to a separate cross-case issue, and the information from the individual cases would be dispersed throughout each chapter or section" (p. 172). Therefore, this results chapter presents a synthesis of the cross-case issues that arose from analysis, in addition to certain issues addressed by subgroups of participants.

Eleven of the 12 triads spoke French as a first language, and so interviews with those participants were conducted in French. The remaining triad, Triad 11, spoke English and so the interviews with those participants were conducted in English. In order to retain the original sense of the words, to ease the length of this dissertation, as well as because of financial

considerations, French quotes were not translated except in the case of single words. In essence, this bilingual dissertation is a reflection of a certain level of bilingualism present in Montreal. When the dissertation will be transformed into publication format, however, specifically chosen quotes will be translated. Furthermore, French-speakers often peppered their narratives with English expressions. To ease comprehension, these expressions were italicised within the original quotes. Current American Psychological Association (APA) style was used when citing from both French and English narratives.

Research Objective One

Responses to research objective one focused on the systemic view of the participants in the mentoring relationship. Nine separate systemic-based themes were isolated from the participants' transcripts, using the process described in Chapter 2. Within each theme emerged several subthemes. These are reported below, and are categorised by groups of children, mentors, and parents.

Motivation to join the programme.

Children.

Isolated from adult figures and activities. Children reported two main reasons for wanting to participate in a mentoring relationship. Nine (eight boys and one girl) of the 12 children made reference to the absence of a parent—either one of their parents did not take an active role in their lives or had died (each of these being a requirement for participation in the programme). These children clearly expressed this main reason in a variety of ways. For example, Child 2 explained “je pense parce que mon père était parti, puis ma mère voulait quelqu’un qui le remplace un peu, puis c’est ça. . . . J’étais d’accord.” Child 10 expressed, “premièrement, c’est parce que je n’avais pas de père. J’en ai un, mais je ne le vois jamais.”

Child 12 clarified, “bien, premièrement j’ai jamais connu mon père, j’ai jamais vu une photo, j’ai jamais entendu sa voix, je connais juste son prénom: c’est Francis. Puis, bien, c’est pas mal ça en gros, le plus gros qui m’a incité à avoir un Grand Frère.” The two children who had a parent die clearly stated “mon père est mort [my father is dead]” (Child 6) and “my mom passed away” (Child 11).

Six of the 12 children also added that a motivator to participate was that they had been lonely and wanted to participate in more activities and have new experiences with another person. Child 4 explained “je me sentais comme toute seule,” Child 5 expressed “j’arrêtais pas de m’ennuyer,” and Child 7 further explained his situation “c’est pas que je manquais d’attention, parce que j’en ai beaucoup de ma mère, mais. . . . Comme je ne connais pas mon père, j’avais besoin d’un homme pour faire des activités avec moi.”

Mentors.

Receiving and giving. Mentors responded similarly to children and parents in that they all had clear reasons for wanting to participate in the programme. Eight mentors reported a desire to give to others because at one point in time they had received from a significant older person such as a sister, brother, parent, or coach. They in turn wanted to give to another child what they had received. Mentor 9 explained “j’ai joué au baseball et j’ai joué au hockey quand j’étais jeune, j’ai eu des coachs, j’ai eu des coachs qui m’ont marqué aussi. De vouloir en redonner aussi un peu par la bande.” Mentor 7 noted, “j’ai un ‘grand demi-frère.’ Il m’a montré tellement de trucs! Et mon ‘beau grand-père,’ si on veut, il m’a montré tellement de choses! Ça m’a vraiment ouvert l’esprit. J’ai vraiment adoré cette période-là.” Mentor 2 explained being similarly motivated but in reverse; not having had a mentor as a child, as an adult he wished to become a mentor to compensate: “Moi, je me rends compte que lorsque j’étais jeune, j’ai

manqué de la présence de mon père. Il était là physiquement, mais. . . Je ne sais pas, c'est comme une façon de donner à quelqu'un qui en a besoin."

Contribution to society. In addition to the idea of giving because they had received, nine mentors also explained that they had the desire to volunteer in order to contribute to society. Mentor 10 explained this urge: "Disons que je voulais m'impliquer dans quelque chose. Je voulais faire du bénévolat. Je trouvais des fois que je critiquais beaucoup mais que moi, de mon côté, je ne faisais pas grand-chose pour aider mon prochain ou n'importe qui. Comme j'aime beaucoup les enfants, le lien s'est fait assez rapidement avec les Grands Frères." More specifically, mentors believed that by volunteering they would pass on certain values or knowledge, thus contributing in a positive way to a child's future, and that "dedicated attention from an adult can have a very big impact on a child, especially one who needs it" (Mentor 11).

"I don't have children." Additionally, four of the mentors cited not having a child as a reason for wanting to volunteer. Mentor 11 explained "I'm, uh . . . a single woman and although I have children around me, like my nieces and my nephew and a step-daughter from a previous relationship, I don't have children in my life and I do want children in my life." Mentor 2 supported this idea, simply stating "je n'ai pas d'enfant, moi, donc c'était un petit gars à m'occuper." To a lesser extent, two mentors were also motivated because they felt the relationship would enable them to participate in a variety of activities and also to expose them to different levels of society.

Parents.

A need for positive male role models. All 10 parents reported similarly to their children: The fathers (in all cases except for Child 11, whose mother had died) were absent and mothers felt that their children would benefit from having a stable and positive relationship with a man.

For instance, Parent 9 explained “je n’ai pas vraiment de famille. Donc, il n’y a pas beaucoup d’hommes dans mon entourage. Pauvre lui, il est entouré de femmes! C’est cela, c’est pour cela que je suis allée chercher, pour qu’il ait une image masculine à quelque part, vu que c’est un petit garçon.” Parents also mentioned a belief in differences in sex roles and capacities, as mothers often explained that they felt unable to play both female and male roles for their child. Parent 5 explained “la réponse première, c’est parce que je me suis rendue compte que je ne pouvais pas, je pouvais pas donner, donner de références masculines. . . . On essaie, et puis on se rend compte, on essaie en tant que mère monoparentale, on essaie de, on essaie de substituer l’autre parent c’est, c’est un réflexe. . . . On compense, on compense, on compense. Et un moment donné, on se rend compte, qu’à essayer de se mettre à la place d’un homme non seulement ça résoud pas la question, mais en plus, probablement qu’on donne de fausses pistes. Parce qu’on n’est pas un homme.” Parent 8 supported this idea noting that “malgré le fait que j’ai peut-être développé des traits plus masculins en raison de son absence, en n’ayant pas d’homme qui jouait son rôle. . . . Je ne suis pas un gars. Je n’aime pas faire les affaires de gars. Je n’ai pas cette facilité-là. Déjà, être parent, c’est difficile à deux. Quand on est tout seul, c’est encore plus complexe. Surtout que je n’étais pas du même sexe que mon enfant. . . . De prime abord, c’était ça, c’était en raison du manque d’une présence masculine.”

Relational difficulties. Seven mothers also worried that their children experienced difficulties that they attributed to coming from a single-parent home, and they hoped that the presence of a Big Brother would mitigate these difficulties. Mothers described their sons as being uncomfortable with men (7 and 9), too easily attached to men (10 and 12), or sad and anxious about living with only one parent (Parents 3, 6, and 8). Parent 10 expressed “Ça faisait longtemps: il y avait droit à partir de sept ans, mais même à cinq ans j’y pensais, parce que quand

il voyait des garçons autour de moi, que ce soit un ami ou frère, aussitôt que c'est un homme, il s'accrochait beaucoup, même physiquement. Il s'accrochait beaucoup aux hommes. Même, des fois, il disait 'Papa' à des gens qu'il connaissait. Je sentais qu'il avait besoin d'avoir une image masculine au plus vite.”

Three mothers (5, 7, and 8) also felt that the parent-child dynamic needed to change because the mother and child were always together and that they would benefit from periods of separation: “Il fallait aussi un petit peu se détacher. On était tout le temps, tout le temps ensemble. Un peu serré, un peu beaucoup serré” (Parent 7).

The mentoring relationship.

Children. Children had an extremely positive view of their relationship with their mentors. The match date itself was an important event as all children recalled the length of time that they had been matched and many spoke of their match date as an anniversary.

Describing mentors and their roles. In describing their mentors, all 12 children used positive terms (all directly translated from French because they were single words), such as “reliable” (Child 9), “smart” (Child 7), “perfect” (Child 4), “persevering” (Children 8 and 10), “fun” (Children 6 and 11), “resourceful” (Child 3) and “nice” (Children 1, 2, and 5). In describing the role they felt the mentors took in their lives, all 12 children gave a variety of highly positive responses such as “my lucky charm” (Child 1), “a good friend” (Children 10 and 11), “a very important person” (Children 3 and 5), “all the place in my heart” (Child 9), “my real big brother” (Children 2 and 6), “my sister and guardian angel” (Child 4), “my father” (Children 7, 8, 12), and “a big positive place in my life” (Child 12).

In the same vein, children were also very positive when they spoke about how they felt with their mentors, highlighting the importance of feeling happy, safe, and understood. Child 9

explained, “on s'amuse. Quand je vais avec lui, moi c'est pour m'amuser, tu sais, puis là je me dis: 'J'ai tellement passé une bonne journée que j'ai le goût de le revoir demain.'” Child 2 agreed, “bien, j'aime ça être avec lui, je me sens bien, je me sens aussi en sécurité, puis j'aime ça être avec quelqu'un que j'aime.” Child 4 added, “bien, j'aime ça être avec elle. C'est comme elle est toujours là pour moi, puis c'est ça. . . . Je l'aime beaucoup.”

Describing the mentoring relationship. The positive feelings that the children felt about their mentor were reflected when they described their mentoring relationships. Two children captured the essence of what the group of children defined, with Child 12 explaining, “on fait un bon duo” and Child 6 adding, “c'est la meilleure relation que j'ai eue de ma vie.” In describing their relationships, three children tended to speak of themselves and their mentors as one, using “on [we]”, and Child 6 explaining, “on est quasiment identique intérieurement.”

Communication. When speaking about their relationship, seven children mentioned the positive role that communication played in having positive feelings about their relationship. They saw their mentors as providing an outlet for communicating difficulties that they were having with friends or family, and turned to them for guidance and counselling. For instance, Child 4 explained, “je peux toujours la parler, on s'appelle souvent, puis c'est le fun.” Child 12, whose mother was an alcoholic, confided “la seule personne en qui je peux vraiment avoir confiance, c'est Mentor 12. La seule personne qui est plus proche, c'est mon grand-père, mais il est malade, il est en train de mourir d'un cancer, ça fait que ça va mal.”

Activities. As well, the activities they participated in were an important part of the relationship description for all 12 children. They looked forward to seeing their mentors because the activities would allow them to take their minds off whatever was bothering them and also feel good about learning new things. Child 3 explained, “bien il représente beaucoup pour moi,

parce que j'ai commencé à m'amuser plus avec lui, j'ai commencé à faire plus de sorties, de sports, des choses intéressantes." Child 12 added, "ce qu'on fait, moi puis lui, ça m'aide à me défouler" and Child 4 said, "quand je vais faire du sport, j'oublie tout le reste." Child 7, who at the time of the interview lived in a group home, described, "on a pris des photos de [quartier], c'était mon quartier d'enfance. C'était vraiment une journée parfaite."

Attachment and comfort. In speaking about their relationships, five children reflected on the process of attachment and comfort with their mentor. Although Child 6 explained that he immediately felt comfortable with his mentor, "en le voyant, juste en le voyant, j'ai su que ça allait 'cliquer'. . . que ça allait marcher," the other children described an attachment and comfort that changed over time. Child 4 remembered "bien, au début on n'était pas trop, comme, attaché, mais . . . après on commençait, comme, à s'attacher. . . . Je me suis rendu compte que, tu sais, je l'aimais beaucoup." Child 12 recalled, "bien avant, au début, on n'osait pas trop niaiser dans la voiture quand on parlait puis tout, sauf que ces temps-ci, on n'arrête pas de niaiser dans le char, c'est drôle."

A representation of the relationship. The importance of the activities and the attachment to their mentors was evident when children were asked to represent their relationship in one form or another. All 12 chose either an activity that they had done together (for example, hockey (Child 8) or a story they were planning to write together (Child 10)), a picture of the pair together (for example, during a sailing activity (Child 9) or at the Botanical Gardens (Child 4)), or a gift that the mentor had given to the child for a special occasion (for example, a bracelet given when they first met (Child 1), or Shrek sheet music as a birthday present (Child 5)).

Mentors. Mentors expressed positive views of their relationships with the children. In addition to the enjoyment they felt from being a mentor to a child, their reflections also took into

account the responsibility they held towards building and maintaining the relationship. As did the children, mentors also placed importance on the match date itself and referred to it as an anniversary. For example, Mentor 1 stated, “à Noël ça va faire deux ans.”

Describing the children’s role. Eleven mentors spoke about the role that the children played in their lives and these mirrored the children’s positive responses. For instance, they included, “une vraie petite soeur” (Mentor 1), “un vrai petit frère pour moi” (Mentor 2), “je suis son vrai Grand Frère” (Mentor 3), “c’est ma petite sœur, mais, je suis pas là pour lui faire la morale de grande sœur” (Mentor 4), “je le présente comme mon petit frère” (Mentor 5), “c’est plus qu’un ami. . . . Là où on est rendu, j’ai l’impression d’avoir un lien de sang pratiquement avec lui” (Mentor 6), “c’est une relation fraternelle” (Mentor 7), “vraiment un petit frère” (Mentor 9), “il fait partie de la famille” (Mentor 10), “it’s very much a friend relationship” (Mentor 11), and “c’est vraiment un petit frère pour moi. Pas juste dans le sens du jumelage, mais dans le sens propre de la chose” (Mentor 12).

Describing the mentoring relationship. Although the mentors did not speak of their feelings regarding the children in the same manner the children did about them, nine of the mentors expressed their feelings by positively describing their relationship as “honest and easy” (Mentors 3, 5, 8, and 12), “agreeable” (Mentor 6), “respectful” (Mentors 4 and 8), “fun” (Mentor 2), and “enjoyable” (Mentors 1 and 10).

Communication. Nine of the mentors also spoke about the importance of communication between themselves and the children. Consistent with the children’s descriptions, mentors agreed that their role was to listen and create a comfortable space so that the children could confide both positive and negative experiences. Mentor 1 understood the need for Child 1 to communicate even though she was awkward in doing so, explaining that Child 1 would often

leave “des messages incohérents, mais tu vois que c’est parce qu’elle a tellement besoin de cette attention là . . . et qu’elle peut compter sur sa grande soeur pour avoir cette attention là.”

Mentors mentioned three types of strategies to make children feel comfortable. Some mentors encouraged communication about the mentoring relationship itself (Mentors 9 and 11). Others described using humour to help children feel at ease (Mentors 1, 2, 4, and 9), and Mentor 4 gave an extended example of this:

Moi je lui demande: “Puis, quoi de bon?” “Bien rien.” “Bien non, bien là, s’il vous plaît!” Tu sais, je lui pose des questions comme ça, là—comme, vraiment, j’essaie . . . c’est ma façon un peu de lui tirer les vers du nez, entre guillemets. Je dis: “Voyons, il doit t’arriver quelque chose de drôle, au moins, qui t’a fait rire. Il y en a un qui a, je le sais pas, moi, il y a un gars qui s’est planté dans la cour d’école, puis qui s’est cassé le nez. Racontes-moi quelque chose, là!” Elle part à rire: “Ah bien, il y a peut-être ci, il y a peut-être ça.” Puis là, elle parle de choses anodines, mais un moment donné, elle parle d’elle.

Finally, other mentors (Mentors 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 12) explained that they consciously left space for the children to talk and valued moments of silence. Mentor 11 explained, “I try not to bombard her with 20 questions because I find that makes her really quiet. And so you know, sometimes we will not say anything for a couple minutes and I think I want to let her . . . come out whenever she’s ready to say something.”

Mentors also spoke about the process of attaining a certain level of comfort in their communication and that this occurred as the children came to know and trust them. Mentor 2 explained, “c’est ce que je vois chez lui: de l’aisance . . . à parler. C’est comme une amitié qui s’installe. Une aisance à parler de plus en plus.” Mentor 9 added, “aujourd’hui, il ne se gêne

plus, il sait qu'on peut se parler. . . . J'ai vraiment l'heure juste avec lui. C'est pour ça que je te dis que la relation s'en vient vraiment intéressante. Parce que là il commence à avoir des problèmes sérieux . . . des questionnements sérieux, avec l'adolescence qui s'en vient. Et on commence à en parler, il va me dire aussi ce qu'il en pense. Il sait qu'il ne peut pas me déplaire en tant que tel. Aujourd'hui, il sait qu'il a le droit de dire qu'il n'est pas nécessairement d'accord, on va en parler." Mentors explained that, once a level of confidence and trust was attained, the children would confide certain fears or vulnerabilities, ask challenging questions, and address more intimate topics such as sexuality, dating, social difficulties, and personal values.

Activities. Like the children, all mentors spoke about the activities. For children the activities seemed to fill feelings of loneliness and provided an opportunity for new learning experiences, whereas for mentors, the activities were perceived, more so as time went on, as an excuse to spend time with the child and to simply enjoy each other's company. Mentors and children seemed to participate in a variety of activities and had no difficulty coming up with examples, such as shopping (Mentor 1), skating (Mentor 2), baseball (Mentor 9), making a short animated movie (Mentor 11), and learning how to use tools (Mentor 12). All of the mentors mentioned that they tried to plan enjoyable activities because they recognised that they were important to the children and that the children looked forward to their outings. Mentor 10 explained, "ça se sent aussi quand on se parle, qu'il est content de me parler, qu'il a hâte de faire des activités. Ce qui est bien avec le petit frère, c'est sûr que, ce que je représente, c'est une activité aussi, quelque chose qui fait juste du bien. C'est juste du positif, dans le sens que ce n'est pas plate pour lui. C'est certain qu'on va faire quelque chose d'agréable." Some Big Brothers also acknowledged that they participated in gender-stereotyped activities with their

Little Brothers such as going to the auto show, or a hockey or a football game because they realised that the children did not otherwise have the opportunity. They felt that the children particularly enjoyed those specific activities. Mentor 12 explained how Child 12 enjoyed wrestling with him: “C’est un petit gars qui a beaucoup, beaucoup d’énergie, qui aime se chamailler. Et ça, je pense qu’il fait cela juste avec moi. Il n’y a pas personne dans son entourage avec qui il peut se tirailler.” When some of the mentors did not enjoy an activity, they spoke of the negotiation process that ensued between themselves and the children in order to find common ground.

A realisation that all mentors made in time was, above and beyond the activities, what children appreciated most was spending time with them. Mentor 4 realised this during the interview:

Mentor 4: Je lui demande aussi des fois, qu’est-ce qu’elle veut faire des fois—“Bien, je le sais pas, ce que tu veux.”

Interviewer: Elle dit souvent ça?

Mentor 4: Oui, ça arrive souvent qu’elle va dire ça.

Interviewer: Puis elle est contente de faire n’importe quoi?

Mentor 4: Je pense que oui. Oui oui, mmmm hmmm, je dirais: “On va prendre un café” puis elle dirait “OK,” je pense.

Interviewer: Fait que dans le fond, elle est contente de vous voir.

Mentor 4: Oui, je pense, oui, c’est ça, c’est plus ça je pense, oui.

Mentor 11 recognised that Child 11 enjoyed spending time with her regardless of the success of the activity, and so adapted her outlook regarding completing the activities. She explained, “I want to encourage her if she doesn’t like something to tell me because. . . . She was anxious

about whether she would have to . . . go home early, yeah. ‘So does this mean we have to go home earlier?’ And I realise that’s not what she wants. So you know, we did other things during that time period.” Mentor 8 similarly explained that he and Child 8 adapted their outings depending on how they felt: “C’est aussi banal que, des fois, on regarde et ah! On va s’acheter une crème glacée, puis on s’assied. On n’avait pas prévu d’aller faire ça. ‘Aye! Est-ce qu’on va jouer au *pool*?’ On change de programme!”

Another realisation made by mentors was that sometimes the simplest outings and activities had been the ones most appreciated by the children. Mentor 10 explained, “des fois, c’est juste dans la simplicité, comme faire un tour de voiture ou quelques petits trucs. C’est souvent des affaires comme ça qui l’ont marqué, mais qui n’étaient pas les plus grosses activités.” Mentor 9 summed up that he had realised that the simplest activity where he had been the most present for Child 9 was also the one that marked Child 9 the most:

Après la première année . . . ils ont demandé aux enfants: “C’est quoi l’activité qui t’a le plus marqué?” Et ce qui l’avait le plus marqué, c’est qu’une fois en revenant de la récréathèque, pour s’amuser, il a fait comme un bruit de bombe. Moi, j’ai fait semblant d’avoir peur. On s’est mis à s’engueuler, à se crier par la tête dans l’auto, à déconner comme des malades. Et c’est ça qu’il avait le plus aimé. . . . On est allé au [partie de baseball], on a fait plein d’activités, on a fait plein de choses. L’affaire qu’il avait le plus aimé, c’était ça. Avoir su, on aurait roulé de même deux heures autour de Montréal et sa sortie aurait été faite. . . . C’était vraiment ça. C’était vraiment effectivement, c’est la présence. C’est ça qui le marquait le plus.

Logistics. In speaking about activities, all 12 mentors spoke about the importance of logistics, such as phone calls, organising meetings, knowing how to begin and end meetings, and

speaking with parents. Mentor 1 explained the general routine that evolved: “Habituellement, la façon qu’on fonctionne, je passe, comme, la première demi-heure chez elle, on se parle un peu. Sa mère, on se raconte ‘comment a été ta journée?’, ‘comment va Child 1?’, des changements en ce moment. Puis, quand je la ramène chez elle aussi, ‘notre sortie s’est bien passée,’—Child 1, elle raconte tout à sa mère, tout de suite.” They described that routines were gradually put in to place. Many spoke about providing a certain predictable element during their outings, such as always playing a certain game (Mentors 8 and 9). Mentor 2 learned the importance of providing Child 2 a routine for their outings: “Mon rôle s’est précisé. Je vois plus ce que j’ai à faire. . . . Quand on fait une activité, on se parle, on se demande comment s’est passé la semaine. À la fin, on se serre la main. Je trouve ça important, le contact de ‘fin.’ Je sais plus ce que j’ai à faire. C’est mon rôle de savoir le déroulement des rencontres, ce que je dois lui apporter, ce que je dois écouter.”

Attachment and the relationship process. All mentors reflected at length about the relationship process, including attachment and comfort within the mentoring relationship. Ten mentors felt that the relationship became more comfortable over time, whereas the other two felt at ease right away. Mentors who spoke of a gradual process indicated many reasons for not sensing an immediate ease, such as having differing interests, children being wary of their mentors leaving, not understanding each other’s sense of humour, and the possibility of a mentor changing employment. They also explained how the relationship came to feel more natural over time. Mentor 7 explained how he and Child 7 gradually found common ground through the interests they shared, elaborating, “on est très différent, avec des champs d’intérêts différents, et on fait notre bout de chemin ensemble. On partage des choses, des expériences, petit à petit. Petit à petit, plus le temps passe, plus la relation se base sur tout ce qu’on a déjà partagé

ensemble.” Mentor 5 explained how Child 5 believed that he would choose another child if he became displeased with him. It was when Child 5 realised that this was not the case that the relationship began to flourish:

On ne se connaissait pas beaucoup au début. C’est la première activité, il faut que tu fasses quelque chose quand tu ne te connais pas. Même les premières semaines, tu y vas pour trois heures, il faut que tu bâtisses quelque chose, et Child 5 n’osait pas, il avait peur. Je sais qu’au début il pensait que c’était mon métier être Grand Frère, que j’en avais d’autres, et il avait peur que . . . j’en prenne d’autres, et que je ne prenne pas lui . . . d’un coup que je n’aime plus ça travailler avec lui. J’ai essayé de lui laisser de la place pour qu’il comprenne que, et à un moment donné, il a compris que ce n’était pas mon métier, que j’avais un vrai métier en dehors d’être Grand Frère, et que c’est moi qui a fait le choix. Puis là, Child 5 a commencé à plus prendre sa place. Il a réalisé que je n’étais pas là pour partir, je ne suis pas là pour lui dire quoi faire, je ne suis pas son père.

The two mentors who described an immediate connection to their Little Brothers explained that they felt the children communicated easily with them from the beginning. Mentor 8 found himself quickly connected to Child 8 because of his openness and their common interest in playing a variety of sports: “Le jumelage entre Child 8 et moi s’est fait parfaitement dès le début. . . . Child 8, il était facile d’accès et il aimait beaucoup un des éléments que j’aimais: le sport.” Acknowledging that this was likely a rare case, Mentor 12 supported the idea that Child 12’s ease of communication helped them to feel attached to one another very quickly, explaining: “Je pense qu’il y a beaucoup de jumelages, comme je te disais, qui vont se buter des fois à la difficulté de communiquer ou la gêne qui prend toute la place au début. Nous autres, dès les premières rencontres, c’est comme si on se connaissait depuis longtemps. . . . Child 12,

c'est vraiment un moulin à paroles.”

As they described how their relationships progressed, five of the mentors recalled how the children had tried to impress them at the very beginning and how, as the children gradually came to trust their mentors, they began to act more naturally. Mentor 9, who would sometimes meet new Big Brothers in order to answer any questions, explained, “il essayait tout le temps de m'impressionner. Lui, dans sa tête, comme je disais aux Grands Frères, vous voudriez lui faire faire le tour du monde, vous pourriez tout donner à votre Petit Frère, mais dites-vous que vos attentes sont milles fois plus grandes que les siennes. Parce que lui, tout ce qu'il veut, c'est ta présence. Donc au début, tout ce qu'il va faire, tout ce qu'il va essayer de faire, c'est d'impressionner.” The other mentors supported the idea that the children wanted to impress them with various near-impossible stories for fear their mentors would leave them. For instance, Child 1 told her mentor she had almost been hit by a car, Child 3 told his mentor that he had flown a Cessna airplane, Child 7 told his mentor that he could jump off of treetops, and Child 9 told his mentor that he had climbed to the top of a water fountain inside the Botanical Gardens! Mentor 9 explained his thoughts about this at the time, and then how Child 9 opened up to him years later about their first activity:

Il avait fait tous les coups pas possibles dans la place. Je me suis dit: “Voyons, quel genre de petit gars que j'ai là?” Il voulait tellement m'impressionner, qu'il beurrait tout épais. J'avais l'impression d'avoir un *Bart Simpson* entre les mains. . . . Et là il me racontait ci, il me racontait ça. Et le plus drôle, c'est qu'il y a à peu près un an, on passait à côté du Jardin botanique. Il dit: “Tu sais, la première fois qu'on est allé aux papillons bleus? Là, tous les coups que j'avais dit que j'avais fait, ce n'était pas vrai. Je n'avais pas fait ça.” J'ai dit: “Je m'en doutais un peu, c'était trop gros, ça n'avait pas de bon

sens!” Il m’a raconté ça, comme, deux-trois ans après. Il voulait juste m’impressionner.

The facility with which they could end their meetings also improved as their relationship progressed. Because the children enjoyed themselves so much, many would ask them to prolong their outings. So, mentors often felt that if they did not place firm boundaries on a finishing time, their outings could last the entire day. As their relationships progressed, however, mentors felt that this became less and less of an issue and children readily accepted when they were told that it was time to end their activity. Mentor 8 explained, “au début, c’était comme . . . on devait aller le reporter à 17h00. Bon. ‘On peut-tu arrêter dans le parc se lancer le ballon quinze minutes?’ Finalement, rendus dans le parc, c’était une demi-heure, puis encore une autre cinq minutes. Tu sais, il aimait ça beaucoup alors il prolongeait. Des fois, je pouvais pas. Des fois, ça ne me dérangeait pas. Sauf que là, maintenant, c’est ‘Bon, Child 8, il faut qu’on y aille.’ Et c’est beau, c’est correct.”

As their relationships progressed, mentors explained how their relationship adapted depending on the changes in each other’s lives. For instance, Mentor 6 explained how he and Child 6 navigated through the birth of his own son, and the importance that Mentor 6 placed on making Child 6 feel included. Mentor 3 told of how he worked for a few months in the United States, and during this period he and Child 3 communicated through Skype. Child 7, who was living in a group home and did not see his friends regularly, asked to space out his meetings with Mentor 7 so that he could see both his mentor and his friends. Mentor 1 recalled how Child 1 decided, at a point in her life when everybody had abandoned her, that she did not want a mentor anymore because she feared Mentor 1 would abandon her too. So Mentor 1 continued to have scheduled visits at Child 1’s home, and gradually Child 1 came to trust her. Mentors explained that successfully navigating these delicate situations helped to strengthen their mentoring

relationships and the children's trust in them.

Mentors added that as time went on, they became more and more attached to the children, and began to feel responsible for them and protective of them. Mentor 11 recalled an incident when she felt that Child 11 was uncomfortable: "I just [wanted to] let her feel protected or surrounded, you know? That we were together." This sense of responsibility also propelled them to view the relationship in a more long-term manner. A strong sense of commitment to the match was communicated by all the mentors in several ways. Some explained that they found pleasure in seeing the child grow up and develop (Mentors 3, 6, 9, and 11), whereas others enjoyed seeing the relationship itself mature over time (Mentors 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9), and others even wanted to remain one of the stable figures in the children's lives (Mentors 1, 2, and 11). Nine mentors, in talking about their view of the relationship, candidly expressed their attachment and commitment to the children above and beyond the organisation's expectations. Mentor 2 stated, "pour moi, c'est officiel. C'est une amitié à long terme. Les Grands Frères, il y a le contrat officiel, mais il y a la réalité aussi. Ce ne sera pas possible de couper comme ça à 18 ans." Mentor 1, who already worked through some ups and downs in her relationship with Child 1, felt that they could withstand whatever changes in their lives: "Si je déménage en Floride demain matin ou en Irlande ou *where ever*, je vais rester en contacte avec LS, on va s'envoyer des emails, on va s'envoyer des cartes postales, on va s'appeler. Ça finira pas là." Mentor 6 envisioned being in contact with Child 6 in a very distant future: "Je le vois, j'ai des images de lui jouant avec mon fils, faire du sport, et avec moi aussi. Tu sais, de belles images positives. Je vais être très vieux et il va venir me voir."

Developmental mentoring. As they described their mentoring relationships, their evolution, and the activities in which they participated, mentors described examples of the two

distinctive mentoring styles—developmental and prescriptive. All 12 mentors told of incidents in which they responded in a developmental style, and eight of them also described areas in which they took on a more prescriptive approach, indicating that their capacity to adhere to a certain approach depended on the context. Examples of developmental mentoring included being child-oriented (Mentor 5), adapting the meetings to meet the child's needs (Mentors 1, 4, 7, 9, and 11), being sensitive to the child's emotional state (Mentor 11), encouraging and supporting exploration (Mentors 3, 5 and 9), sharing one's own experiences without having an expectation for the child to follow their lead (Mentors 6 and 9), allowing the child to invite friends now and again (Mentors 1 and 2), and consciously being non-judgmental about lifestyles and choices (Mentors 7 and 8). Mentor 1 explained how she came to the decision of allowing friends to join on an outing even though it was not part of the programme policy: "Il y avait des fois cet été . . . quand on se voyait que, de temps en temps ça dérangeait pas s'il y avait des amis qui faisait des sorties avec nous. . . . S'est supposé être stricte avec les Grands Frères Grandes Soeurs que c'est juste moi et l'enfant. Mais, comme Child 1 à un moment donné elle n'en voulait plus d'une grande soeur puis tout ça, on faisait des concessions. . . . De temps en temps elle ne voulait pas faire de sortie ensemble; elle voulait aller à la piscine avec ses amis: 'OK bien on va y aller ensemble.'" Mentor 5 explained how he was careful not to push his passion for creative activities onto Child 5: "on dirait qu'il n'a pas de plaisir à le faire, peut-être plus tard. Je n'essaie pas de trop le pousser là-dessus, je ne veux pas qu'on fasse des activités qui l'emmerdent non plus." Two mentors also explained how being empathetic towards the child's life circumstances and background enabled them to take on a more developmental approach. Mentor 1 explained that she better understood Child 1's difficult behaviour after learning that Child 1 had discovered that her father was in prison and the she had two siblings she did not

know existed: “Je comprends qu’elle sauté des coches des fois.” Mentor 11, upon learning about Child 11’s background, understood the importance of making Child 11 feel secure.

Prescriptive mentoring. Eight of the mentors also described situations in which they took on a more prescriptive style of mentoring. The prescriptive style seemed to link to an area or a value that the mentors held dearly, and they wished to share this value with the children. Some mentors also described feeling like they needed to teach the children some of these values that were dear to them because they were not valued by the children’s parents. For instance, Mentor 6 explained that he promoted his values of perseverance and generosity and Child 6 gradually integrated them: “C’est moi qui a commencé avec cette approche-là. Là, c’est lui qui s’y intéresse. Comme, par exemple, [mon bénévolat à l’hôpital des enfant], il trouve cela bien intéressant. Avec l’école, il s’est impliqué dans des activités de bénévolat. Je pense qu’il m’a vu faire cela et il a dit ‘regarde.’ Il sait que cela a été positif pour moi, donc [pause].” Mentor 1, who described herself as being very ecological, was happy to say that Child 1 does not litter anymore, and herself became bothered by other people who litter. Mentors 3, 4, 5, and 8 all extolled the importance of critical thinking skills, and in their outings would sometimes purposely have the children practice these skills. Mentor 8 explained at length how he did this on one occasion:

Mentor 8: C’est drôle, en fin de semaine, il n’aimait pas Burger King, je sais pas pourquoi, parce que c’est pas bon. Pour moi, un Harvey’s, un Burger King, un McDonald, c’est toute la même affaire! Ça, c’est mon opinion. Pourquoi il aimait pas ça? Parce que sa mère n’aime pas ça. En fin de semaine, je lui ai dit: “On va aller chez Burger King. Il y a une nouvelle publicité, un nouveau hamburger, pis je trouve qu’il me donne le goût d’aller manger un hamburger chez Burger King.”

Interviewer: Est-ce que c'est par exprès que vous avez fait ça?

Mentor 8: Les deux. Parce qu'effectivement, je savais qu'il n'aimait pas ça et je voulais voir sa réaction. Je lui dis: "Viens. Essaie-le. Ça fait longtemps que tu n'y as pas goûté. Ils se sont peut-être améliorés." Puis, il a bien aimé ça! Ça goûte pareil, mais tu sais.

Interviewer: Alors c'est dans ce sens là: le côté critique.

Mentor 8: Ouain. J'essaie de lui dire: "Regarde, ça, c'est pas ton opinion." Moi, j'essaie juste de lui faire réaliser: "Si moi, je n'aime pas ça, ça ne veut pas dire que tu n'aimes pas ça. Si ta mère n'aime pas ça, ça ne veut pas dire que toi, tu n'aimes pas ça. Avant de dire que tu n'aimes pas ça, il faut que tu y goûtes. Il faut que tu fasses ta propre critique."

Other examples of prescriptive-style mentoring included teaching the child about basic hygiene (Mentor 12) and about responsible drinking (Mentor 9), though both mentors also reflected that they had spoken to their caseworkers about these issues.

A representation of the relationship. The importance of the activities and the relationship evolution were primarily present when mentors were asked to represent their relationship in one form or another. Seven mentors chose a picture of the pair during an activity or the activity itself, and 5 mentors described an image, a drawing, or a saying that described a process or an evolution in the relationship. For instance, Mentor 5 chose an activity when the two made a movie together, Mentors 3 and 7 showed pictures, and Mentor 1 recited the saying "What doesn't kill me will make me stronger," referring to the difficulty she had gone through in gaining Child 1's trust.

Parents. Parents expressed extremely positive views of the mentoring relationship their

children had with their mentors. While all children and mentors recalled either their match date or the amount of time they had been matched, parents did not mention the match date but instead recalled the number of months or years they had to wait in order to be matched.

Describing the mentor's role. In describing the role that the mentors played for their children, parents used terms such as “friend” (Parents 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10), “big brother” (Parents 9 and 10), and “masculine model” (Parents 7 and 8).

Describing the mentoring relationship. Parents described the mentoring relationship in many positive terms, such as “reliable” (Parent 12), “harmonious” (Parent 2), “healthy and respectful” (Parent 5), “complicit” (Parents 7 and 9), and “special” (Parent 8). Parent 7’s description of the relationship was representative of what other parents said: “C’est deux-là ensemble, ils font la paire. . . . Ils ont vraiment développé une grosse complicité. Ils s’entendent bien. Ils ont une belle relation. Je sais que c’est de l’or en barre pour lui.”

Communication. Eight parents acknowledged the important role of communication in the child’s and the mentor’s relationship. While some parents saw the mentors as someone else for their children to turn to if they needed to talk, others described how the mentor was a person that their child could trust and confide personal information to. The parents explained that at times children would prefer to confide to their mentors instead of confiding to them. Parent 9 recalled, “l’autre fois, il n’a pas voulu m’en parler, il a appelé Mentor 9 pour en discuter.” Part of what enabled this communication was that mentors made themselves available to the children by making it clear that the children could contact them. Parent 9 explained how Mentor 9 made himself available over the phone: “Depuis le début c’est: ‘Écoute, tu peux appeler la fin de semaine.’ Et là, il va répondre. Sinon, [Child 9 laisse un] message. Le lendemain, il va rappeler. C’est sûr qu’il comble un vide et que . . . c’est ça. Il sait qu’il a quelqu’un d’autre que moi.”

Parent 4, whose daughter was experiencing social difficulties at school, recalled how their caseworker told them Child 4 could confide to her mentor and how this helped: “Avant, au début, on ne savait pas que l’enfant peut faire confiance à leur Grand Frère ou Grande Sœur, de parler de leurs problèmes. Et puis, elle est retournée très, très relaxée. . . . Le malheur est parti. . . . Quand elle parle, juste la maman n’est pas assez. Elle a besoin l’opinion de quelqu’un d’autre.” Although the process of comfort in communicating was addressed at length by mentors, only one parent brought this up. Parent 7 explained, “les deux premières années, il flottait, il flottait sur des nuages. Maintenant, ils sont plus eux-mêmes, ils sont plus capables de se parler. . . . Tranquillement, ils s’apprivoisent encore.”

Activities. Parents spoke about the activities that their children experienced with their mentors, but unlike children for whom the activities filled a void, and unlike mentors who perceived the activities as an excuse to build the relationship, parents referred to the activities as opportunities for their children. Parents explained that mentors would take their children on activities they could not afford or teach skills they could not share with their children. For instance, Parent 6 exclaimed, “c’est tout le temps un déjeuner ou un dîner avec Child 6 et deux heures de sport, tennis, ou squash. C’est lui qui lui paie ses raquettes, en titanium! Je suis pas capable de payer ça, moi!” Parent 8 told of how Child 8 had never been involved in hockey until he was matched with his mentor: “j’ai jamais voulu m’engager dans le hockey parce que c’est une discipline qui est trop demandante. Child 8 c’est un garçon là, mais ça, tu t’organises pour que le père s’en occupe, pas toi.” Additionally, Parent 8 explained how she did not have skills in handiwork and Mentor 8 made an activity with Child 8 by finishing some renovations in her kitchen: “Je ne suis vraiment pas un gars. Je suis nulle. Fais-moi faire de la cuisine, il n’y a pas de problème! Mais ne me fais pas faire des portes d’armoire: je ne sais même pas par où

commencer! Mentor 8, il voyait que mes portes traînaient là. Une journée, il a décidé de venir les poser avec Child 8.”

Logistics. In speaking about activities, all parents, like all mentors, spoke about the importance of logistics, such as scheduling meeting dates and times and phone calls. They did not elaborate on the logistics of the meetings themselves as the mentors did, but focused rather on the reliability and predictability of the phone calls and meetings. Parent 12 made the link between Mentor 12’s predictability and her son’s ability to trust and confide in him: “La relation avec son Grand Frère, comme c’est une relation régulière, a permis à mon garçon de pouvoir avoir quelqu’un en qui se confier. . . . Comme Child 12 est très, très ponctuelle dans leur rencontre, ça aide beaucoup au lien de confiance entre les deux.” Some parents spoke about the mentors having a specific day and time slotted for the child every two weeks, while others reflected that the mentor’s schedule made it difficult to have predictable meetings even though most would respect the every-two-weeks guideline imposed by the organisation. Parent 3 recounted how Mentor 3 was often away on business but they were able to make a compromise: “Il était capable de s’arranger quand même. Les voyages étaient fréquents, donc en retournant il récompensait mon fils. Il lui donnait plusieurs sorties fréquentes.”

Attachment. Although how the relationship itself progressed over time was addressed at length by mentors, only two parents spoke about this. Parent 7, who referred to the process of increased communication, referred to gradual changes in the relationship throughout time, and Parent 11 explained, “the first year is to try to make the child and the big sister comfortable adjusting, and after the first year, there’s more freedom.”

Parents’ focus was more so geared towards their children’s attachment to their mentors. Parents used words such as “bond,” “attachment,” “trust,” and “connected” to describe the

connection between the children and mentors. Parents explained their child's attachment to their mentor in different ways. Parent 1 explained that her daughter was able to trust Mentor 1 because she was reliable: "C'est ça, là, un modèle, quelqu'un qui est responsable, qui est fiable." Parent 5 added that her son does not worry when his mentor does not call him because he is consistent: "Il n'a pas à être craintif si le Grand Frère ne téléphone pas le soir. . . . C'est assez . . . plate comme relation. Il sait qu'il est là. Il sait que son comportement ne change pas." Parent 12 felt that Mentor 12's similar background to her child's helped them to bond: "Ils ont vécu la même chose—le Grand Frère n'a pas connu son père quand il était jeune. Alors, il comprend Child 12. . . . [Il y a] une grande, grande complicité entre les deux. Des fois, ils se regardent, ils se font un sourire, puis eux se comprennent. Et moi, je suis là, puis, 'Okay, il y a quelque chose. Je là connais pas.' Le lien est très fort entre les deux." Regardless of the reason leading to the strong attachment, all parents agreed that their children cherished the relationship they had with their mentor. Parent 8 expressed, "il n'y a même pas un doute dans ma tête. Mentor 8, c'est vraiment le summum pour Child 8. C'est vraiment un modèle sur toute la ligne. . . . Je suis sûre que Child 8 voudrait être comme lui. Ah oui. Il est gentil, il est généreux, il est drôle, il est intelligent, il est fin." Parent 6 explained how her son cherishes his time with Mentor 6: "Les moments privilégiés avec Mentor 6, il les attend et il les aime. Et il n'y a rien de prévu, oublie ça, aucun téléphone. Tous ses chums sont avertis qu'il n'est pas disponible. Il n'échangera jamais Mentor 6 pour un chum, jamais, jamais, jamais. Il passe avant tout."

Commitment. Alongside attachment, parents reflected on the theme of commitment. Eight parents commented on how there were certain instances that lead them to believe that their mentor was truly committed to the relationship. Examples included the affection parents observed between the mentors and children, the relationship surviving through difficult

transitions (Parent 1), the mentor including the child in many of his own family's activities (Parent 3), and the already long duration of the match (Parents 6 and 9). The most powerful evidence of commitment for parents came from two statements that originated directly from mentors themselves, revealing to the parents and children that they wished to be involved in the children's lives over their lifetime. For example, Parent 9 shared, "À un moment donné, Mentor 9 a parlé à ma mère. C'était pour les États-Unis. Il lui a dit: 'Il y a un petit quelque chose qui me retient ici à Montréal.' Ça m'a fait un velours, je me suis dit: 'Il aime mon gars.'" Parent 6 similarly told how Mentor 6 asked her son to be his best man at his wedding, and recalled his speech: "Il a dit: 'Mentor 6, j'ai besoin de toi. Je ne veux pas que tu sois mon Grand Frère jusqu'à dix-huit ans, je veux que tu sois mon Grand Frère pour toute la vie.' Mentor 6 lui avait laissé une carte: 'Child 6, c'est pour la vie, nous autres.'"

Although parents generally felt that the mentors were committed, in the same breath many also acknowledged their fear that, for one reason or another, the relationship would break down. Parent 7 explained, "si Child 7 perdait Mentor 7, cela serait la fin du monde. J'aime autant ne pas y penser. J'aime autant ne pas y penser s'il arrivait quelque chose." Parent 9, although having heard Mentor 9 verbally commit himself to his relationship with Child 9, admitted, "son amour est acquis. Acquis, bien, je veux dire, jamais rien n'est acquis," and added "s'il fallait qu'il le perde du jour au lendemain, mon dieu, ce serait un gros deuil."

Developmental mentoring. As they described the mentoring relationships their children were involved in, five parents described clear aspects and examples of a developmental mentoring style. Parent 8 particularly appreciated Mentor 8 respecting her boundaries as a parent: "Il ne l'éduque pas, dans le sens qu'il ne s'ingère pas dans la discipline ou la façon dont moi, je 'run' ma maison. Au sujet des études non plus. Il ne fait pas de discipline. C'est sûr que

si Child 8 est avec lui et qu'il est impoli, il va le lui dire. . . . Donc, vraiment, quand Child 8 sait que Mentor 8 vient le chercher, il sait qu'il va avoir du 'fun.'” Three other parents explained how the mentors often matched the activities they organised with their children's interests (Parents 3, 5, and 7).

Representation of the relationship. The importance of the activities, the child-mentor attachment, and the parents' view of the relationship were evident when parents were asked to represent their relationship in one form or another. Parents chose a variety of representations to answer this question, such as the words “regaining your breath” (Parents 1 and 2), “a family barbecue with everyone together” (Parents 3 and 4), “Shrek clarinet music” (Parent 5), “a picture of the two of them together” (Parents 6 and 11), the image of the child and mentor “clowning around together” (Parent 12), “complicity” (Parents 7 and 9), “11 out of 10” (Parent 8), and “going from black and white to colour” (Parent 10).

Child-parent and child-family relationships

Children.

Someone to talk to about my family. The presence of a mentor provided a space for children to talk about their feelings and difficulties they had with their parents. Seven children reported having an improved relationship with their parent following being matched with their mentor. While three children could not explain specifically why they felt there was an improvement, the other children proposed a variety of possibilities. Child 11 explained, “like with my dad—I listen to him a lot more. . . . because I'm able to, like, let my feelings out to more than . . . one person.” Child 4 explained how her mentor often played the role of an unofficial mediator, enabling her and her mother to better communicate, and also helping her to better understand her mother's perspective. Child 6 admitted that he had been possessive with his

mother, but with his mentor had become “plus ‘maturisé’.” Three children also reflected that they were better behaved with their parent, more inclined to do chores, and follow through with instructions since their match. Child 6 explained himself during the interview:

Interviewer: Puis ta relation avec ta mère? Est-ce que là, tu vois une amélioration ou une différence?

Child 6: Une difference.

Interviewer: Qu'est-ce que tu dirais, comme différence?

Child 6: Je fais plus de travaux ménagers. Avant, je chiâlais pour pas en faire ou pour en faire pour de l'argent, mais maintenant, c'est rendu normal pour moi. . . . C'est Mentor 6 qui disait à ma mère: “Plus besoin d'argent.” Puis là, aujourd'hui, j'en fais plus sans demander de l'argent.

Interviewer: Est-ce que t'es content qu'il y ait des changements comme ça qui se soient opérés?

Child 6: Ouais, ça fait plaisir à moi, à ma mère, puis à Mentor 6.

Children also remarked that they had a better appreciation for their family when they returned home, as if they had “missed” them. Children 3 and 4, who are brother and sister, both felt that they got along better with one another since they had been matched.

A support for troubles at home. Two of the three children whose families lived in difficult contexts, such as familial involvement with the Department of Youth Protection, referred to an enlarged safety network following their match. They perceived their mentor as an adult they could confide to about the problems in their relationship with their parent. They also considered them as someone they could call in case of an emergency. Child 7 candidly described his relationship with his mother:

Interviewer: C'est comment ta relation avec ta mère?

Child 7: C'est couci-couça. Elle m'a donné un placement volontaire. Je me suis fait arrêter. Agression à main armée sur ma mère. J'ai passé une journée et une nuit dans une prison. Ben, dans un centre. . . .

Interviewer: Donc des fois ça va bien, des fois ça va pas.

Child 7: Ouain. Elle m'a fouetté. Elle m'a frappé avec une corde. J'ai réagi en réaction à ce qu'elle a fait. Elle n'a même pas pris la peine de le dire au juge et moi, je n'ai pas pensé à le dire au juge. Elle m'a frappé. C'est un peu pour ça que j'ai tout le temps envie de me battre. J'agis en réaction.

Interviewer: Est-ce que ce sont des choses dont t'arrives à parler?

Child 7: À Mentor 7. À ma blonde. . . .

Interviewer: Puis Mentor 7, comment il t'aide dans tout ça?

Child 7: Mettons que je dis: 'Je vais tuer ma mère,' c'est sûr qu'il va en parler. Mais il garde les affaires, tu sais, les bons secrets.

In the same vein, Child 12 spoke about how the positive moments he spent with his mentor enabled him to, for a few hours, forget his troubles.

The only difficulty mentioned by any of the children was by Child 4, who admitted to comparing her mentor to her mother and using certain elements to hurt her mother in arguments, which would then cause Parent 4 to become jealous of Mentor 4.

Mentors.

Increased respect at home. In reflecting on changes in the child's family since the beginning of their match, mentors primarily relayed observations from when they had seen the child's family interact. Four mentors noted that the children had become more respectful

towards family members when they were present. For example, Mentor 1 noted, “on dirait que elle a plus de respect—que ce soit qu’elle va dire ‘merci’ à sa mère pour le souper, puis qu’elle va amener sa table ou qu’elle la traitera pas de ‘grosse vache’ devant moi—qu’elle fera par exprès.” She added, with respect to Child 1’s relationships with her siblings, “il y a moins de chicanes aussi quand je suis là. Parce qu’avant j’allais là, puis c’était, aïe, ça se battait à coups de poings, puis ça se tirait les cheveux, ça se donnait des coups de pied. Child 1 sait que pour moi c’est inacceptable. . . . Ça passe pas, tolérance zéro. Ça fait que au moins, quand je suis là, ces comportements-là, elle ne les a plus ou vraiment moins.” In a similar vein, Mentor 2 noted that after he had made his expectations known to Child 2, the entire family became more respectful of his limits to graphic violence.

Mentor 6 felt his presence had the impact of reducing the rate of development of disrespect and challenge of others as Child 6 entered adolescence: “Je ne sais pas s’il est plus [respectueux] qu’avant, parce qu’il y a une évolution normale de sa personne qui entraîne qu’il est moins à l’adolescence. Je pense qu’il serait pire si je n’avais pas été dans le portrait. Il serait une coche en dessous sur le plan du comportement parce qu’en quelque part, il sait que Parent 6 me parle et il ne veut pas trop me décevoir.”

A listening ear. Three mentors also felt their role was to be present to listen and help the children communicate about their family. Mentors 4 and 9 acted as mediators between children and parents, at times, and encouraged the children to communicate with their parents about certain concerns.

Changes in family dynamics. Two mentors expressed insight into the possible changes in the family dynamics that their presence had caused. Mentors 3 and 12 both felt the children to be less of a “partner” to their single-mothers after being matched. Mentor 12 described the

separation process as gradual: “C’est en train de changer. Mais, je pense que Child 12 a été presque, des fois, le conjoint de sa mère. Je pense qu’il dormait encore dans le même lit jusqu’à récemment. Pas tous les soirs, mais oui, cela arrivait souvent. Child 12 a souvent des préoccupations monétaires: le loyer, l’épicerie, les paiements mensuels pour le nouveau lit, pour le *set* de salon. Pour un enfant de 12 ans . . . je trouvais que c’était un peu précoce.”

Like a member of the family. Finally, four mentors felt that they themselves had been integrated into the child’s family. Although they felt a certain privilege of being treated like a member of the family, they also felt an added responsibility of sometimes being asked to take care of the needs of other unmatched children.

Parents.

Changes in family dynamics. Whereas mentioned by only two mentors, all mothers spoke at length about changes in family dynamics that occurred since the mentors had been matched with their children. They explained that the presence of another adult had forced them to become open to someone else’s presence. Parent 8 expressed, “c’est tout un changement dans notre vie aussi, de trouver une place pour quelqu’un d’autre.” Parent 5 described how she reasoned with herself in order to make space for Mentor 5: “Il faut s’adapter et . . . il faut intégrer une autre personne (alors qu’on chiaule parce qu’on est tout seul). . . . Puis quand il y a l’autre personne, il faut surtout se raisonner en se disant, ‘bien non, faut que tu ouvres un peu les portes, il faut que tu laisses d’autres personnes entrer dans le cercle.’ On devient une famille, vraiment un nucléosome. Et là, il faut se raisonner pour laisser l’autre prendre une place.”

Increased mother-son distance. Seven mothers also expressed that the mentor’s presence had an impact on the closeness they felt with their children. Mothers mentioned that this presence created a distance, where there had not previously been one, between parents and

children. Parent 5 explained how she saw Mentor 5 as opening up their closed circle so mother and child could have a bit of breathing space: “Je me rendais compte qu’il y avait un espèce de désir, phénomène de phagocytose. J’ai l’impression que mon fils commençait à m’envahir, il me prenait complètement. Maman, maman, maman! . . . C’est le style de dynamique là où on commence à étouffer. Il va falloir absolument un pôle extérieur qui va tirer un petit peu le petit cercle, parce que moi, je fournissais plus là. Et donc, cela a fonctionné. Parent 10 added to this, explained the difference she felt at home: “Dans la maison, ça fait une différence. Ça fait que moi, je me sens plus libérée aussi, peut-être. Je pense que c’est ça, l’effet du Grand Frère: il se rattache moins à moi. Dans un sens, je suis le centre de son univers. Là, il y a un autre, palliatif.”

Some mothers also mentioned that they became less close to their sons because they decided to share more masculine aspects of themselves with their newfound masculine role models. Parent 12 described the difficulty she had at accepting this:

Dans les premières semaines . . . un jour Child 12, je me souviens plus c’est quoi le sujet, mais je voyais que ça feelais pas. Je lui ai dit: “mais qu’est-ce qui se passe, mon grand, tu veux m’en parler, on va essayer de régler ça.” “Non, finalement, c’est pas à toi que je veux parler, c’est à mon Grand Frère.” Oh, ça je l’ai pris dur, tu sais, quand tu as été tout le temps toute seule, tu as toujours été la personne qui supporte, qui aide, qui essaie de trouver des solutions. Puis là, tout d’un coup, pouf, c’est plus moi, c’est plus à moi qu’il veut parler. Ça a été le côté difficile, mais tu apprends à vivre avec. Ça c’est fait partie de la *game*. Le coup est dur à avaler. Oui, c’est ça, j’ai avalé tout croche.

Parent 6 added, “il est peut-être moins ouvert avec moi. Il y a des affaires, c’est Mentor 6, des affaires, c’est maman. . . . Child 6, c’est un gars et Mentor 6, c’est un gars.”

Improved mother-son relationship. In accepting the other adult's presence, mothers (Parents 3, 5, 8, 9, and 12) allowed themselves to concentrate on themselves and found that they were better able to appreciate time with their children. Parent 12 expressed, "être séparé un peu, quand on se revoit, on est peut-être plus content. Quand on est tout le temps ensemble, il n'y a personne qui interagit entre nous autres, on est juste les deux dans la maison." Parent 8 explained that she began to parent more consistently because she was better rested: "Tu n'as jamais un moment de répit. Cela fait qu'à un moment donné, tu n'en fais plus de discipline parce que c'est plus facile de laisser aller que de maintenir. . . . Les écarts sont moins énormes qu'avant. Au lieu de faire cela en dents de scie, peut-être que ça monte et que des fois, cela revient, et que des fois, il y a un petit bout où c'est plus stable." Parent 12 added that her expectations of Child12 changed after the match and gave him greater responsibilities around the house: "Quand t'apprends à prendre plus de temps pour toi, cela a nécessairement un impact sur la relation avec ton enfant parce que là auparavant, je faisais tout, toute seule. Maintenant, Child 12 a besoin de m'aider, parce que ça ne me tente pas de passer trois heures à faire le ménage. . . . Je demande un peu plus de tâches à Child 12 que je ne faisais pas auparavant."

Less pressure from sons to find a father-figure. Outside of changes in family dynamics, four mothers also noted less pressure from their children to find a partner. Parent 3 explained how her son suffered from not having a father and how he would bug her to find a father for him and his sister: "Ils ne parlent pas du manque de la famille comme avant. Child 3 a fait mal beaucoup à l'absence d'un papa. Il me poussait beaucoup de trouver un homme, quelqu'un, n'importe quel homme. . . [pour qu'un] papa soit dans notre vie. Et puis, avec le temps, je l'ai trouvé pas très insistant comme il était avant parce qu'il a son Grand Frère. Parent 12 added that her son no longer talks about her to men he meets, in an attempt to match her up: "Mettons, on

allait dans un parc et le père était là avec ses enfants, tu sais. Lui, il vient avec ses enfants, il ne vient pas sortir le voisinage. [Child 12 disait], ‘Oui, ma mère s’appelle Parent 12, elle est là. Moi, j’aime ça faire ça.’ ‘Oui, oui.’ Des fois, c’était un peu gênant. C’était comme, tu sais: ‘Child 12, joue avec les enfants, mais ne va pas.’ C’est cela. C’est beaucoup cela qu’on a remarqué dans le jumelage.”

Reflecting on the child-parent relationship. Another aspect that three parents (4, 7, and 11) mentioned was that their children were exposed to different types of relationship styles with their mentors, and at times the differences became an impetus to discuss their own relationship. Parent 7 explored this with Child 7 when he said: “Des fois, Child 7 a fait des comparaisons: ‘Je peux faire ça avec Mentor 7.’ Bien, je dis: ‘Avec moi, tu ne peux pas. Avec moi, c’est ma limite.’ . . . ou ‘Pourquoi est-ce que je ris tout le temps avec Mentor 7, mais qu’on n’est pas capable de rire ensemble ?’ Moi, je lui disais: ‘C’est parce que, regarde, la relation est tendue. Avec Mentor 7, elle ne l’est pas.’ Oui, des comparaisons, mais c’est aussi: ‘Regarde, il y a des raisons pour lesquelles c’est comme ça.’” Another mother explained that at times, the differences between herself and her children’s mentors became a leverage that the children would try to use against their mother. Parent 4 gave an example, “Child 4 me dit: ‘Chez elle, elle me laisse dormir à n’importe quelle heure, elle est une meilleure maman. Si elle serait ma maman, c’est beaucoup mieux. Si je veux quitter ici, je vais aller chez elle.’”

The mentor becomes part of the family. A final comment from parents regarding the impact of the mentor on the family is that the mentors became part of the family. Seven mothers explained that the mentors ended up taking such an important role in their child’s life that they were included in most family events, such as birthdays, weddings, and confirmations. Parent 8 succinctly remarked, “Mentor 8, cela fait partie de notre vocabulaire. Il s’appelle Mentor 8.

Cela fait partie de notre vie.”

The mentor-parent relationship.

Children. No children commented on the relationship between their parents and their mentors, but instead spoke about moments when the three of them were together.

Mentor-parent romance. Although not reflective of an actual relationship between a mentor and parent, one child revealed his wish for his mentor and mother to be involved in a romantic relationship with each other. Child 12 had thought about how his mentor would conciliate the roles of husband and father by spending less time with him and more with his mother:

Interviewer: Si tu avais à lui donner un rôle qu'est-ce que tu dirais?

Child 12: Mon père.

Interviewer: Ton père?

Child 12: Un rôle dans ma vie, ce serait mon père.

Interviewer: Donc, il prend la place que ton père n'a pas pris, n'a pas pu prendre?

Child 12: En fait, qu'il n'a pas voulu.

Interviewer: Il a une grande importance. . . .

Child 12: Oui. . . . S'il serait mon père, on ferait pas toutes ces activités-là, c'est sûr qu'on en ferait quelques unes, mais pas tous parce que il serait avec ma mère. Il ne faut pas qu'il s'occupe juste de moi. Mais, par exemple, juste de la manière qu'il me parle, juste de la manière qu'on se parle, moi puis lui, juste, je ne sais pas, rien que être avec lui c'est chaleureux, c'est le fun. . . . Ça serait le fun pareil qu'il soit mon père, même si je passe moins de temps avec lui, là.

Mentors. All mentors agreed that they got along well with the parents of the children

they mentored, although their level of closeness to the parents varied from being cordial (Mentor 11) to nearly familial (Mentor 1). In explaining what helped them to get along with each other, mentors came up with a variety of possibilities. Some found it easy to engage in small talk with the parents (Mentors 2, 3, 9, and 10), whereas others, coming from similar cultural backgrounds, felt they had similar value systems (Mentors 3 and 10). Mentors 3, 6, and 9 all felt they got along well because they felt there was a mutual respect between mentors and parents, and Mentors 4, 5, and 8 felt the parents trusted them.

Discussing the children. All mentors felt that a major component of their relationships with parents consisted of discussing how the children were doing, be it briefly or at length, depending on the context. Six mentors specifically mentioned appreciating the open lines of communication the parents had with them. Mentors particularly appreciated when parents shared specific situations that had occurred that could impact the children. For instance, Mentor 1 was grateful when Parent 1 spoke with her privately about how changes in Parent 1's personal life could affect Child 1: "Je suis pas l'amie à Parent 1, je suis l'amie à Child 1. Mais, sa mère puis moi, on est assez proche qu'elle va me dire . . . 'là ça va être difficile; il faut que j'casse avec mon chum. Child 1, elle l'aime beaucoup. Child 1 . . . va passer sûrement à travers un moment plus difficile.' 'Ah, OK. Ça fait que si Child 1 m'appelle plus souvent cette semaine-là, je vais savoir pourquoi.' . . . Et là, récemment . . . Parent 1 me disait . . . le père de Child 1 s'était retrouvé en prison. . . . Il faisait à croire à [Child 1] que c'était à cause [de Parent 1] s'il était en prison." The mentors specifically appreciated receiving important information concerning the child so they could understand where certain feelings may come from and respond appropriately during their outings. Mentor 5 commented, "elle me donne beaucoup d'informations. Justement, quand il est revenu d'Algérie la première fois, elle m'a rencontré à part, sans Child 5,

pour m'expliquer ce qu'il s'est passé pour que je comprenne. . . . Child 5 avait été bizarre la première fois, il n'arrêtait pas de me parler de son père. . . . Ça m'a aidé à comprendre aussi, faque elle-même m'aide beaucoup dans ma relation à comprendre pourquoi, des fois, Child 5 réagit d'une façon. J'arrive des fois, puis il est frustré et je ne sais pas pourquoi, puis sa mère . . . va me dire: 'Je lui ai dit non à telle chose, fait que ça se peut qu'il soit.'"

On a mission. In the same vein, Mentors 4, 6, and 9 also mentioned the important role of mediator that the parents sometimes asked them to play. At certain times, the parents had called them to give them a "mission" (Mentor 9) and enlist their help with regard to a certain topic. For instance, Mentor 4 recalled that Parent 4 privately asked her to speak to Child 4 about some of her difficulties with peers and teachers. Mentor 6 had been asked to speak to Child 6 about his school motivation, and Mentor 9 had been asked to address some behaviour difficulties with Child 6. These three mentors all felt flattered that the parents trusted them enough to confide in them about this, and these requests did not bother the mentors because they occurred only occasionally. In all the examples given by mentors, this communication was kept confidential between parents and mentors, and mentors specifically mentioned that they had not told the children about the requests their parents had made. The mentors also remarked they did not give post-intervention feedback to the parents because they felt they wanted to keep some privacy to their relationship.

Flexibility: Advantages and disadvantages. Three mentors spoke positively and negatively about flexibility surrounding the rules governing the mentoring relationship. Mentors 1 and 5, for instance, felt positively about making personal ententes with parents without the caseworkers knowing. Mentor 1 explained herself:

Je désaccord un peu les Grands Frères et Grandes Soeurs. Moi puis Parent 1, on a cette

entente-là: Que si Child 1 a plus le goût d'aller jouer avec ses amis en fin de semaine, que c'est pas grave, que nous, on se reprendra une autre fois. . . . Pas qu'on ment, là, mais quand Caseworker le demande: "Ah oui, oui, on se voit pas mal tout le temps aux deux semaines égales." Mais, des fois . . . ça va faire 2 semaines et demie, ou on va avoir sauté une fin de semaine au complet. . . . Je pense qu'en partant, Parent 1 puis moi, on a comme établi notre flexibilité, tu sais. . . . *Learn the rules and you can bend them*, tu sais.

At the same time, two mentors, including Mentor 1, also mentioned the difficulty associated with blurring the rules surrounding outings, specifically surrounding scheduling. Mentors 1 and 11 did not appreciate when the parents picked their daughters up late from their outings.

Support from parents. Five mentors addressed the extremely important role of support in the mentor-parent relationship. Mentor 5 clearly stated the importance of feeling parental support:

Dans la mission du Grand Frère, dans le contexte de l'association, le rôle de la mère peut faciliter ou détruire la relation. Si la mère s'implique trop ou si elle ne te fait pas assez confiance, tu ne feras pas l'effort supplémentaire de la convaincre de [pause]. Regarde, c'est déjà beaucoup, s'il faut en plus que tu aies une embûche avec la mère, tu vas abandonner. Moi, je connais quelqu'un qui a abandonné après un an parce que la mère ne lui faisait pas confiance. Par exemple: "Tu ne vas pas faire ci, tu ne vas pas [pause]." Et ce n'est pas quelqu'un qui était négligent. Mais elle était trop *control freak*, donc cela n'a pas marché.

Mentor 4 spoke about being very supported by Parent 4 when her own mother suddenly died. She felt relieved that Parent 4 supported her in taking the time to recover from the shock,

even if it meant not seeing Child 4 for some time. Mentors 10, and 12, however, would have preferred to have received more support from the parents on specific occasions. Mentor 10, for example, had to cancel his appointment once with Child 10, and did not feel supported by Parent 10 when he had to announce this to the child. Mentor 10 also did not feel supported by Parent 10 when Child 10 once called him and asked if they could have an outing because his mother wanted to go out. Also, Mentor 12 mentioned not feeling supported by Parent 12 when she forgot that they had scheduled an outing and so he showed up for nothing.

Mentor-parent roles and boundaries. Six mentors (12, 2, 3, 9, 1, and 6) spoke specifically about the differences between their role and the parents', as well as how they negotiated the boundaries between the two roles. Mentors defined their respective roles by explaining that the mentoring relationship included the child only, and was separate from the parents. Mentor 6 explained, "c'est quelque chose entre lui et moi. Tu sais, lui, moi et mon entourage. Sa mère, elle est séparée de cela." However, because the mentoring relationship existed because the parents had consented to it, and because mentors had to consult with the parents regularly in order to plan outings, mentors strove to maintain friendly and respectful terms with the parents. Mentor 2 illustrated, "je ne parle pas souvent à sa mère. Quand j'appelle, c'est: 'OK, je te passe Child 2.' Des fois, après, je fais exprès pour lui demander: 'Comment ça va?' Mais, je ne pousse pas. Ma relation, c'est avec lui, pas avec elle." Mentor 9 showed his respect for boundaries by never dismissing Parent 9's authority, especially with regard to rules that she had set: "On discute, on en parle, mais il ne faut jamais—j'essaie jamais de *challenger* son autorité, en tant que telle, à elle. Ce n'est pas mon rôle." Finally, Mentor 1 respected the boundaries by not expressing her disagreement with Parent 1's lack of limit-setting with her daughter: "Si c'était mon amie à moi et je voyais qu'elle agit comme ça . . . peut-être

que je leur dirais. . . . C'est pas ma place à dire ça. . . . Ma place de Grande Soeur c'est pas ça. Je peux pas me permettre de dire quelque chose comme ça.”

Negotiating closeness. The main challenge mentors spoke of, in striving to maintain a “friendly, yet not friendly” relationship with parents, was negotiating an appropriate distance between each other, in which both were comfortable. Although mentors wanted to be friendly, they did not want to become too close, either, for fear of crossing boundaries. Mentor 12 described how, in several ways, Parent 12 wanted a friendlier relationship than he was comfortable with, at times, attempting to play the role of both mother and friend to him: “Elle est un peu maternelle avec moi. Elle est toujours: ‘Ça va tu? Messemble que tu as l’air grippé?’ Cela m’énervé un peu. J’en ai une mère, et elle fait bien sa *job*. J’en ai pas besoin d’en avoir deux tout le temps.” Mentor 12 also described how he had to actively protect the intimacy of his mentoring relationship because he felt Parent 12 was overly concerned in letting him know that his homosexuality was not a problem for her:

Au début . . . elle me prenait avec des pincettes par rapport à mon orientation sexuelle, parce qu’elle voulait tellement être sûre que je comprenne qu’elle n’avait pas de problème avec cela. Elle m’invitait à souper et tout. Aux Grands Frères Grands sœurs, on nous dit: “Vous êtes l’ami du Petit frère, pas l’ami de sa mère. C’est correct que vous vous entendiez bien, mais vous n’allez pas faire une sortie avec votre Petit frère et sa mère. Cela peut arriver exceptionnellement, mais ce n’est pas ça le but de l’affaire.” Elle voulait souper avec moi et mon chum et tout, et Child 12, évidemment. . . . J’ai dit: “Ben regarde, c’est gentil. Mais, on regardera si ça adonne. Mais, je te dirais que je suis pas très à l’aise avec cela.” Là, elle était sûre que c’était à cause de l’orientation sexuelle. Elle dit: “Mais, je veux que tu saches que tout le monde dans ma famille t’accepte.”

“Regarde, tournons la page. Ce n’est pas de ça que je te parle. Je te dis juste que j’ai envie de me concentrer sur ma relation avec Child 12. Peut-être quand ça va faire assez longtemps, on verra si je suis prêt à élargir cela. Mais pour l’instant, c’est juste moi et Child 12. Et je veux vraiment qu’il se sente privilégié d’avoir ce lien-là avec moi. Je ne veux pas partager ce qu’on a avec tout le monde.”

Mentor 9 similarly described feeling that Parent 9 had been too familiar with him, sharing too many personal details: “Sa mère a tendance à vouloir parler de ses problèmes personnels, parfois. Elle ne le fait peut-être plus parce que je ramène toujours la discussion à Child 9: ‘Qu’est-ce qu’il en pense, Child 9? Ou, par rapport à Child 9?’ En général, . . . les Grands Frères sont à l’écoute, alors les mères ou les pères peuvent s’en servir aussi pour une oreille, mais bon, ce n’est pas tout à fait mon rôle. Je ne suis pas psychologue, je suis un informaticien.” While Mentor 9 did not appreciate when Parent 9 shared her own personal difficulties, he also provided an example of when he had done the same: “Un moment donné, j’étais chez elle. Et moi, ça n’allait pas bien au travail. J’avais des opportunités aux États-Unis. J’ai dit: ‘Bah, au pire s’ils niaient trop, je vais m’en aller aux États-Unis et on verra bien ce qui se passera après ça, et tout.’ Et il [Child 9] a entendu. Et là aussi, il a piqué une crise, à ce moment-là.” In essence, Mentor 9 blurred his boundaries by sharing his frustrations at work with Parent 9. This led to other complications as Child 9, who had overheard the conversation and thought his mentoring relationship was in peril. Mentor 9 then had to reassure him that he would not abandon him.

A final example of a mentor feeling discomfort because of a parent being too familiar came from Mentor 1, who brought Child 1 home from an outing only to find Parent 1 in bed with another man: “Je ramène Child 1 chez eux après une sortie, puis sa mère est enfermée dans sa

chambre avec son chum puis Child 1, elle insiste: ‘Ouvre la porte! Ouvre la porte!’ J’étais comme: ‘Là, donne lui deux minutes, là! Je pense qu’elle a besoin de se réhabiller.’ Puis, tu sais très bien qu’est-ce qu’ils faisaient. Puis sa mère, elle dit: ‘Non, non, non! Tu nous pognes un peu les culottes baissées!’ Oui, effectivement j’ai remarqué. ‘Regarde, je voulais pas vous déranger. Je voulais juste vous dire que Child 1 est revenu, puis je m’en vais. Bye!’” Mentor 1 explained how this situation led her to realise that Parent 1 was comfortable with much looser boundaries than she was.

Mentor-parent romance. In addressing the complexities of respecting each other’s roles and boundaries, two mentors spoke about the hypothetical notion of crossing boundary lines by becoming romantically involved with a parent. Although only two mentors spoke about this, this issue was included because it is a plausible, yet incredibly complex, possibility that deserves to be named and explored. Mentor 3 described his reasons for thinking this would be a possibility and his apprehension of being caught in such a situation, even prior to his match:

J’avais un peu peur au début qu’elle veuille plus. . . . Je suis avec ma fiancée depuis cinq ans, puis Child 3 depuis deux ans, donc je n’ai jamais eu un moment où j’étais célibataire pendant. Mais ça, c’était ma question majeure par rapport à la mère de l’enfant, avant. . . . Comment *manager*, de parler avec la mère, si la mère s’attache à toi ou quelque chose. . . . Ce n’est jamais arrivé, disons que je ne pense pas que ça aurait été bien pour Child 3. Mais, j’imagine que ça doit arriver, si beaucoup de critères sont là qui fonctionnent—avoir un homme qui vient voir ton fils. Si j’étais la mère, à un moment donné, je m’attacherais, c’est ça que je me dis.

Mentor 9, who never had a romantic relationship with Parent 9, recalled how, in the early stages of the mentoring relationship, Child 9 wished for them to be romantically linked. The expression

of this wish caused both adults to become uncomfortable:

Ça avait mis un petit froid, c'était assez comique. On était dans sa cuisine, c'était sa fête [à Child 9]. Il rentre dans la cuisine, il commence à chanter la marche nuptiale. C'est sa fête! Au lieu de chanter "Bonne fête," il chante la marche nuptial! Je le regarde: "C'est quoi cette affaire-là?" Et là, il vient tout gêné. Sa mère aussi. C'est sûr, qu'au début de la relation . . . il aurait voulu qu'on se *match*. Moi et sa mère. J'aurais été là plus souvent, en tant que tel. Mais ça avait été drôle parce c'était comme ça que ça c'était traduit. . . . Il savait ce qu'il avait chanté, là. On a fait comme: "C'est quoi cette affaire-là?" Elle et moi, on est devenu super mal à l'aise. C'était assez! J'étais assez mal à l'aise, merci! Oh minute, qu'est-ce que je suis supposé répondre?

Parents. All parents agreed they got along well with the mentors, and similarly described varying levels of relational closeness, ranging from "courteous" (Parent 2) to "like a partnership" (Parent 6). In explaining what helped them to get along with each other, parents came up with a variety of possibilities, and these were identical to the reasons the mentors gave. A subset of parents found it easy to chit-chat with the mentors (Parents 2, 5, 7, 9, and 11). One mother, Parent 3, appreciated coming from similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, while another group of mothers felt it was easy to get along with the mentors because they had similar value systems (Parents 4, 6, 9, and 10). Parents 5, 6, and 8 all reported getting along well because they felt there was a mutual respect between mentors and parents, and Parent 4 trusted the mentor. In addition to small talk, similar values, and mutual respect, three parents (3, 9, and 12) reported getting along with the mentors because they were simply nice people, and two parents (7 and 8) specifically had positive feelings towards the mentors because they were reliable. Parent 7 summed up her thought on her relationship with Mentor 7: "C'est vraiment exceptionnel, parce

que parfois, les personnes dans une relation, que ce soit avec l'enfant ou la mère de l'enfant, au bout d'un certain temps, vont vouloir se permettre de dire des choses ou de parler de quelque chose qui ne les regarde pas . . . ou de poser un lapin au rendez-vous. . . . Ce qui est bien, c'est que tout le temps n'a pas altéré la qualité de la relation. Ni avec mon fils, ni avec moi."

Discussing the children. All parents, as did mentors, felt that a primary element in mentor-parent relationship consisted of informing the mentor about how their children were doing. Parents explained that most of the communication with mentors occurred when mentors would pick the children up for their activities. Parents would share how the children's week unfolded. Some parents also used this time to find out more about the activities the children were going to participate in, and discussed the logistics of future meetings. Seven parents also felt strongly about sharing information concerning their children if they felt it could help mentors better understand them, and explained they would do this in private. Parent 6 specified when she would to this: "Des fois, c'est arrivé. J'ai appelé Mentor 6, comme pour l'école. . . . Je lui ai déjà envoyé un *email*. C'est rare que j'interviens, c'est seulement quand quelque chose va mal ou quand il y a une bonne nouvelle." Parents 7 and 11 also shared with the mentors the behaviour problems their children were experiencing, though also mentioned they had been warned by their caseworkers about the complexities of sharing specific issues because it could taint the mentors' view of their children. Parent 11 admitted, "Mentor 11 is easygoing and [pause] I find it easy for me to talk to her. Sometimes, I might tell her things, but then I'm told by the Big Sisters organisation: 'Well just keep that between, like [pause] Don't let Child 11 know that Mentor 11 knows.'"

Mentors giving feedback. Parents also enjoyed getting feedback about their children, positive or negative. Parents 4 and 9 cherished the comments that the mentors had made about

the positive impact the relationship had on their lives. Parents 4 and 6 also appreciated the transparency with which the mentors had shared difficult conversations or behaviours that they felt parents should be aware of. Parent 4 recalled when Mentor 4 spoke to her privately about a conversation she had with her daughter, who had attempted to give herself a home tattoo:

J'ai vu des marques sur son bras, j'étais trop fâché, j'ai expliqué que ça fait . . . de l'infection, les maladies . . . c'est pas la bonne façon de s'y prendre. . . . Elle m'a écouté, mais elle m'a pas cru . . . donc elle a contacté sa Grande sœur en cachette. . . . Et puis, c'est ça, Mentor 4 m'a parlé après. . . . Elle a expliqué qu'à cet âge-là, la loi ne te donne pas le droit de le faire maintenant. . . . Et qu'il y a aussi d'autres impacts négatifs . . . donc . . . elle est retournée à Maman: 'Mentor 4 m'a dit des choses qui sont comme tu me l'expliques, toi, mais elle me donne plus de raisonnement.' . . . Et comme Mentor 4 nous a visité pour l'activité [suivante], on a parlé entre moi et elle de qu'est-ce qui s'est passé.

Other parents, however, clearly wished they received more feedback from the mentors (Parent 8), or, in recalling past incidents, wished that the mentors would have addressed a problematic situation earlier (Parents 1 and 3). Parent 1 recalled sadly that Mentor 1 had kept her daughter's behaviour problems to herself, until Mentor 1 reached a point where she questioned her commitment to the relationship:

Avec Child 1, bien c'est sûr que le fait que ça a été plus conflictuel par période, ça allait moins bien. C'est que Mentor 1 l'a pas dit plus tôt qu'il avait des choses qui n'allaient pas. Tu sais, il y avait des affaires que . . . c'est quasiment sept, huit mois . . . qu'ils se passaient. Bien, j'aurais aimé ça qu'elle le dise avant. . . . Tu sais, le fait qu'un moment donné, ça avait changé de vent, dans le sens où Child 1 ne voulait plus de Grande sœur, . .

. je pense que Mentor 4 tolérât des choses . . . pour se faire accepter aussi. Bien là, elle a attendu . . . avant de dire: “Bien, je continue tu d’être bénévole ou pas”—tu sais, à remettre la relation en question.

Communication. Four parents (5, 6, 8, and 10) explained that the greater the comfort they felt in communicating with the mentors, the greater their satisfaction in their relationship with them and their ability to place trust in the mentors. Parents specified the importance of being able to discuss problems or work through certain misunderstandings so that they could generally feel good about the relationship. Parent 5 explained how she came to a greater comfort level with Mentor 5 by speaking to him directly instead of going through her caseworker: “Quand j’ai des questions, . . . je les pose, puis j’ai les réponses. Il y a vraiment pas de problèmes, pas d’accro, pas de gêne—parce que, parfois, il y a toujours une espèce de gêne quelque part—quelqu’un qui n’est pas d’accord avec quelque chose. Mais, à un moment, je voulais poser une question au Grand Frère et puis, j’avais dit à Caseworker: ‘Est-ce que je peux lui parler directement? Puis lui, aussi.’ . . . Elle a dit oui, donc on se parle directement. On n’a pas besoin d’intervenant pour les échanges de fond. Alors, c’est très bien. Il n’y a pas de peur à prendre le téléphone.” Similarly, Parent 6 explained that she and Mentor 6 had agreed to discuss any problems between the two of them: “On s’était dit que s’il y avait un problème, on n’en parlerait pas nécessairement aux Grands Frères. On est assez mature et capable de se parler. . . . Il aime mieux ça, j’aime mieux ça.”

Parent 8 recalled how, at the beginning of the relationship, that she felt a barrier in her relationship with Mentor 8 because he communicated too formally with her. She explained how she brought this up with him and their discussion allowed him to become more familiar with her, which in turn, enabled Parent 8 to feel more comfortable handing her child over to him:

Tu ne connais pas l'autre personne. Il me vouvoyait. Cela me tapait sur les nerfs parce que je me disais: 'Je te donne mon enfant. Ça crée une barrière pour moi, le vouvoiement.' . . . Je lui disais tout le temps: "Tu peux me tutoyer." . . . Malgré cela, il a été habitué à vouvoyer. C'était un signe de respect pour lui. Il s'est dit que, peut-être avec le temps, la barrière tomberait. . . . Mais moi, je n'en pouvais plus! . . . Parce que, pour moi, cela créait cette barrière-là, qui faisait que je n'étais pas à l'aise. Ce sont des petites choses . . . mais moi, cela me *boguait*. Donc, il a commencé à me tutoyer. . . . Il ne me vouvoie plus depuis longtemps! Il rentre ici, il s'écrase sur le divan. C'est comme si c'était mon frère.

On a mission. Parents 4, 6, and 9, whose children were matched 37, 49, and 60 months, respectively, also spoke of the support the mentors provided by occasionally playing the role of mediator between themselves and their children. Children of these parents also happened to have the longest mentoring relationships amongst all participants. These parents specifically appreciated being able to rely on the mentors to support them at rare, yet important, times. Parent 9 explained that during the course of her son's five-year relationship with Mentor 9, "c'est arrivé deux fois dans tout le jumelage qu'à un moment donné, j'ai attendu que Child 9 se couche pour appeler Mentor 9: 'Bon écoute, il s'est passé telle, telle situation. Pourrais-tu regarder ça, en arrière, subtilement, qu'est-ce qu'il a dit? Ou voir, tu sais.' Donc, il a dit: 'OK.' Donc . . . ils ont discuté." Parents appreciated this support because they realised the extent to which the mentors could influence their children and trusted they would guide them in the same direction they would have.

Mentor-parent roles and boundaries. Four parents (5, 7, 8, and 12) specifically addressed how mentor and parent roles differed from one another and how they respected each

other's boundaries. The explanations they gave were considerably more in-depth than those of the mentors. Parent 12 clearly described the contrast between the two roles and the responsibility of each:

On comprend nos rôles respectifs. Lui n'a pas à faire de discipline envers Child 12. C'est sûr que si Child 12 est avec lui, il vient pour traverser la rue en courant, puis que la lumière est rouge—ben là, oui, il est obligé de l'empêcher de pas le laisser se faire tuer. . . . Pis moi, je n'ai pas à m'immiscer dans leur relation, non plus. . . . La seule exception, c'est que si Child 12 faisait une confiance à son Grand Frère qui a rapport à sa santé ou sa sécurité. À ce moment, Mentor 12 a l'obligation de m'en parler. N'importe quels autres, Mentor 12 n'a pas à m'en parler. Les confidences qui sont faites à Mentor 12 demeurent entre eux deux, et moi, je n'ai pas à poser des questions. . . . Ça m'appartient pas. . . . On a vraiment nos rôles qui sont très distincts l'un de l'autre. La discipline, ça m'appartient—l'alimentation, tout ce qui a rapport à l'éducation de Child 12. Eux autres, c'est vraiment amitié, activité. . . . On a des règlements à suivre. Mentor 12 n'est pas mon Grand Frère, c'est pas mon ami, là. . . . Le Grand Frère ou la Grande sœur est là pour l'enfant, mais pas pour le parent. Moi, je peux pas appeler Mentor 12 pour lui dire: “Ça te dérangerait-tu si que Child 12 dorme chez vous à soir parce que moi j'aimerais ça sortir?” J'ai pas le droit de faire ça. Moi, je ne peux pas appeler Mentor 8 pour faire des confidences. Mentor 12 est là pour Child 12, et non pour moi.

Negotiating closeness. Parents 5, 7, and 8 also spoke of the substantial challenge they experienced in endeavouring to maintain a “friendly, yet not too friendly” relationship with mentors. A main concern of these parents was the worry that they would become too close to the mentors and over involve themselves in the relationship. Hence, their main struggle was to keep

an appropriate distance, while remaining approachable, in order to respect their child's space, as Parent 7 explained:

J'ai trouvé ça difficile au début, d'entrer en communication avec Mentor 7. C'est-à-dire, pour moi, c'était important que ce soit l'espace de Child 7. . . . Mais Mentor 7 est super sympathique, il est super le *fun*. Cela serait facile pour moi de déborder et je ne veux pas. Ce qui était difficile, c'était de mettre la limite. . . . Dire ce que j'ai à dire, mais ne pas trop approcher pour . . . ne pas que Child 7 ait l'impression que Mentor 7 devienne mon ami. [pause] Au début, cela a été difficile pour moi—dire: "J'avance, j'avance pas?"

Parent 8 went in to detail about why striking a balance was difficult. Because Mentor 8 was more than an acquaintance, yet not a friend nor a family member, but with considerable influence on her family life and the knowledge she could count on him in an emergency, her relationship with him was not comparable to any other:

Ce n'est pas comme de la famille, dans le sens que mon frère, je vais l'appeler pour lui parler de mes affaires personnelles. Je ne fais pas cela avec Mentor 8. . . . C'est dur à dire, parce que Mentor 8, il n'est pas là pour moi, il est là pour Child 8. Mais c'est sûr que, qu'on le veuille ou non, je suis le lien entre les deux. C'est sûr qu'on se parle—il va me parler à moi quand il va téléphoner. . . . C'est plus qu'une connaissance. C'est entre les deux. C'est dur à expliquer. . . . C'est sûr que, bien mal prise, je suis sûre que j'appellerais Mentor 8 pour quelque chose. Mais, je ne le ferais pas, parce que, justement . . . cette relation-là, c'était pour Child 8. Je dirais vraiment que dans un cas de vie ou de mort, oui, je l'appellerais. Mais je veux dire, je ne l'appellerais pas pour des problèmes d'argent, je ne l'appellerais pas parce que mon 'char' est brisé.

The final parent to comment on the challenge of striking a balance in the mentor-parent

relationship was Parent 5, whose main concern was to not overwhelm Mentor 5: “Quand ils sont ensemble, j’essaie de ne pas trop m’immiscer dans la relation parce que je veux que ça reste la leur. . . . Moi j’interviens juste au niveau de la logistique. . . . Mais sinon, non, j’essaie de pas trop être envahissante parce que je ne veux pas que ça dérange le Grand Frère.”

The subset of mentors (5, 7, and 8) associated with parents who strove to negotiate a comfortable, yet acceptable, distance in the mentor-parent relationship did not recall uncomfortable anecdotes of parents crossing boundaries. As well, among the subset of mentors who told of discomfort in relation to parental role and boundary crossings, none of the associated parents explained during the interview how they negotiated closeness in the relationship.

Mentor-parent romance. Although none of the parents addressed the possibility of engaging in a romantic relationship with their child’s mentor, Parent 11 remembered Child 11 specifically expressing her disapproval of that possibility, even before they met Mentor 11: “When the Big Brothers Big Sisters were telling me about Mentor 11, even before I met her—they were telling me, like, ‘she’s a film producer, 38, single.’ I was telling that to my daughter [who said]: ‘Why are they telling you that?!’—like, she thought maybe they were trying to match me up with her! [laughs]. . . . But it’s not the case. . . . Of course, one day I wouldn’t mind, uh, [pause] meeting somebody, there. [pause] Whatever, I’m human too, eh? [pause] But that scares Child 11.” The only other parent to address this issue recalled with awkwardness a situation in which she and Mentor 8 could have been perceived by others as forming a romantic relationship: “On est allé à une cabane à sucre avec son club de hockey [de Mentor 8]. La conjointe de Mentor 8 était là, j’étais là, Mentor 8, Child 8. . . . La conjointe de Mentor 8 était un peu plus loin parce qu’elle connaissait des femmes des joueurs de hockey, et moi, je ne connaissais personne. Moi, j’étais à côté de Mentor 8, avec Child 8. Mentor 8 a dit, à un

moment donné, en *joke*, parce que tout le monde savait qui était sa blonde: ‘J’ai emmené mes deux blondes.’” Parent 8 recalled being uncomfortable upon hearing that comment, and wondered to herself what her role in that specific context.

Triad relationship.

Children. All children reported getting along well when their parents and their mentor were present at the same time. Most did not elaborate on this issue, but some explained that the three of them were not together for very long, and others listed the activities the three had participated in together.

Triangulation. One child mentioned the difficulties that arose from involving Mentor 4 in her relational difficulties with her mother. Child 4 admitted to making her mother jealous of Mentor 4 by yelling during arguments that Mentor 4 would make a better mother. Child 4 did not elaborate further on this point, but conceded that she no longer used such tactics during her arguments with her mother.

Mentors. Mentors gave generally positive comments concerning the times mentors, parents, and children were together. Mentors’ responses largely fell into two general categories—those which concerned concrete tasks, such as giving updates and feedback and going on occasional activities together, and those which concerned an abstract negotiation of boundaries.

Updates and activities. All mentors expressed that most of the time, the mentors, parents, and children were present at the beginning and end of an outing. Otherwise, they occasionally participated in activities all together. Seven mentors specifically spoke about cooking and eating together, and others recalled a variety of activities, such as meeting an author (Mentor 11), going to a winter festival (Mentor 7), and shopping for a bed for the child (Mentor 12). Mentor 4

excitedly remembered her exposure to Syrian culture in an outing with Child 4 and her mother:

“Je suis allée à Adonis avec eux autres une fois, là. Wou, mon dieu! Puis, ça commande en arabe, ‘wawawawawawa!’, Puis tu sais, puis, wou! C’est un choc, mais c’est le fun, je trouve ça super cool, j’aime ça.”

Dyad-to-triad behaviour changes. By interacting all together, three mentors specifically observed how the children interacted with their parents and noted similarities and differences in their own relationships with the children. For instance, Mentors 1, 7, and 11 quickly noted the children’s deterioration in behaviour from when they were with them alone, to when they were in their parents’ presence. Mentor 11 recalled when Child 1 became angry at her father after returning home from an activity, and “she got really mad at him and she threw the exacto knife into his direction. So, I was like ‘oooookayyyyy.’” Mentor 1, who dealt with Child 1’s behaviour problems during their outings, cringed, recalling Child 1’s vulgar songs about her in Parent 1’s presence: “[en battant sur le tamtam et en chantant] ‘Mentor 1! Elle fait l’amour! Avec ses voisines! Avec ses voisins! Tout le monde ensemble! Tous nus dans cour! Ils se frottent le vagin! Ensemble puis [pause].’ . . . C’était vraiment. . . Mais, encore là, sa mère disait: ‘Chhhiiiiiiiilllld 1! Lààààà! Frannnnchement!’ Puis, quand on est à la maison, puis sa mère est là, c’est pas mon rôle à *moi* de lui interdire de dire qu’on se frotte les vagins avec les pénis des voisins. Tu sais? Puis c’est gênant, tu sais, comment tu réagis avec la mère par rapport à ça?”

Because of her observations, Mentor 11 took extra caution to respect Parent 11’s authority: “If we decide on an activity, I’ll always ask her father if it’s OK and if it works for him, because I want him to feel . . . like he’s also really an authority in her life. I kind of want to . . . reinforce for Child 11 . . . that, like, her Dad has the final say, even if we figure out what we

want to do.” Mentor 1, however, in realising that Parent 1 was not going to provide any consequences to her daughter for her unacceptable behaviour, found herself having to place limits on Child 1 in front of her mother: “Dès qu’on retombait dans son environnement . . . tout de suite Child 1 avait besoin d’aller chercher toute l’attention de tout le monde—en hurlant, en faisant des cris de mort pour que sa mère s’occupe d’elle, et maintenant. Tellement, que j’ai été obligée de lui dire, moi-même, devant sa mère: ‘Child 1, *calme-toi*.’”

Children: Protecting their relationships. An important aspect that mentors observed when the triad was together was that the children they were matched with would become jealous if the mentors and parents would talk together for too long, as if the children sensed a need to protect the exclusivity of the relationship with their mentors. Six mentors (1, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 11) specifically saw a decrease in the children’s levels of openness and participation when in the presence of the parents. Mentor 5 explained how he viewed this change: “Pour lui, je suis vraiment la fierté . . . et les activités qu’on fait ensemble, il n’en parle pas beaucoup avec sa mère. C’est comme une intimité entre nous. Notre amitié à nous. Si sa mère lui pose des questions, des fois il va réagir . . . ‘Ben, là!’ C’est, comme, privé, ça, c’est notre relation. . . . Ça lui fait un petit à côté, parce qu’il vit tout le temps avec sa mère, il fait tout avec sa mère. Ça exclus elle, ça lui fait du bien.” Mentor 1 recalled instances during which Child 1 stated her view on the matter out loud: “Si je parle deux minutes de plus avec sa mère: ‘Aïïïeeee! C’est mon amie à moi! . . . On s’en va dans ma chambre, puis c’est tout, puis on ferme la porte!’”

The mentors who spoke about children protecting their relationships or behaving less appropriately in the triad found those occasions more difficult than when they were with the children alone. Because of this, they preferred to keep the relationship exclusively between themselves and the children. With effort, they strove to maintain an acceptable balance between

children and parents when they were all together.

Mentor 5, having described the difficulties he perceived in a triadic activity, recalled a successful activity that included himself, his girlfriend, Child 5, and Parent 5: “On fait une recette typiquement algérienne qu’ils nous on montré. . . . Child 5 a aimé ça parce que c’est lui qui nous montrait quelque chose. Faque ça, il a beaucoup aimé—quelque chose que lui, pas juste sa mère, mais lui aussi, nous montrait.” During the activity, Child 5 had a specific and valued role, which Mentor 5 attributed as a reason for Child 5’s active and appropriate participation.

Triangulation. Two mentors spoke about triangulation in the relationship. Mentor 7 specifically explained that Parent 7 did not tell him about her son’s behaviour issues outside of the one’s that concerned him: “C’est très clair dans l’information transmise par l’association aux mères, aux parents: Le Grand Frère ne peut pas être utilisé comme objet de chantage. Par exemple, ‘si tu ne fais pas ça, ton Grand Frère [pause].’ Je suis vraiment quelqu’un en dehors de ça. Le lien est entre Child 7 et moi.” Mentor 8 also brought up the concept of triangulation, explaining that he was often triangulated into the parent-child relationship when Parent 8 was angry at Child 8 for not having done his homework because he knew his mentor was coming to pick him up: “C’est plus avec sa mère, quand j’arrive et qu’elle me dit: ‘Là, il n’a pas fait ses affaires ou il se débarrasse de ses *jobs* parce que tu arrives et qu’il sait que je vais accepter—et toi, tu t’en vas avec [pause].”

Parents. Parents, as did mentors, gave generally positive comments concerning the time the triad spent together. Their responses also essentially fell into two general categories—one involving concrete tasks and planning, and the other focussing on abstract negotiation of boundaries.

Updates and activities. All parents expressed that the time when the triad was together was primarily organisational and secondarily participatory. The triad would decide on days and times of outings, and give news to each other. Parent 5 described the positive atmosphere she felt when they were all together: “Il y a cette atmosphère de confiance parce que, ce que dit Child 5 au Grand Frère, moi je l’entends, ce que je réponds à Child 5, le Grand Frère l’entend. Donc une espèce de consensus en tout temps. Rien n’est caché, et son Grand Frère voit comment nous vivons. Si Child 5 veut lui raconter un truc, je dis: ‘Bon, est-ce que t’as raconté ça à Mentor 5, et tout?’ Donc, j’essaye parfois de mettre l’accent sur des trucs qui se produisent. Je sais pas, l’école, ou quelque chose qu’il a vu, qu’il a entendu. Des fois, c’est pour déclencher une discussion entre les deux tout simplement.” All parents recalled a variety of activities the triad had occasionally participated in, such as shopping (Parent 12), going to a baseball game (Parent 9), eating (Parents 3 and 4), and celebrating the children’s birthdays (Parents 1 and 12). Two mothers (3 and 5) were delighted at being able to share their culinary knowledge with the mentors by inviting them and their partners to cook a culturally traditional dish with their children.

Dyad-to-triad behaviour changes. Only two parents spoke about the changes in behaviour in their children when the triad interacted together. The first, Parent 11, was pleased to observe that Child 11’s behaviour with her father improved in the presence of her mentor: “Let’s say she’s more cautious with me. She doesn’t answer me back as rude or whatever. I’m not saying she’s rude all the time but sometimes. . . . Yeah, I guess she wants to give a good impression to her Big Sister.” He also mentioned that Mentor 11 always made sure the activities were acceptable to him. The other parent who spoke about this did not necessarily notice behaviour changes when the triad was together, but was always apprehensive that her son would

behave poorly: “J’avais peur que Child 8 défie mon autorité, en profitant du fait qu’il croirait peut-être que je ne voudrais pas le chicaner devant Mentor 8. Tu sais, un peu comme quand tu vas visiter quelqu’un et que tes enfants savent que tu ne crieras pas trop. Moi, j’ai toujours un peu peur de cela. Parce que Mentor 8, c’est comme un super héro aux yeux de Child 8. OK, vraiment, on pourrait lui mettre le costume de Superman avec un gros ‘S’ dessus. Mais, étant donné qu’il ne reste pas là trop longtemps, je n’en subis pas trop les conséquences.”

Children: Protecting their relationships. When the triad was together, five parents (5, 6, 7, 8, and 12) remarked their children would actively protect the intimacy of the relationship with their mentors. Parents could tell because their children would want to leave quickly, leaving little time for parents and mentors to talk. Parent 12 described, “quand le Grand Frère arrive pour partir en activité, Child 12 est tellement content que ‘Bye man,’ pis j’ai pas le droit à un bec. Moi, je ne prend pas ça comme s’il m’ignorait. Je prends ça comme c’est normal. Si je me mettais à sa place à lui, je serais pareille. Je serais pas là à minoucher mes parents! . . . Il veut vivre une aventure avec son Grand Frère, puis c’est normal.” Mothers also specifically noted their sons became quiet when they were altogether and shared little about their time spent with their mentors. Parent 5 explained, “il faut que je pose des questions pour savoir ce qu’ils ont fait. Bon, il va me dire deux, trois trucs, mais il va jamais aller dans le détail d’une conversation. Jamais, jamais, jamais. Ça c’est sûr, et puis je trouve ça correct. C’est vraiment leur environnement, leur petit petit monde.” Others also chose to not to ask too many questions so as to respect the boundaries of mentor-child relationship: “Ses sorties avec Mentor 6, je ne pose pas de questions et il ne m’en parle jamais. S’il veut m’en parler, trois jours après, il me dit: ‘Hey, maman, on a fait ça, c’était *cool*.’ C’est quelque chose que je respecte, ça leur appartient.” Mothers also noted their sons cherished the privacy their same-sex mentors offered when they

made revelations to them. In fact, they only realised that their sons shared certain things with their mentors and not with them when the mentors accidentally disclosed the information when they were all together. Parent 6 explained, “il ne me parle jamais de ses petites blondes. Il en parle avec Mentor 6. Ça, j’ai su ça, parce qu’à un moment donné, Mentor 6 l’agaçait. Je lui ai dit: ‘Tu es au courant de ça, toi? Ah bien, pas moi.’ Mais, je ne pose pas de questions, ça lui appartient. C’est son monde à lui et à Mentor 6.”

Although the majority of parents sensed that their children preferred being alone with their mentors, Parent 7 addressed what she understood as ambiguity. Although her son had said that he had wanted to participate in triadic activity, when they were all together it was as if he was torn by having to navigate two roles—son to his mother, and Little Brother to his Big Brother. She recalled, “j’avais l’impression que Child 7 aurait préféré que je ne sois pas là. Mais, en même temps, il a aimé l’idée qu’on soit là tous ensemble.” It is perhaps because it was challenging for children to navigate between both roles that both parents and mentors sensed differences in how the children conducted themselves when in the triad as opposed to either dyad.

Furthermore, parents’ recollections of triadic activities were more positive when another person was added to the group. For instance, when the mentors’ partners were present, parents did not recall feeling discomfort, and instead emphasised how successful the activities were. Parent 8, who had previously described her apprehension about triadic activities, explained that when Mentor 8’s girlfriend was present, she would spend most of her time with her, while Child 8 would spend most of his time with Mentor 8: “Je dirais qu’on a une bonne relation . . . tous les quatre. Même avec la conjointe de Mentor 8, cela va super bien. C’est facile. D’habitude, quand on est les quatre, c’est moi et elle qui parlent et les deux gars qui sont ensemble.” Perhaps

by adding another person to the triad, the children settled into an easier equilibrium, as it allowed them to remain primarily in a relationship with their mentor, while their parents interacted more with the fourth person.

Supporting parents in their role within the triad. Comments from two of the parents illustrated a certain difficulty in appreciating the importance of their role within the triad. Parent 9, in describing what she said to caseworkers when it came time to evaluate the relationship, reported, “bien, à chaque fois qu’on a l’évaluation, c’est comme: ‘Bien, il n’y a rien!’ [rires] Bien, je me dis ‘on,’ mais ‘on’ exclut la personne qui parle, justement.” As such, Parent 9 omitted considering herself as part of the triad when asked how the relationship was going. Parent 8 provided an example of having difficulty identifying and feeling comfortable in her role as parent within the triad when the three went out to an event together: “Et là, [Mentor 8] me présentait à des gens et je disais, ‘Moi, je suis la mère de Child 8’—parce qu’il disait, ‘Mon Petit frère,’ et moi, je disais, ‘Je suis la mère.’ Tu ne sais pas comment t’identifier: ‘Je suis qui, moi, là-dedans? Je suis la mère du petit.’ Je ne savais pas trop.” Within that social context, Parent 8 needed support in identifying herself within the triad.

Triangulation. Three parents spoke about triangulation within the relationship. Two parents expressed that, they had been warned by the organisation to not speak badly of their children to their mentors because the difficulties they were experiencing at home were not to be used as a lever in the mentoring relationship. Parent 11 reasoned, “I was told also to never use her Big Sister as a punishment. So that part I don’t do, eh? But . . . Mentor 11 is easygoing and I find it easy for me to talk to her. Sometimes I might tell her things but then I’m told by the Big Sister organisation: ‘Well just keep that between, like, don’t let Child 11 know that Mentor 11 knows.’” Parent 6 explained at length how she had been cautioned to not tell Mentor 6 about her

son's bad deeds. However, both mother and mentor chose to carry on communicating with each other in this manner because he wanted to remain informed, while she continued to enjoy the support she received from him:

Une fois, aux Grands Frères, Child 6 avait dit en entrevue: “Bien, ma mère, quand je fais des conneries, des fois, elle en parle à Mentor 6.” Moi, je me le suis fait dire: “Child 6 et Mentor 6, c’est un *team*, ce sont des amis. Mentor 6 n’est pas là pour lui faire la morale.” Sauf que moi, j’ai parlé avec Mentor 6. Il m’a dit: “Parent 6, quand ça ne va vraiment pas bien—les Grands Frères, ils disent que je suis là juste pour avoir du *fun*. Mais j’aime ça le savoir, je suis capable de lui en parler. Entre nous autres, il y a des manières d’approcher Child 6.” Alors lui, il aime ça le savoir et moi, ça fait mon affaire. On passe un petit peu par-dessus ce que les Grands Frères nous disent. Child 6, il écoute beaucoup Mentor 6. . . . Je pense que c’est une autre personne que sa mère: “Fais ceci, fais cela.” Tu sais, je suis sa mère; Mentor 6, c’est son chum, c’est son *partner*. Quand, des fois, il fait de quoi, je dis: “Imagine si Mentor 6 saurait ça?!” La face lui change. Je ne dis pas tout à Mentor 6, non plus. Ça donne des *breaks*. . . . Tu sais, quand on devient ado . . . l’impolitesse . . . des faces d’ado [pause]. Je ne suis plus capable! . . . Des fois, je lui en parle [à Mentor 6]: “Parle-lui, je vais le tuer!” Alors c’est ça. On a quand même une belle relation, comme ça.

As a result of agreeing to a triangulated communication with Mentor 6, another complication arose for Parent 6: In order to protect Mentor 6’s feelings, she felt pressured to not be fully honest in her communication with her caseworker. She explained:

Quand il s’est passé quelque chose [et j’en ai parlé à Caseworker] [pause]. Je pense qu’il avait trouvé ça [pause]. Je pense que Mentor 6 est quand même soupe au lait. Pour lui,

c'était comme une prison. Il l'a pris comme ça. Alors moi, [maintenant] quand l'association me pose des questions, je fais attention avec Mentor 6 [pause] [sinon] il se sent, comme, trahi. Je le connais moi, son Grand Frère. . . . Il ne faut pas qu'il se fasse appeler par les Grands Frères. Il est comme ça [pause]. Puis, dans le fond, on est des adultes aussi. Et, pour Child 6.

Although Parent 6 was the only parent to mention these communicative challenges, certain important ramifications could have resulted in time. By agreeing to spare Mentor 6's feelings and, in the short term, avoid any negative impact on Child 6, Parent 6 was perhaps maintaining certain relational stressors that may have remained ongoing without ever being clearly addressed.

Parent 3 was the only parent to comment on the difficult feelings she experienced when her son spoke to his mentor when he, in turn, was angry with her. She explained that Child 3 would call him to talk about his frustrations with her, and Mentor 3, knowing only his mentee's side of the story, subsequently reacted negatively towards her when they would see each other in person. She did not understand the change in his behaviour, until, with time, she realised what had been happening.

Ongoing motivators.

Children.

Fun, safe companionship. Children were very clear when it came to expressing what made them want to continue seeing their mentors. Nine children expressed that taking part in fun and enjoyable activities with their mentors made them want to continue their relationships with them, explaining that they would not otherwise be able to participate in those activities. Six of the children also said that they were motivated to continue because they felt good and safe with their mentors and because their mentors were fun. Four children were additionally

motivated to continue because they enjoyed having someone to confide in and talk to, enabling them to feel less alone. Child 2 also was motivated by the fact that his mentor wanted to spend time with him: “Bien, c’est quelqu’un qui veut être avec moi à toutes les deux semaines. On peut parler avec, on peut confier des secrets, puis c’est ça.”

Mentors. Mentors had two distinct reasons for wanting to continue the mentoring relationships with the children, the first being related to positive feelings associated with the relationship itself, and the second being outcome-oriented.

Positive feelings. Ten mentors simply stated that the main reason they wished to continue was because they enjoyed spending time with the children, they felt close to them, and felt that they had a pleasant relationship with them. Mentor 5 explained, “ce qui garde ma motivation, c’est vraiment qu’on a, comme, une intimité ensemble. C’est une belle relation, j’aime beaucoup Child 5, et ce qu’il est comme personne, son ouverture de vouloir faire des choses.” Mentor 6 added, “la première raison qui me motive, c’est que j’ai le goût. J’aime être avec Child 6, passer du temps avec lui. C’est toujours plaisant.” Mentors also mentioned a sense of reciprocity that kept them motivated. For instance, they could tell that the children enjoyed seeing them and felt that they were important to the children. Mentor 7 explained, “ce que je trouve agréable, c’est quand Child 7 a du plaisir. C’est quand on fait une activité qui l’a branché, qui l’a stimulé. Quand je le vois bien . . . dans sa peau. Quand je le vois heureux. C’est vraiment ça que je trouve agréable.”

Observing impacts on the child. The second type of answer, objective oriented, relates to observing the impact of the mentoring relationship on the child’s development and seeing the relationship develop. Seven mentors had a desire to see what these children would be like in several years, and felt that their presence would have had a positive impact on how they fared.

Mentor 6, who also was motivated by the relationship itself, was also secondarily motivated by future developmental outcomes: “Le sentiment d’avoir un rôle positif. Tu fais quelque chose de bien. Ce sont des choses positives. De le voir s’améliorer.”

Anti-abandonment. Three mentors (1, 6, and 12) were equally motivated by proving to the children that they would not abandon them the way they already had been by one of their parents. Mentor 12 elaborated, “bien, ce qui m’encourage à rester, c’est vraiment de penser que s’il fallait que je déménage à l’étranger ou que notre jumelage soit terminé pour une raison ou pour une autre, que Child 12 prendrait cela vraiment comme un abandon. Qui, pour lui, résonnerait avec l’abandon du père de façon consciente ou inconsciente, mais qui le marquerait à vie. Puis, on ne peut pas prévoir, mais j’ai l’impression que les conséquences seraient dévastatrices.”

Parents.

Future benefits for their children. The seven parents who specifically spoke about their motivating reasons to continue participating in the relationship overwhelmingly agreed that they were primarily motivated because of all the benefits that the relationship had brought or would bring to the child in the future. Parent 12 explained, “ce qui me motive c’est de voir le bien-être de Child 12. . . . Pour un parent, quand tu vois ton enfant qui est si bien, qui est si épanoui, qu’est-ce qu’on peut vouloir de plus pour notre enfant? Alors, non, je n’ai pas l’intention de sortir du mouvement.” Contained within in this general idea was the idea that parents viewed the relationship as being important to their children (Parents 1, 2, and 5) and that the mentor was a positive role model for the child (Parents 11 and 12).

Personal needs. Although one of the main positive impacts that parents mentioned for themselves about participating in the relationship was having time for themselves, only three

parents mentioned this as a motivating factor, when asked about their motivating reasons to continue participating in the relationship. Secondly to the positive impact she saw for her son, Parent 12 also acknowledged wanting to pursue the relationship in order to fulfil her own personal needs: “Ce que j’ai trouvé agréable c’est le temps de liberté que ça donne, parce que quand tu es monoparentale, on a jamais de temps pour toi. Moi, je suis avec mon garçon, 365 jours par année, tout le temps, tout le temps. . . . Alors, le quatre heures à toutes les deux semaines, parfois c’est toute la journée qu’ils sont ensemble, ça fait un bien énorme.”

Anticipated developments and wishes.

Children.

Long-term. Although all children expressed motivation to continue their relationship, three children shared how they envisioned their relationship to be in the future, past their eighteenth birthday. The children explained that they were so attached to their mentors and that their mentors’ presence was extremely important to them. Child 8 felt that Mentor 8 was like a father to him: “Il est très important. C’est comme un père. . . . Je sais qu’on garde contacte jusqu’à 18 ans, mais c’est sûr que je vais garder contacte avec lui [après].” The other two children envisioned that there would be a transition from a mentoring relationship to a friendship. Child 12 explained, “je compte encore le voir après, parce qu’on n’est pas obligé de finir notre relation là, on peut rester ami. Lui, dans cinq ans il va avoir 35 ans, puis moi je vais avoir 18 ans, mais je vais encore garder une relation amicale avec lui. Il est le fun, ce gars-là, sérieusement là.” Child 9 elaborated on the kinds of activities he and his mentor-turned-friend could do together: “Même si ça finit à 18 ans, les Grands Frères . . . dans ma tête, je me dis, genre, on s’aime trop pour se laisser. . . . C’est sûr qu’on va continuer à se parler. . . . Ouais, en plus, on pourrait faire plus d’activités, genre aller au paintball, dans les bars, . . . le karaoke, . . .

travailler . . . pour me faire de l'argent pour aller en voyage avec lui.”

Mentors.

Commitment until the age of majority. All 12 mentors clearly expressed a desire to remain in the relationship until the children reached 18 years of age. However, two mentors hesitated to say that they would remain involved officially in the match, explaining that it may be more realistic to continue the relationship outside the organisational boundaries. Mentor 1 explained, “si éventuellement il faut qu’on sorte des Grands Frères et Grandes Soeurs pour continuer quand même notre relation, je pense que ça se ferait. . . . Si, un moment donné ils venaient à mettre trop de limites qu’on n’est pas capable de respecter, je pense qu’on continuerait quand même à se voir, puis à faire des activités. Peut-être pas autant qu’on en fait, là, parce que c’est très rigide.” Mentor 5 foresaw that he would see Child 5 less often as he became older: “J’ai l’impression que, peut-être oui on va se voir jusqu’à 18 ans, mais probablement que la fréquence va diminuer parce qu’il va avoir tellement de choses à faire.” Two additional mentors anticipated being rejected by the children during their teenage years, sensing that the children would be more interested in friends than in outings with them. Mentor 2 expressed, “j’ai l’impression que dans les prochaines années, il va vieillir et il va peut-être m’envoyer promener.” Mentor 10 wondered, “souvent, on se demande si l’enfant va s’éloigner de nous. On est même averti, dans les Grands Frères, qu’il peut y avoir un rejet du Grand Frère lors de la crise d’adolescence.”

Long-term and a transition to friendship. Eight of the mentors also clearly stated a desire to remain in the children’s lives even after they would no longer be followed by the organisation. They envisioned long term relationships with the children. Mentor 2 explained his attachment: “Les Grands Frères, il y a le contrat officiel, mais il y a la réalité aussi. Ce ne sera pas possible

de couper comme ça à 18 ans. Par contre, ça se peut qu'à cet âge-là, il ait besoin de liberté et qu'il ne veuille plus me voir aussi souvent qu'avant. Mais, je souhaite être toujours là." Mentor 12 also saw ahead, hoping for Child 12 to keep him involved in his life: "J'espère qu'on va continuer de se voir au-delà. J'espère qu'il va m'inviter à son mariage ou ce qu'il viendra après." Finally, Mentor 6 saw into the distant future, imagining himself with Child 6 in his old age, and recalled even joking about this with him:

Mentor 6: J'ai des images de lui jouant avec mon fils, faire du sport, et avec moi aussi.

Tu sais, de belles images positives. Je vais être très vieux et il va venir me voir. Je fais des farces tout le temps avec lui: "Il va falloir que tu me promènes en chaise roulante!"

Je lui ai montré à changer la couche à mon garçon et je lui ai dit: "Regarde, c'est de même que ça fonctionne. Un jour, dans cinquante ans, c'est *ma* couche que tu vas changer!" (rires)

Interviewer: Comment il a réagi?

Mentor 6: "Aaark!" Il dit: "Ah! Jamais!" Moi: "Ah, laisse faire, je me rendrai pas là!"

Interviewer: C'est des images à long terme?

Mentor 6: À très long terme, très long terme.

Three of these 8 mentors also specifically anticipated the relationship transitioning from a mentoring relationship to a friendship, whereby the child would reciprocate interest in the mentor (Mentors 1 and 2), and the mentor would be able to enjoy adult activities with the children, such as double-dates (Mentor 6).

In anticipating future developments in their relationship, five mentors also expressed concern about the child's development. They hoped children would make the right choices with regard to negative influences such as smoking, drinking, sexuality (Mentor 1), and delinquency

(Mentor 7). They worried that the children would not persevere enough to be successful (Mentor 5 and 8). Mentor 11 also expressed unease with regard to Child 11's "hard" and "tough" family life.

Parents.

Long-term wish coupled with fear of abandonment. All parents clearly wished for their children to continue to participate in the mentoring relationship. However, this wish also encompassed a certain amount of worry for six of the parents who elaborated on how the relationship would evolve, as they hoped that the mentor would not quit or abandon the child. For example, Parent 10 said, "s'il continue comme ça longtemps, je ne pourrai jamais le remercier assez. . . . J'espère qu'il ne le lâchera pas à l'adolescence parce que ça, ça serait difficile." Additionally, Parent 4 worried about future instability in the mentors' lives and the negative impact this could have on her children: "Je souhaite que cela continue, parce que pour l'enfant, c'est aussi la sécurité. . . . Par rapport au jumelage, je souhaite toujours qu'il aît de la stabilité dans la vie de leur Grand Frère et Grande sœur."

In three of the relationships, parents could not imagine the relationship ending, given the mentor-child attachment. Parent 12 explained, "moi, j'ai la conviction que ça va continuer pendant longtemps. . . . Tu vois que le lien est très fort entre les deux, puis tu vois qu'ensemble il y a vraiment une chimie qui passe entre les deux. Ça va durée au-delà des dix-huit ans de Child 12." Parents 6 and 9, whose children had been in long-lasting relationships (60 months and 37 months, respectively), also felt that the relationship could not end given the amount of time they had been matched. Parent 9 explained, "je pense que c'est un jumelage que, Child 9 va avoir 18 ans et qu'ils vont se donner des nouvelles pareil, comment c'est parti. Écoute après cinq ans, je me dis que cela ne peut pas finir comme cela."

Organisational support.***Children.***

Caseworker as messenger. Only one child mentioned organisational support in helping him communicate to his mentor what he was too shy to tell him—that Child 7 wanted to see him less often. Child 7 related, “je voulais rester avec mes amis. Mais j’étais gêné de lui dire. Je l’ai dit à Caseworker et elle le lui a dit. Puis là, il m’a dit de ne pas être gêné de me le dire: ‘Si tu veux qu’on se voit aux trois semaines, c’est correct.’” Child 7 was the only child who requested to see his mentor less frequently in order to also see his friends, but was also the only child living in a group home that severely restricted the frequency of his outings with friends.

Mentors. Virtually all mentors reported three areas that they appreciated with regard to being affiliated with the organisation and their caseworkers.

Caseworkers as messengers. Like the child who used his caseworker as a messenger because he was too shy, five mentors also mentioned appreciating the role of the caseworker as a communicator between themselves and the families. Mentor 6 said, “Caseworker est géniale. Géniale, géniale, géniale. Elle passe de bons messages, de la bonne façon. Cela pourrait facilement aller de l’autre côté, où tu te dis: ‘Là, aïe!’” Mentors explained this was especially important when either side did not feel comfortable to address the other directly. For instance, Mentor 1 revealed that, although she felt that it was important to address her worries about Child 1 being hyperactive, she also felt that it was not her role to speak about this with Parent 1: “Bien je pense que Caseworker lui en a glissé un mot, mais c’est parce que je ne suis pas là pour ça, non plus, là. Je ne suis pas là pour attester qu’elle a un problème, puis qu’elle aurait peut-être besoin d’aide.” As well, following the death of Mentor 4’s mother and the Mentor’s subsequent burnout, their caseworker let her know that Parent 4 understood her need to rest and prioritise her

health even though it meant not seeing Child 4 for some time: “Elle [Parent 4] dit: ‘Pauvre Mentor 4. On veut juste savoir si, toi, tu es bien, là.’ . . . C’est comme, ouf, tant mieux. . . . J’aurais même pas été capable.” Mentor 9 also recounted how her caseworker tactfully passed on the message to him with respect to drinking beer in front of Child 9, considering Child 9’s prior negative past experience with adults drinking beer.

Support from caseworkers. Six mentors enjoyed the support they received from caseworkers for personal difficulties as well as manage feelings of doubts they felt in the mentoring relationship. Mentor 6 explained a general feeling of support from caseworkers: “C’est vraiment une super belle organisation: dynamique, qui organise des choses, qui fait les suivis. . . . Je ne sais pas si c’est une explication de la raison pour laquelle les jumelages sont de cinq ans et plus. D’ailleurs, tu as vraiment un sentiment de faire partie d’une famille.” Mentor 1 explained that her caseworker’s support enabled her to continue being a mentor when she found Child 1’s behaviour challenging: “Des fois, quand je sais plus quoi faire, c’est Caseworker que j’appelle, en lui disant: ‘Ah non, là, fais de quoi!’” Mentor 11 explained that the “impact that it’s had on me is . . . that it has allowed me to continue while I have not been sure about the positive impact I’m making. Like the caseworker is, like, ‘Oh, I understand it is fine, everything is going great,’ so you know, that, I think, it has been very helpful to have a supported relationship.” Other mentors valued having the regular contact by caseworkers to make sure all was going well in the relationship, and another appreciated the support received from his caseworker when he was feeling rejected by Child 2: “Les premières fois que je téléphonais, les conversations duraient dix secondes. Il n’avait pas le goût de me parler. Caseworker me disait: ‘Mais non, c’est un enfant! Il a envie de faire autre chose.’” Mentors 1 and 3 also mentioned the important role of caseworkers in helping them to establish limits and boundaries with the

children.

Looking to caseworkers for guidance. Four mentors commented on the importance of being guided by caseworkers throughout their mentoring relationships. Although they did not need guidance on a day-to-day basis, they enjoyed turning to their caseworkers for assistance on occasion. Mentor 12 explained that he looked to his caseworker as a resource person: “Pour moi, c’était vraiment une personne ressource dont l’apport était inestimable. À chaque fois que j’avais des questions pour elle, des choses à lui demander, des situations à éclaircir avec elle: ‘Puis, est-ce que j’ai bien réagi? Est-ce que j’aurais dû dire autre chose?’” Other mentors consulted for specific advice. For instance, Mentor 2 consulted with his caseworker when Child 2’s father did not show up when they were supposed to meet: “Je parlais avec Caseworker, parce que je savais que les enfants avaient été bien déçus quand il était supposé d’aller les voir. Caseworker m’a dit: ‘Tu vois comment c’est important d’appeler à tous les mercredis?’” Mentor 9 recalled that his caseworker helped him to define his role during a particularly turbulent time between Child 9 and his mother: “Je sais, qu’un moment donné, ça n’allait pas bien avec sa mère. Ça brassait un peu. . . . J’avais demandé aux Grands Frères, ‘Si je ne suis pas tout le temps d’accord avec ce qu’il me dit?’ ‘Tu as le droit de dire que tu n’es pas d’accord, mais tu ne peux pas prendre le parti de sa mère parce que, peu importe ce qui se passe entre les deux, si lui se ramasse en internat, s’il se ramasse en pension, bien, il faut que tu restes là pour lui, peu importe ce qui se passe.’ Donc, ça avait été clair, ça avait défini le rôle.” Mentor 12, who particularly appreciated his caseworker’s support, provided several other examples of when he turned for guidance, such as when Child 12 was horrified that Mentor 12 had a nude art book on his coffee table, and when Child 12, occasionally, had inadequate hygiene.

Support from organisation. Another four mentors also appreciated the support they

received from the organisation, first by matching them well and then by supporting them by suggesting certain activities. Mentor 8 explained, “les Grands Frères envoient toujours de l’information: une activité en groupe, une activité par-ci, des billets de hockey par-là. Au début, je me disais: ‘Mon dieu, c’est *le fun*, si je n’ai rien à faire, j’ai de l’aide.’” Another mentor specifically mentioned the relief he felt when he found out he could become a mentor even though he was gay, and the supportive explanation he received from the organisation:

En rentrant dans leur bureau, j’ai vu un article: “Comment être un Grand Frère m’a préparé à être un meilleur père.” Et il y avait une photo de Joël Legendre. J’ai dit: “Bon ben, regarde! [rires] Si Joël Legendre est Grand Frère, d’après moi, je n’aurais pas de problèmes!” Mais, oui, c’est ça. Moi, j’avais des questionnements à ce niveau-là. Et après cela, tout de suite, à la première rencontre individuelle, l’intervenante m’a dit: “Non, non, regarde on en a plein de Grands Frères qui sont gais. C’est des supers bons Grands Frères.” Elle dit: “C’est sûr qu’on le mentionne aux parents. Et les parents ont le droit de dire: ‘Ben moi j’aimerais mieux que le Grand Frère de mon enfant soit hétéro.’”

Parents. Although mentors reported feeling supported and guided by their caseworkers both generally, when they had to deal with negative feelings, and specific circumstances, parents mentioned mostly the positive feelings associated with feeling supported by their caseworker and the organisational professionalism that instilled confidence in them. Parents also mentioned to a lesser extent the role that the caseworker played in communicating.

Caseworkers as messengers. Only two parents (5 and 8) mentioned using caseworkers in helping to communicate to mentors, and in both cases it was to clarify that it was okay to speak directly to one another instead of using the caseworker as messenger.

Support from caseworkers. Nine parents clearly appreciated the support they received from caseworkers throughout the match process and beyond. The relationship with their caseworker was particularly important, and parents expressed global feelings of satisfaction. Parent 12 said about her caseworker: “Elle est très, très à l’écoute, elle connaît bien son métier. On aime beaucoup Caseworker.” Four parents specifically appreciated that there was a rigorous follow up in order to make sure the relationship was successful. Parent 1 reported that when Child 1’s relationship was at risk because of her behavioural difficulties, their caseworker supported the triad so they could continue successfully until things worked out again. When Parent 5 was nervous because she was unsure of Mentor 5’s continuing motivation, their caseworker helped to mitigate this fear by sharing some of Mentor 5’s feelings about the relationship: “Moi, j’avais demandé à l’intervenante: ‘Je souhaiterais que lui ne s’ennuie pas, dans cette relation-là, au bout d’un certain temps.’ Parce que, pour moi, rien ne garantissait que le Grand Frère ait toujours envie de voir le petit frère. . . . Peut-être qu’un moment donné il va se dire: ‘Ah, j’ai plus le temps, ou ça me tente plus.’ Mais bon. Puis là, elle avait répondu: ‘Non, non. Il apprécie le temps qu’il passe avec Child 5.’ Alors j’ai trouvé ça formidable.”

Boundaries. Two parents referred specifically to role boundaries and how they could be mediated through the organisation. The first, Parent 5, recalled how her caseworker served as a model for her about clear boundaries in the triad: “Ils ont quand même assez de distance quand ils font les rencontres. C’est-à-dire . . . ils vont écouter, mais ils ne vont pas donner leur avis personnel à aucun moment. . . . S’ils ne sont pas sûrs, ils font fouiller, ils vont . . . ils vont creuser mais, ils restent toujours professionnels donc . . . le parent est en confiance, l’enfant aussi, mais en plus, il arrive à regarder la relation de façon objective. . . . Et donc, cette distance-là qu’ils créent par rapport à eux-mêmes . . . ça nous apprend à la créer par rapport à la relation.

Donc, donc chacun à sa place.” Although Parent 5 mentioned a certain objectivity that was cultivated by her caseworker setting an example, Parent 6 highlighted the difficulties of blurred boundaries and the impact this had on her communication with her caseworker. She illustrated this blurring using an example of when she chose not to speak honestly with a caseworker for fear of offending Mentor 6: “Il ne fait pas tout le temps ses quatre heures et tout ça. Il est super occupé. Tu sais, je me dis, bon, il ne fait pas tout le temps ses deux semaines, mais je n’ai pas à me mêler de ça. Parce que des fois, ils m’appellent pour avoir un résumé. Ils me disent: ‘Parent 6, est-ce qu’il fait ses quatre heures ?’ Pas tout le temps. Mais je me dis : ‘N’en parle pas, il est super occupé. Child 6, il l’aime au boutte.’ S’il y a un problème, je suis capable de lui en parler. Alors, des fois, je laisse aller.”

Support from the organisation. Seven parents specifically spoke of their appreciation for the organisational support structures that were offered to them, such as parenting groups and organised family outings. Parent 1 explained, “il y a le soutien aux familles monoparentales: Des choses qu’on peut faire pour mieux dialoguer, communiquer, avoir plus confiance en soi. Des choses comme ça, c’est l’aspect du groupe qui est assez intéressant.”

Challenges. Although a number of challenges were included in the mentoring, familial, mentor-parent, and triadic relationship sections, the following were included in a separate section because they were specified as elements that, at the time the interviews took place, challenged the relationship, maintained discomfort, or decreased motivation to continue participating in the relationship within its organisational boundaries.

Children.

Mentors versus friends. Children had little to say concerning challenges in their relationship. When asked if there was anything they disliked about the mentoring relationship,

all 12 children said “nothing.” However, both Children 7 and 10 mentioned that, at times, it had been difficult to choose between their mentor and their friends. Child 10 explained, “c’est pas que j’ai moins le goût, c’est juste que c’est plate de faire un choix entre les deux.”

The mentor’s romantic partner. An important challenge concerned the moderating role a mentor’s partner or new child could have on the mentoring relationship. Although only one child mentioned this, Child 6 was the only child in all the participants having lived through his mentor’s marriage and the birth of his son. He explained, “il y a peut-être des enfants qui n’aiment pas ça que leur Grand Frère ait une blonde, mais moi, sa femme, je la respecte, je la trouve vraiment cool. Pis, elle est enceinte, donc je félicite Mentor 6. Pis ça me fait plaisir qu’il ait un enfant. . . . C’est sûr qu’il y a du monde qui [n’aiment pas ça]. Ils sont jaloux. Même moi, quand j’étais possessif, j’étais jaloux.” Although Child 6 emphasised that he was not upset by the changes in his mentor’s family life, he highlighted the possibility that such changes could be difficult for any child to live through if the changes were to make them feel displaced.

Fear of abandonment. Two children mentioned a certain fear of abandonment. Child 9 expressed this by talking about a friend of his whose relationship did not even last one year. Child 8, on the other hand, admitted becoming anxious every time his mentor was late: “S’il est comme trois minutes en retard, je suis toujours stressé, parce que j’ai peur qu’il ne soit pas là.”

Mentors. Mentors addressed a number of challenges they had experienced throughout the mentoring relationship.

Logistics. Logistics was by far the most frequent challenge that mentors encountered. Ten mentors expressed that it was very difficult for them to find time in their busy schedules, but also made it very clear that they were not upset at having to block off the time. Mentors explained that although finding time was the greatest concrete challenge in the relationship, they

also enjoyed that the relationship forced them to have regular “down time.” Two mentors (9 and 10) also admitted sometimes not feeling up to meeting the children on certain occasions, and another two (4 and 5) found the increased travel distance, after they had moved further away, created more logistical difficulties. Mentors 1 and 3 additionally explained that they found the organisational boundaries somewhat rigid to follow, and wished they could be a bit looser.

Limits and boundaries. Only Mentor 1 spoke about the incredible challenge Child 1’s behaviour problem had posed for her, and how it made her, at one point in the relationship, question her commitment to her Little Sister. She animatedly described the unbelievably bothersome behaviour that Child 1 engaged in, and the discouragement she felt at constantly having to be placing limits:

J’étais en train de devenir folle. Un moment donné, je suis débarquée chez Caseworker en disant ‘là, regardes, je suis plus capable, là!’ Elle suce ton énergie . . . vraiment hyperactive. Je l’amenais chez moi, elle garochait du riz partout. Elle a trouvé mon fusil à l’eau, elle a mis de l’eau partout. Pendant que je faisais le souper, elle avait tout déroulé mon rouleau de papier collant autour de l’escalier de secours avec toutes les épingles à linge, avec tout ce qu’elle avait trouvé pour le mettre après. On écoute la télévision, elle met du popcorn partout. Puis, j’suis pas là pour la chicaner. J’suis là pour être son amie. . . . Là, c’était rendu que tout ce que je faisais, je me chicanais avec. . . . Il fallait que je mette mes limites en disant: ‘Non c’est inacceptable; si tu fais ça je te ramène chez vous; ça finira là.’ Fait que, avec Caseworker, on a décidé de dire à sa mère on va faire des sorties de deux ou trois heures, pas plus—je la ramène pas chez moi—pas plus que deux ou trois heures, parce que après ça, elle devient insupportable.

Mentor 1 described feeling drained, and was afraid that at some point she would be accused of

sexual abuse because Child 1 was so precocious in her sexual language. At the time of the interview, however, Mentor 1 felt things had improved because of her caseworker's support and Child 1 seemed to respond well to the new rules in place.

Although no other mentors described such intense behaviour problems, five mentors mentioned that placing boundaries on the frequency and types of contact with the children had been a challenge for them: Mentors 1 and 12 described receiving constant phone calls from the children, Mentor 11 described how her mentee often bugged her to chat on msn, and Mentors 3, 8, 9, and 11 had had trouble ending an outing or felt pressured by the children to increase the frequency with which they met.

Money matters. Four mentors (3, 6, 10, and 12) addressed the complication that money matters brought to the mentoring relationship. While some families were financially comfortable and so money never became an issue, other families had limited means. For mentors, this meant that they had to take this in to account when choosing an activity, or alternatively paying for the child. Although Mentors 3, 6, 10, and 12 often chose the latter option, the difficulty arose when some parents became uncomfortable, feeling as though they were receiving charity, yet did not have the money to contribute. Mentor 3 explained, “je ne veux pas faire sentir sa mère qu’elle n’a pas grand chose. Et ça, c’était une grosse histoire entre moi et Child 3. . . . C’est que sa mère s’est énervée que je payais pour lui.” Mentor 12 similarly found money to be a challenge between himself and Parent 12, and wished that she would more easily accept his generosity because at the end of their outing he did not enjoy charging her for her son's expenses, based on his own decisions:

L’autre chose qui est difficile, c’est la gestion des sous, parce que moi j’aime bien gâter Child 12. Si on fait une activité pendant l’heure du lunch et si je veux payer à dîner à

Child 12 [pause]. Il faut toujours que je rende des comptes à Parent 12 en rentrant, que je lui dise comment cela a coûté. Elle veut toujours m'en payer la moitié. Mais, moi au moment où je lui paye son hot dog ou son extra fromage sur sa poutine, je ne réfléchis pas à "Parent 12 va falloir qu'elle m'en paye la moitié." Des fois, je lui paie des traites, sans réaliser que, quand on va revenir à la maison, bien Parent 12 va vouloir payer la moitié de tout. Des fois, j'ai menti, j'ai dit, genre que cela avait coûté rien, que c'était gratuit, ou que j'avais des billets gratuits ou quelque chose, dépendant des activités qu'on faisait. Parce qu'elle était trop *stiff*, elle voulait toujours payer sa moitié. Je comprends cela, mais [pause]. Une couple de fois, j'ai réussi à lui faire avaler, lui dire: "Regarde, c'est un cadeau que je lui fais. Je le sors, c'était ma traite. C'était pour le féliciter pour son bulletin." Ou bien: "C'est pour sa fête qui s'en vient." Mais, la plupart du temps, je veux juste l'emmener en Métro et elle dit: "Bien là, je n'ai pas été au guichet. Donc, je n'ai pas de billets de Métro. J'aimerais cela que vous fassiez une activité dans le coin." "Regarde, je peux-tu lui donner un billet de métro et on en parle plus?" Ça, je trouve cela dur des fois. Mais, c'est normal. Cela ne fait pas super longtemps non plus qu'on se connaît. On va apprendre à respecter l'autre et à être à l'aise là-dedans. À laisser la place à l'autre aussi.

Although money was a recurring challenge for mentors, they also could appreciate why parents were uncomfortable in accepting their money.

Worrying about what to say. Within the mentoring relationship itself, the main challenge for mentors was knowing what to say to the children when they asked questions or topics arose concerning potentially delicate subjects, such as nudity (Mentor 12), homosexuality (Mentor 4), dieting (Mentor 4), death (Mentor 4), sexuality (Mentor 6), and drugs (Mentor 8). Although

some mentors felt ill prepared to deal with certain subjects (Mentors 4 and 8), others worried that their answers and opinions would conflict with parental values (Mentors 3 and 12), and subsequently create a future conflict with the parents. Some mentors also worried that parents might misinterpret the context of how certain topics arose if their children were to recount anecdotes about their activities. Mentor 4 was horrified thinking about what Parent 4 would say if she found out that one of Mentor 4's friends revealed that he was gay at a group gathering that included Child 4: "Je me disais: 'Ah mon dieu, ça y est.' Sa mère va dire: 'Ah non! Elle l'a emmené chez des gays! Ah mon dieu, ah mon dieu.' C'est niaisieux, mais j'y ai pensé." Similarly, when Child 12 perused a book from an art exhibition that was on Mentor 12's coffee table, Child 12 was stunned at the inclusion of a statue of a nude man: "J'imaginais juste qu'il allait rentrer chez eux en disant: 'Oui, il m'a montré un livre avec des hommes nus.' Je capotais!" In this regard, Mentor 3 felt the being a mentor was more difficult than being a parent: "Il faut se poser la question: 'Est-ce que ce que je veux dire est correct ou pas?' Parce qu'à tes enfants, tu peux dire ce que tu veux, mais quand tu es mentor, tu ne peux pas."

Rejection. An important challenge for mentors (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 12) was dealing with feelings of rejection as a result of certain words or behaviours, as well as dealing with the fear of being rejected in the future, after they had become attached to their mentees. For Mentor 1, being rejected by her mentee actually occurred fairly early on in the relationship, when Child 1 had difficulty trusting that Mentor 1 would not leave her. For other mentors, feelings of rejection were spurred by a variety of situations that made them feel left out or unappreciated. For instance, Mentors 2 and 4 felt rejected when their mentees did not want to talk to them on the phone, Mentor 7 felt underappreciated when his mentee showed no interest in his life, and Mentor 12 felt displaced when his mentee referred to his own mother's new boyfriend as his

“father.” Mentor 6 struggled with the idea that Child 6 would eventually reject some of his opinions, explaining, “s’il prend des décisions qui vont dans l’autre sens et que je ne réussis pas à le convaincre, c’est là que je vais avoir des déceptions, qui vont me démotiver à le voir.”

Mentors 2 and 10 were also unsettled by the idea that their mentees might reject them as adolescents.

Disagreeing with parenting. One of the most difficult challenges for mentors to live with was when they either disagreed with the parenting skills and choices made for the mentees (Mentors 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, and 12) and subsequently had difficulty accepting the fact that they did not have more power over those decisions (1, 3, 6, and 9). Mentor 1, whose child had behavioural problems, would, at times, become enraged that Parent 1 had no structure and control over her child. It was extremely difficult for Mentor 1 to accept these parenting methods: “J’ai le goût de me choquer après Parent 1, puis de dire: ‘Bien, voyons donc! Elle te monte complètement sur la tête, cette enfant-là, là!’ Puis je me dis toujours: ‘Si c’était mon enfant’— puis c’est pas correct de dire ça . . . parce que je suis pas là pour être une mère de remplacement, je suis là pour être une soeur de remplacement!” Other mentors (6, 8, and 12) had difficulty with the lack of structure and support concerning the children’s school outcomes, and felt frustrated at only being able to watch from a distance. Mentor 6 expressed, “c’est de voir justement que ton impact ne peut pas être aussi grand que celui d’un père. Parce que pour moi, c’est quasiment comme un fils. Il y a comme un lien de sang maintenant. Je souhaite qu’il réussisse à l’école, je veux qu’il fasse les bonnes choses, les bons choix. Mais, je n’ai pas tous les outils dans mon coffre pour pouvoir assurer toutes ces choses-là, comme je les ai avec mon fils. Mon fils, je vais pouvoir lui donner justement tous les outils. Le premier outil, c’est de lui donner du temps. Et ça, tu ne l’as pas le temps avec ton Petit Frère.”

Not knowing the impact. Not being aware of positive impacts on the child was a challenge for three mentors (2, 7, and 11) in preserving their motivation. Mentor 11 explained that this was the greatest difficulty for her in the relationship: “The things I find difficult . . . is not knowing if she thinks our time together is boring, or if she’s, like annoyed, or . . . she’s not into it, you know? . . . Feeling like I’m not making any sort of impact [pause] I think [pause] is the thing that I find difficult. . . . Just the lack of demonstrativeness and feedback is probably the most challenging thing.” Mentor 6 supported this statement, conversely explaining the satisfaction and increased motivation he felt upon hearing the positive impact the relationship had had on Child 6:

Dernièrement, on a été faire un témoignage. . . . Ils demandaient à des jeunes gens d'affaires qui étaient bénévoles dans la vie de venir faire des témoignages. . . . Donc, j'ai fait mon témoignage, Child 6 a fait le sien. Après cela, les gens posaient des questions. Le voir—voir comment il se comportait et l'entendre dire ce qu'il disait, qu'il ne m'avait pas dit nécessairement [pause]. Tu sais, deux gars ensemble, on ne se fait pas de confidences trop émotives. C'est quand il y a un événement spécial qu'on va le dire. . . . Bien, Child 6 [a dit] qu'il était fier de moi. Que je représentais . . . un modèle à suivre pour lui. Qu'il s'inspirait beaucoup de moi. J'ai appris beaucoup de choses. Moi, je n'ai pas nécessairement l'impression de lui avoir appris beaucoup de choses, mais ce sont de petites choses. Comme jouer au squash, il a appris cela. Cela l'a amené à autre chose. . . . L'entendre a été la chose la plus positive de cette conférence. Je vais résumer en disant que de voir son témoignage, par rapport à ce que cela lui rapporte, c'est cela la plus grande satisfaction.

The mentor's romantic partner. Four mentors spoke about the mediating role their

outside romantic relationships played in the mentoring relationship's success. In fact, they felt that partner support was such an important factor in the relationship that much of its success was due to that. Mentor 6 explained, "elle était très acceptante de ma relation avec Child 6. Elle a joué un rôle elle aussi—elle a à cœur la réussite et la relation avec Child 6. Lui, il s'en ressent d'autant plus bien avec elle. Elle comprend mieux mon temps avec lui."

That their romantic partners accepted the mentoring relationship and did not harbour negative feelings towards the child was crucial for Mentors 6, 8, 9, and 4. They also appreciated that their partners did not interfere or immerse themselves in the relationship, and explained that difficulties with a partner could lead to negative outcomes for children. Mentor 8 explained, "elle s'implique, mais elle ne s'ingère pas là-dedans. . . . Si ma blonde, à un moment donné, me disait: 'On sait bien, tu es tout le temps avec Child 8,' le négatif serait peut-être plus fort que le positif qu'il m'apporte. Au bout du compte, je ne serais pas meilleur pour lui—ce qui n'est pas le cas." All mentors appreciated that their mentors were not jealous of the time they spent with the mentees, but imagined the difficulties that could arise had they not been so supportive.

Parents. Although parents and mentors shared some common challenges, parents also reported certain unique challenges they had faced.

Logistics. Although finding the time to maintain the mentoring relationship was a challenge for virtually all mentors, the same could not be said about parents. Five parents commented on other challenges relating to the logistics of the relationship. Parents 3, 6, and 10 explained that they sometimes found themselves planning their own schedules around their children's outings, or that they had to cancel a personal appointment in order to accommodate the mentoring relationship. Parents 4 and 5 also found that the distance from the mentors' homes to theirs added a logistical challenge.

The discomfort of “ordering” a relationship. Although only two parents spoke about the difficult feelings associated with “placing an order” for a relationship, the intense emotions these mothers displayed while addressing this aspect highlighted the difficult journey they, and possibly other parents, faced in accepting the idea of applying for a mentor for their child, even before they contacted the organisation. Parent 8 revealed, “ah, tu vois, je fais juste y penser [commence à pleurer]. C’était une décision qui était très difficile pour moi. D’autant plus que ça te donne l’impression d’avoir échoué quelque part. De se rendre à l’évidence qu’on ne peut pas tout faire. . . . D’aller là [pause]. Tu as, comme, l’impression que tu commandes quelque chose, une relation. Appliquer à une relation, c’est tellement bizarre comme concept. Mais il faut que tu sois à bout pour te rendre là, je trouve.” Parent 9 added, referring to her thoughts on the state of society in needing to apply for a mentor for her son: “C’est presque pathétique. Non, non—ce n’est pas négatif. Mon dieu, c’est: Bravo à l’organisme. Mais, quand tu es obligé d’aller demander qu’un étranger vienne donner de la présence à ton enfant, c’est pathétique, côté société.”

The possibility of abuse. Six parents (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10) spoke about their greatest fear in requesting a mentor for their children—the possibility of abuse. They worried about the mentors’ true motivations in wanting to become a Big Brother, and the fact that they would not be there to protect their child. They often thought “what if,” and expressed how unnatural it felt for them, as mothers, to send their children off with strangers. Parent 5 explained, “c’est quelqu’un qu’on ne connaît pas. En plus, on n’est pas là pour voir . . . pour protéger. . . . La difficulté du début, ben, c’est la crainte de l’étranger. . . . Tout simplement, parce qu’on joue le rôle de protecteur *en tout temps* . . . parce que y’a pas l’autre parent. Alors, vous comprenez quand vous avez mal au ventre, que c’est pas une crampe, c’est qu’on a peur.” Parent 8, who

“was afraid of 100 000 things” that could go wrong, was reassured by Mentor 8 after he answered her lengthy list of questions. However, she still worried about her son being abused until, with time, Mentor 8 gained her trust. Nevertheless, she recalled how she transmitted this fear to her son:

C’est un étranger. La première fois qu’il part avec [pause]. Je ne sais pas si tu le sais, mais avec tout ce qu’on entend sur la pédophilie—pas besoin de te le dire: “Mais pourquoi tu n’as pas d’enfant?” Écoute, tu as bien beau vouloir tourner autour du pot, mais à un moment donné, c’est comme, regarde: “Moi, c’est mon garçon. Tu le touches, je te tue.” Et Child 8! Child 8, la première fois, je pense que je l’ai traumatisé quand il est parti: “Oublie pas. Il n’a pas le droit de te toucher, il n’a pas de droit de t’approcher, il n’a pas le droit de [pause].” [Child 8 a répondu]: “Mais là, maman, tu me fais peur!” Mais, j’avais tellement [pause] écoute, c’est stressant. . . . Tu laisses partir ton enfant avec un pur étranger. Comme mère, c’est complètement dénaturé. . . . Cela m’a pris du temps à m’adapter à cela. Mais, avec les semaines [pause]. Et, Mentor 8 est tellement respectueux.

Jealousy between siblings. An important challenge was addressed by the only two mothers with siblings enrolled in the programme. Both parents (1 and 3) explained that their daughters were matched first and their sons second, and how this created jealousy between the siblings. In both cases, after waiting for so long, the boys were so discouraged that they asked their mothers to be taken off of the wait list. Parent 3 explained, “Child 3 a été sur la liste d’attente . . . pendant à peu près deux ans. . . . Le manque a augmenté avec le temps . . . et beaucoup de jalousie: ‘Pourquoi ma sœur est chanceuse, pourquoi c’est pas moi, pourquoi’ [pause]. Et il m’a demandé d’enlever son nom. Je les ai contacté, et puis, ils m’ont dit de

patienter un petit peu. . . . On était désespéré. . . . Oui, ça, c'était long pour mon fils." Both parents explained that until their sons were matched, the mentors who had been matched with their daughters occasionally took them, as well, on their outings. However, both sons remained acutely aware that they did not have someone especially for them, as their siblings did, and until they were matched, their jealousy towards their sisters persisted.

Not knowing the impact. Not being aware of positive impacts on the mentors was an important challenge for five parents (4, 5, 7, 8, and 9). Although knowing the positive impact on children was a motivator for mentors, for parents, being aware of the positive impacts on mentors allowed them to feel less guilty. They explained that knowing the mentors had gained from the match enabled them to view the relationship as a reciprocal, instead of perceiving mentors as "givers," and children and parents as "takers." Parent 8 explained how positive feedback she had received from Mentor 8's girlfriend allowed her to change her vision of the relationship:

On n'a pas souvent le *feedback* du Grand Frère, parce que lui, il le raconte à l'intervenante sociale. Elle va me le dire, en résumé: "Ça va bien. Il ne dit jamais rien. Il est super content." Mais, dans le fond, le meilleur feedback que j'ai eu, c'était avec la conjointe de Mentor 8, d'entendre: "Ça a complètement changé notre vie!" Quand elle m'a dit cela, j'étais comme: "Ah oui? Je pensais que c'était juste nous qui recevions!" Tu comprends? Tu te sens quasiment comme: "Ce n'est pas juste—nous, on ne donne rien en retour." Mais non, quand elle m'a dit ça, cela m'a fait du bien. C'est comme: "OK. Wow. Eux aussi, ils sont contents." Tu n'as jamais ce *feedback* là. . . . Je suis heureuse qu'il retire de ça. . . . Je dirais que c'est juste cela. Ça serait le *fun* qu'on ait peut-être plus la chance de savoir comment eux se sentent. C'est quoi l'impact sur leur

vie à eux? Parce que nous, on le voit, c'est notre enfant. C'est nous qui avons demandé l'aide, qui avons demandé d'être jumelé. Tandis qu'on ne sait pas l'impact qu'on crée, comment on enrichit leur vie à eux.

Both Parents 4 and 9 explained that it was the mentors themselves who revealed to them the positive impact the relationship had had on them, and how after knowing this information they were able to feel less shy and embarrassed and were able to enjoy more fully the relationship. Parent 4 explained that at first she felt her happiness was one-sided: “La joie c'était d'un côté—moi, à chaque fois, je remerciais Mentor 4 pour accepter de faire partie de notre vie.” However, it was only after Mentor 4 replied, “qu'est-ce que j'ai eu, moi, plus que vous avez eu? Parce que moi aussi, cela me donne la même chose: Le bonheur,” did Parent 4 truly understand that both sides appreciated each other. Similarly, during a period when Parent 9 was not working, she felt guilty about enjoying her four-hour break when Mentor 9 would come to pick up her son, because, at the time, Mentor 9 was working extremely long hours. It was after he admitted, “si je n'étais pas venu le chercher, c'est au bureau que j'aurais été. Il m'a sauvé, pas mal sûr, qu'il m'a sauvé d'un burnout,” that Parent 9 truly began to understand the positive impact her son had on Mentor 8.

Research Objective Two

Responses to research objective two focused on the developmental and impact-related perceptions of the participants in the mentoring relationship. Nine separate themes were isolated from the participants' transcripts, using the process described in Chapter 2. Within each theme emerged several subthemes. These are reported below, and are categorised by groups of children, mentors, and parents.

General impressions of match impacts on children.

Children.

General positive opinion. All children gave general statements about their mentoring relationship that generally expressed a positive opinion of the match. Some said that it was fun (Children 5, 10, and 12), while two others expressed that having a mentor was positive and that they themselves had changed so much because they had grown during the process (Children 4 and 9). When asked specifically why they had a positive view, five children had a difficult time explaining themselves. They expressed that things were better for them since they had been matched with a mentor, but could not explain why. Child 4 however, lovingly expressed her general feelings towards her relationship: “Bien, elle m’aide beaucoup, puis que sans elle je ne serais pas, comme, dans le bon chemin, puis au bon endroit, puis je ferais pas les bonnes choses. Mais, c’est ça, je l’aime beaucoup, elle est vraiment fine, puis avec elle, on s’amuse toujours, puis la vie est belle.”

Mentors. All mentors made a similar impression on the parents—that they were a positive figure in the children’s lives.

A positive presence. Six mentors focused more specifically on the positive nature of their relationship, and did not include the longitudinal aspect present in parents’ narratives. They felt that just being together with the children was positive in itself because they knew that the children were happy to see and be with them. Mentor 1 stated, “c’était toujours très positif dans le sens que, au moins dans ces moments-là, tu voyais que le fait qu’on ait passé ce moment juste ensemble—surtout qu’ils sont quatre enfants chez elle—avec toute l’attention. C’était bon.”

Positive element among others. Four mentors felt similarly to what some parents felt—that they were “un élément parmi tant d’autres qui contribuent à l’épanouissement et à l’évolution” (Mentor 8). They thought that the children would not be doing as well had they not

been participating in the mentoring relationship, as if their presence had offset the onset of difficulties. Mentor 7 explained his reasoning: “Tu sais, il a un sacré parcours, alors c’est quasiment impossible de savoir comment ce serait maintenant, si je n’avais pas été là. Il y a des choses qui sont allées de pire en pire, mais je ne pense pas que ce soit de ma faute. Tu sais, c’est un peu parce qu’il vit dans un milieu qui est super *tough*. Je ne sais pas exactement la différence depuis notre jumelage, mais je me dis que ça aurait pu être pire.”

Parents. All parents had a positive opinion of the match. Although some saw differences in their children right away and others viewed the relationship as more of a process, all parents felt that there were positive outcomes and benefits to participating in the relationship.

A general, positive, long-term impact. Six parents specifically spoke about their conviction that their children were benefitting from the relationship. Parent 10 relayed her belief: “C’est sûr que ça va avoir un impact à long terme si ça dure encore. Je suis convaincu de ça, ce n’est pas pour rien que je l’ai fait et je suis tellement contente de l’avoir fait. Je vois qu’il évolue bien.” Parent 11 expressed his same belief in the positive process of the match: “I believe that in two or three years from now, it will make a big difference, there, but it’s a slow process.” Additionally, another three parents also believed that although their children could experience difficulties in the future, the presence of their mentor would help to offset the onset of those difficulties. Parent 10 expressed that thought by leaving off with a question to which she had no answer: “Est-ce qu’il aurait évolué aussi bien?”

Four parents felt that, with time, the constant presence of a positive role model added up over time. Parent 1 explained, “Ça paraît peut-être pas beaucoup quand on dit ‘une rencontre, quatre heures aux deux semaines,’ mais à l’année, c’est quelqu’un qui est là continuellement. C’est quelque chose que l’enfant peut aller, puis faire confiance.” Parent 6 agreed, adding, “à

long terme, avec les années, c'est intégré dans sa vie, c'est une sécurité." Finally, Parent 9 expressed the difficulty she had in seeing positive impact over the short term, but over the long term she saw significant changes in her son: "Bien, je te dirais que moi, je vois plus les impacts à long terme. À court terme, je ne les voyais pas. . . . C'est plus à long terme qu'on sait. Le Grand Frère et moi, à un moment donné, on s'est parlé et on voit la différence d'avec le Child 9 du début. . . . À long terme, à force de connaître Mentor 9, . . . avoir confiance en lui et la complicité."

Academics and career.

Children. Although children did not once mention academics and careers in reasons for wanting to have a mentor, 11 of the 12 children interviewed described positive perceived impacts in these areas since they had been matched.

Teaching role. Half of the children explained that their mentors played a significant teaching role in their lives by explaining a variety of concepts and sharing their passion for informal learning. Children 1 and 11 described that their mentors were like teachers to them because they explained concepts that they had not grasped in school, such as in French (Child 11). Other children recalled that their mentors introduced them to educational games and they felt that this had helped them in school. For instance, Child 10 revealed that his mentor taught him a game that helped him to learn new words and Child 7 learned about medieval history after his mentor introduced him to a book trilogy and the Dungeons and Dragons game. Another two children linked specific activities to their increased interest and academic achievement in science. Child 3 elaborated, "Je fais des choses [des expériences] comme ça avec lui. C'est pour ça que j'ai commencé à avoir des meilleures notes en science, et c'est pour ça que j'ai commencé à aimer beaucoup les sciences."

Motivation and schoolwork. Two thirds of the children felt that their mentors helped to motivate them in school. This increase in motivation was reflected in a variety of ways. For instance, three children explained that they put more effort in their schoolwork since their match: Child 3 simply stated, “avant j’étudiais pas, maintenant j’étudie,” Child 12 revealed, “c’est vrai qu’à l’école je travaillais plus, après que je l’ai connu,” and Child 6 explained, “il me poussait. Ma mère aussi, elle me poussait, mais il y avait lui aussi, alors je me forçais deux fois plus.” Three children (10, 11, and 12) similarly expressed that after being stimulated by certain activities with their mentors, they then were motivated to complete homework assignments by writing about their outings. Child 12, who attended a specialised school for children with learning and behavioural difficulties, particularly appreciated the positive attention he received from Mentor 12, and was able to use this to motivate himself in school. He explained how he was motivated to have good behaviour because Mentor 12 looked at his individualised education plan each time they met:

Child 12: Quand je vois Mentor 12, lui, il regarde ma feuille de route: Si ça c’est bien passé il me félicite, sinon, il faut que je me rattrape.

Interviewer: Ça, c’est un motivateur de plus, tu dirais, le fait que tu le sais qu’il va la regarder ta feuille de route?

Child 12: On pourrait dire!

This same child also saw his outings with his mentor as a reward for applying himself in school:

Child 12: D’être jumelé avec Mentor 12, ça reste quand même une motivation. . . . Finir la semaine rapidement pour aller le voir. . . . Pour qu’on se voit, oui, ça reste quand même une motivation.

Interviewer: OK, tu t’appliques bien pour être sûr de pouvoir le voir?

Child 12: Oui. . . .

Interviewer: C'est comme ta récompense?

Child 12: C'est ça.

Motivation to stay in school. Apart from helping to increase their motivation to do well in school, four children also spoke of the impact their mentors had on their motivation to stay in school. Child 11 expressed that her mentor was a living example of what she could become if she continued her schooling: "She went through school to get her job, so, yeah . . . it shows that I can go to school and get a good job." Three other children explained how their mentors actively encouraged them to stay in school. Child 4 explained:

Child 4: Mentor 4 est toujours là pour m'encourager.

Interviewer: T'encourager?

Child 4: À continuer, puis à persévérer. À un moment, donné j'étais comme: "Je ne veux plus aller à l'école, je veux juste jouer au basket." Puis Mentor 4 est comme: "Non, si tu veux jouer au basket, il faut que tu ailles étudier, puis tout." Puis, elle a commencé à m'expliquer, puis elle me faisait comprendre. Puis là, j'étais comme: "OK," puis j'ai, comme, travaillé fort, puis ça a été. . . . Tu sais, si Mentor 4 n'avait pas été là, j'aurais juste profité de la vie: "Wow! La vie est belle, nananan," mais, tu sais, les études, le basket et tout ça aurait, comme, rien fait.

The two other children similarly expressed that their mentors encouraged them to do well in school, and added that their mentors used themselves as successful examples. Child 8 explained, "Mentor 8, il est comptable, puis il est allé loin dans les études. Alors, il me dit toujours de bien faire mes devoirs, d'aller à l'école, pis de pas lâcher, pis tout ça." Child 6 added, "Lui, il habite à [quartier]. On va voir les grosses maisons. Il me dit . . . que je pourrais me rendre là si je

travaille beaucoup . . . si je travaille fort, puis je me motive.” Child 6 also added that his mentor wanted him to do well in his schooling to the point that he convinced the principal of his high school to accept him even though he had been on the waiting list.

School enjoyment. Five children also explained how the mentoring relationship indirectly helped them to enjoy school more. By speaking with their mentors about problems at school, children more easily resolved social difficulties and had better relationships with peers and teachers. The children, in turn, felt better and happier at school. Child 4 explained how Mentor 4 helped her to handle her relationship with her teacher: “Tu sais, comme, quand tu es toujours dans les conflits. . . . Mentor 4, elle m’a beaucoup conseillé, comme d’habitude, puis là, c’était correct vers la fin de l’année. . . . Elle m’a toujours conseillé pour l’école, comme, ‘Relaxe,’ puis ‘Pètes pas des cochés,’ puis comme, ‘Juste reste relaxe—écoutes-la quand elle te parle puis tout, puis donne pas d’attitude, ou des yeux en haut,’ puis tout, là. Des façons de communiquer, puis tout, puis ça a marché.” Child 7, whose behaviour problems were so severe he attended school in a psychiatric hospital for a year, reflected on the support he received from Mentor 7:

Child 7: Ça a commencé à être mon Grand Frère en mai, avant que je rentre à l’hôpital. Ça a bien été. Il ne faisait pas de commentaires. Il me demandait comment ça allait à l’école.

Interviewer: Et pour toi, c’était important qu’il reste pendant ces moments-là?

Child 7: C’est sûr que j’avais besoin de dire à quelqu’un, autre que ma mère, comment je me sentais, comment ça se passait là-bas, donc c’était assez important.

Future career. In addition to increasing their motivation for school, six children also indicated that their mentors had an influence on their vision of the future and their career aspirations. For Child 1, the change was that she now envisioned a future for herself: “Avant je

la voyait pas, maintenant je la vois.” Other children were influenced by their mentors in different ways. For instance, when Child 4 shared her dream of being the first female basketball player to play on a male team, Mentor 4 responded with acceptance, encouragement, and guidance. Child 11, who wanted to become a film maker like Mentor 11, was taken to an editing studio and envisioned a possibility of higher education:

Interviewer: And for your future? How do you imagine yourself in five years?

Child 11: I’m in grade seven, so I’ll just be finishing school.

Interviewer: Exactly, so where do you see yourself in five years, so, when you’re done with school?

Child 11: I’ll try a go to college.

Interviewer: Okay, is there a field that interests you more than others?

Child 11: I wanna do, like, film making.

Interviewer: OK, like Mentor 11?

Child 11: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. This interests you very much?

Child 11: Yeah.

Finally, Child 8, who envisioned a career as a veterinarian, explained that Mentor 8 encouraged him to concentrate on his schoolwork so that this dream could come true.

Teacher perception. In reflecting on the impact their mentoring relationships on academics and career aspirations, Children 2, 8, and 12 also revealed that their teachers saw an improvement in their attitudes toward school after they had been matched. Child 12 explained, “ils me l’ont dit à la fin de l’année de la 6e année, quand je m’en allais au secondaire. On a eu une rencontre . . . puis ils ont dit que, depuis que je connaissais Mentor 12, ça allait beaucoup,

beaucoup mieux.”

Mentors. All 12 mentors were interested in the children’s educational and academic achievement. Mentors described numerous conversations they had with the children throughout their relationship that had to do with school, grades, subject areas, teachers, and careers.

Genuine interest: Asking about school. They were genuinely concerned with the children’s life at school and expressed their interest in a variety of ways. For instance, seven mentors recalled having spoken with the children about problems they had in school and with teachers. Mentor 9 explained, “En général, je vais lui poser des questions. Je vais lui poser des questions pour voir pourquoi. ‘Le professeur a-t-il raison?’ Et en général, il [Child 9] n’avait pas raison. Je dis: ‘Bien, le professeur n’a pas fait ça pour le plaisir, qu’est-ce qui c’est passé?’ Et tout ça, et là, on en discute.” Four mentors also showed their interest by looking at the children’s report cards or individualised education plans. Mentor 12 explained, “il a une feuille de route qu’il fait signer par sa mère à chaque soir. Puis, à chaque fois qu’on se voit, je lui demande de voir sa feuille de route. Parce qu’à chaque journée, il y a une note sur 15 ou sur 30 qui est attribuée à la fin de chaque journée. On voit pourquoi il a perdu des points.” Five mentors additionally showed their interest in school by explicitly encouraging the children to continue making efforts in school and to continue their schooling. Mentor 4 understood Child 4’s dislike for certain subjects, but encouraged her to forge through a difficult period in order to achieve her goals: “Je me souviens quand qu’elle me disait ça: ‘J’aime pas ça l’école, là, c’est plate.’ . . . J’ai dit: ‘L’année passée, tu voulais être médecin. Tu n’apprendras pas ça sur l’internet, là, être médecin. Donc, lâche pas, c’est un coup plate, c’est un bout plate à passer. Oui, je le sais l’histoire, tu vas trouver ça plate. Puis, oui, c’est plate, l’histoire, parce que moi aussi je trouvais ça plate, l’histoire. Mais, regarde en quoi j’ai faite ma maîtrise: En histoire.”

Positive relationship with school attitude and behaviour. Mentors generally had difficulty affirming if their presence had had an impact on academics. However, when queried, 10 mentors recalled that they had seen or been told of positive outcomes with regard to school behaviour and attitudes, motivation, homework, and achievement that had been associated with their presence. Mentor 7 explained that Child 7, who had severe behaviour problems, shared with pride his improvement in his grades for behaviour: “Ils ont un bulletin exprès pour le comportement. . . . Alors, quand il avait de bonnes notes de comportement, il était super fier. Il m’a toujours parlé de ses bonnes notes de comportement.” From what Mentor 1 had heard, Child 1’s behaviour had improved significantly since the beginning of their match: “Bien, quand on a commencé, Child 1 puis moi, elle avait des retenues presque toutes les semaines. Mais maintenant c’est plus rare. Je pense que, si je ne me trompe pas, j’ai même pas entendu parler qu’elle en avait eu une cette année. Juste ça, ça fait une différence.” Similarly, Mentor 12 commented on the improvement in Child 12’s attitude in school following their match: “Son attitude en classe a beaucoup changé. Son professeur m’a dit que ce n’était plus le même petit gars depuis qu’on était jumelé. Cela faisait quelques mois à peine qu’on se voyait. Et au niveau de son attitude, il était beaucoup plus sûr de lui, beaucoup plus confiant.”

Positive impact on homework and schoolwork completion. Four mentors also expressed positive experiences with regard to homework and academic achievement. Mentor 1 explained how Child 1 began to do her homework because Mentor 1 refused to let their outing be used as an excuse for not completing homework:

Mentor 1: Maintenant elle fait ses devoirs le soir en arrivant. Donc il n’y a plus de bataille pour faire les devoirs; il n’y a plus de “il faut que je te ramène avant neuf heures parce que tes devoirs ne sont pas encore fait parce que t’as tout garoché tes livres en

arrivant.”

Interviewer: Ça arrivait des fois dans vos sorties?

Mentor 1: Bien, c’est arrivé l’hiver passé, en fait, que: “Non! Elle avait pas fait ses devoirs!” “Bien pourquoi?” “Ça lui tentait pas quand elle est arrivée de l’école, puis là elle les fera pas parce qu’il va être trop tard.” “Bien non! Faut que tu fasses tes devoirs là! Tu peux pas dire à ton professeur que tu fais pas tes devoirs parce que t’as une grande soeur, ça marche pas.”

Mentor 8 also recalled at length how Child 8 had tried to get out of doing his homework by going on an outing, the tension that this created with Parent 8, the solution that arose, and how Mentor 8’s participation in the homework led to increased motivation and grades:

Mentor 8: C’est arrivé, une circonstance. C’est arrivé juste une fois. Une grosse fois. Puis je pense que ça a bien marché. Sa mère l’a réalisé. Lui aussi. Semble-t-il que ça a eu un effet positif sur ses notes.

Interviewer: Ça, c’était dans une matière en particulier?

Mentor 8: Oui, mais je sais plus c’était quoi. . . . Il fallait faire le résumé d’un texte. C’était en histoire, je pense. . . . Sa mère s’était fâchée après lui parce qu’il ne l’avait pas fait. Il le fait toujours à la dernière minute. Donc là, Mentor 8 arrive. Child 8 est content, parce qu’il vient de se sauver de l’ouvrage. Mais là, sa mère dit: “Mentor 8, tu ne pourras pas partir avec Child 8, parce qu’il n’a pas fait ce qu’il avait à faire. Il reste à la maison. Puis la prochaine fois, il aura juste à [pause].” Donc, c’est bien, de la part de la mère, de mettre ses limites. Puis, là, bien, j’ai pris le temps: “Bon, on va rester ensemble et on va regarder ce que tu fais.” J’ai l’impression que si j’étais parti tout de suite. . . D’une part, parce qu’il aurait aimé ça me voir, parce que sa mère l’avait chicané,

parce qu'il n'avait pas de solution. . . J'ai l'impression que sa page serait restée blanche . . . parce qu'il ne se serait pas motivé. Donc on s'est assis ensemble. On a relaxé. On a pris notre temps. Et on a commencé à travailler sur la matière que je connaissais. Je lui ai dit: "Regarde, je vais te dire ce que je sais, mais je suis pas pro, moi, là. Je vais te montrer comment je l'aurais fait. Va chercher ton dictionnaire, prend ton mot-clé. Va te chercher des outils de travail. Tu ne peux pas tout trouver dans ça: on te demande de résumer! Donc d'écrire quelque chose, de condenser. Et d'écrire dans d'autres mots, ce serait encore mieux, parce que ça montrerait que tu as compris. Si tu écris dans les mêmes mots, je ne suis pas certain que ça montre que tu as compris. Donc si tu ne comprends pas un mot, il faut que tu le cherches, faut que tu le comprennes avant de résumer." Donc c'était ça l'approche. On a fait un cas ensemble. Il a fait un cas tout seul. . . . Semble-t-il qu'après, il en a fait cinq. Il était sur son high! Il m'a appelé dans la semaine pour me dire: "Mentor 8, j'ai eu [pause]." Je ne sais plus combien, c'était sept sur dix ou huit sur dix, mais en tout cas, c'était très bon. Il était content.

The mentors who spoke about occasionally actively supporting the children with their homework reflected that, for those specific instances, this support translated into increased motivation, and in turn, an increase in grades.

Three mentors similarly observed that children were stimulated by their outings, and then used these outings as inspiration for their own assignments. For example, Mentor 11 explained that she had been conducting research about a famous Inuit photographer for her latest documentary film. In a remarkable coincidence, this photographer turned out to be Child 11's great-grandfather. Mentor 11, in turn, organised an outing for Child 11 to meet her great-grandfather's biographer. Mentor 11 explained, "she went to meet [the biographer] and [the

biographer] told her stories about her great-grandfather, and she gave her a book of his drawings and photographs. I later heard from her dad that she took the book with her to school and she was going to write a report about it.”

Sensing the importance for children of showing interest in school. In the same way that mentors expressed concern for the children’s schooling, mentors sensed from the children that it was important for them to show interest in the children’s education. Six mentors recalled that they had been formally invited by the children to various functions at school, such as graduations (Mentor 11), end-of-year concerts (Mentors 5 and 10), and to meet the teacher (Mentors 1, 2, 12). When the teacher met the mentors they shared their observations of positive change in the children since the matches began. Mentor 1 described the improvement in feedback from one year to the next: “L’année passée, le professeur que j’avais rencontré, tu voyais qu’elle était . . . débordée, juste par le fait qu’elle a fait, comme, ‘ouff’ [un geste en passant la main par dessus la tête] comme ça, là. Puis, j’avais dit quelque chose comme, ‘Tant que ça?’ puis elle avait dit ‘Ah oui!’ Cette année . . . j’ai rencontré la personne du service de garde qui lui souhaitait ‘une bonne journée, puis belle amélioration, puis beau comportement aujourd’hui.’ . . . Wow! C’est pas des choses qu’on aurait entendu l’année passée! Fait que, déjà, il y a, comme, des petites améliorations.”

Interest in career aspirations. Mentors also had an equal interest in the children’s future career aspirations. All but one mentor specifically spoke with the children about their future ambitions. Depending on how focused the children’s goal was, mentors encouraged the children by asking them what they would like to be when they were older (Mentors 1, 3, 5, 10), talking about different professions and the education required for each (Mentor 2), encouraging the children to improve or maintain their grades in order to be accepted into career programmes of

their choice (Mentor 4), and encouraging them to practice specific skills that were related to their future goals (Mentor 11). For example, Mentor 11 gave Child 12 a journal to encourage her ambition to become a writer. Some mentors also saw that children enjoyed some activities so much that they began to consider new career choices. Mentor 12 explained, “j’ai remarqué des activités qu’on a fait, des fois, qui lui ont donné envie d’un nouveau choix de carrière. Comme, quand on a monté un meuble, il voulait être ébéniste. Il trippait.” Similarly, Mentor 6 saw the impact that being exposed to his job had on Child 6: “Je le vois entrepreneur parce qu’il aime bien mon côté business. Ça, tu vois qu’il aime ce que je fais.” Other mentors also foresaw sharing their career knowledge with the children if they ended up choosing a job in the same domain (Mentor 9).

Difficulty of not having more of a say in the child’s education. A final aspect that mentors referred to specifically related to the challenges and difficulties they felt in not having more influence over the children’s education. The five mentors who spoke about this explained that they valued education and that it had been a priority for themselves in their lives. However, they felt that the parents of the children they had been matched with did not prioritise education or did not necessarily put in to place the structures needed for the children to achieve their full potential. Thus, they had much difficulty accepting that they did not have the power or influence that they would have liked to have had, and worried about the children’s future education. Mentor 12 explained the difference in values and his struggle to let go: “Il a une mère très, j’oserais dire, libertine, qui lui permet d’haïr l’école. À la limite, l’encourage à ne pas aimer cela. . . . Mais, son professeur de 6e année m’a dit que ce n’était plus du tout le même petit garçon [depuis le jumelage]. Il m’a dit qui lui restait un petit bout de chemin à faire et c’est à la maison que cela devait se passer. . . . C’est sûr que j’ai envie de m’en mêler. D’écrire à sa mère,

qu'on s'échange des courriels pour voir comment on pourrait le motiver davantage. Mais, ce n'est pas ma place. Il faut que je le lâche prise. J'accepte que cela ne soit pas. . . . Oui, pour un gars comme moi, c'est très difficile." Mentor 6 explained that he was told by the organisation that he overstepped his boundaries by trying to convince the principal of a private high school to accept Child 6: "J'ai appelé le directeur de l'école parce qu'il était sur la liste d'attente après son examen. J'ai essayé d'influencer, expliquer notre situation pour qu'il rentre. . . . Je n'aurais pas dû le faire, selon les Grands Frères. Je le dépassais, mon rôle. Cela, c'est un rôle de père. Mais moi, je trouvais cela important. Parce que moi . . . j'accorde une importance à l'école."

One positive element among others. Regardless of specific examples that mentors gave that showed a positive correlation between the mentoring relationship and school-related improvement, many hesitated to take sole credit for the improvement, feeling that they were rather "un élément parmi tant d'autres qui contribue à son épanouissement et à son evolution" (Mentor 8). Mentor 6 similarly felt that his presence had the impact of delaying a negative onset: "Tu sais, une petite étincelle qui va faire en sorte que la locomotive va avancer dans la bonne direction? Je ne suis définitivement pas l'étincelle qui l'envoie dans la mauvaise direction. Je fais tout pour que cela retarde. Si jamais cela arrive, cela retardera. Mais, pour l'instant, j'essaie de le mettre dans la bonne *track*."

Parents. All parents spoke about the positive relationship they perceived between the mentoring relationship and their children's schooling and career. They explained that the mentors expressed interest in their children's schooling in a variety of ways and encouraged their children to remain in school. Parents also perceived a positive impact of the mentoring relationship and school behaviour, attitudes, and achievement.

Mentors express genuine interest in education. Six parents spoke more specifically about

how the mentors expressed interest in education. The first and simplest way was by asking how school was going, and actively listening to what the children had to say about school. Parent 12 explained that Mentor 12 “s’informe toujours, il est heureux d’apprendre comment ça se passe à l’école.” Parents 4 and 9 knew of specific instances where speaking to their mentors about difficulties with peers and teachers helped to alleviate their stress and made the children feel better about going to school. Parent 4 recalled that her daughter went through a very difficult period at school but was able to feel better by talking to Mentor 4: “Ma fille avait beaucoup de difficultés à cette école-là. . . . On a eu beaucoup de problèmes. . . . Child 4 est tombée malade. Elle était à l’hôpital deux ans, à peu près, on ne savait pas ce qu’elle avait, il y avait beaucoup de complications au niveau de sa santé. C’était à cause de ça, le stress, les problèmes. Et puis, . . . la responsable de notre dossier au Grands Frères, elle m’a dit: ‘Elle peut discuter de tous ses problèmes-là avec sa Grande Sœur.’ . . . Elle sent que c’est quelqu’un qui la comprend, quelqu’un qui l’écoute, qui la conseille.” Parents added that another way that mentors showed interest was by attending school functions (Parents 8 and 11) and looking at report cards and congratulating the children on their results (Parents 6, 11, and 12). For instance, Parent 11 explained that Mentor 11 “sees her report card. Of course, she encourages her, tells her that she is proud of her.”

An additional method of showing interest mentioned by parents was that mentors were passionate about learning. Parent 5 explained that since her son’s match with his mentor, he began to inform himself at greater length about certain subject areas in order to share the information. She explained, “le fait d’avoir un Grand Frère l’encourage à quantifier. . . . Par exemple, au niveau de la variété de ses connaissances, parce qu’il parle de sujets différents, et son Grand Frère se branche sur plusieurs sujets. Donc, il arrive à avoir des discussions de

grands. Et donc, il voit dans le regard de son Grand Frère qu'il est en mesure de développer des idées intéressantes. Donc, c'est à ce niveau-là qu'il encourage."

Positive impact on school behaviour, attitudes, and achievement. In addition to parents observing the mentors' interest in education, six parents also perceived a positive impact on school behaviour, attitudes, and achievement since their children were matched. Parent 11 remarked that his daughter was particularly motivated and proud to share a biography of her great-grandfather that had been given to her during one of her outings with Mentor 11: "Child 11's proud of that book. She brought it to school and then her French teacher photocopied the book, like, three times. And, Child 11's proud of being in a famous family—famous Inuit family—like a lot of white people don't know who that was but people who know the Inuit culture, yeah, they know." Parent 5 noted a change in attitude in her son since being matched, in that he became more open to different ideas, and she has observed the impact in his schoolwork: "Il gagne de la maturité en ouverture, puis c'est ça qui est important, parce que . . . si on expérimente pas cette faculté-là, on la développe pas. Il faut leur donner la chance de le faire. Et donc, ça se ressent au niveau du travail à l'école dans le sens . . . on applique ces qualités-là. S'il a un exposé à faire, il va l'appréhender de façon différente." Parent 8, whose son made a dramatic turnaround after being matched, described the changes in behaviour, attitude, and academic achievement as "spectacular," noting that even the computer system in a private school had not been designed to accept a student with his prior academic standing:

Il a doublé la sixième année. C'est rare qu'on double, maintenant. . . . Il ne faisait rien, il n'avait pas d'intérêt. . . . [Il était] dans une classe adaptée. . . . Il était en colère contre tout le monde. Il était frustré. Il n'était pas heureux, il était triste. Les professeurs m'écrivaient des mots. . . . Parce qu'il échouait à l'école. . . . Il se battait, il s'est fait

expulser. . . . C'était vraiment l'autre extrême. Là, je ne vous dis pas que c'est un enfant parfait. Sauf qu'il est rendu au Collège [école secondaire privée]. C'est quand même un collège privé. Il a commencé son secondaire 1 cette année. Je ne pense pas qu'il aurait pu faire tout ce cheminement-là juste avec moi. . . . Au Collège, quand il a été inscrit, . . . ils ne pouvaient pas accepter son *paperwork* parce qu'ils ne comprenaient pas qu'un enfant puisse . . . avoir doublé sa sixième année et s'être rendu au Collège. . . . Cela n'avait pas de sens dans leur système informatique. Sur papier, c'était bien correct. Il avait réussi l'examen et c'est tout. . . . Il a fallu que l'autre école atteste, . . . qu'ils écrivent une lettre avec le sceau de l'école. . . . Parce que ce n'était jamais arrivé que quelqu'un à [l'école précédente] tente d'aller au Collège.

Encouraging children so stay in school. Another positive aspect that seven parents addressed was that mentors explicitly encouraged the children to continue their schooling and informed the children that they had educational expectations of them. Although parents viewed this as a positive impact on their children, they also personally felt supported by the mentors in that they promoted a message that some parents had difficulty passing on to their children. For instance, Parent 6 recalled how she called Mentor 6 for help when her son did not want to go to a highly ranked school he had been accepted at because none of his friends were going there. She explained that Mentor 6 took her son out for breakfast, and when they came back, Child 6 had agreed to enroll in the school. Parent 12, whose child was in a specialised high school for children with learning disabilities, appreciated Mentor 12's encouragement to finish high school: "Mentor 12 aide beaucoup à ce niveau-là parce que Mentor 12 lui dis souvent: 'Tu sais, Child 12, il faut continuer l'école, il faut se rendre jusqu'au bout, au moins jusqu'à la fin du secondaire.'" Parent 5 supported this idea as well, and was happy that Mentor 5's educational

values “va dans la veine de ce que je lui aie inculqué.”

A real life example. Another five parents also viewed the mentors as real life examples for their children about the positive outcomes of continuing their education as well as having a well-paying job. Parent 11 found that “Mentor 11 is a good role model—well educated, so I hope Child 11 kind of follows in her footsteps . . . I hope she goes far with her education.” Parent 8 was similarly pleased that Mentor 8 was an example of balancing studies and pleasure: “C’est un grand modèle positif aussi parce qu’il a fait des études. Il est comptable agréé. . . . Child 8, il voit ce qu’il peut devenir. Il voit quelqu’un qui est fin, qui est le fun, qui fait du sport, mais qui, quand même, est sérieux: Il travaille, il est allé aux études. . . . Cela passe mieux lorsque cela vient de Mentor 8 plutôt que de moi, ce message-là.” Finally, Parent 6, who had higher educational aspirations for her son that she was able to achieve for herself, foresaw Mentor 6 guiding her son through his higher education: “Mentor 6 a fait de bonnes études et c’est un gars super intelligent et il a une business. Plus Child 6 va vieillir, plus il va aller aux études, plus il va avoir des difficultés. Quand il va être découragé, je vais lui dire d’appeler Mentor 6, pour qu’il lui donne des trucs.”

One positive element among many. Like mentors, parents also viewed the presence of a mentor as a positive element among many that had influenced their schooling. Four parents emphasised that, while they could not attribute a specific percentage the mentor had contributed to their children’s academic gains, and they felt that they had definitely played a positive role. Parent 2 explained that the beginning of her son’s match coincided with the arrival of a good teacher, and she felt that both helped to propel Child 2 to good academic standing: “La pire année, ça a été la quatrième année . . . quand il a eu peur d’avoir une année à reprendre. . . . Puis, il a tombé, en même temps, sur un très bon professeur. . . . Ça coïncidait aussi avec son Grand

Frère qui était arrivé. . . . Donc les deux choses en même temps. Cela fait que le professeur a dit: ‘Bien, le Child 2 qu’on en a parlé, c’est pas lui que j’ai dans ma classe [aujourd’hui].’”

Positive impact on career. Ten parents spoke positively about the mentoring relationship and possible impacts on their children’s career. The remaining two parents, whose children were also the two youngest participants (both were 10 years old), were unsure of the impact. The angle at which the parents viewed the impact varied, depending on how close the child’s career interest was to their mentor’s. While some parents saw the exposure to their mentor’s career as perspective-broadening, others still, viewed the exposure as a direct exposure to their child’s goals. For instance, because Mentor 12 was an actor, he had been asked to participate, along with Child 12, in a television ad campaign for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal. Parent 12 explained, “ça amène un impact beaucoup plus grand, mais à long terme, intéressant, parce que ça développe des côtés de la vie de Child 12 qu’il n’aurait jamais connu parce que moi, je ne ferais pas ce métier-là.” Parent 11 explained that Mentor 11, a film producer, brought his daughter, who wanted to also make films, to a studio to make a short animated movie. Similarly, Parent 2 thought that perhaps because Mentor 2 was an engineer, Child 2 might decide to choose a career that would require higher education.

Social-emotional development. All children, mentors, and parents commented on three separate areas within social-emotional development: social impacts with peers, positive and corrective experiences with parent-like adults, and emotional impacts.

Children.

Social development—peer relationships. Seven children spoke about what they felt was a positive impact of the mentoring relationship on their peer relationships. Children 1, 3, 10 and 4 felt closer to friends after being matched with a mentor. Child 1 explained that friends

approached her more often to find out about the activities she participated in with her mentor, and Child 10 sweetly explained that he now had more to talk about with friends: “Admettons, à la place de dire que tu voudrais avoir un chien, et bien, tu parles de ton Grand Frère.” Child 3 was thrilled to explain that because he was generally happier with a Big Brother in his life, he had a greater facility to make friends. Finally, Child 4 felt less in conflict and closer to friends as a result of being matched with Mentor 4. She explained how she and Mentor 4 would chat about certain social skills that enabled her to become a better friend: “Quand je me chicane avec mes amis, Mentor 4 est toujours là pour m’aider. . . . Comme avant, les gens, ils n’avaient pas trop confiance en moi. Je ne gardais pas toujours les secrets, pis tout. Pis Mentor 4 m’aidait pis tout, pis là, les gens on plus confiance.”

Five children additionally felt that having a mentor helped them go out more and feel less isolated (Children 4 and 11), become more outgoing (Children 7 and 9), and feel more comfortable in social situations by learning social norms (Children 2 and 9). For example, Child 11 explained, “it’s better that I get out more, because like, I used to not go outside a lot. [I was always in my room] . . . or on the computer.” Child 7 felt “moins renfermé,” and Child 9 was encouraged by his mentor to be more sociable. He recalled his social difficulties, and like Child 11, was often on the computer:

Child 9: Au début, . . . mettons, que je parlais à une personne, sur internet, genre. Puis je n’avais même pas d’amis. Quand je sortais, je pleurais. Il y avait une genre de table, je me couchais, la tête en dessous de la table puis je me bouchais les oreilles.

Interviewer: Puis qu'est-ce qui change avec Mentor 9?

Child 9: Bah, l'affaire [c’est que Mentor 9 est] plus sociable. Admettons, je lui demande l'heure . . . Il dit, mettons, “j’sais pas.” Je dis, “demande-le à quelqu'un.” Il me dit, “toi,

demande-le.” Je lui fais, “OK.” Genre, juste pour me dégêner du monde.

Finally, Child 4 described how it became easier to approach friends when she was with her mentor. She described how her Mentor 4 would cheer her on at sports competitions and took an interest in her friends: “Des fois, elle vient m’encourager à des compétitions de basket ou d’athlétisme. Pis après on se voit, on va faire quelque chose. Des fois elle me demande: ‘Ça te tenterais de dire à ton ami de venir avec nous?’ pis des choses comme ça. Pis là on parle, pis c’est le fun. . . . Ben, quand j’étais pas jumelée avec Mentor 4—exemple, aux compétitions d’athlétismes, c’est comme: ‘Ah, allo, ça va?’ Je parle avec mes amis, c’est tout. Tu sais, on se chicane, pis on se parle pas pour un bout, pis . . . on rentre chez-nous.”

Alternative view of family life. Four children felt that their mentors played a positive role in helping to shape an alternative view of family life. Children 5 and 6 explained that he now knew what having a brother was because they were only children, and Child 10 explained that, through his mentoring relationship, he realised children could get along well with adults. Children 8 and 9 expressed that they knew what having a father would be like, and that their mentors were, for them, father figures, because they chose to be present while their biological fathers had chosen not to.

Emotional development—anger to happiness. Four boys emphasised the dramatic emotional changes that occurred after they were matched with their mentors, and all explained that their negative feelings they held about themselves turned in to happiness. The anger they felt often lead to behaviour problems with peers in school, and once they were matched, the feelings of anger diminished, leading to fewer behavioural difficulties. Child 3 thankfully explained, “s’il n’était pas là, je pense que je resterais moins content, plus agressif. Je lui dois beaucoup.” Child 8 clearly linked his feeling badly with not seeing his father, and explained

how this changed after beginning his relationship with Mentor 8:

Child 8: C'est sûr que je me sentais mal quand je ne voyais pas mon père. Il y avait, comme, un vide. Quand Mentor 8 est arrivé, ça a rempli. C'est comme s'il y avait quelqu'un [pause] un homme dans ma famille, là. Pas un père, là, mais [pause].

Interviewer: Une présence masculine.

Child 8: C'est ça. Je fais plus de sport, là. J'étais plus content. J'étais moins méchant, moins bougon.

Emotional development—talking about feelings. Six children spoke about the positive impact of having someone they could trust, talk to about their feelings, and confide in. Child 11 explained that her mentor was another person in her support network: "I'm able to, like, let my feelings out to more than . . . one person, and [it helps]." Child 12 agreed, and added, "je peux lui confier ce qui s'est passé, puis je lui ai raconté la grosse chicane avec ma mère." Children 4 and 9 also felt that their mentors took them seriously and listened to what they had to say so that they could give them helpful feedback, especially in social situations. Child 9 revealed, "quand j'ai un problème avec une fille, admettons, je vais en parler."

Emotional development—self-confidence. Seven children reported an increased perception of self-confidence. While some of the children had difficulty explaining why they felt more confident, others came up with concrete examples of feeling more confident in specific abilities that they had practiced with their mentors, such as taking the Métro (Child 9), and participating in certain sports (Child 3). Child 4, who described having lost much of her self-confidence in 6th grade after being bullied by her peers, appreciated that Mentor 4 had caringly tried to help her: "Pis Mentor 4, je lui avais pas vraiment parlé de ma confiance, parce que je voulais pas trop en parler. . . . Mais, elle m'a aidé pareil, parce qu'elle l'a remarqué quand

même—que j’avais beaucoup changé sur ça. Pis là, elle a commencé à m’aider, pis, comme, discrètement: ‘Tu es bonne.’ Elle faisait des detours, pis elle m’en parlait.”

Mentors.

Social development—peer relationships. Seven mentors (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11) spoke about the support they gave to children in helping them to socialise with peers and in public. This support was often shown by example and through nonjudgmental practice and discussion. Mentor 6 explained how he emphasised the importance of listening to other people when he was with his mentee, and felt that this skill had improved: “L’importance d’écouter ce que les gens ont à dire plutôt que de penser à ce que tu vas dire. Lui, il n’avait pas cet aspect-là. Prendre le temps de dire: ‘Je t’écoute.’ Cela s’est amélioré.” Interestingly, Mentor 9 recalled addressing the identical issue with his Little Brother: “Il n’avait pas beaucoup d’écoute. . . . Il posait des questions, mais il n’écoutait pas les réponses. Il était tout le temps en train de poser des questions. En avant de tout le monde et il devançait. Au lieu d’écouter, puis après ça, poser des questions, il avait tendance à vouloir interagir tout de suite. Une fois, je lui avais dit : LB, écoute, après tu poseras des questions. Parce que là tu poses une question et tu n’écoutes même pas la réponse. Ça, ça a pratiquement complètement disparu de son comportement. Ça fait longtemps que je n’ai pas observé qu’il ait posé une question et pas écouté.”

Mentors 6 and 8 specifically set examples of social interaction with others by always making sure to say “please” and “thank you.” As well, after observing Children 1, 5, and 9 in difficult social dealings, their mentors discussed the events with them and explored different ideas and strategies that they could use in future interactions. For instance, Mentor 5 recalled an activity at the National Film Board that required Child 5 to interact and make decisions with another child. The first time they participated in the activity, Mentor 5 felt that Child 5 behaved

almost like “a dictator,” and was not satisfied with the outcome of the film they had produced. Several months later, they again participated in the same activity, but prior to going, spoke about what kind of interactions would give the best outcomes: “Je lui ai dit: ‘Là, Child 5, on va être avec d’autres gens encore.’ Il a dit: ‘OK, c’est correcte.’ Et là il parlait plus, et il essayait d’échanger, parce qu’il s’était rendu compte que la première fois c’était difficile quand il essayait d’imposer aux autres.”

In support of mentors’ accounts of guiding the children in the use of their skills, eight mentors reported improvement in mentee peer relationships. Mentor 1 specifically recalled having a conversation with her Little Sister about what friendship was, and how her understanding of this concept had grown following their conversation: “Là, elle se rencontre que, bien, *best friend* c’est pas juste l’amie avec qui tu joues le plus souvent—c’est celle avec qui tu peux partager tes sentiments . . . que tu vas aider. Elle a une plus grande ouverture d’esprit par rapport à c’est quoi des vrais amis, parce qu’avant . . . elle te nommait tout les gens dans sa classe, tout les gens dans son autobus scolaire.”

Mentors 1 and 4 recalled helping out with certain social conflicts, Mentors 3, 4, and 5 saw the children as being more outgoing, and Mentors 1, 3, and 9 had the impression that their mentees had more friends. Mentor 1 explained that, through discussion, Child 1 became more aware of socially appropriate language, and this enabled her to maintain friendships: “Maintenant, elle sait aussi . . . les limites de ce qui est acceptable de dire, surtout devant les parents—parce qu’il y avait des situations où les parents ne laissaient plus les enfants voir Child 1 parce qu’elle disait: ‘Stop, gros pète!’ [au] père—je comprends que le père voulait plus que sa fille joue avec Child 1, après ça.” Also, Mentors 2 and 11 specifically showed interest in their mentees’ friends in order to make them feel valued. Mentor 11 explained, “One of her friends is

Friend 11, and has been around when I picked her up. . . . I [include] her when we're together, in our discussions . . . even if it's very briefly. . . . We were talking about her mark at school and Friend 11 said, 'I'm not very smart, I don't get good marks,' and I'd say, 'Well, you seem pretty smart to me', you know what I mean? I think it's important to include her friends, also. So if I see Friend 11, I'll ask her about something she said to me the last time I saw her." Finally, six mentors also were aware that their mentees were proud of being matched to them and knew that they spoke about them to their friends. Mentor 11 remembered, "one of the times when I can tell that . . . she's enjoying the relationship [is when] she wants to introduce me to her friends or . . . she'll be like, 'oh, you know, I have to go with my Big Sister now,' and I can see that it's a positive thing. And they're like, 'oh you're so, you know, you're lucky.'"

Alternative view of family life. Nine mentors reported that the mentoring relationship played a positive role in helping children have alternative views of family life. They all felt that the children had gained an extended family, by having a brother or a sister, in addition to "grandparents" and "uncles," and "aunts." Mentor 3 felt that his mentee had gained an entire extended family: "Pour lui, ma famille, c'est sa famille. Une bonne partie de nos sorties, c'est avec ma famille, mes amis. . . . On est allé manger au restaurant à ma sœur. . . . C'est lui qui a filmé l'anniversaire de mon filleul." Mentor 4 similarly explained that her mother had become a grandmother to Child 4: "Je l'ai emmenée chez mes parents . . . et on l'a emmenée au [zoo]. Oui, oui, ma mère, elle lui envoyait des cartes à sa fête, puis de l'argent à Noël, puis . . ."

However, along with attachment and a newfound vision of an extended family came the possibility of loss, and Child 4 experienced this when her "grandmother," Mentor 4's mother, suddenly died. The triad experienced much difficulty manoeuvring through a lengthy and challenging adjustment period, and both adults—Mentor 4 and Parent 4—were unsure of their

roles in supporting Child 4 in her grief. Six mentors also spoke of the positive impact of the children observing a positive couple relationship by watching the mentors interact with their romantic partners.

Corrective relationships—abandonment. Eight mentors found the relationship to be a corrective experience for the children, in that it enabled them to realise that they could count on another adult that would not abandon them. Mentor 2 felt that his stability helped his Little Brother understand that he was someone he could count on: “Je suis plus comme un pilier, pas nécessairement en terme de solidité, mais comme quelqu’un sur qui il peut compter. Il sait que toutes les deux semaines on se voit, que tous les mercredis, je l’appelle. Je suis régulier. Un pilier de confiance, avec l’aspect confiance que cela peut avoir.” Mentors explained that it was only after much time that children began to trust that their mentors would not leave.

Mentor 9 recalled an incident that took place just prior to the one year mark of their relationship: “Les Grands Frères demandaient un minimum d’un an d’implication. . . . Ils disaient ça aussi aux mères, aux pères, aux petits gars: ‘Ton Grand Frère, il va être là au moins pour un an.’ Quand on est arrivé sur le bord de la première année, Child 9 a disjoncté. À l’école, il s’est mis en dessous d’une auto . . . parce qu’il avait peur que ça finisse. C’était directement ça, et après ça, on en a parlé après.” Mentor 9 had to explain to his Little Brother that he had never planned to leave after one year, and after that, Child 9 gradually began to believe that he would not be abandoned by his mentor. Mentor 3 also relayed how Child 3’s fear of abandonment caused him to become so nervous at the end of each meeting that he would vomit. Mentor 3 explained that after he made certain commitments in his own life, such as buying a house, and choosing a job that did not require him to travel, that Child 3 became less nervous and gradually stopped vomiting at the end of each meeting. Mentor 5 provided another

example of this, recalling how Child 5 thought his mentor was in a paid relationship with him, and believed that if Mentor 5 changed jobs, he would no longer have a mentor: “C’est moi qui lui a dit à un moment donné. . . . Je quittais chez lui—je le ramène tout le temps à la maison—et j’ai dit: ‘Bon, ben, on se rappelle la semaine prochaine.’ Puis là, . . . il m’a posé la question: ‘Est-ce que tu vas voir d’autres Petits frères le reste de la semaine? Est-ce que tu en vois à tous les jours?’ J’ai dit: ‘Ben, non!’ Et il me dit: ‘Ce n’est pas ça, ton travail?’ [J’ai répondu]: ‘Non, c’est pas ça mon travail. Moi, je travaille au cirque . . . , j’ai juste un Petit frère, et c’est toi . . . et il n’y a en pas d’autres.’ Il était, comme: ‘Ah, ouain?’ De savoir que . . . je n’étais pas payé pour faire ça, je ne reçois pas un salaire. Ça, je lui ai expliqué. . . . Puis là, tranquillement, il a réalisé qu’un jour que je ne partirai pas et que je vais continuer à être là. Ça, ça a pris un an avant que ça c’est bâti. Il a réalisé: ‘Ah, il a été là toute l’année.’ On a fait notre bilan et il a réalisé que j’allais être là tout le temps.”

Corrective relationships—talking about the absent parent. Seven mentors also recalled that the children would speak about the parent that had died or abandoned them, and they found it important to provide a nonjudgmental safe space for children to do so. Mentor 6 recalled how Child 6 spoke about his father upon their meeting: “Quand on se rencontre aux Grands Frères, il y a d’abord une rencontre avec la mère qui te dit: ‘OK.’ Après cela, Child 6 est entré dans la salle, et il est venu s’asseoir à côté de moi. Je te dirais qu’après m’avoir dit ‘Bonjour,’ la deuxième chose qu’il m’a dit a été: ‘Mon père s’est suicidé il y a deux ans.’ Cela voulait dire: ‘Regarde, on ne gardera pas cela en dessous de la table. C’est ça les faits et c’est pour cela que je suis ici.’ Il me l’a dit . . . il m’a garroché cela de même. [J’ai répondu]: ‘Là, je suis au courant, Child 6, et c’est correct. S’il y a d’autre chose, si tu veux m’en parler, sens toi bien à l’aise.” Similarly, Mentor 11 explained how Child 11 would occasionally disclose information

about her mother: “We once were walking along [street] and there was a funeral home, and she said: ‘Oh, that’s where my mother’s funeral was, and that’s where I went to the grief counsellor.’”

With time, some mentors felt that the space for discussing their absent parent allowed the children to heal somewhat. Mentor 8 explained: “Cela lui a donné plus confiance en lui. Child 12 était, surtout, beaucoup, beaucoup marqué par l’absence de son père qui n’a jamais connu. Sa mère l’a quitté quand elle était enceinte de [lui]. Alors, quand j’ai rencontré Child 12, on en parlait et il se mettait à pleurer tout de suite. Il y a une grande blessure par rapport au père manquant. Puis, on dirait que d’avoir un Grand Frère, cela n’a pas compensé, mais, c’est comme si cela a beaucoup allégé le fardeau qu’il portait.” As well, Mentor 2 recalled when Child 2 told some funny stories about his father, who was serving time in prison, thus giving him an opportunity to share the positive memories he had of him: “Je conduisais et je gueulais après quelqu’un. Il m’a dit: ‘Mon père, il fait pareil comme toi.’ . . . Oui, il m’en parle comme ça, des liens avec ce qu’on fait. La fois suivante, dans la voiture, je lui ai demandé en blague: ‘Ton père, est-ce qu’il était aussi méchant que moi, dans la voiture?’ [Il a répondu:] ‘Il était pire!’ Il m’a raconté une petite anecdote.”

Emotional development—mastering emotions. While the children tended to focus on the positive changes in how they felt about themselves since being matched, four mentors instead commented on the relationship as a safe medium for the children to master difficult emotions. Mentors 3, 7, and 11 all recalled supporting their mentees when they felt uncomfortable or anxious, guiding them through to the end. Mentor 11 explained her strategy: “When she’s in an unfamiliar place, that when she’s . . . very quiet and very anxious. So, when we do . . . venture out of that comfort zone . . . I really want to make it as comfortable as possible by giving as much information as possible on where we are, and what we’re doing, and you know how long it

will take, and that kind of thing so. I think she can go out [of her comfort zone] if she has a bit of support in that sense.” Mentor 12 explained that certain provided activities were an outlet for Child 12’s emotions. He recalled how a construction activity helped Child 12 appropriately express his aggressiveness:

Avec l’adolescence, il a besoin de plus en plus d’exprimer une certaine violence, une certaine colère qu’il a en dedans de lui . . . ça c’est normal. Une fois, il est venu ici, notre activité c’était de monter un meuble Ikea. . . . Il avait la perceuse, le marteau et tout. Il pogne la scie sauteuse et il dit: “J’aimerais ça, défoncer un mur!” La perceuse: “Je peux tu faire des trous?” [J’ai répondu]: “Oui. Regarde, je vais te donner un bout de planche et vas-y! Amuse-toi.” Et là, il a vraiment fait des trous, démolit la planche. Mais c’est bon. Ça, il a besoin de laisser sortir cela. À la maison, souvent, cela va être découragé. Ça va être: “Ben voyons, calme-toi.” . . . J’ai l’impression qu’avec moi, il peut laisser sortir cela, cette violence-là qu’il a en dedans de lui—et c’est correct.

Emotional development—talking about feelings. Seven mentors spoke about encouraging the children to express their feelings verbally, all the while guiding them to do so appropriately. As a result, Mentor 1 noticed a difference in her Little Sister over time: “J’ai l’impression qu’elle a plus de facilité à s’exprimer. Quand . . . il y a un problème, quand elle n’aime pas quelque chose, elle en parle maintenant. Au lieu de faire une crise . . . puis d’être super désagréable, elle va en parler, à place. C’est ça qui est une grosse différence par rapport à il y a deux ans, où elle était renfermée sur elle même, qu’elle racontait n’importe quoi d’autre, tant que ça n’avait pas rapport avec ses sentiments.”

Mentors spoke specifically about having conversations about how children felt in certain social situations, and how they felt about various changes or challenges in their lives. Mentors

recalled addressing subjects related to dating, step-parents, and sexual orientation, and viewed the conversations as a medium to think things through as well as alleviate certain fears and apprehensions. Mentor 2 recalled talking about girls with his Little Brother after he had been rejected by his love interest:

Une fois, on est sorti et je lui ai donné un petit cours sur les femmes . . . en voulant dire: “Si tu te fais dire par une femme qu’elle ne veut rien savoir, tu te retournes de bord, tu montres que ça ne te fait rien—elle va revenir.” Il est revenu à la maison, il riait. . . . C’était humoristique, mais en même temps [pause]. C’est parce que je pense que ça l’avait affecté, le fait que la petite fille semblait l’ignorer à l’école. . . . Pis le point de vue de sa mère, ce n’est pas le point de vue d’un homme. . . . C’est normal, les premières fois, aussi [pause]. Moi, je me suis déjà fait laisser. Au début, on ne sait pas toujours comment *dealer* avec ça. Ça peut marquer longtemps. Il faut évacuer ça un peu.

Similarly, Mentor 9 remembered talking with Child 1 when his mother started dating, and normalised his feelings for him: “On était [aux glissades d’eau]. . . . On est en train de monter le *chairlift* . . . et là, il me lâche un *whack*: ‘Ma mère a un chum.’ Je le regarde: ‘Ah oui? Veux-tu qu’on en parle tantôt?’ Tout le monde est parti à rire dans les *chairlifts*. Mais là, à ce moment-là, il se sentait délaissé. Par sa mère, parce que l’autre ne montrait aucun intérêt envers lui. Il sentait ça comme ça.”

Emotional development—self-confidence. Eleven mentors spoke about the positive impact of the mentoring relationship on changes in mentee self-confidence. While some mentors felt that the impact could be felt across many spheres in their mentee’s lives, others saw increased self-confidence in specific areas. Mentor 5 noted the changes: “Quand je l’ai connu, au début, c’était un garçon très, très timide, très renfermé. . . . Ce n’était pas juste vis-à-vis moi,

c'était en général, comme sa mère le disait aussi. Et puis . . . au fil des années, Child 5 est encore timide avec les gens qu'il ne connaît pas, mais il prend plus sa place. C'est un garçon qui a plus confiance en lui, qui réalise plus sa valeur, savoir ce qu'il est capable de faire, de dire: 'Ça, moi je suis capable de le faire.' Quand je l'ai connu au début, il avait l'impression que tout ce qu'il faisait, ce n'était pas extraordinaire, ou ce n'était pas bon." Similarly, Mentor 7 noted that the relationship allowed Child 7 to show his vulnerabilities, which in turn, gave him the confidence to admit he did not know something: "Ça s'est beaucoup amélioré. . . . C'est son attitude générale. . . . Un des exemples que je peux te donner, c'est qu'avant, quand je lui montrais quelque chose, il disait: 'Je sais.' Pourtant, je savais qu'il ne savait pas. Un moment donné, je lui ai dit: 'Pourquoi tu me dis tout le temps *je sais*? Ça m'énerve. Je le sais, que tu ne le sais pas.' [Il a répondu]: 'Ah, mais, c'est parce que lorsque j'étais à l'école, j'étais poche. . . je n'avais jamais les bonnes réponses. Alors je disais: 'je savais,' comme ça.' Il se valorisait comme ça, aux yeux des autres, mais en fait, il suivait."

Although mentors referred to their mentees' increase in self-confidence as positive, Mentor 12 highlighted the fact that Child 12 needed guidance in order for him to appropriately use this new-found confidence. He explained:

Au niveau de son attitude, il était beaucoup plus sûr de lui, beaucoup plus confiant. Moi, je pensais que Child 12 était toujours comme cela, dans la vie en général. Mais, j'ai réalisé que c'est à cause de moi . . . qu'il a cette espèce de confiance à toute épreuve. Je pense qu'il avait peut-être cela en lui, mais cela ne s'était jamais exprimé avant d'être jumelé. . . . On a déjà donné des entrevues pour un documentaire . . . puis, j'ai entendu Child 12 raconter comme il n'avait pas froid aux yeux—comment, depuis qu'il était jumelé avec moi, il ne fallait pas lui lançait un défi, parce qu'il allait tous les relever. Et

ce n'est pas toujours positif. Tu sais, une fois, il y a un ami qui l'a mit au défi de tirer d'un fusil à pétards dans le centre d'achats, puis Child 12 l'a fait: "Avant de le rencontrer, moi, je n'aurais jamais fait cela." [rires] Pour lui, c'est positif, pour nous, on prend cela avec un bémol.

Other than a general increase in self-confidence, six mentors (1, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 12) noted greater confidence in their mentees' willingness trying new things. Mentor 5 explained how his mentee would often make self-deprecating comments, and that gradually, his attitude changed when it came to trying something new: "C'est sûr qu'il y avait des choses qu'il faisait bien. Sinon, c'était: 'Ah non, je ne suis pas bon' ou 'Je ne veux pas l'essayer.' Il n'osait pas essayer des choses, puis ensemble, bien, on a souvent essayé des activités qu'il ne connaissait pas. J'imagine que ça lui a donné le goût, en dehors [du jumelage], parce qu'il fait plus d'activités qu'il n'osait pas. Il va plus vers les sports qu'il ne connaît pas, qu'il a le goût d'essayer. . . . Donc, c'est la plus grosse chose que j'ai remarqué . . . de l'évolution chez Child 5."

Five Big Brothers specifically noticed an increase in self-confidence in their mentees when playing sports. Mentors explained that the boys had never played competitively with other men, and that the children had to learn to adjust to their level of play. Mentor 8 recalled, "on jouait au hockey. Puis c'est le meilleur, c'est le plus bon. Mais, à chaque fois qu'il fait une erreur, qu'il se fait *scorer* un but: 'Bon, je suis poche.' Mais, je lui dis: 'Child 8, force toi donc! Moi, je suis un joueur de hockey—ne me demande pas de jouer poche! Moi, je joue comme je joue. Toi, tu as à te forcer, puis à bien jouer.' . . . Bon, c'est sûr que je lance pas de toutes mes forces—je joue à son niveau, mais je veux dire: 'Ce serait une insulte pour toi si je jouais poche pour que tu aies l'air bon.'"

Parents.

Social development—peer relationships. Six parents perceived a variety of positive impacts related to their children having mentors. Parent 11 recalled a specific instance where his daughter had to practice working in a team (Parent 11), and four other parents felt that their children's interactions with their mentors, over time, allowed them to socialise more appropriately with peers and more adequately resolve conflicts. For example, Parent 12 recalled, “je me souviens qu’auparavant, il se chicanait avec un ami, il rentrait à la maison, puis il restait tout seul. C’était fini. Alors que maintenant, il va au moins lui dire: ‘J’aime pas ça, que tu fais ça. Ça me dérange.’” As well, Parent 5, noticed that conversations with his mentor helped Child 5 to think more flexibly, and as a result, became less judgmental and more tolerant of his peers: “Par exemple, avant Mentor 5, s’il rencontrait des enfants qui parlaient mal, qui se comportaient mal, il allait tout de suite dire: ‘Ah, ben, on joue pas avec lui. Il est bête, ça donne rien.’ Un peu raide au niveau du jugement, et là, il est plus nuancé. . . . Il accepte plus que les autres . . . peuvent évoluer dans des conditions différentes, ils ont des raisons pourquoi ils se comportent comme ça. . . . Il est plus compréhensif . . . c’est pas le couperet qui va tomber raide.”

Six parents emphasised how often their children spoke, with pride, to their friends about their mentors. Parent 7 explained, “Il parle beaucoup de Mentor 7, du fait qu’il a un Grand Frère. Au début, en tout cas, il n’arrêtait pas, il n’arrêtait pas. . . . Je te dirais que cela a pris deux ans avant qu’il arrête d’en parler régulièrement.” Parent 8 also felt that the mentoring relationship allowed her son to feel at ease when other children spoke about their fathers, and began to notice that he was more comfortable inviting friends to their home: “Avant, pas grand monde ne venait ici. . . . Beaucoup d’enfants parlent de leur père: ‘Je m’en vais chez mon père en fin de semaine.’ On est dans un quartier, quand même, assez pauvre. Il y a beaucoup de parents divorcés. Les enfants se promènent. Mais lui, il ne pouvait pas le dire. Mais là [depuis

le jumelage], tous ses amis [disent]: ‘Child 8 a un Grand Frère!’ Ils sont jaloux un peu. Là, ils disent: ‘Qu’est-ce que tu as fais en fin de semaine?’ . . . ‘Je suis allé au football avec mon Grand Frère.’ Donc, au niveau social, je dirais qu’il y a le fait qu’il ait plus d’amis. J’ai remarqué ça depuis un an.”

Corrective relationships—family. Five parents (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9) perceived a positive impact of the mentoring relationship on their children’s sense of family. Parents felt that the longing for a complete family was partially attenuated because their children were included in their mentors’ families. Parent 4 explained how her daughter not only gained a sister, but a brother-in-law and grandparents too, and how her son stopped mourning the fact that he did not have a proper family.

Parents 4, and 5, who had immigrated to Canada without any extended family, emphasised that their children had gained an enlarged notion of what “family” could be. Parent 5 explained, “il aurait aimé avoir un petit frère, mais c’est pas possible. Mais, pour lui, la notion de frère est déjà élargie—c’est pas juste biologique.” Similarly, Parent 4 expressed, “il y a pas un [lien de] sang, mais il y a [un lien] d’amour dans cette relation-là. Je trouvais cela extraordinaire. . . . Comme quand je parle de Mentor 4, quelqu’un de québécois ‘pure laine,’ on l’appelle—ma fille a des grands-parents québécois qui l’adorent. . . . C’est juste la volonté de donner de l’amour, [et de] partager comme [si s’était] une relation héritée.”

These five mothers also specifically appreciated that their children could be included in familial contexts that they could not give. Parent 4 cherished the idea that her daughter could observe a healthy couple relationship. Parent 6 added, “tu sais, il y en a qui ont des grosses familles. Moi, ma famille, c’est tout éclaté, c’est tout fucké. J’aimerais ça que Child 6 apprenne les bonnes bases d’une famille. Et Mentor 6, sa famille, c’est super familial. . . . C’est plein

d'amour. C'est tout ce que j'aurais voulu que Child 6 ait comme famille. Alors, je trouve que c'est le *fun*."

Corrective relationships—abandonment. Whereas a majority of mentors were sensitive to the corrective aspect the mentoring relationship could play in mediating the children's sense of having been abandoned by a parent, only three parents addressed this issue. The three mothers all agreed that the mentors helped to fill a gap that had been left. Parent 10 observed the change in her son: "Il sautait sur les hommes . . . il les appelait 'papa.' Il était très accroché, [mais maintenant] il ne dérange plus les autres pour dire 'papa, papa!' . . . C'est la meilleure stabilité qu'il ait jamais eue, au niveau masculin. Ça remplace un père dans un sens—enfin, pas totalement. Ça fait une bonne partie de la job." Parent 9 similarly expressed, "c'est sûr qu'il doit y avoir un petit vide qui est rempli. Bon, il y a un gros vide du père qui n'est pas là, mais [Mentor 9] doit remplir . . . un petit peu ce trou-là." Finally, Parent 8 linked her son's sadness to his relationship with his father, and felt that his mentor's presence was helping to repair what it could: "Child 8 était rendu triste . . . et frustré. Il avait beaucoup de colère. Il ressentait un abandon, finalement, par rapport à son père. . . . Cela faisait un an, au moment où il a été jumelé, qu'il ne voyait plus son père. Il l'a peut-être vu une fois, en trois ans. C'est sûr qu'il avait beaucoup de frustration, de colère, beaucoup d'anxiété. C'est un abandon. C'est comme un gouffre. Cela ne se remplira jamais, je suis consciente de cela. Mentor 8 remplit ce qu'il peut."

Corrective relationships—talking about the absent parent. No parents addressed that their mentoring relationship provided a safe space for their children to speak about their absent parent, highlighting the possibility that neither children nor mentors shared these conversations with the present parents.

Emotional development—angry to happy. Four parents noticed a dramatic change in

their children's disposition following their match. Parent 3 used an analogy to describe the changes in her son, describing him as “quelqu'un qui avait faim et il a eu de la nourriture devant lui.” Similarly, Parent 4 commented, “elle revient à la maison très contente” and Parent 8 expressed, “il est plus positif . . . plus heureux . . . plus content. . . . Le jumelage avec Mentor 8, cela a changé sa vie. Mentor 8, c'est comme un rayon de soleil.”

Emotional development—talking about feelings. Only one parent explained how her son's mentor helped her son to express his feelings. Parent 12 explained, “il était . . . très passif-agressif, plus jeune. . . . Depuis la rencontre avec Mentor 12 et avec la maturité, il apprend à exprimer plus, quand il est en colère ou quand il est de bonne humeur, ou peu importe. Il apprend à l'exprimer plus. Ça, je considère que Mentor 12 a une grande part de responsabilité là-dedans, parce que Mentor 8, étant un comédien, il s'exprime énormément. Il a beaucoup d'expression, alors ça aide Child 8 à prendre un chemin un peu différent qu'auparavant.”

Emotional development—self-confidence. Nine parents expressed that the mentoring relationship helped with their children's self-confidence. They primarily felt that their children's confidence was bolstered by knowing they had someone to count on and who genuinely cared about them. Parent 5 expressed the subtle changes she saw in her son: “[Il est] plus à l'aise, plus posé. . . . C'est pouvoir avoir quelqu'un d'autre pour qui il compte, en fait. . . . Il voit qu'il peut discuter de certaines choses avec un autre adulte fiable. . . . Un autre adulte qui émane le désir de parler avec lui.” Although viewing the impact as positive, Parent 7 wondered about the permanence of these changes, as they continued to fluctuate depending on the context, and hoped that they would solidify in the future. She explained:

La confiance et l'estime de soi sont deux choses qui sont très vulnérables. Cela fluctue beaucoup. Et je dirais que les rencontres avec son Grand Frère ont beaucoup nourri son

estime de lui, mais pas dans la longue durée. Parce que, quand il rencontre un pépin, la première chose qui débarque, c'est: "Ah, je suis pas bon! Ah, je suis ci! Ah, je suis ça!" Tu comprends? Je pense que cela nourrit son estime, petit à petit. Je pense que cela va finir par avoir un impact. Mais, en ce moment, je ne peux pas dire que c'est durable, que cela a 'pris' bien. Mais, je pense, mon dieu, s'il ne l'avait pas, je ne sais pas ce que cela serait.

Other than a general sense of increased confidence because the children had another reliable adult in their lives, six parents also felt their children had greater confidence when they tried new activities, as well greater confidence in specific activities they had practiced with their mentors. Parent 8 recalled how her son had gained confidence in using tools with his Big Brother, and was proud to show them what he had learned: "Son bicycle, c'est un bicycle de route. . . . Mentor 8 l'a acheté pour Child 8, parce que son père s'en achetait un nouveau. Là, il fallait qu'ils enlèvent quelque chose. . . . Mentor 8 n'avait pas le bon tournevis. Là, Child 8 a dit: 'Ben, attends, moi, je pense que je vais être capable.' Il a utilisé une autre affaire et il a réussi. . . . Il était tout fier de montrer à Mentor 8 et à son père qu'il était capable de faire des choses, lui aussi." In a similar way, other parents felt their children's self-confidence improved in specific areas, such as sports (Parent 9) and taking the Métro (Parent 12).

Identity development.

Children. Children had a difficult time addressing any identity changes that arose as a result of being matched. To begin with, many had a hard time describing themselves. Children used adjectives such as "polite" (Child 9), "manual" (Child 12), "good speller" (Child 10), and "funny" (Child 2), while others described themselves through the activities they enjoyed, such as "art" (Child 11), and "sports" (Child 5).

Positive changes. Two boys identified that they had taken on a more athletic identity since being matched (Children 3 and 8). Some children also identified themselves more strongly with certain traits since their match, such as "politeness" (Child 9), "responsibility" (Child 2), and "generosity" (Child 5). Child 4 explained that her mentor had helped her to better balance changes in her identity as she entered her teenage years, instead of going from one extreme to the other. Finally, Children 6 and 7 specifically mentioned that their mentors had helped them take on a more positive identity at times. For instance, Child 7 explained how his identity changed depending on if he was in the group home or if he was with his mentor:

Interviewer: Quelle identité est-ce que tu te donnes?

Child 7: Le JPA [justice pénale pour adolescents]

Interviewer: C'est cette identité-là que tu te donnes?

Child 7: . . . Ça dépend dans quelles circonstances. . . . Avec ma mère, avec tout ce qui s'est passé, pourquoi je suis en centre jeunesse puis tout, je me décrirais comme JPA.

Interviewer: Donc, toi, tu te décrirais comme un délinquant?

Child 7: Oui. À la cabane, avec mes amis, je me décrirais comme un "skateux". Puis, avec ma blonde, "normal". Je n'ai rien à me décrire. Avec Mentor 7, "correct"—complice, mais pas méchamment.

Both Children 6 and 7 also looked up to their mentors and hoped to take on similar identities to them. Child 6 saw his mentors as "an example" and Child 7 explained, "je veux pas me ramasser dans un centre jeunesse jusqu'à 16 ans, ça c'est sûr. Mais, tu sais, j'ai le goût de lui ressembler."

Mentors. Generally mentors' view on the children's identity development fell into three categories: awareness of self, cultural identity, and gender identity. Only one mentor had difficulty expressing what kind of identity development his mentee had made, and, laughing, said

Child 6's identity was "dans le 'twilight zone' à quelque part. C'est là qu'il est!"

Awareness of self. Four mentors (5, 7, 8, and 10) specifically felt that, throughout the relationship, the children had become more aware about who they were and what their opinions were. At the same time, they also wondered if the strength in the children's opinions had developed over time, or if they were already present but the children became more comfortable in expressing them, or even a combination of the two. Mentor 5 expressed, "quand je l'ai connu, Child 5 ne parlait pas beaucoup de lui. . . . C'est moi qui a commencé à le questionner: 'Qu'est-ce que tu aimes' . . . et, oui, là il va plus me parler et me dire: 'Ah, j'ai envie de telle chose'. Il va beaucoup plus s'affirmer. Je sais ce qu'il aime maintenant, je sais ce qu'il n'aime pas. Je sais où il veut aller, ce qu'il a envie de faire. Mais comme il était timide au début, je ne sais pas si c'était parce qu'il avait peur de s'identifier ou ça s'est développé. Je sais que, bon, sa mère me disait qu'il était plus affirmatif maintenant."

Cultural identity. All four mentors who were matched in a relationship with a child from a cultural minority group commented positively about the added aspect of diversity to their relationship. Mentor 5 explained that although Child 5's French-Algerian-Muslim identity had not ever been explicitly addressed, there had been occasions on which Child 5 had proudly shared some aspects of his cultural identity with him, such as teaching Mentor 5 and his girlfriend to cook an Algerian dish, and talking about his routine during Ramadan. Mentor 3 explained that both he and Child 3 were of Syrian origin and spoke Arabic, but differed in religion, since Mentor 3 was Christian and Child 3 was Muslim. Mentor 3 explained that the religious difference was very important given the historical context of their peoples. As well, Mentor 3 recalled being bothered by his cultural difference when he was a child, and was happy to observe that Child 3 was not shy to express his differences to him and to others. Finally,

Mentor 11, who was a documentary film producer about Inuit culture, felt that her career interests helped to support Child 11's Inuit identity and exploration about her Inuit family: "Well, because I'm working with people in the Inuit culture, . . . that, in a way, has had an impact on her life . . . because . . . her mother was Inuit, and I think that she sort of lost touch with that when her mom died. . . . And you know . . . [there have been] really interesting coincidences, like the next film that I'm making is about an Inuit photographer, and it turns out that's her great-grandfather."

Gender identity. The third area that ten mentors observed was with regard to gender-identity development. Although most mentors did not state it as such, they gave examples of how the children particularly enjoyed being able to talk to another person of the same sex. Female mentors 1 and 4 encouraged their mentees (girls) when they observed them wanting to participate in more gender-stereotyped activities with them. Mentor 1 particularly noticed a change in that Child 1 went from being a tomboy to asking Mentor 1 to guide her in certain areas, such as hair styling and fashion.

The eight other mentors that spoke about gender identity development were men, and they all felt that part of their role in the relationship was to support and model a positive masculine identity for their mentees (boys). Mentor 10 explained that he quickly realised this would be an important role for him:

Child 10, étant donné qu'il n'a pas d'homme dans sa vie, à un moment donné, je pense que je me suis rendu compte de ce que moi, je pouvais lui apporter, de ce que je devais lui apporter. . . . Je crois qu'il lui manquait un peu le petit côté masculin. Il est très, très prudent dans tout ce qu'il fait. Très raisonné . . . je trouvais. Ça fait qu'à un moment donné, j'ai pris cet angle-là avec lui, [en choisissant] de le pousser un peu dans certaines

choses, même un peu dans le sport. Il est plus sûr de lui maintenant, je pense. Ce sont de petites choses, mais souvent on sortait, on faisait des activités, comme quand on est allé aux glissades d'eau, l'été dernier. . . . Il avait peur de tout. . . . Puis, je l'ai poussé un petit peu là-dedans, même je l'ai poussé là où sa mère ne le poussait peut-être pas. Et, une fois qu'il a réussi à vaincre certaines peurs, il m'en a parlé par la suite. C'était sa fierté à lui, d'avoir fait ça.

Mentor 9 similarly spoke about being "tougher" with Child 9: "Il avait été élevé par des filles. Il avait tendance à pleurer pour attirer l'attention, parce que quand un enfant pleure, les filles ça [pause], tandis que les gars, c'est comme [pause]. . . . C'est arrivé comme ça au début quand on faisait des choses ensemble. Il se cognait un tout petit peu, il se mettait à pleurer et c'était la grosse crise. Là je le regardais: 'Excuse-moi, mais ça ne fait pas mal ça. Je ne suis pas une fille moi, je ne viendrai pas en courant.' Et là, il arrêta."

In a similar vein, other mentors saw the boys particularly enjoyed sharing and discussing 'boy-related' topics with them. Mentor 12 immediately saw that Child 12 had a need to bond in that way: "Il parle beaucoup de choses home à homme, comme des goûts musicaux, du heavy métal, des jeux vidéo, des filles, des choses qu'il ne partage pas nécessairement avec sa mère. . . . Oui, au niveau de son identité, définitivement." Mentor 2 also provided support by talking with Child 2 when he revealed the burden he felt of being the oldest boy in his family: "Il était tanné d'être 'l'homme de la maison.' On est allé faire une sortie de ski et il avait dit ça. Il semblait trouver ça un peu pénible d'avoir tant de responsabilités. . . . Il l'est par défaut. On sait que souvent, sans le père, le plus vieux devient l'homme de la maison. . . . Ça semblait lui peser un peu." As well, Mentor 6 recalled discussing sexuality with Child 6.

Identification with mentors. Finally, Mentors 1, 8 and 9 observed that their mentees often

wanted to be like them in many ways, through sports and appearances. Mentor 9 recalled an amusing incident in which he realised Child 9 was copying his gestures, and this made Mentor 9 take a closer look at himself: “Définitivement! Je vois des influences, je vois qu’il me copie. . . . Il y a des choses, des expressions . . . des aptitudes physiques qu’il va copier. . . . J’ai les cheveux longs. . . . Il veut les avoir plus longs. Un moment donné . . . il faisait ça de même [fait un geste passant la main dans les cheveux]. Je dis: ‘Voyons! Qu’est-ce que tu fais là?’ Lui: ‘Bien, tu fais ça, toi, des fois.’ . . . Je dis: ‘Voyons, arrête ça, t’as l’air d’une fille!’ C’était tellement drôle! Mais, cette fois-là, je me suis posé la question: ‘Je fais ça pour de vrai? J’ai tendance à faire ça, je le sais, mais pas à me faire remonter les cheveux!’ Il était drôle, ça n’a pas de bon sens.”

Developmental outlook on identity development. Regardless of the type of identity development the mentors observed, a common feature in all was the positive regard and developmental stance they took by being patient and sensitive towards the child’s needs. For instance, when Mentor 8 saw that Child 8 wanted to be like him, he allowed this yet also introduced the notion of critical thinking. As well, mentors gave space for children to express and explore their cultural and gender roles.

Parents. Eight parents spoke about their child’s identity development and all had a positive outlook on the impact the match in this area. Their views on the children’s identity development fell into the same three categories as the mentors’: identity exploration, cultural identity, and gender identity.

Identity exploration. Four parents (5, 7, 8, and 10) explained that the mentoring relationship provided an opportunity for the children to explore elements of their own identity, as well as to be exposed to their mentors’ identity. They felt this helped to round out their sons’

conception of who they were.

Cultural identity. The parents of the children whose mentors commented on cultural identity development also felt the mentoring relationship had a positive impact on the children's association to their cultural identity. Although they were not matched based on culture, parents were pleased the mentors were open to learning about the children's culture. Parent 3, who was Syrian, was pleased that his son would continue to be exposed to Arabic values such as "la générosité, la chaleur d'accueillir quelqu'un, . . . de réunir comme une famille." Parent 5, whose son was of mixed cultural identity, felt that his mentor's all-round identity and interest in others encouraged Child 5 to tap in to his different identities and make connections between them:

Tu as le volet francophone, tu as le volet nord-africain, tu as le volet religieux qui est musulman, ce qui est différent de la majorité. T'as le volet francophone. T'as le volet arabe, t'as le volet canadien, t'as le volet québécois. Faut essayer de tout mettre . . . ensemble, c'est difficile. Et, il faut trouver un terrain d'entente et il faut vraiment cimenter tout ça. Déjà adulte, il y a en a qui n'arrive pas. . . . Au niveau de l'identité, . . . c'est vraiment un *challenge*, là. . . . L'autre fois, [Mentor 5] est venu avec sa copine, on a fait des gâteaux . . . et puis j'ai trouvé ça très bien parce que, en fait, c'était la demande du Grand Frère. . . . Ce que je veux dire par là, c'est qu'ils ont un et l'autre de la curiosité. Donc vis-à-vis de l'autre, vis-à-vis de la famille de l'autre, vis-à-vis de la culture de l'autre ils se respectent tous les deux. C'est de l'or en barre.

Finally, Parent 4 explained that her daughter had struggled to balance her Syrian Muslim identity within a predominantly White, French Canadian culture. She recalled that Mentor 4, a White, French Canadian woman, expressed such an interest and enthusiasm for Child 4's culture that she began to show some pride in her differences.

Gender identity. Seven mothers felt that their sons were more in touch with their masculinity and more confident in their masculine identity as a result of their match. They specified that they could not provide for their sons in this domain, and were happy that the mentors played this role. Parent 8 explained, “Mentor 8 apporte tout le côté masculin que je ne peux pas apporter. Au niveau de sa personnalité, au niveau des activités qu’ils font, au niveau des sorties, au niveau de sa perception des choses, au niveau de sa communication avec lui. Tout, je veux dire. C’est une autre dimension complètement.” Parent 10, like Mentor 10, observed an increased confidence in Child 10’s sense of masculinity: “Moi, je pense que le Grand Frère, il a plus un impact au niveau de la vision de la masculinité, de son sentiment d’être un garçon. . . . Ça a peut être développé un côté plus aventurié, plus garçon. Peut-être plus d’assurance dans son côté masculin.” Parent 7 agreed, and noted a change from the very beginning of the relationship, which in turn translated into greater confidence with peers: “Cela a été marquant au début, quand il revenait des premières fois. . . . La première année, vraiment, je voyais qu’il était plus ‘gars.’ C’est comme s’il avait compris c’était quoi un ‘gars.’ Pour moi, c’est un peu gros, là. . . . Le côté ‘gars,’ c’est un peu le côté ‘niaiseux.’ Je l’ai moins, ce côté-là et là, lui, il l’a plus. . . . Ce n’est pas négatif. Cela a permis qu’il aille ‘niaiser’ au parc, qu’il aille trouver ses ‘chums.’”

In the same vein, mothers also recognised that their sons began to share more intimate conversations with their mentors, and they were grateful that the mentors were there to listen and guide. Parent 12 thought, “il y a des choses que tu ne veux plus raconter à tes parents, encore plus dans mon cas, parce que je suis une femme. Il y a des choses qu’il peut pas ou qu’il se sent mal à l’aise de me raconter. D’emblée, il a eu quelqu’un qu’il a immédiatement eu confiance et il s’est mis à, au moins, se confier sur les sujets plus délicats.”

Behaviour.

Children. Children overwhelmingly perceived a positive impact of the match. One child, Child 9, was unable to say if he had seen a difference, citing that too much time had elapsed since the beginning of his match to tell: “Je ne peux pas le dire. Sérieusement, on parle de quatre ans, c’est comme, il me semble que c’est long!” The only other child that did not see any change was Child 10, a young boy who reported never having had behaviour problems, and this was also confirmed by his mother.

More prosocial and less delinquent behaviour. The ten children who perceived an impact generally described themselves as either having more prosocial behaviour or avoiding delinquent behaviour. For instance, children who described actively engaging in prosocial behaviour described not talking back as much (Child 11), behaving better (Child 1) and becoming more responsible (Children 2, 6, and 8) and more patient (Child 5) than they had been prior to the match. When asked to explain this, however, most children were at a loss for words and did not know what to say, except for Child 1, who clearly said, “je veux pas en parler.” Only Child 11 offered an explanation: “Before I use to get in, like, trouble a lot. Now, I have somebody else, except for my dad and stuff, to talk to about it.”

Three children also spoke about making choices in order to avoid delinquent, violent, and aggressive situations as a result of their match. Both Children 3 and 6 openly expressed that they had been aggressive and often in fights before the match, and after meeting their mentors they were able to better control their behaviour. Child 6 explained that Mentor 6 gave him strategies to not get in to fights: “Dans [mon] comportement, avant, j’étais plus impulsif, mais il m’a montré comment . . . mieux gérer ma colère.” Child 3 also explained, in the following passage, why he was no longer in fights following his match with Mentor 3:

Child 3: Avant j'étais très agressif, mais j'aimais bien me battre avant. Maintenant, j'aime moins ça, là. J'aime pas me battre, j'aime pas les problèmes, je cherche pas le trouble.

Interviewer: OK, et comment est-ce que ça changé, avec Mentor 3?

Child 3: Je sais pas [pause]. Je me suis senti mieux avec lui et moins besoin d'être agressif. . . .

Interviewer: Donc, tu dirais maintenant que tu te comportes mieux, que tu as moins d'ennuis qu'avant?

Child 3: Oh! Beaucoup moins d'ennuis!

Child 7, who had severe behaviour problems and lived in a group home, explained at length how being matched with Mentor 7 had helped him to be less isolated and withdrawn, and to avoid delinquent behaviour following their match:

Child 7: Je suis du genre à me battre, mais là, je suis rendu pacifique, surtout. Mais des fois, j'ai le goût de me battre encore. Je vais être effronté avec des jeunes qui sont effrontés avec moi. . . .

Interviewer: Et depuis que tu es avec Mentor 7, est-ce que c'est différent?

Child 7: Non! Même que des fois, c'est mieux.

Interviewer: Donc c'est différent, dans le sens que c'est mieux.

Child 7: Oui.

Interviewer: Puis pourquoi tu penses que c'est mieux?

Child 7: Parce que j'étais vraiment beaucoup renfermé. J'avais beaucoup de problèmes, mais là, ça va bien mieux.

Interviewer: Tantôt, tu me disais que depuis que tu le connais, tu étais capable de mieux

t'extérioriser, donc au niveau de ta colère, tu arrives à—

Child 7: Oui. J'écris beaucoup. Je dessine beaucoup. J'aime dessiner. J'adore dessiner. . . . J'ai des amis, comme les gars de la cabane, qui sont devenus *gangsters*. Mais je ne leur parle plus beaucoup. . . . C'est sûr que quand on se voit, on se parle, mais il n'y a pas de complicité. Je reste dans mon coin. Quand je les vois, c'est correct, mais je ne vais pas vers eux autres.

Interviewer: Et en quoi Mentor 7 a eu un impact dans tout ça?

Child 7: Bien, avant je les aurais suivi dans leur gang, puis tout, mais là, non. J'ai compris des affaires. Il m'a fait comprendre des affaires. . . .

Interviewer: Ça t'a amené à réfléchir suffisamment pour te garder plus éloigné?

Child 7: Oui. Puis mes amis, je les aime bien, mais j'ai un ami, c'est un *gangster*, il est dans le pot, mais moi, j'ai jamais embarqué là-dedans. Puis je lui ai dit: "Si tu veux m'en vendre, je te parlerai plus." Puis il a dit: "C'est ben correct." On n'en parle jamais.

Interviewer: Toutes ces histoires-là, est-ce que tu te sens libre d'en parler à Mentor 7?

Child 7: Oui

Interviewer: Tu te sens en confiance.

Child 7: Oui. . . . Je suis moins "renfermé." J'aime ça, être moins 'renfermé' parce qu'avant, j'étais tout le temps dans mon petit coin, j'étais effronté avec tout le monde qui m'écoeurait. Je suis encore de même, mais moins.

Interviewer: Donc tu es plus capable de communiquer.

Child 7: C'est comme hier, il y a un grand, il a envoyé un petit cul, genre six ans, me dire. . . . Je lui aurais *jumpé* dessus. Mais là, je l'ai pas fait. . . .

Interviewer: Pour toi, c'est un changement?

Child 7: Avant . . . j'aurais poigné un bout de bois et je l'aurais assommé.

Interviewer: Donc tu arrives à te contrôler?

Child 7: Oui. Mais je suis encore effronté. Je lui aurais dit: "Qu'est-ce que t'as dit?" et je le lui aurais répété en pleine face. Je l'ai même presque frappé. Mais, je l'ai pas fait.

Although many children were quick to say that they were not perfect and they still had areas in their behaviour that could improve, they viewed their mentors as positive influences in their lives with regard to their behaviour choices.

Mentors. Mentors saw themselves as a positive element among many that generally influenced the children to choose a positive path and avoid delinquent behaviours.

Discussing delinquent behaviours as they arose. Seven of the mentors gave specific instances where they addressed issues the children brought up, such as fighting (Mentors 1, 6, and 7), smoking (Mentors 4 and 7), and stealing (Mentor 12). Mentor 6 reflected on the impact similarly to Child 6: "Je pense qu'il est moins agressif. Il avait une tendance à se battre, avant. À l'école, il se bagarrait, mais ça, c'est fini. Il a compris que. . . Si je ne lui ai pas dit cent fois . . . que 'tu es beaucoup plus gagnant de répondre intelligemment à une attaque que de frapper.' . . . Vraiment, il s'est débarrassé de cette envie-là, de régler avec les poings." Mentor 7 also viewed the improvement similarly to Child 7: "Je sais qu'il gère mieux ses crises. Puis, il verbalise beaucoup. Là, il gère ses crises . . . en se contrôlant. Avant, c'était explosif. Il pouvait lancer une chaise dans la classe ou se battre, piquer une crise de nerfs, tandis que là, il arrive à se calmer." As well, when Children 4 and 7 revealed to their mentors that they had begun to experiment with cigarettes, Mentors 4 and 7 provided a safe forum for the children to address their concerns. They guided the children through the conversation while making their own limits clear, all the while being careful not to preach. Both mentors spoke of the interventions as being

successful in that both children did not continue to smoke. Mentor 12 also took a similar approach when Child 12 revealed to him that he had been arrested for shoplifting. Although he recalled having a serious discussion about the matter, he also put it into perspective and was able to use it in a humorous yet psychoeducational manner: “J’ai fait quelques farces quand on est allé magasiner des fois. Quand on est dans un Dollorama ou des magasins du genre où ce serait facile de mettre quelque chose dans ses poches: ‘Là, on peut sortir? Ça ne va pas sonner? Tu n’as rien mis dans tes poches?’ ‘Arrête-là! Je fais plus ça.’”

Providing limits. Another role that mentors took on with respect to problematic behaviours was that of limit-setter. Although this was not something that mentors spoke at length about, all mentors, at one point or another in the relationship, had to set clear limits of expected behaviour, be it minor or major. For instance, Mentor 9 had to occasionally remind Child 9 to remain respectful of his mother: “Un moment donné, quand je vois des choses que je ne trouve pas correct, supposons la façon qu’il va répondre à sa mère, je vais lui dire systématiquement. Donc, oui, il y a une petite influence, veux, veux pas là-dessus. Je trouve que ce n’est pas parce que tu as les hormones qui te poussent que tu as besoin d’être bête avec tout le monde.”

Delaying the onset of risk-taking behaviours. From what five mentors (6, 7, 8, 9, and 12) expressed, they generally felt that the mentoring relationships helped to delay the onset of risk-taking negative behaviours, or moderate the risk-taking behaviours already in place, by exposing the children to positive alternatives. Mentor 12 explained his thoughts on the matter:

J’ai l’impression que ce n’est pas parce que je suis jumelé avec Child 12 qu’il ne va pas développer des dépendances à la drogue ou à l’alcool, ou qu’il ne va pas décrocher. Je pense juste que cela va faire en sorte que si ces choses-là arrivent, il va avoir quelqu’un à

qui en parler. Pas qu'il n'a personne en ce moment, mais qu'il va avoir une personne de plus. Quelqu'un qui entretient un lien spécial, privilégié avec lui. C'est sûr que c'est tentant de croire que notre présence dans leur vie va faire en sorte qu'ils vont se tenir loin de tout écart. . . . Mais tu vois, j'ai l'impression que si je n'avais pas été là, cela [l'arrestation pour le vol] aurait arrivé plus tôt, que cela aurait été plus loin. Il aurait peut-être eu d'autre chose de mêlé à cela, du trafic de je ne sais pas quoi, de stupéfiants quelconques. Je ne dis pas que cela n'arrivera pas, mais je pense que cela aurait été plus accessible, plus facile. Cela aurait été plus vite, je pense, si je n'avais pas été dans sa vie.

Mentors: Accepting their presence would not improve everything. Although mentors felt they were positive influences, a challenge for three mentors (6, 8, and 11) was accepting that the positive behaviour they observed had not necessarily generalised to all other areas. Mentor 11 recalled when Parent 11 started to cry in frustration because Child 11 was becoming aggressive and rude to him, and threw an Exacto knife in his direction: "I was hoping that, you know, things would improve with my presence, but I know that I'm not the only influence, obviously, in her life. There's many, many, many, many things going on."

Mentors: Feeling ill-equipped. A final challenge for a third of the mentors was their own feelings of perceiving themselves as ill-equipped to deal with problems that the children brought up or could face in the future. Mentor 8 had already discussed this with his caseworker: "La journée où il va prendre de la drogue, la journée où il va vouloir parler de sexualité avec moi, là, je ne suis pas sûr que j'ai les outils. Je vais être obligé de prévoir ou d'avoir l'air de savoir. Mais jamais je n'ai été confronté à de la violence, à de la chicane, à du sacrage, à du dopage, à du taxage. Ces éléments-là, j'ai pas d'outils."

Parents. Four parents (Parents 2, 9, 10, and 12) expressed that their children had no

behaviour problems to begin with and so had not observed any change in behaviour.

More prosocial and less delinquent behaviour. Another five parents (Parents 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11) felt that the mentors had a positive impact on their child's behaviour. Parent 5 saw the impact primarily as an impetus for her son to behave in a more mature way, Parent 11 felt the impact had generally been positive without specifying how, and three mothers (Parents 6, 7, and 8) described drastic positive changes in their children's behaviour. Although they clearly expressed that their children were not perfect, they agreed that the change could not have been done with just them alone. Parents 6, 7, and 8 specifically referred to lowered aggression levels in their boys—from angry and resentful to happier and communicative. Parent 6 gave a specific example of how Mentor 6 had helped to improve her son's behaviour: “J’ai eu des difficultés à l’école, beaucoup—de comportement. Child 6 était très agressif. . . . Par contre, je ne mêlais pas Mentor 8 à ça au primaire. Jusqu’à cette année, à un moment donné, parce que c’était *rock n’ roll*. J’ai dit: ‘Mentor 6, aide-moi, parce que moi, toute seule, je pense que ça ne donne rien.’ Et, ça a paru, ça a paru. . . . Ils discutent, tout simplement. Il a arrêté aux trois jours à l’école, prendre des nouvelles pour savoir comment ça va, pour se rapprocher.” Parent 6 was also the only parent to mention a mentor's involvement in actively preventing Child 6 from smoking and using drugs: “Mentor 6 lui a dit qu’à la fin de son secondaire, s’il n’a pas fumé la cigarette, il va lui acheté un bicycle de je ne sais pas quelle marque, à 1200\$! . . . Et s’il fume un joint, comme adolescent, Mentor 6, il veut être le premier à le savoir. Si jamais je vois ça, Mentor 6, il veut que je l’appelle tout de suite pour lui dire. Ça veut dire que Mentor 6 en a discuté avec.” Parent 7, whose son had attended school in a psychiatric hospital because of a severe behavioural disorder, knew that he had particularly appreciated his relationship with Mentor 7 during that time: “Je sais que quand il était en quatrième année, il a eu un moment vraiment difficile. . . . Ils

se parlaient de ce que Child 7 trouvait dur. . . . Je pense qu'il parlait beaucoup et que cela l'a beaucoup aidé." She also specifically remembered an occasion when Child 7 ran away from home and called Mentor 7 for advice on what to do.

One aspect that almost all parents mentioned, often in passing, regardless if their child improved in behaviour or not, was that they believed child-mentor communication had helped to defuse or resolve ongoing problems and helped to delay the onset of any potential negative behaviour that would arise.

Exposure to new life experiences, skills. and values.

Children. Children expressed excitement about being exposed to new things with their mentors.

New activities and skills. All children were happy to participate in a variety of new activities that they had not participated in before. The reasons they gave were generally because their parents could not afford activities such as canoeing (Child 1) and going to the movies (Child 11), their parents did not have the skills to teach certain activities that the children did with their mentors, such as snowboarding (Child 6) and science experiments (Child 3), and finally, their mothers did not participate in activities they particularly enjoyed, such as hockey (Child 8), football (Child 9), and sword fighting (jousting, as in the medieval and Dungeons and Dragons sense) (Child 7).

Social skills and valuing diversity. Another general area that four children mentioned they were happy to have exposure to consisted of social skills and values. Child 1 learned safety skills such as wearing a seat belt properly, and Child 10 was happy to learn that children and adults could get along with one another. Child 2 was proud to have been exposed to certain social skills: "Il m'a appris des choses, là, à faire, comme être plus poli. Comme manger la

bouche fermée, puis de, comme, pas roter en public. . . . Ça me corrige, puis j’aime bien ça.”

Child 9 also mentioned how he had been taught by his mentor to respect diversity: “D’être juste avec tout le monde, admettons, pas préférer une personne plus que l’autre tant que tu connais autant l’un que l’autre, de ne pas être raciste, même de ne pas faire des jugements sur ceux qui ont des foulards, des choses de même.”

Mentors. Mentors had a definite agenda when it came to exposing the children to the values that they felt were important, especially with regard to savoir-vivre, or ‘knowing how to live well.’

Social skills and values. Seven mentors specifically gave examples of passing on certain social mores and values by example and direct teaching, such as being polite with others (Mentors 1, 2, 6, and 8), respecting diversity (Mentors 1, 8, and 9), having good personal hygiene (Mentor 12), knowing how to remain calm in an emergency (Mentor 8), knowing how to properly use utensils (Mentor 4), and giving to others (Mentor 6). Mentor 1 expressed her general view regarding life skills: “Écoute, je suis pas là pour rendre l’enfant parfait, là. Mais, au moins j’ai l’impression que je suis capable de lui passer certaines de mes valeurs. La diversité, le respect. C’est pas grave s’il est noir, c’est pas grave si la madame elle porte un foulard sur sa tête.” Mentor 6 recalled how he taught Child 6 to properly shake another person’s hand: “Ce sont de petites choses sur lesquelles j’insistais avec lui. . . . ‘Quand tu sers la main, regarde la personne dans les yeux.’ Ça, il ne l’avait pas cet aspect-là. . . . ‘Fais-le comme il faut.’” Mentor 8 recalled how he emphasised being polite by role modelling in front of Child 8: “Moi, j’essaie de donner l’exemple. C’est-à-dire que, quand on va au restaurant, j’essaie de prendre le temps de parler à la personne qui nous sert en lui disant: ‘Merci beaucoup. C’est bien le fun’. Et quand on voit des gens en ville qui ont besoin de sous, je leur en donne. C’est par

mes gestes que j’essaie plutôt qu’en lui parlant, en lui faisant la morale. C’est comme ça que moi, je l’emmène à socialiser différemment.” Mentor 1 also explained how she managed to transmit the value of respecting the environment to Child 1: “Un moment donné, tu sais, on jouait au parc, puis elle jetait ses déchets par terre. ‘Non! La poubelle est juste là. Veux-tu bien dire pourquoi tu jettes tes déchets par terre? Il faut respecter la terre, il faut respecter l’environnement!’ . . . Là, astheure, elle en parle, tu sais. Elle pose des questions aussi, puis elle parle de l’environnement: ‘Est-ce que ça c’est correct ou c’est pas correct?’”

Encouraging openness to new experiences. Seven mentors also encouraged and even pushed the children to become more open with regard to their outlook on new experiences, encouraging them to approach experiences with eagerness and openness instead of fear and scorn. For instance, Mentors 1, 4, and 12 recalled the resistance they encountered when they first took the children on public transportation, and how the children were subsequently proud of being able to navigate the metro system. Mentors 1, 4, and 8 also spoke about exposing the children to different foods and the importance of trying new things. Mentors 10 and 12 encouraged Children 10 and 12 to challenge themselves physically, and the specific challenges (for example, going down the highest water slide) became sources of pride when accomplished.

Finally, mentors also exposed the children to specific topics related to their professions or personal interests. For instance, Mentor 11 took Child 11 to her film-editing studio, Mentor 12 showed Child 12 how to use certain tools, and Mentor 9 encouraged Child 9 to participate in various team sports.

Parents. While mentors focussed primarily on exposing children to values of savoir-vivre, seven parents instead appreciated that, through the mentoring relationship, they were exposed to a variety of resources and knowledge that they would not otherwise access.

Exposure to resources. Parents acknowledged that they didn't have enough knowledge, time, money, or interest to carry out the activities that their children had access to with their mentors. It gave them great pleasure to see that their children benefitted from the match in ways that they were unable to give to their children. For instance, Parent 12 explained how Mentor 12's career gave Child 12 exposure to theatre: "Il y a eu un autre impact, que moi je considère, comme important, qui est plus grand, c'est tout ce que son Grand Frère lui fait vivre. Que moi, je n'ai pas nécessairement accès à lui faire vivre. Un exemple, son Grand Frère, étant un comédien professionnel, on a été invité à aller voir une pièce de théâtre. Puis, Child 12 et moi avons eu accès à l'arrière scène et puis tous les accessoires sur la scène. Ils nous ont montré . . . C'est des choses que je ne peux pas servir à Child 12. . . . Alors, c'est un impact majeur, qui a long terme, est très important parce que ça amène Child 12 à vivre autre chose." Parent 6 explained that Mentor 6 exposed her child to activities that were not possible due to financial and time constraints: "Il a des moments de bonheur, beaucoup, qu'il n'aurait pas autrement. . . . Il l'emmène faire des choses que moi, je n'aurais pas les moyens de faire. . . . J'ai tout fait: le rôle du père et de la mère. Mais, tu sais, moi, aller jouer au squash avec Child 6, aller jouer au hockey dehors, jouer au tennis avec, puis l'emmener déjeuner. Moi, j'ai mon ménage à faire, après la semaine. C'est un plus. Child 6 vit de belles choses qu'il ne vivrait pas s'il n'avait pas Mentor 6."

Exposure to another image of an adult. Three parents also felt that their children were lucky to be exposed to another image of an adult. They explained that the mentors complemented who they were as a people and parents. Parent 10 explained, "ça lui apporte justement un autre côté que moi. C'est ça dont il a besoin, d'avoir d'autres images." Parent 8 added, "c'est une aide complètement séparée, avec une façon de faire complètement différente

de la mienne. Si on regarde juste les différences hommes-femmes, la façon d'adresser les problèmes et tout.”

Impact on parents.

Children. Children did not make any mention of impacts they had seen on their parents.

Mentors. Only one mentor brought up that there had been a positive impact on parents.

Mentor 1, whose mentee had behaviour problems, made a clear link between her outings with Child 1 and Parent 1 benefitting from time without her daughter.

Parents. Parents listed a number of perceived impacts on themselves that they had observed as a result of their child's participation in the mentoring match.

Time for themselves. Parents were unanimous in saying that, as single parents, they took care of their children 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The simple fact that the mentors took the children for four hours every two weeks gave these parents a break from parenthood to take time for themselves. Parent 12 commented on the time this allowed her to focus on paying attention to herself: “Les premières fois, je faisais du ménage, je faisais de la popote. À un moment donné, je me suis dit: ‘L’esthéticienne, ça serait peut-être le fun, à la place. Aller à la bibliothèque où à la librairie, ça serait peut-être plus le fun que faire le ménage.’ . . . Au début, tu es pas habitué d’avoir du temps libre, que là, tu as quatre heures devant toi, où, tu as pas de besoin d’être là pour quelqu’un d’autre. Tu peux être là pour toi. Alors, oui, j’ai changé beaucoup.” Parent 5 commented on the psychological freedom that this time away from her son had given her: “Ça m’a un peu permis de souffler. Psychologiquement, ça fait comme une petite soupape. . . . Oui, on a tous des besoins personnels aussi. Moi je les ai mis en veilleuse . . . très longtemps, *très longtemps*, parce qu’il fallait que j’accorde, mais vraiment tout mon temps, tout mon attention, tout le temps, et donc et donc voilà. Ça, ça a aidé un peu.” Three parents (7,

8, and 12) also mentioned that as a result of having time for themselves, they felt more energised and were better able to parent in a consistent manner.

Improved personal social network. Ten parents also remarked that the time they had gained for themselves enabled them to reach out socially, in that they had time to maintain friendships, meet new people, and form potential romantic relationships. Parent 7 explained, “cela m’a permis de socialiser avec les gens qui étaient déjà dans mon réseau, et c’est très, très installé maintenant. Ah oui! Je te dirais qu’à peu près tous les dimanches, je vais chez une de mes copines pour souper, pour jouer aux cartes.”

The security of another adult’s support. Another perceived impact that all mothers unanimously agreed on was the happiness and relief they felt in the fact that the mentors had become responsible and caring adults in the children’s lives. Parent 1 shared, “J’étais très émue quand [mon garçon a eu son jumelage]. Je le dis, je vais encore pleurer. Mais j’étais très contente, je me dis, bon, quand tu te maries . . . tu dis ‘c’est pour longtemps.’ Tu souhaites quelqu’un, puis, bon, ça fonctionne pas, fait que je me dis d’avoir quelqu’un qui peut être là, puis qui va me reprendre un petit peu au niveau de la relation. . . . De montrer un petit peu que, bon, c’est pas tous les adultes qui sont comme ça, . . . ça donne d’autres images. Je trouve que c’est excellent finalement.” Parents also saw the mentors as a backup, who supported their value system, and who were present for the children in the case of an emergency. Parent 6 explained: “L’impact. Bien, je te dirais que ça me donne une petite sécurité d’avoir un *partner* à côté de moi. Ce n’est pas un conjoint, ce n’est pas rien, sauf qu’il encadre Child 6 et je sais que dans mes décisions, il va m’appuyer. Si j’ai de la misère à convaincre mon fils ou que je ne pense pas que je sois la bonne personne appropriée pour lui parler de quelque chose, il est assez ouvert pour qu’on puisse en discuter. J’ai un appui que je n’ai pas de personne d’autre auprès de Child

6.”

Loss of an exclusive role. On the contrary, because of the important role that mentors took in their children’s lives, ten parents also spoke at length about how the mentoring relationship had forced them through a transition period. Mothers found themselves no longer being the sole caregiver to their children, and found that they needed time to digest this new, and not so exclusive, role. They spoke of challenging feelings when their child wanted their mentor, instead of them, in difficult times. Parent 9 called her caseworker in order to help sort out her feelings:

Écoute, la maman qui a son enfant à elle, et il faut qu’elle apprenne à partager. . . . Un moment donné, j’avais appelé Caseworker: “Écoute, ça ne va pas. . . . Je suis en train de perdre mon rôle de mère.” Bon, Child 9, on avait la tradition, quand il était plus jeune, on allait voir le père Noël. À un moment donné, il dit: “J’y vais avec Child 9.” “Hein, c’est notre tradition. C’est moi sa mère, c’est moi qui l’amène.” Donc, à un moment donné, je l’ai appelé. Elle m’a dit: “Bien non, c’est normal que tu te sentes de même.” On a discuté et c’est comme: “Oui, c’est moi qui faut qui apprenne à le partager.” Mais aujourd’hui, il a des amis, il sort. Donc, le cordon, il se coupe de plus en plus. Mais, je pourrais dire que le petit côté . . . plus difficile, c’est qu’il a fallu que: “Bien là, je suis sa mère. Mais là, il y a un autre adulte dans sa vie et il faut que je coupe le cordon.”

Co-parenting with another adult. Mothers also spoke about how their role changed in unexpected ways, in that they had to begin coparenting with another adult, taking into account their values and expectations. For instance, Parent 12 remembered how difficult it was to allow her son to take the Métro alone to their activities because Mentor 12 felt that he was ready to do that. Parents 5, 8, and 9 also found that the relationship was an exercise in trust and generosity,

because they learned to trust another adult with their child and because they had never experienced another person being so generous to their child and themselves in times of need.

Supporting their child through change in the mentor's life. Although all mothers felt a positive impact of having another responsible adult in the children's lives, some also relayed a certain difficulty with the supportive role they were forced to play when there were changes in the mentors' lifestyles. Parents of children whose mentors moved and changed jobs (Parents 3, 4, 5, and 9) explained that they were left to care for their children's grief and worry. In all cases, mothers spoke of how things worked out in the end; however, they personally found the process difficult as they were fearful of their children having to live through another abandonment.

Increased resources and social network through the organisation. Eight parents felt that being in the programme had brought to them a wealth of resources and widened their social networks. Some parents particularly appreciated having professionals they could turn to because they were not faring badly enough to enter the public social support system. Parent 1 explained how the organisation supported her where the public system did not: "Je regarde par rapport à moi: J'ai changé. C'est sûr que d'avoir du monde qui sont là, qui te soutiennent . . . tu te sens moins seule. . . . Je suis allée au CLSC [Centre local de services communautaires] pour une plainte de violence conjugale j'ai fait quand j'ai eu la séparation. Et au CLSC, je ne suis pas un cas assez grave. Puis, ils ont moins de ressources. Moi, j'ai un travail . . . je suis . . . un peu trop bien . . . pour avoir des ressources."

Through the programme's parenting classes, single-parents were brought together and could exchange their experiences. Some people spoke of meeting new people and friends, and others of learning concepts, and even others spoke of the power of knowing they were not alone. Parent 6 explained how she felt before the meetings, "des fois, on dirait que t'es toute seule à être

brûlée,” and Parent 5 explained how she felt after the meetings: “C’était très enrichissant parce que, déjà le seul fait de voir qu’il y avait d’autres personnes qui vivaient la même chose que nous, c’était une espèce de bouffée d’oxygène. . . . Mais l’échange, les témoignages des autres, la façon de fonctionner des autres, ça nous apprend à apprécier ce qu’on a.” Parents also appreciated the information and the notions that were taught during these sessions: “Je pogne des trucs. Quand je vois que je pogne les nerfs, j’essaie de les faire aussi: Respirer, respirer!”

Exposure to different perspectives. Four parents (1, 5, 6, and 7) also spoke about their appreciation of being exposed to different perspectives brought forth by the mentors, the mentors’ partners, or personnel within the organisation. For instance, many spoke about the positive recognition they felt when someone else saw positive qualities in their children. Parent 6 gushed, “Quand je vois [l’épouse de Mentor 6], c’est: ‘Il est beau, ton gars, tu as fait une belle job avec ton gars. Je te trouve bonne.’ . . . Ça fait du bien aussi, de se le faire dire.” Parent 5 became more conscious of her own values because of conversations she had with Mentor 5.

Impact on mentors.

Children. Children did not make mention of any perceived impact of the mentoring relationship on their mentors.

Mentors. All mentors agreed that they had positive feelings about being in the mentoring relationship, and all viewed these feelings as a positive impact on themselves. The positive feelings, for some, involved seeing themselves reflected in their Little Brothers and Sisters (this concept was well-named by Mentor 3 as “mini-me”). Five mentors also mentioned the positive feelings associated in gaining a “real little brother or sister”.

Pride and enjoyment. Eight mentors specifically mentioned they were either proud of being a Big Sister or a Big Brother, found the relationship enjoyable, or felt fulfilled in making a

contribution to society. Mentor 8 described the positive impact in his life: “Une chose est certaine . . . ce n’est pas négatif. Ça, c’est clair. Ce n’est pas une tâche, ce n’est pas une obligation de faire ça. Au contraire, c’est intéressant.” Six mentors were delighted in knowing that the children would heed their advice and took pleasure in knowing there had been a positive impact on the children as a result of the relationship. Mentor 5 explained, “moi j’ai toujours dit . . . tout acte de charité était en soi, égoïste, parce que tu le fais parce que ça te fait sentir bien. . . . Donc . . . en réalisant que j’avais un impact, l’influence que tu peux avoir, de savoir que c’est pas moi qui va définir son avenir mais je vais pouvoir être là pour l’aider . . . dans son cheminement, il y a quelque chose de gratifiant.”

Responsibility. Seven mentors also felt a new-found sense of responsibility in becoming a mentor that they had never felt before. They described that they suddenly felt needed by another person, becoming the go-to person for the child and being there when needed as their relationship developed. Mentor 6 explained, “À part de dire les choses évidentes—que c’est positif, que j’aime cela—l’impact sur moi, ma personne? Un plus grand sens des responsabilités. Si je recule de cinq ans, . . . cela m’a donné de la maturité. J’avais quelqu’un *to look after* et cela m’a comblé. Oui, cela m’a *groundé*—pas que j’étais farfelu, mais je n’étais pas attaché à grand chose. J’étais célibataire, je travaillais oui, mais bon! . . . J’ai toujours pris cette relation-là au sérieux.”

Weight of responsibility. On the flipside of the positive feelings associated with realising their responsibility towards the children, four mentors also felt the weight in realising the power they held over the children and the potential for both positive and negative impacts. With time, they became acutely aware of the possible impact their words and actions could have on the children. For instance, Mentor 5 expressed, “je ne réalisais pas à quel point tu pouvais avoir un

impact sur lui. . . . C'est là que tu vois: Je dis juste une petite chose et il s'en rappelle.

L'influence que tu peux avoir sur lui, c'est aussi bien, positivement, que ça peut être négatif. Je ne pense pas que c'est négatif, mais un Grand Frère pourrait facilement avoir une influence négative sur un enfant, en l'influençant d'une mauvaise façon. . . . Là, je le vois plus, maintenant."

Commitment and attachment. In parallel to feelings of increased responsibility, eight mentors also spoke about a feeling of commitment towards the relationship and attachment towards the child. Mentor 3 explained how she felt: "J'y prends plaisir, j'suis attachée à cet enfant-là. Si elle déménageait puis j'la voyais plus, ça me ferait beaucoup de peine."

These mentors mentioned that as a result of their attachment to the children they often thought about and worried about the child outside the time they were in direct contact with them. Mentors 6 and 7 worried about the children's future, Mentor 5 worried about the child's school outcomes, Mentor 12 worried about his Child 12 after he found out his mother had a boyfriend, Mentor 3 wondered about the child's perception of monetary differences between his family and his mentor's, Mentor 4 worried about the culture shock that Child 4 experienced with her since they were from distinctly different cultures, while others worried about how they would address issues of sexuality and smoking (Mentors 4, 6, and 8).

In addition to this, three mentors (6, 8, and 9) also mentioned the challenge of walking the fine line between wanting to be a father for this child and not over-involving themselves in the children's outcomes, all the while realising their impact was limited. Mentor 5 explained that this was his biggest challenge in the relationship, and commented at length about it:

Mentor 6: La façon dont le Grand Frère doit trouver un équilibre entre son désir d'être père et le fait d'être mentor—c'est quelque chose qui est *challengeant*. . . . C'est sûr que

tu es Grand Frère pour être Grand Frère. Moi, d'après moi, le moins que tu t'impliques vraiment là-dedans, il vient un point où tu dépasses ce que tu es supposé faire selon le cadre de la mission des Grands Frères Grandes sœurs. Moi, je l'ai dépassé souvent (rires).

Interviewer: Comme tantôt, tu as mentionné que tu as appelé le directeur.

Mentor 6: L'école, les cadeaux. . . . Les budgets de sorties. On a *lunché* ensemble des centaines de fois. Tu es supposé impliquer la mère, demander du budget. Je n'ai jamais fait cela. Jamais. Premièrement, j'ai la chance d'être plus à l'aise que Parent 6, je n'irai quand même pas lui demander de payer le *lunch* qu'on va prendre ensemble. Mais là, je deviens un peu plus "père."

Interviewer: C'est un équilibre assez difficile?

Mentor 6: Pour moi, cela a été difficile. . . . Ne pas prendre trop à cœur. C'est correct de prendre à cœur, mais il ne faut pas que cela devienne trop préoccupant, non plus. Ton impact est limité, *bottom line*. Et cela, il faut que tu le réalises. Tu peux t'embarquer, être envoûté, excité par l'impact que tu as, mais il reste qu'il est limité.

Mini-me. The concept of "mini-me" was brought forth by Mentor 3, and well explained by Mentor 5: "J'ai la perspective d'aujourd'hui que Child 5 m'amène, et j'ai l'impression que c'est moi en plus jeune, et je revoie une espèce de naïveté, de l'enfance. C'est comme si je transposais qui j'étais à l'époque sur ses façons de réagir et des fois je me dis: 'Mon dieu, j'étais petit, et quand j'étais petit, je faisais ça.' C'est comme un miroir du passé en quelques sortes." Seven mentors (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 12) enjoyed this seeing themselves reflected in their mentees because it provided an occasion to reminisce about their own childhood as well as remain connected to youth. Mentor 12 agreed: "Je me suis reconnu en Child 12, en fait—c'est moi. À

son âge, j'étais comme cela. C'est vraiment moi. Il vit tout seul avec sa mère, pareil comme moi, les mêmes intérêts que moi. . . . J'ai fait: 'Ah, OK. On va bien s'entendre.'" The mentors who saw similarities between their mentees and themselves as children also felt quickly they would get along well together.

Gaining an extended family. Eight mentors mentioned the concept of gaining a family member as a positive perceived impact. They either viewed the children as a real little brother or sister or felt that they had gained an extended family through the child's family. Mentor 5, who was matched for five years at the time of the interview, commented, "là où on est rendu, j'ai l'impression d'avoir un lien de sang pratiquement avec lui. Écoute, s'il lui arrivait quelque chose, ce serait—non, regarde . . . il fait partie du noyau de personnes importantes dans ma vie." Three mentors also expressed feeling fatherly towards the children (Mentors 6, 8, and 9).

Having children or a connection to youth. Within the concept of family emerged another specific theme from five of the mentors, that of children—either their own children, their future children, or the role the mentees played for mentors who never had children. Mentor 2 reported that Child 2 filled a certain void in his life. He explained, "moi, je n'ai pas eu d'enfant. Avant, à chaque fois que je regardais un film avec un homme et un enfant de dix ou onze ans, ça me mettait les larmes aux yeux. C'est quelque chose qui m'a manqué." Mentor 1 realised that she wanted children after being matched with Child 1, and Mentor 6 learned that he enjoyed spending time with children, thus making him comfortable with the idea of becoming a parent.

In a similar way, four different mentors felt that being matched allowed them to have a connection to youth and an awareness of what childhood is like today. Mentor 9 recalled that being with Child 9 made him appreciate once again the small things that he had appreciated as a young boy. Mentors 3 and 4 also appreciated the fact that their relationships helped them to stay

young at heart.

Self-improvement. Many mentors also spoke of the concept of self-improvement as a result of participating in the relationship. Mentor 1 spoke of becoming more patient, Mentors 1, 3, 4, and 7 spoke of becoming more open minded and Mentor 2 spoke of improving his listening skills. Other mentors spoke about the relationship as being an impetus for improving or refocusing their career ambitions. Mentor 6 reported the importance he now placed in volunteering for children's causes, while Mentor 5 reported that his relationship stimulated his writing career. Finally, Mentor 7 reported the relationship confirmed his desire to work with children and refocus his career from being a journalist to an elementary education teacher.

“Moment de décrochage.” All mentors mentioned the impact of forgetting their own lives, problems, and schedules during their time with the children, and the term “moment de décrochage” [disconnecting from the responsibilities of everyday life] was used by many. A large number of mentors professed to working long hours, and saw the time they spent with the children as a break and a reason that would force them to pause. Mentor 3 stated, “c’est lui qui fait que je me libère à chaque deux semaines, parce que sinon, je n’arrêtera pas.” Others felt that the relationship gave them an excuse to participate in a variety of activities that interested them as well as temporarily let go of their day-to-day stressors. Mentor 4 explained, “quand je suis avec Child 4; toutes mes gardes tombent. . . . J’ai pas rien à *watcher*, . . . à *checker* mes angles morts. . . . Pendant les quatre heures que je suis avec elle . . . la terre arrête de tourner. . . . *Off* de toute, même pas de cellulaire, *yes!*”

Parents. Four parents (4, 7, 8, and 9) mentioned having some knowledge about the impact of the match on the mentors.

Knowing the positive impact on the mentor helps the parent. The importance they

placed, however, was not necessarily on the particular impact, but rather that the impact itself was positive. Knowing the mentor had a positive impact from being in a relationship with their children allowed the parents not to feel as if they were taking advantage of them in order to fulfill their child's own needs. Interestingly, many parents mentioned that it was not the mentor themselves that shared the positive impacts with them, but had received this extremely important information from another source, such as a mentor's partner or caseworker.

Impact on others

Children. Only one child mentioned seeing an impact on others.

Envy in friends. Child 9 explained that his friends were jealous that he had a mentor, and because of that they would often ask to join their activities.

Mentors. The greatest perceived impact on others mentioned by six mentors was that other people immediately had a positive impression of them when they found out that they were volunteer mentors.

Positive impression on others. Six mentors explained that people were impressed at the level of commitment mentors were required to give, and all had more favourable impressions towards the mentors after discussing what the role of mentor entailed. This positive regard was even transferred on to the partners of some mentors. Mentor 4 explained that her partner's relationship with his boss, who was half Syrian, became much more positive when the boss found out about her mentoring relationship with Child 4, who was Syrian. Mentors 3, 9 and 12 also spoke about trying to motivate other adults in their network to become mentors, however, not one had managed to convince anyone to join.

The mentor's partner and family. In their own families, two mentors (3 and 4) expressed that their own parents took on the role of grandparent to the children, and two other mentors felt

that their own families began to consider the children as part of the family (6 and 9). Mentors 3 and 4 also recalled conversations that had arisen with partners and family members when the child's background and what the child had been (or not been) exposed to was different than their own cultural norm. Mentors 3 and 4 also introduced the children to their social networks, and the people who formed these networks also built bonds with the children, such as bringing them presents at Christmas. An additional impact that seven mentors noted was that their romantic partners were all interested in the children, though their level of involvement and attachment to the children was minor.

Parents.

The mentor's partner and family. In addressing the possible perceived impacts of the relationship on other people, five parents (3, 5, 6, 8, and 12), all mothers, felt that the mentors' partners had benefitted from the relationship. Even though they played a minor role in the relationship, parents admitted they were curious to know who the partners were, and vice versa. Parents also felt it was important to at least meet the mentor's partner if their child was to spend time in their home. Parent 12 explained, "j'ai rencontré le conjoint de Mentor 12 parce que lui aussi, ça l'intéressait de nous rencontrer. . . . C'est sûr qu'éventuellement, quand la première année est écoulée, c'est une bonne idée de le rencontrer—parce que là, le Grand Frère et le Petit frère ont droit de soit dormir chez eux ou . . . de sortir pendant deux-trois jours à l'extérieur ensemble. Alors, si le conjoint est pour être impliqué, oui, c'est important que le parent le rencontre."

Mothers 3, 6, and 8 also enjoyed the relationship they had with the partners, and enjoyed being on friendly terms with those women. These mothers mention that it was through the partners that they actually came to understand just how important their children were to the

mentors, which in turn, allowed them to feel that they were not only on the receiving end but on the giving end as well. Parent 8 recalled her conversation with Mentor 8's partner: "Mentor 8, étant un homme, ce n'est pas lui qui va me dire: 'Ah, vraiment! Cela a changé ma vie. Je suis épanoui depuis.' Il ne me dira jamais cela. De un, je tomberais en bas de ma chaise. Et de deux, je dirais: 'Quel fou que j'ai là?!' Par contre, des fois, quand je rencontre sa compagne—c'est arrivé avant que Child 6 parte en vacances. On est allé souper là. Elle m'a dit: 'Mon dieu, cela a changé notre vie.'" Parent 8 also mentioned her discomfort with not necessarily knowing just how friendly she and Mentor 8's partner could become. As such, they self-imposed certain boundaries, and agreed that the partner would never go over to Parent 8's home, but the reverse was possible. She explained her uncertainty regarding her relationship with the partner: "C'est parce que l'association ne favorise pas tellement ça. On est quasiment [pause] illégal quand on fait ça. On se demande si c'est correct ou pas correct. Mais, en quelque part, on est tous curieux de savoir avec qui notre enfant est . . . quand il n'est pas avec nous."

Apart from the mentors' partners, parents also were aware that the relationship had a positive impact on some mentors' siblings and parents, in that this allowed them to take on the role of grandparents, and aunts and uncles, respectively. Parent 9 explained, "il fait presque partie de la famille [de Mentor 9]. Dès la première année . . . Mentor 9 avec son frère, ils font la tournée des enfants de la famille déguisés en Père Noël et en lutin. . . . Ils viennent voir Child 9, il fait partie de la tournée. Oui, presque'adoptif."

Envy in friends. Parents 5 and 8 also explained that the relationship had created envy in their children's friends, who then, in turn, asked their own parents if they could also have mentors.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion

The general goal of this research was to integrate two models of youth mentoring, systemic (Keller, 2005b) and developmental (Rhodes, 2005), in order to obtain a holistic perspective of the perceived impacts on, and the relationships between, all the people involved in the youth-mentoring relationship, namely, children, mentors, and parents. Nine different themes relating to the system and another nine themes relating to perceived individual impacts emerged from the in-depth, semistructured interviews. This discussion synthesises the results in order to understand the converging and diverging perspectives of children, mentors, and parents with regard to each theme. Table 2 was created to more easily compare and contrast the narratives of each group.

The themes that emerged from the data were useful to report the results. At the level of interpretation, however, the inter-relatedness of the system throughout the relationships and its impacts on individuals became apparent. The case of Triad 8 provides an example. After Child 8 was matched, he felt happier and felt less alone, and this had positive impacts on specific areas of his development, specifically, academic performance and social-emotional development. Upon seeing gradual changes in her son, Parent 8 felt enjoyment and relief. At the same time, Parent 8 began to have some regular respite when her son and Mentor 8 met. This newfound time apart from each other positively influenced the mother-son relationship. Upon hearing positive feedback concerning the benefits of the relationship on Child 8, Mentor 8 felt encouraged, and became ever more motivated to maintain the mentoring relationship, even in the light of challenges. As Mentor 8 maintained his relationship with Child 8 over time, they developed an attachment to each other. Parent 8 viewed this attachment as a protective factor in relationship maintenance, and this allowed her to place increased trust and confidence in

Table 2

Themes and subthemes specific to children, mentors, and parents within the systemic or developmental models of youth mentoring (N = 12)

Theoretical model	Theme	Children	Mentors	Parents
	Theme 1.1: Motivation to join the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Absent mother or father ($n = 9$) • Participate in new activities ($n = 6$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Contribution to society ($n = 9$) • Receiving and giving ($n = 8$) • “I don’t have any children” ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • A need for a positive male role model ($n = 10$) • Relational difficulties ($n = 7$)
Systemic	Theme 1.2: Child-mentor relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive description of mentors and their roles ($n = 12$) • Positive description of the mentoring relationship ($n = 12$) • A representation of the relationship ($n = 12$) • Activities ($n = 12$) • Communication ($n = 7$) • Attachment and comfort ($n = 5$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities ($n = 12$) • Logistics ($n = 12$) • Attachment and the relationship process ($n = 12$) • Developmental mentoring ($n = 12$) • Prescriptive mentoring ($n = 12$) • Children and their roles ($n = 11$) • Enjoyable mentoring relationship ($n = 9$) • Communication ($n = 9$) • A representation of the relationship ($n = 7$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentor’s role ($n = 12$) • Special mentoring relationship ($n = 12$) • A representation of the relationship ($n = 12$) • Activities ($n = 12$) • Logistics ($n = 12$) • Attachment ($n = 11$) • Commitment ($n = 8$) • Communication ($n = 8$) • Developmental mentoring ($n = 5$)

Systemic
(continued)

Theme 1.3: Child-Parent relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Someone to talk to about my family” ($n = 7$) • A support regarding serious troubles at home ($n = 2$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased respect at home ($n = 4$) • Like a member of the family ($n = 4$)A listening ear ($n = 3$) • Changes in family dynamics ($n = 2$) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in family dynamics ($n = 11$) • Increased mother-son distance ($n = 7$) • The mentor becomes part of the family ($n = 7$) • Improved mother-son relationship ($n = 5$) • Less pressure from sons to find a father ($n = 4$) • Increased reflection on the child-parent relationship ($n = 3$)
Theme 1.4: Mentor-Parent relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wish for a mentor-parent romance ($n = 1$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along with parents ($n = 12$) • Discussing the children ($n = 12$) • Negotiating closeness ($n = 12$) • Roles and boundaries ($n = 6$) • Support from parents($n = 5$) • On a mission ($n = 3$) • Flexibility: Advantages and disadvantages ($n = 3$) • Mentor-parent romance ($n = 2$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along well with mentors ($n = 12$) • Discussing the children ($n = 12$) • Mentors giving feedback ($n = 6$) • Communication ($n = 4$) • Roles and boundaries ($n = 4$) • On a mission ($n = 3$) • Negotiating closeness ($n = 3$) • Mentor-parent romance ($n = 2$)

	Theme 1.5: Child-Mentor- Parent (Triad) relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation ($n = 1$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and activities ($n = 12$) • Children: Protecting their relationships ($n = 6$) • Dyad-to-triad behaviour changes ($n = 3$) • Triangulation ($n = 2$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and activities ($n = 12$) • Children: Protecting their relationships ($n = 5$) • Triangulation ($n = 3$) • Dyad-to-triad behaviour changes ($n = 2$) • Supporting parents in their role within the triad ($n = 2$)
Systemic (continued)	Theme 1.6: Ongoing motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun, safe companionship ($n = 12$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feelings ($n = 10$) • Observing impacts on the child ($n = 7$) • Anti-abandonment ($n = 3$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future benefits for their children ($n = 7$) • Personal needs ($n = 3$)
	Theme 1.7: Anticipated developments and wishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term ($n = 12$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment until the age of majority ($n = 12$) • Long-term and a transition to friendship ($n = 8$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term wish ($n = 12$) • Fear of abandonment ($n = 6$) • Ongoing given attachment ($n = 3$)

Systemic
(continued)Theme 1.8:
Organisational
support

- Caseworker as messenger ($n = 1$)
- Support from caseworkers ($n = 6$)
- Caseworkers as messengers ($n = 5$)
- Looking to caseworkers for guidance ($n = 4$)
- Support from the organisation ($n = 4$)
- Support from caseworkers ($n = 9$)
- Support from the organisation ($n = 7$)
- Caseworkers as messengers ($n = 2$)
- Boundaries ($n = 2$)

Theme 1.9:
Challenges

- Choosing between mentors and friends ($n = 2$)
- The mentor's romantic partner ($n = 1$)
- Fear of abandonment ($n = 2$)
- Logistics ($n = 10$)
- Disagreeing with parenting ($n = 8$)
- Rejection ($n = 7$)
- Limits and boundaries ($n = 6$)
- Worrying about what to say ($n = 5$)
- Money matters ($n = 4$)
- The mentor's romantic partner ($n = 4$)
- Not knowing the impact ($n = 3$)
- Logistics ($n = 5$)
- The possibility of abuse ($n = 6$)
- Not knowing the impact ($n = 5$)
- The discomfort of "ordering" a relationship ($n = 2$)
- Jealousy between siblings ($n = 2$)

Develop- mental and individual impacts	Theme 2.1: General impressions: match impacts on children over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General positive opinion ($n = 12$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally positive opinion ($n = 12$) • A positive presence ($n = 6$) • Positive element among many ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General, positive, long-term impact ($n = 12$)
	Theme 2.2: Cognitive- academic development and career impacts on children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Increased motivation in schoolwork ($n = 8$) • Teaching role of mentor ($n = 6$) • Future career ($n = 6$) • Increased school enjoyment ($n = 5$) • Increased motivation to stay in school ($n = 4$) • Improved teacher perception ($n = 3$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Genuine interest: asking about school ($n = 12$) • Interest in career aspirations ($n = 11$) • Improved school attitude and behaviour ($n = 10$) • Improvement in homework and schoolwork completion ($n = 7$) • Sensing the importance for children of their mentor showing interest in school ($n = 6$) • Difficulty of not having more power over the child's education ($n = 5$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Positive impact on career ($n = 10$) • Encouraging children to stay in school ($n = 7$) • Mentors express genuine interest in education ($n = 6$) • Improved school behaviour, attitudes, and achievement ($n = 6$) • Mentors: real-life examples ($n = 5$) • One positive element among many ($n = 4$)

Develop- mental and individual impacts (continued)	Theme 2.3: Social- emotional development in children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Peer relationships ($n = 7$) • Self-confidence ($n = 7$) • Talking about feelings ($n = 6$) • Alternative view of family life ($n = 4$) • From anger to happiness ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Self-confidence ($n = 11$) • Alternative view of family life ($n = 9$) • Corrective relationships– abandonment ($n = 8$) • Peer relationships ($n = 7$) • Talking about the absent parent ($n = 7$) • Talking about feelings ($n = 7$) • Mastering emotions ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General theme ($n = 12$) • Self-confidence ($n = 9$) • Peer relationships ($n = 6$) • Alternative view of family life ($n = 5$) • Corrective relationships – abandonment ($n = 3$) • From angry to happy ($n = 4$) • Talking about feelings ($n = 1$) •
	Theme 2.4: Identity development in children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive changes ($n = 6$) • Making space for a new identity ($n = 2$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental outlook on identity development ($n = 12$) • Exploration of gender identity ($n = 10$) • Increased awareness of self ($n = 4$) • Positive impact on cultural identity ($n = 4$) • Identification with mentors ($n = 3$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General positive view ($n = 8$) • Gender identity ($n = 7$) • Increased awareness of self ($n = 4$) • Cultural identity ($n = 4$)

Develop-
mental
and
individual
impacts
(continued)

Theme 2.5:
Behaviour in
children

- More prosocial behaviour and less delinquent behaviour ($n = 10$)
- Providing limits ($n = 12$)
- Discussing delinquent behaviours as they arise ($n = 7$)
- Delaying the onset of risk-taking behaviours ($n = 5$)
- Mentors: feeling ill-equipped ($n = 4$)
- Mentors: accepting their presence cannot improve everything ($n = 3$)
- More prosocial and less delinquent behaviour ($n = 5$)
- No behaviour problems to begin with ($n = 4$)

Theme 2.6:
Exposure to
new life
experiences,
skills, and
values in
children

- New activities and skills ($n = 12$)
- Social skills and valuing diversity ($n = 4$)
- Social skills and values ($n = 7$)
- Encouraging openness to new experiences ($n = 7$)
- Exposure to resources ($n = 7$)
- Exposure to another image of an adult ($n = 3$)

Develop- mental and individual impacts (continued)	Theme 2.7: Impact on parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for mother ($n = 1$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for themselves ($n = 12$) • The security of another adult's support ($n = 11$) • Improved personal social network ($n = 10$) • Increased resources and social network via organisational programming ($n = 8$) • Loss of an exclusive role ($n = 10$) • Co-parenting with another adult ($n = 4$) • Supporting their child through change in the mentor's life ($n = 4$) • Exposure to different perspectives ($n = 4$)
	Theme 2.8: Impact on mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride and enjoyment ($n = 12$) • "Moment de décrochage" ($n = 12$) • Having children or a connection to youth ($n = 9$) • New sense of commitment and attachment ($n = 8$) • Gaining an extended family ($n = 8$) • New-found responsibility ($n = 7$) • Weight of responsibility ($n = 4$) • "Mini-me" ($n = 7$) • Self-improvement ($n = 6$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing the positive impact on the mentor is positive for the parent ($n = 4$)

Develop- mental and individual impacts (continued)	Theme 2.9: Impacts on others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Envy in friends ($n = 1$)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mentor's partner and family ($n = 8$)• Positive impression on others ($n = 6$)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mentor's partner and family ($n = 6$)• Envy in child's friends ($n = 2$)
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Mentor 8. She then developed a collaborative relationship with Mentor 8, and both adults enjoyed the sentiment of feeling respected by the other. In parallel, Child 8 sensed the mutual appreciation between adults, which helped him to further invest in his mentor. As part of their collaboration together, Parent 8 shared vital information concerning her son's well-being. This knowledge, in turn, helped Mentor 8 better understand the Child 8's reactions and enabled him to more sensitively and appropriately support Child 8, who in turn, appreciated the support he received from his mentor. Child 8 felt heard and appreciated by his mentor, and sensed that he was important to him and could count on him. Because of Child 8's trust in Mentor 8, he accepted to be advised and guided, which in turn, continued to support his development in a number of areas. This specific case illustrates the importance of a comprehensive view of the mentoring relationship, and sets the stage for more general observations.

As a whole, the combined data from triads explains an iterative, positive spiral that began with the introduction of a new person, the mentor, to the original child-parent dyad. These data provide strong evidence of the interdependent relationship between all participants in the mentoring process. This unique exploration of triads provides much support for Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring, which focusses holistically on the interactional effects of child, parent, mentor, and caseworker relationships, all set within an organisational structure.

Although all participants spoke of an iterative, positive process that began when the child and the mentor were matched, both parents and mentors addressed the complexities of maintaining this positive momentum. They spoke of several challenges which arose, especially in learning, adapting, and negotiating the new roles they had to play. They explained that misunderstandings on either side could have negative consequences and initiate a negative spiral that would take considerable effort to turn around. As a result, both mentors and parents

assigned the utmost importance to the caseworker's role in guiding them through the process as the relationship evolved, so as not to cause unintentional harm to the child.

Objective One: A Systemic Perspective

Nine different themes emerged that were common in varying degrees to children, mentors, and parents. Although qualitative research traditionally limits the labeling of themes to those that are addressed by all participants, that limitation would be excessively restrictive given the presence of 36 different individuals in this study. Although these themes were common across all participants, several subthemes emerged showing group similarities and differences. It is clear from participants' rich narratives that children, mentors, and parents alike recognised each other's role as necessary and important to the relationship. By adding parental perspective to the existing body of research, vital information about perceived impacts and the relational processes in the youth mentoring relationship were revealed.

Theme 1.1: Motivation to join the program. Children, mentors, and parents each had different reasons for wanting to participate in a formal youth-mentoring programme. There was a great deal of consistency within each group. Children cited living in a single-parent home and wanting to participate in new activities as main reasons; mentors wanted to give as they had received, contribute to society, and have children in their lives; parents wanted same-sex role models for their children and hoped that the relationship would help with specific social and relational difficulties. Whereas children and mentors chose to participate in order to fulfill needs specific to themselves and for self-improvement, parents wanted to participate to help their children. Parental reasons to participate partially supported predictions made from previous literature. Spencer and colleagues (2011) reported that parents wanted role-models for their children; however, instead of hoping to improve social and relational difficulties such as

expressed by the parents in the present study, they hoped their children would be exposed to new opportunities with their mentors. Although, in the present study, parents were not motivated to join, nor were they motivated to maintain the relationship because of new opportunities for their children, they admitted that exposure to new opportunities was a positive impact of the relationship. Very heterogeneous triads came together to form relationships composed of very different people, with very different needs and motivations.

Theme 1.2: The child-mentor mentoring relationship. All participants gave positive descriptions of the child-mentor relationship. Children and parents commented on the importance of the mentor to the children, and mentors likewise expressed the importance of the children in their lives.

Children, mentors, and parents addressed the role of communication in the mentoring relationship. Although perspectives varied between groups, all agreed that the safe space created by the mentors enabled the children to confide in them. Children specifically explained that they were able to communicate with their mentors because they trusted them, and this additionally made them feel good about the relationship. Mentors primarily felt that a major component of their role is to make the children feel comfortable to communicate when they are emotionally ready. As such, they were cautious not to push intimacy too quickly, as did mentors in Spencer's (2007a) study, and were careful to provide engaged and authentic emotional support, as did other mentors in Spencer and Liang's (2009) study. In the present study, examples of how mentors promoted comfort with their protégés fell into three categories: reflecting on the relationship itself, using humour, and valuing moments of silence. Mentors also reflect that children communicate more over time. Parents recognised with pleasure that mentors made themselves available to the children. As a result, their children began to confide in their mentors, at times,

instead of to parents, and this process, though viewed in a positive light, was also a difficult and unexpected transition for mothers.

All participants spoke about the activities in the child-mentor relationship. They all expressed positive comments though each group contributed unique reflections, which indicates the importance of including child, mentor, and parent perspectives. Children viewed the activities as fun and as allowing them to forget their troubles, and this was echoed by mentees in Spencer and Liang (2009), and parents saw the activities as opportunities for their children, as did parents in Spencer et al. (2011). Mentors, on the other hand, revealed new insight about how their views of activities changed. Over time, mentors came to realise that, as long as activities are geared towards the children, the most important *raison-d'être* of the activities is to provide an excuse for child and mentor to spend time together and bond. In parallel, many come to view the activities with a relational perspective, which fosters trust and emotional connections, as opposed to an instrumental perspective, which promotes engagement in goal-directed activities (Keller, 2007).

All parents and mentors addressed the importance of logistics, such as scheduling meetings and phone calls. Parents focused primarily on the reliability and predictability shown by the mentors in their actions, and explained that this helped to build trust in them. The importance of trust was a key element identified in parents' ability to experience satisfaction with the relationship (Spencer et al., 2011). Mentors, on the other hand, while remaining consciously consistent for their protégés, did not recognise the impact of their predictability on parents. Instead, mentors' views concerning their reliability and predictability were mentee-focused and therapeutically-oriented, in that they believed that it allows the children to realise they can count on them even though they have been failed by other adults. These regular

patterns of interaction are an intrinsic part of relationship growth and maintenance (Keller, 2005a), and have been cited by mentees as facilitating the ongoing relationship (Ahrens et al., 2011).

Children's attachment to their mentors was evident from the roles they assigned to them, such as guardian angel and father. Most described increased attachment, comfort, and affection toward their mentors over time. Mentors were equally attached to their protégés, but their reflections on attachment also took into account a certain level of responsibility they hold in building and maintaining the relationship. They also reflected on the relationship as a process, and as such, understood the necessity of adapting to changes in either mentor or protégé circumstances. This gradual approach toward attachment and the child-mentor relationship taken by mentors enabled them to eventually view the relationship as long-term. The processes that mentors referred to support the different stages of development that have been proposed for youth mentoring relationships—contemplation, initiation, growth and maintenance, decline and dissolution, and redefinition (Keller, 2005a). Parents, on the other hand, did not refer to a process over time, indicating that they perhaps were not aware of how the child-mentor relationship develops and evolves. Rather, they focused on their child's attachment to the mentor, and more specifically, the importance of the mentor's commitment to their child, because they did not want their child to experience a second abandonment.

Evidence of mentoring style was embedded throughout mentors' narratives. Although all mentors used a developmental approach, two thirds also used a prescriptive approach in specific circumstances. Although previous research has pointed to the positive impacts of a developmental versus the negative impacts of a prescriptive mentoring style (Morrow & Styles, 1995), in the present research, neither children, parents, nor mentors mentioned any negative

impact of a contextually specific prescriptive style. Perhaps the level of trust and mutuality between child and mentor was high enough that an occasional prescriptive style was accepted. Common to mentor narratives when they insisted on focussing on a specific skill or capacity was that they explained to the mentees why they felt it was so important. Thus, perhaps because the context of the prescriptive style was explicitly explained by mentors, mentees did not reject the interventions.

Theme 1.3: The child-parent relationship. Parents provided the most feedback regarding changes in the child-parent relationship following the introduction of the mentor into their family. Although children's perspectives generally support the existing literature, in that they appreciated having an outside perspective and support with regard to their family matters (Spencer, 2006), parents contributed an important original perspective on the impacts of the mentoring relationship on the child-parent dyad. All mothers comment that the introduction of the mentor caused changes in family dynamics: Mothers were no longer the sole focus of their children's attention. Although they viewed this in a positive light, this produced an unexpected impact for them—a decreased sense of closeness with their sons. Mothers especially relied on the support of caseworkers to manoeuvre through conflicting feelings, and realised that an increased emotional distance from them and an increased emotional closeness with the mentors in some gender-related areas was developmentally appropriate for their sons as they headed through their adolescent years. All parent-child dyads in this study adapted to this important change in dynamics, however, the possibility of resisting this change, especially when unexpected, is certainly plausible. The way in which the child-parent relationship adapts to the introduction of the mentor may strengthen or weaken the child-mentor relationship.

Many mothers also felt that the addition of the mentor to the system allowed both mother

and son more space, which in turn, improved their relationship. A handful of mothers also felt less strain in the relationship because their sons stopped pressuring their mothers to find a romantic partner after they were matched with their mentors. This parental perspective supports Keller's (2005a) systemic model which emphasises the interdependent network of relationships established among child, mentor, and parent.

Theme 1.4: The mentor-parent relationship. Parents and mentors spoke at length about their relationship, and clearly indicated that it is a key factor in the success of the child-mentor relationship. Although most revealed some frustration with each other at some level, all parents and mentors feel that they generally got along with each other, and attributed this to common values, trust in the other, and respect of each other's roles. These findings echo previous research that found trust and respect for the other as major components of successful parent-mentor relationships (Spencer 2007b; Spencer et al., 2011). When they are together, mentors and parents speak about the children; parents inform the mentors how the children are doing, and mentors appreciate the open lines of communication because they feel they are better able to support the children during their outings. Parents are also very happy to get feedback from the mentors after their outings, but wish for greater transparency regarding difficulties they experience. Generally, parents express that the greater their comfort in communicating with mentors, the greater their satisfaction in their relationship with them and their ability to trust the mentors.

Achieving a comfortable balance in their relationship was a complex task for both parents and mentors. Interestingly, all mentors spoke about the challenges of negotiating closeness and maintaining a "friendly, yet not too friendly" relationship with parents. Although mentors wanted to be friendly, they did not want to become too close, either, for fear of crossing

boundaries. Similarly, some parents remained very conscious to not involve themselves too much in the relationship because they wanted to respect the privacy of the child-mentor relationship. However, mentors and parents who became close also offered insight about how their relationship enabled them to bend organisational rules, bringing about desired and undesired consequences.

A small subgroup of participants in each group, spanning five separate triads, addressed a single common theme—mentor-parent romance. None of the mentors or the parents reported engaging in a romantic relationship together. However, as one mentor explained, all the elements for a romance to develop are present: single-women, with sons, are in regular contact with responsible, single-men, who genuinely care for and invest in their children. The fact that this subtheme emerged indicates that it may be an elephant in the room because such a romance would be in clear violation of boundaries. Furthermore, a new set of complexities would arise as participants would have to navigate between dual relationships. Parents and mentors revealed that when one of the members of the triad made reference to a mentor-parent romance, the other participants reacted with discomfort. This topic, which so far has not been mentioned in the literature, should be further explored so as to not keep this topic taboo, and to provide a safe space for a discussion of the mechanisms that help participants maintain their roles.

A subgroup of parents and mentors revealed that, as a result of their collaborative relationship, parents may occasionally request mentors to play the role of mediator in the child-parent relationship. Mentors discretely addressed specific issues with the children at the parents' request. This mediating role differs from how it has been used in past literature, in which parents choose to act as mediators in the child-mentor relationship (Spencer et al., 2011) and where mentors choose (as opposed to responding to a request) to act as mediators in the child-parent

relationship (Philip & Hendry, 2000). Although, in these latter two situations, both parents and mentors act in the best interests of the children, difficulties may arise in that the adult who did not choose to play the role of mediator may perceive an imbalance in power in not being able to negotiate his or her own relationship. Within the present study, parents and mentors maintained their respective power by asking the other to play the role of mediator, and the other had the choice to agree or disagree.

Theme 1.5: The child-mentor-parent (triad) relationship. Children, mentors, and parents all agreed that they were rarely all together because the point of the relationship is to foster a bond between the child and mentor. However, regardless of this goal, parents remained, at the very least, minimally involved because they are required, especially with younger children, to logistically support the relationship. In this respect, little attention has been given to what goes on and how certain dynamics within dyadic relationships change when the triad is together. Mentors and parents agreed that the three participants are normally together when they plan activities and give updates. However, they will occasionally—about once or twice a year—participate in a triadic activity, such as sharing a meal together, celebrating a child's birthday, or taking part in a formal activity organised by the association. Groups of parents and mentors noticed differences in the children's behaviour when they were all together. They especially agreed that children actively protect the intimacy of their relationships with their mentors and excluded their parents by minimally participating. For these reasons, some parents and mentors preferred to not engage in triadic activities. Some mothers also felt greater comfort when a fourth person accompanied the triad, which allowed children to align with their mentor, while parents interacted with the added person.

Small subgroups of participants from each group and spanning six triads addressed the

concept of triangulation within their triads. Triangulation (Bowen, 1978) is a term that is used in family systems theory to explain a situation in which one family member does not communicate directly with another, and instead communicates with a third person. In this way, the third person becomes part of the triangle. The third person can then be used as a substitute for direct communication between the first and second person, or can be used as a messenger to transmit information. In the present research, for example, mothers triangulated by telling the mentors that their children did not do their homework, and children triangulated by telling their mentors negative things about their parents. In such a way, mentors can be placed in uncomfortable situations that become difficult to navigate without angering child or parent. The caseworker's role is important in this respect and, throughout the narrative of mentors and parents it was clear that they had been told by caseworkers to not communicate in such a fashion. The concept of triangulation has not been addressed within the youth-mentoring context, although it is clearly a possibility in Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring, because it stems from family-systems theory. The concept has received some attention, however, in social work, through the exploration of different patterns of triangulation between service provider, caregiver, and adolescent triads (Ungar, Liebenberg, Landry, & Ikeda, 2012).

Theme 1.6: Ongoing motivators. All participants wished to continue participating in the mentoring relationship, although, like the initial motivators to join the programme, the ongoing motivators in relationship maintenance varied between the groups. Children enjoyed the fun activities and the safe companionship that the mentoring relationship provides. The motivating reasons given by the children in this study are similar to the reasons given by older protégés in nonformal mentoring relationships (Ahrens et al., 2011), possibly indicative of the existence of more global, ongoing motivators in mentees across broader contexts.

Mentors primarily wished to continue the relationship because they cared for the children and were attached to them. They were secondarily motivated to observe the long-term impact of their presence on the children. In citing their motivating reasons to join, mentors did not once mention developing an attachment to a child, yet this relational aspect became, for most, the main reason to continue. This attachment points to the importance of the child-mentor relationship in mediating the long-term maintenance of the relationship, and simultaneously supports Spencer's (2007a) findings emphasising the importance of close and enduring emotional connections in formal mentoring relationships.

Parents and children were originally motivated by the need for a same-sex role model, though none mention this sex-specific aspect as an ongoing motivator. Rather, parents focused more globally on their desire for their children to maintain a healthy and secure relationship with another adult. They believed the mentor's presence would help, in the long-term, with their children's general sense of well-being. Although all parents reported positive personal impact of having regularly scheduled time for themselves, they were secondarily motivated by their own benefits in wanting to maintain the relationship.

Theme 1.7: Anticipated developments and wishes. All children, mentors, and parents agreed on their wish to continue participating in the mentoring relationship in the long-term. Mentors specifically commit themselves until the children turn 18 years of age, reflective of BBBS of Greater Montreal's recommendation for this relationship. The majority, however, surpass this recommendation and envision a relationship that will last a lifetime, eventually transitioning into a friendship. All mentors and parents expressed that their initial objectives were met, or were in the process of being met. Perhaps what supports this long-term view in mentors and parents is their perspective that the relationship is constantly evolving and

expectations and impact may be met in time.

Theme 1.8: Organisational support. Although the children rarely spoke about the caseworker associated with their match, mentors and parents had exceptionally positive comments regarding the support they receive from their caseworkers. Some mentors and parents alike felt that caseworkers enabled them to respect each other's roles and boundaries by mediating when necessary and passing along tactful messages in an inoffensive manner. Mentors specifically felt that the support they received from their caseworkers encouraged them to maintain their motivation and continue participating in the relationship when they doubted the mentee was benefitting from the relationship. Caseworkers also acted as resource-persons to mentors, helping them redefine roles and boundaries after changes have occurred in participants' lives. They provided objective feedback about remaining culturally sensitive and guided mentors through sensitive topics. Mentors additionally appreciated the activities that were organised. Their appreciation of organisational support echoes best practices that recommend mentoring programmes provide ongoing support for and supervision of youth-mentoring relationships and support mentors by organising enjoyable and structured activities (Miller, 2007).

Parents equally appreciated the organisational support, and particularly valued the relationships they had with their caseworkers. They felt the caseworkers actively listened and cared about them, and that caseworker professionalism throughout the match instills confidence, quells doubts, and shows parents real-life examples of appropriately respecting boundaries. Parents additionally appreciated the parenting groups that were offered by the organisation. The description of the organisational support given to parents in this study varied somewhat from program best practices, in what appears to be a positive way. Although parents were aware of

the importance of not actively engaging themselves in the mentoring processes, existing recommendations do not take into account the need for parents to be supported through certain parental processes that occur in parallel. Parents in this study explicitly explained that they were able to better support the mentoring relationship when they themselves felt supported by caseworkers at the times when they felt vulnerable within the relationship. However, the clear support cherished by parents in this study is not reflected in BBBS programme best practices at this point in time.

Theme 1.9: Challenges. The challenges cited by children, mentors, and parents vary considerably. The three groups do not have one common challenge, though one child and some mentors both agreed that the mentor's romantic partner may negatively impact the mentoring relationship, and subgroups of mentors and parents agreed that not knowing the impact of the relationship on the other prevents them from participating without reservation.

Parents did not comment on the possible challenges the mentor's romantic partner may bring to the mentoring relationship, but rather focused on the positive aspects associated with their children being exposed to a healthy couple relationship. That the parents viewed the mentors and their partners as role-model couples indicates that parents may idealise these romantic relationships. Mentors, on the other hand, were very aware of the complexities that may arise in their own romantic relationship as a result of their partner's negative feelings, such as jealousy, toward the protégé. In this study, none of the mentors experienced such a challenge, but did imagine that this may occur in other mentoring relationships. Conversely, they pointed out that their romantic partner's supportive stance was crucial to the success of the mentoring relationship. Similarly, the one child who spoke about this theme imagined that some children could be jealous of the romantic partner or feel rejected if the mentor decided to have children.

This challenge has not been addressed in past research, though it lends support for the creation of an extended version of Keller's (2005b) systemic model that takes into account the mediating and moderating contexts of each participant.

The challenge that mentors and parents shared relates to not knowing the impact of the mentoring relationship on the other. This has not been addressed by past mentoring literature; however, it is clearly an important point because parents and mentors are better able to participate without feeling guilty once they know the other has experienced benefits as a result of the relationship. As such, they both perceive that there is reciprocal benefit to the relationship, with both giving and taking in different ways.

Respecting diversity has been addressed in past studies by both mentors (Spencer, 2007b) and parents (Spencer et al., 2011) that showed the difficulty of bridging cultural and socioeconomic differences. In the present study, only mentors express challenges associated with diversity, although they simultaneously sought to respect these differences so as not to create conflict with the parents and children. These mentors understood a perspective other than their own, as opposed to those who participated in failed mentor relationships and interpreted parental behaviour in a negative light (Spencer, 2007b). It is perhaps because mentors in this study were aware of cultural differences and strove to understand the other that parents did not report diversity as a challenge.

An additional challenge revealed by mentors was their fear of being rejected by the mentee during adolescence. Although fear of abandonment has been documented in children (Ahrens et al., 2011), fear of rejection in mentors is new to the literature. A possible explanation is that mentors were motivated to participate in order to fulfill their desire to have a relationship with a child, hence were more vulnerable to fear this possibility.

An addition to the literature was the unique challenge facing parents and children from families with multiple siblings waiting for a mentor. The difficulty was supporting the unmatched child's grief while being happy for the child who had been matched. The impact of the match on parents and siblings provides another example of the far-reaching repercussions of adding a person to an existing system.

Objective Two: A Developmental Perspective

Nine different themes emerged that were common in varying degrees to children, mentors, and parents. Although these themes were common across all participants, several subthemes emerged showing group similarities and differences. It is clear from participants' rich narratives that children, mentors, and parents alike perceived the impact of the relationship on all its participants, though each perspective brought forth different areas of focus.

Theme 2.1: General impressions of match impacts on children over time.

Participants unanimously agreed that the mentoring relationship was positive for the children. Children were happy to have individual attention and participate in new activities while getting to know their mentors. Mentors and parents also felt that the mentoring relationship was positive for the children, though each presented a different perspective. Mentors saw their presence as being temporally positive, that is, children benefited from the relationship during the time period that they were together. Mentors also felt that they were one of many elements among others that can positively or negatively influence the children, and as such, help to offset any difficulties that may arise. Parents on the other hand, viewed the relationship in a long-term perspective. They hoped that, over time, the positive impacts of the mentoring relationship on their children will be invaluable.

Theme 2.2: Cognitive-academics and career

Education was highly valued by all of the mentors. Because of this, they were genuinely invested in their mentees' education and wanted to instill this value in them as well. Although the value they placed on education was not a reason specified by any of the mentors regarding their initial motivations to volunteer in the first place, their desire to contribute to society did include sharing important values, such as education, with a protégé. Because education was so important, it was also the source of one of the main challenges for mentors who are matched with children whose parents did not value education to the same extent they did. Some tolerated this difference because they saw their mentee's education within the larger context of their lives. Others described being respectful of this difference in value and presented their perspectives at appropriate moments, while others admitted to overstepping their boundaries. This challenge in dealing with differing educational values was echoed by other mentors in successful mentoring relationships, who tended to use the first two strategies (Spencer, 2006).

Regardless of the intervention, none of the parents was displeased with the mentors' role in his or her child's education. Perhaps this is because all participants in the study commented positively about the impact of the mentoring relationship on the children's learning, education, or career. Particularly striking was the positive perceived impact that mentors had on children who were extremely at risk and vulnerable to dropping out due to family context and extreme behaviour problems. Although the children were pleased with their progress, it was the parents who especially noted the change in their children. In some cases, this progress was echoed by teachers' and school personnel comments as reported by mentors during their meetings with them. These findings provide support for past research indicating that academically at-risk or delinquent children benefit the most as a result of being mentored (Dubois et al., 2011). The present research adds to these findings with the inclusion of parents, who are especially pleased

with their children's improvements given that no parent had joined the programme in order to mitigate academic difficulties. As such, parents were often overjoyed and regarded the mentors in wonder, almost viewing them as heroes for their children. Although all parents spoke about the positive perceived impacts on education, interestingly, none of them cited education as a motivating reason to continue the relationship.

Theme 2.3: Social-emotional development. All participants commented on various subthemes within the broader context of social-emotional development. The majority of children, mentors, and parents spoke about the positive perceived impact of the mentoring relationship on the youths' peer relationships, although each group addressed the issue from a unique angle. Both children and parents reported similar gains. Children reported having more friends, feeling less isolated, and having better quality relationships with peers, whereas parents saw their children more at ease in social situations and in conflict resolution. Mentors, however, spoke primarily about guiding the children to develop their social skills through modelling, discussion, and practice. The three groups were united in their differences through their descriptions of the collaborative ways that mentees and mentors came together to promote social competencies, as described by Spencer (2006) in her study of mentoring processes.

Subgroups of children, mentors, and parents also felt that children gained an expanded notion of family. These mentors recognised treating their protégés like adopted members of their own families and, in turn, the children felt they gained an extended family. Their mothers were especially pleased with this because, through their mentors, their children experienced what they were unable to give them—interactions with healthy and intact families.

Children, mentors, and parents also commented on a perceived increase in self-confidence in protégés. The combination of perspectives from the three groups gave a more

complete understanding of the changes and processes that impact self-confidence. Although a majority of children felt more self-confident, they had difficulty explaining how and why. Mentors observed the changes more specifically through the children's expressions of self-worth and increased willingness to display vulnerability. Parents provided an explanation: They believed their children's self-confidence was reinforced over time by consistently feeling valued by, and important to, their mentors.

Mentors strove to offer the children a safe space to express emotions. Children confirmed and appreciated this effort, expressing that they valued the opportunity to share difficult feelings and topics with their mentors. The importance of a supportive emotional space aligns with Spencer's (2007a) emphasis on the importance of emotional closeness in male youth mentoring relationships. Similarly, many mentors observed that children used the safe space to speak about their absent parent and come to terms with the loss. On the whole, parents did not comment on the space given to express and self-regulate emotions, perhaps reflective of the fact that they were not privy to the intimacy within the child-mentor relationship.

Mentors additionally addressed the therapeutic role the relationship played in helping the children overcome their fear of abandonment, created when they were abandoned by their fathers. Mentors recalled how the children expressed this fear one year or more into the relationship, well after the mentors thought their commitment to the relationship was obvious. This lengthy healing process consequently raises the question of best practices regarding relationship duration. Presently, best practices for mentoring relationships are a minimum six months (Miller, 2007), based on research that showed that at least six months of meetings were necessary to establish positive impacts (Sipe, 1996). However, mentor reports in the present study indicate that some mentees remain clearly vulnerable to abandonment well into the first

year of the relationship. Regardless of the length of the relationship, it is realistic to assume that a perceived abandonment by the mentor after the child becomes attached could increase his or her vulnerability to adversity.

Theme 2.4: Identity development. Some children, especially the younger ones, had difficulty grasping the concept of identity. More than half of the children, however, felt that the presence of their mentors helped to either add positive elements or qualities to their identities, such as “athlete” or “generous.” Others explained that their mentors created a suitable space for them to shed delinquent identities while they were together. Especially stunning was a youth who, in his everyday life, identified himself as an adolescent who had gone through the criminal justice system, but when he was with his mentor, described himself as having a “correct” identity. This adolescent went on to explain that he did not want to be in a group home when he turned 16 years old, and rather wished to be like his mentor when he was older. The descriptions provided by children of how their identity development was influenced by their mentors provides support for the notion that mentors may help to expand and define protégé’s ideas of who they are, what they would like to become, and what they fear becoming (Rhodes et al., 2011). Thus, protégé’s conceptions of their current identities shifted and expanded by observing and interacting with their mentors, and comparing them to other adults they have known.

Parents and mentors both perceived that the mentoring relationship had a generally positive effect on identity development in children. A handful of participants in each group felt that the children gained in self-awareness as a result of exploring their likes and dislikes, and being exposed to new experiences with their mentors. Indeed, participation in new activities can promote identity development by providing experiences on which children can draw to construct their sense of self (Waterman, 1982).

The vast majority of parents and mentors felt that the mentoring relationship had an impact on gender identity development in children. Many mothers explained that one of the main reasons they had joined the program was because of the absence of a male role model in their son's lives. Thus, they were pleased when, early in to the relationship, they noticed their sons acting more "boyish" after coming home from their activities with their male mentors. Similarly, many male mentors recalled that their protégés lacked certain qualities that they associated with being a boy, and could sense the absence of a male role model in their lives. For instance, they recalled the boys crying easily, exhibiting effeminate gestures, and being overly cautious. Mentors took an active role in participating in stereotypical male activities with their mentees and were motivated to continue doing so as the boys gave very positive feedback. At the time of the interviews, mentors and parents felt their boys had become much more confident in their masculinity. Many mentors also perceived that their protégés identified with them, often emulating their gestures and expressions, and becoming interested in mentors' interests. All in all, the mentoring relationship provided children with a same-sex role model that had been lacking because they were isolated from their extended families or communities. The changes perceived by mentors and parents support the notion that same-sex role models have a major role in learning gender-typed behaviour (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Theme 2.5: Behaviour. The vast majority of children perceived that they had more prosocial and less delinquent behaviour as a result of being matched. Children who identified themselves as being angry and aggressive prior to meeting their mentors reported a decline in aggressive and violent behaviours and they directly attributed this to the mentoring relationship. They explained that their mentors made them feel happier and less angry and, as a result, had become less withdrawn. They further explained that they felt comfortable talking to their

mentors about sensitive topics and that mentors gave them advice on how to manage their outbursts. When interviewed, these children felt they had fewer problems than when they were first matched, and were better able to manage their negative feelings and the outbursts that followed. Consistent with Rhodes's (2005) model of youth mentoring, the positive changes in protégé behaviour seems to be a result of the social-emotional, cognitive, and identity processes that are assumed to work in concert over time. Interestingly, several mentors felt that their presence had helped to delay the onset of potential negative behaviour that would eventually arise, echoing exactly the findings of the BBBS of America study, in which the mentoring relationship slowed down, but did not prevent, the negative trend of outcomes such as drug and alcohol use initiation (Grossman & Tierney, 1998).

All the mentors supported what the children reported. In their descriptions of interactions, mentors seemed to consistently provide firm yet understanding limits with their protégés. A major part of their philosophy regarding any inappropriate behaviour they witnessed was to immediately discuss the behaviour in a nonjudgmental way. They did their best to give information and feedback regarding sensitive topics, such as drug use, violence, and shoplifting, similarly to what Jordan (2001) described as "therapeutic authenticity," in which a therapist provides feedback based on "the development of an understanding of the patient, a caring about the impact of what we share on the patient, and careful clinical consideration based on our work" (p. 98). Although the mentors were clearly not therapists, the feedback they gave the children took into account the impact of their words and caseworker feedback in striving to respond in what would be the children's best interests.

Parents, especially those whose children described themselves as unhappy and aggressive before the match, supported what children and mentors reported. They observed positive

repercussions in a number of areas, but were especially pleased with the behavioural improvements in school. Additionally, parents believed that the communication between children and their mentors helped to defuse or resolve ongoing problems, and helped to delay the onset of any potential negative behaviour that would arise, thus supporting mentor reports of interventions and perceptions.

Theme 2.6: Exposure to new life experiences, skills, and values. The new life experiences, skills, and values that were mentioned by children, mentors, and parents, may also be viewed, like Behaviour (Theme 2.5), as positive perceived outcomes of the social-emotional, cognitive, and identity domains that are thought to be nurtured in the mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2005). Virtually all children, mentors, and parents made positive references to the fact that protégés had been exposed to new life experiences, skills, and values. Although they all agreed on the outcomes, each group focussed on the issue from a different perspective, providing in a sense a glimpse of their priorities and motivations in the relationship. Whereas children were happy to participate in new activities, improve their social skills, and learn about diversity, and whereas mentors focussed on teaching aspects of “savoir-vivre” and life skills that they valued, parents emphasised the value of being exposed to resources that a mentor could provide that were out of the parents’ reach. It was most often as they recalled these experiences that mentors described using a prescriptive mentoring style. Over a broad range of examples, such as knowing how to shake hands, not littering, respecting diversity, saying “thank you,” and trying new foods, mentors explained how they explicitly taught, role played, and imparted values that were dear to them.

Theme 2.7: Impacts on mentors. Mentors named numerous perceived impacts that they had noticed since the beginning of the relationship. The majority of existing literature that

includes mentor perspectives has focused more specifically on mentor characteristics (Rhodes et al., 2011), processes in the relationship (Spencer, 2006), or mediating and moderating variables that affect relationship quality and outcomes (e.g., Martin & Sifers, 2012). However, little research has focussed on the impacts of the relationship on mentors, and how the relationship has influenced their lives. In addition to supporting previous findings concerning the impacts of the mentoring relationship on the mentor, the present findings addressed additional perceived impacts that may also serve as ongoing motivators or challenges to the relationship.

All mentors had positive feelings about the relationship and viewed it as something good for them. They enjoyed meeting with the children, having fun, and feeling pride in making a positive contribution to society. These positive feelings and sense of accomplishment align with prior research (Dondero, 1997; Philip & Hendry, 2000). Mentors also revealed several other perceived impacts, such as discovering within themselves a deep sense of responsibility and commitment, and a desire to have or connect with children. When combined, these impacts gave mentors an added sense of meaning to their lives. Previous studies have found that mentoring relationships retrospectively reinforce meaning in the lives of mentors by enabling them to reconcile with their past (Larkin et al., 2005; Philip & Hendry, 2000). A distinguishing feature in the present study, however, is that mentors had a forward-looking perspective regarding the relationship impacts. Based on what they had learned and the values that had been reinforced by the relationship, mentors made choices in their own lives that would last over a lifetime, such as refocusing their career or having children.

Theme 2.8: Impacts on parents. Little research has explored the perceived impacts of the mentoring relationship on parents. However, the present research described a number of impacts as a result of parental involvement in the mentoring relationship. These impacts have

led to changes in their day-to-day functioning, as well as on their general sense of well-being.

An aspect that all parents agreed on was that they had more time for themselves. Although parents emphasised that this was not the reason they joined the program—and insisted that it was not a primary motivating factor to continue participating—they all expressed that an immediate positive impact was to have a regularly scheduled block of time for themselves. Most parents seem to have gone through a similar process in using this newly found time. At first, they were not able to use the time effectively because they worried about their children while they were gone. After a routine had been established, however, mothers began to use the time to pause and reflect on their own needs, as well as to care for themselves. As a result, many began to invest in their social networks without simultaneously looking after their children or finding child care. Parents also gained effective parenting skills through the groups offered at Big Brothers Big Sisters. In realising the importance in investing in their own needs, some mothers managed to change certain patterns in their child-parent relationship. The impact of the child-mentor relationship on the parent, which in turn, influenced the child-parent relationship, supports S. F. Hamilton and Hamilton's (2004) conclusion that perhaps having a mentor leads to an increase in supportive social networks for parents, and this in turn may help reduce the pressure on parent-child relationships. The results clearly call attention to the interdependent network of relationships within which the mentoring relationship is situated (Keller, 2005b). Interestingly, although parents did not gain a sense of meaning in their lives as did the mentors in this study, both had a forward-looking view of the process, in the sense that the changes they made as a result of the relationship could have life-lasting results.

Another perceived impact on which all mothers commented seems to have been therapeutic in nature. Although some were socially isolated and others not, all mothers

appreciated the additional sense of security they gained in knowing they had specific support for their children that they did not have before the match. Mentors filled, in part, a role that the children's fathers would normally have taken. As such, mothers faced the unexpected impacts of interacting with a parental-like figure in their children's lives: the loss of their exclusive role, the challenges of "co-parenting" with another adult, and learning to trust another adult with their children. Even in the midst of the challenging processes these mothers described, all reported an increased sense of well-being that arose as a result of the mentoring relationship. Perhaps what these mothers described is similar to the increases in psychological wellness described by mothers of mentored children in Campbell and O'Neill (1985).

Theme 2.9: Impacts on others. The exploration of the perceived impact of the relationship on other people was not included in Keller's (2005b) systemic model, but it offers an interesting view of the far-reaching impacts of the youth mentoring relationship. Many participants described a multitude of people in their own social networks who were influenced by the mentoring relationship—mentors' families, romantic partners, and friends were primarily named, but others included a partner's boss, teachers, friends, classmates, neighbours, and colleagues. The general view of participants was that they were pleasantly surprised by the network of people who were brought together as a result of the mentoring relationship, and who would otherwise not have had a reason to connect. The experiences of all participants as well as those of others outside of the mentoring system reflect an increase in social capital (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004), a resource derived from people's social ties which, in turn, may act as a protective factor in promoting a general sense of well-being.

Original Contribution and Advancement of Knowledge to the Literature

The objectives of this qualitative research were twofold. The first objective was to

qualitatively explore the relationship processes in mentoring relationships with children, mentors, and parents participating in a formal, traditional mentoring programme, using a systemic framework (Keller, 2005b). The second objective, based on a developmental framework (Rhodes, 2005), was to explore the perceived impacts of participating in the mentoring relationship on children from multiple perspectives, namely, children, mentors, and parents. Narratives from participants in this study indicate that both models are interdependent, in that impacts in children (as well as mentors and parents) influence, and are influenced by, the quality of the relationships between participants. Thus, mentoring relationships can provoke positive, life-altering changes in children, mentors, and parents, when placed in the context of a healthy system in which participants work in concert with each other, collaborating for each other's best interests. Conversely, positive impacts on participants lead them to perceive the relationships as positive and motivate them to continue participating within the organisational constructs. Participants together described a positive spiral of impacts that begins with the introduction of the mentor to the child-parent dyad, all set within the system that holds all three together. Although perceived as highly positive, these participants also warned of the possibility of negative impacts if participants do not work in the best interests of the children, and do not collaborate in order to form positive relationships with each other. In combining both developmental and systemic theoretical models throughout this research, a holistic view of mentoring relationships was achieved. Furthermore, triangulation of perceived outcomes in children, mentors, and parents was achieved by examining child, mentor, and parent perspectives. The use of matched triads to explore both impacts and relationships in the mentoring process yielded important insights and indicated that multiple perspectives greatly contribute to our understanding of the field. The widened view of the perceived impacts

obtained also allowed for a greater nuance in the understanding of the pre-existing literature, as well as generated new and sometimes contradictory hypotheses—in the cases where mentee, mentor, and parent perspectives differed. The use of two complementary theoretical models and the triangulation of sources contributed in a unique way to the current literature.

Furthermore, as a result of this research, the interdependence of both developmental and systemic models became apparent. This suggests that the current theoretical models should be expanded upon by including each other's main elements in order to achieve a more comprehensive model. Because participants in this study were motivated to remain in the mentoring programme because of the relationships, Keller's (2005b) systemic framework appears to be somewhat more important with regard to relationship development and maintenance. Therefore, the systemic model could perhaps be placed at the base of an expanded model, and the processes and impacts proposed by Rhodes' (2005) developmental model could be shown to arise as a product of the relationships within the system. Furthermore, a theoretical model could also be expanded to take into account development over time, as the current models remain anchored in the formal youth mentoring tradition.

Limitations of the Study

Given the qualitative nature of this study, the sample size of was limited to 12 triads. Therefore, although following the recommendations of sample size for multiple case-studies of selecting four to 15 cases (Stake, 2006), results cannot be widely extrapolated, limiting the generalisability of the data. However, consistent with the strengths of qualitative designs, the goal was to understand the processes that occur within functioning mentoring triads from the perspective of all the participants together as well as individually.

The triads were selected from one specific, community-based mentoring program. The

participants, goals, and programme practices at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal differ from many other mentoring programmes that exist (e.g., frequency of contact), both formally and nonformally in the community. Furthermore, the data from these interviews provide a one-time, snapshot of these relationships and a retrospective one-time account. Ideally, studies of this nature would be longitudinal, following triads from match through termination, thereby allowing researchers to more closely examine how relationship processes and individual impacts change over time. The present study does highlight variables that a longitudinal study might especially attend to.

Because the caseworker is an important and valued presence within the systemic context, further research should include a fourth perspective, namely, caseworker reports. Not only would this complete the system in which the relationships exist, caseworkers would also add a potentially more objective view of the child-mentor-parent relationship, and may hold important clues as to why the dynamics of the relationships are as they are.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Applications of this Research

Aside from the theoretical implications of this study, important practical and clinical considerations arose that could translate into recommendations for research and policy. This knowledge could be used to make adjustments in existing programs which, in turn, could have immediate and practical benefits for youth. Mentors are shaped by contact with the child and parent, and these experiences may affect the relationships. Furthermore, parents of mentees are constantly, albeit indirectly, involved in the evolution of the mentor-protégé relationship. Knowing how both mentors and parents are affected by this relationship and how these effects differentially mediate child outcomes will allow mentoring professionals to improve program practices and services by being aware of which themes may be particularly salient for discussion.

These practical implications, while generalisable to all types of youth-mentoring programs, are especially important for those serving at-risk youth because they are most vulnerable to the adverse consequences of a failed mentoring relationship (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002).

Results of the study also raised awareness to the needs of members of each group. Although parents receive specific support via parenting groups that are offered, mentors would likely benefit from an informal support group that would allow them to reflect on their feelings and experiences with regard to the mentoring relationship. The salient themes that arose from this research could also be included in introductory workshops for all participants in order to better prepare them to take on their specific roles of mentee, mentor, or parent of a mentee. Equipped with the knowledge of how and why some participants think, feel, and behave in certain ways may allow other participants to better understand and empathise, which in turn, may ease friction in some relationships.

Although not often a point of focus in mentoring research, the narratives of children and parents provide a sense of the therapeutic nature of the mentoring relationship. Many participants had previously experienced failed relationships with partners or fathers, and the positive relational experiences with the mentors challenged the views they held. The process was, in a sense, corrective in nature, allowing participants to consider the possibility that healthy relationships with other adults and father figures are conceivable. Armed with this information, caseworkers could more effectively recognise and respond with their own “therapeutic authenticity” (Jordan, 2001) to relational processes, as well as sensitise participants to the relational processes.

Generally, this study provides a foundation for a broader scope of research on the effects and processes involved in youth mentoring. Holistic knowledge of how all parties are affected

may allow policy-makers and practitioners to more effectively serve children, mentors, and parents so that each may achieve optimal personal benefit from such relationships. This increased knowledge concerning mentee-mentor-parent (and eventually caseworker) relationships could lead to higher quality, more sustainable mentoring relationships for children and adolescents. This may have the further benefit of facilitating youth becoming increasingly productive members of society, with implications in the academic, social, emotional, and behavioural realms.

Epilogue

Although the dissertation could have come to a close at this point in time, I wanted to leave the last words to the participants—children, mentors, and parents—to reinforce the overall conclusion. In keeping with Cresswell's (2007) suggestion, I have chosen to end this dissertation with closing statements from one triad that reinforces the holistic view that the impacts of the mentoring relationship on individuals exist within a system, and these impacts are influenced by the system within which it exists. Conversely, individual impacts and contexts influence the mentoring system. The following excerpt from this triad exemplifies how both Keller's (2005b) systemic model of youth mentoring and Rhodes's (2005) developmental model of youth mentoring are interdependent. Mentoring relationships can provoke positive, life-altering changes in children, mentors, and parents, when placed in the context of a healthy system in which participants work in concert with each other, collaborating for each other's best interests. All are aware, however, that possible negative impacts may arise if participants do not work toward the best interests of the child and do not collaborate in order to form positive relationships with each other. The following excerpts come from Triad 8. This same triad was used to exemplify the individual and systemic components of the mentoring relationship at the beginning of the discussion in Chapter 4. Child 8 concluded:

Interviewer: Qu'est-ce que Mentor 8 représente pour toi? Quelle place il prend dans ta vie?

Child 8: Il est très important. C'est comme un père. Il est, comme, égal à mon oncle. Mais, je sais qu'on garde contact jusqu'à 18 ans, mais c'est sûr que je vais garder contact avec lui. Il est très important pour moi. Je le vois quasiment chaque fin de semaine. . . .

Interviewer: Puis si tu voulais me résumer en quelques mots ta relation avec lui, qu'est-

ce que ça représente?

Child 8: Chaque fois que je vais le voir, j'ai hâte. S'il est, comme, trois minutes en retard, je suis toujours stressé, parce que j'ai peur qu'il ne soit pas là. Mais chaque fois qu'il arrive, je suis toujours content, j'ai toujours le grand sourire. J'aime ça. Je m'amuse quand je suis avec lui.

Interviewer: Donc ça te rend de bonne humeur, ça te rend heureux.

Child 8: Et puis, toutes les autres affaires.

Mentor 8 concluded:

On regarde l'évolution. . . . C'est plus sa mère qui pourrait voir les subtilités du changement. Pis probablement qu'en partie, c'est grâce à moi, mais c'est aussi parce qu'il vieillit, parce qu'il a changé d'école, parce qu'il a d'autres amis. C'est un tout. Comme je te disais tantôt, je le vois comme ça: C'est un tout, je suis un des éléments positifs dans sa vie—comme sa mère, sa nouvelle école, ses nouveaux amis, ses nouveaux profs. Le positif. Je fais partie de ça, de ces éléments nouveaux depuis trois ans. Je fais partie de ça au même titre que [pause]. Si je serais plus [geste] pis que sa mère parlerait tout le temps contre moi [pause] peut-être que le négatif serait plus fort que le positif que j'apporterais au bout du compte. C'est comme ça pour moi aussi. C'est un plus dans ma vie. Pis tu sais, ça n'a pas apporté de [négatif]. Si ma blonde, à un moment donné, me disait: "On sait bien, tu es tout le temps avec Child 8," le négatif serait peut-être plus fort que le positif qu'il m'apporte. Au bout du compte, je ne serais pas meilleur pour lui—ce qui n'est pas le cas.

Parent 8 concluded:

En résumé, c'est sûr que c'est positif. En tout cas, je suis pas mal sûre pour Mentor 8

aussi. C'est positif, et pour l'enfant, et le parent—parce que si l'enfant s'en porte mieux, le parent s'en porte mieux et vice-versa. Le parent peut souffler un peu, c'est sûr que l'enfant va s'en ressentir, parce que plus je suis heureuse, plus mon fils est heureux. C'est un cercle qui tourne. Mais il faut que cela marche tout le temps, sinon à un moment donné [pause]. C'est un engrenage et je dirais que cela ne peut pas être négatif. Mais, je sais qu'il y en a autrefois qui ont abusé des enfants. Ça, là [pause]. Je ne peux pas imaginer comment cela peut affecter un enfant.

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