Seedling's Promise: A Mentoring Program for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2011-2012

What is Seedling's Promise?

Seedling's Promise is a school-based mentoring program for children of incarcerated parents. The purpose of the program is two-fold:

- To provide the children with a long-term, positive relationship with a trained adult mentor, in hopes they may be better able to navigate the challenges experienced during this period of family separation; and
- To help the children develop or maintain positive attitudes towards and connections to school, so that they may have a clear understanding of the critical need for education to achieve their long-term goals.

About Program Funding

In 2011-2012, this program operated on funds provided by multiple sources. Austin Independent School District's Department of School Family and Community Education provided a total of $199,500 to support the program. This contribution included local school district and grant dollars. Individual donations in support of Seedling's Promise totaled $184,074. No federal funding was available to support the program in the 2011-2012 school year, as in years past.

Understanding This Report

A variety of quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed for this evaluation. Due to availability, only data for mentees enrolled in Austin ISD were examined in this report. The Seedling mentees (n=418) included in the analyses were listed as active program participants in the spring of 2012. Comparison students (n= 418) were actively enrolled in the same schools with Seedling mentees and were matched based on shared demographic characteristics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize academic and survey outcomes for each group. Contextual analyses were used to summarize themes that emerged from open-ended survey questions.

How large is the program?

After years of steady growth and program stabilization in 2010-2011, Seedling's Promise increased 19% in the 2011-2012 school year (Table 1). The program not only served more children, but provided program support in additional schools. The program was officially offered in 34 designated schools: 26 elementary and 8 middle schools. All were AISD schools with exception of one elementary in Pflugerville ISD. Additionally, children attending 39 "satellite" schools were supported by the program, as mentors chose to continue the mentoring relationship after a child had moved into a school that was not a designated "Seedling" school.

Table 1: In 2011-2012, Seedling Program Growth Increased

School Year	# of Children Served	# of Schools Served	% Increase
2006-07	115	15	
2007-08	178	21	54.8%
2008-09	320	28	79.8%
2009-10	408	26	27.5%
2010-11	369	28	-9.5%
2011-2012	440	34	19.2%

Source: Seedling's Promise program enrollment records, 2006-2012.

Who were the children served in the 2011-2012 school year?

The children were in grades Pre-K through 12th grade (Figures 1-3). Most of them were low-income and minority. Most were Hispanic. Some were English language learners and/or had special education needs. Due to the incarceration of their parent(s), they were often highly mobile and may not have been consistently enrolled in or attending a single school.

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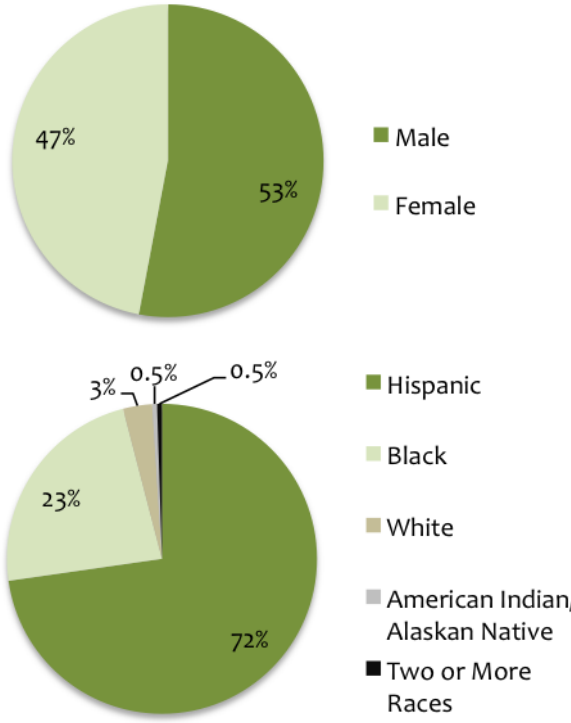
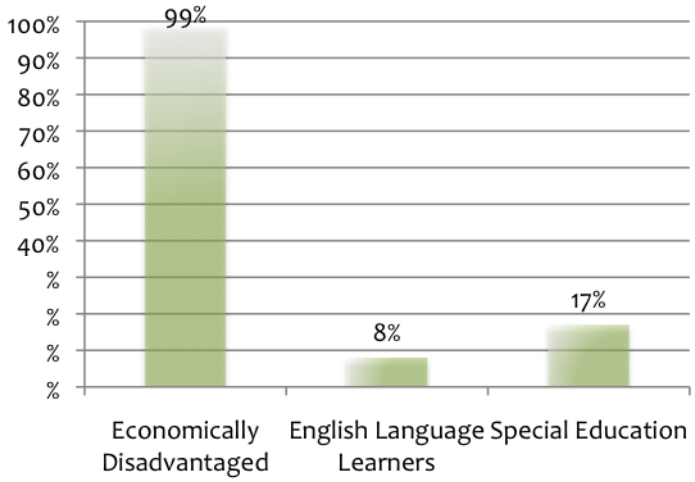
Figures 1-3: Most children served by Seedling's Promise are low income and minority.



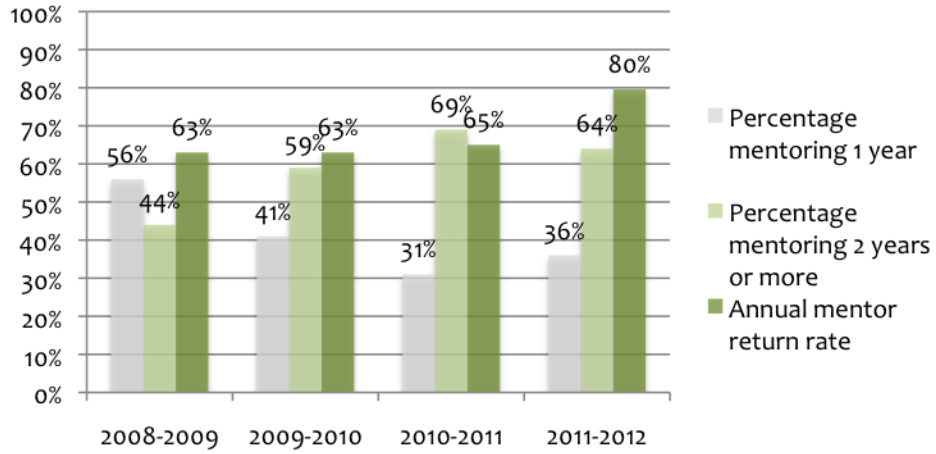


Source. Austin ISD student enrollment records, 2011-12.

How long do Seedling mentoring relationships last?

The increase in the number of children to be served required more mentors to participate in the program. The need for mentors was not a challenge, as the Seedling Foundation had mentors identified and ready to be matched to a child. In 2011-2012, 417 mentors mentored one or more children, compared with a total of 328 mentors who mentored in the prior year. Mentor commitment ranged between one and seven years (Figure 4). Even with 27% more new mentors in 2011, the average commitment of mentors to the program increased from 2 years to 3 years in 2011-2012, well above the national mentor commitment of one year. The percentage of mentors who mentored two years or more significantly increased in 2011-2012 ($p<.05$).

Figure 4: Mentor commitment to the program increased significantly in 2011-2012.



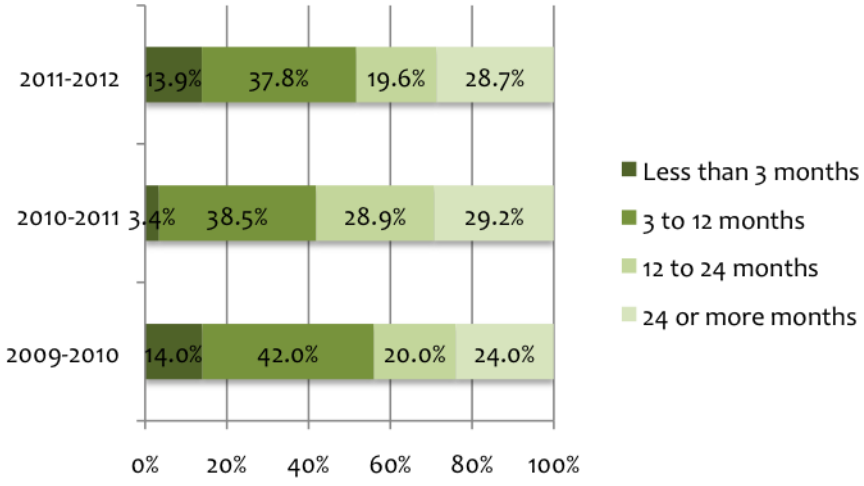
Source. Seedling program records, 2011-12.

Why is this important?

Greater mentor commitment has been associated with positive outcomes, such as mentor and mentee reports of relationship satisfaction and mentoring program effectiveness (Allen & Eby, 2008).

Overall, the average length of a Seedling mentoring relationship was 17 months in both the 2011-2012 and 2010-2011 school years (Figure 5). Approximately 48% of all relationships lasted a year or longer, and 29% of them were over two years old as of May 2012. Of the mentoring relationships that were in place less than three months, 84% were new matches in the spring of 2012.

Figure 5: Most Seedling mentoring relationships last through the school year or longer.



Source. Seedling program records, 2011-12.

Why is this important?

Youth who were in relationships that lasted more than a year reported improvements in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes, while fewer positive outcomes appeared among youth who were in relationships that lasted less than a year (Rhodes, Reddy, Roffman, & Grossman, 2005).

What program practices contribute to effective, long-lasting mentoring relationships?

In the *Elements of Effective Practices for Mentoring, Third Edition (2009)*, eight research-based practices that ensure strong mentoring program operations were described. These effective practices included:

- mentor recruitment;
- mentor screening;
- mentor orientation and training;
- mentor-mentee matching;
- well defined parameters for mentoring sessions;
- ongoing support, supervision, and monitoring of mentoring relationships;
- recognition of participant contributions; and
- closure of ending relationships.

The practices were only effective if the activities were focused on fostering the well-being of each mentee and requiring the program to be driven by the needs and the interests of the children, rather than the expectations of the adults. As a result, programs based on a "developmental" mentoring approach usually lasted longer and were more satisfying for both the mentee and the mentor. Developmental mentoring relationships are characterized by mentors who get to know their mentees well, who are flexible in their expectations of the relationships, and who take cues from their mentees about activities.

In the next section of this report, evaluation results are presented to explore whether there is evidence of effective mentoring practices and promising outcomes for children.

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What do mentors report about program implementation?

Overall, the mentor survey responses were highly positive and consistent with survey results from previous years (Looby; 2009,2010, and 2011). Their responses also provided evidence of effective mentoring program practices. In regards to mentor recruitment and orientation, new mentors were asked to indicate their satisfaction with these processes. Almost all of them indicated high levels of satisfaction.

Table 2. New mentors reported satisfaction with recruitment and orientation processes.

	Extremely satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Sometimes satisfied	Not at all satisfied
New mentor recruitment	72%	27%	1%	0%
New mentor orientation	78%	20%	2%	0%

Source. 2012 Seedling Mentor Survey, June 2012

The 2012 Mentor Survey

To elicit feedback on program implementation and outcomes for the 2011-2012 school year, mentors were asked to complete a short survey. A web-link to the survey was emailed to 413 mentors with verified email addresses in May 2012 and 64% responded. Of those responding, 37% were mentors who just completed their first year in the mentoring program and 67% mentored in previous years. This response rate was determined to be representative of the group at a 95% confidence level.

During the school year, ongoing mentor support and assistance was provided by Seedling Mentor Directors and designated School Contacts. About half of all mentors (51%), new and returning, requested assistance from Seedling Mentor Directors. However, a higher percentage of new mentors (76%) requested assistance from the School Contacts, compared with the returning mentors (69%). Regardless of whether the mentor was new or returning, most mentors who contacted a Seedling Mentor Director and/or a School Contact were satisfied with the support they received.

Table 3. Mentors reported helpful Seedling and school support staff.

	Extremely helpful	Mostly helpful	Sometimes helpful	Not at all helpful
Mentor Director	79%	19%	1%	0%
School Contact	66%	19%	13%	2%

Source. 2012 Seedling Mentor Survey, June 2012

Why is this important?

Herrera et al. (2007), found that mentors who reported higher levels of staff support and helpfulness and receipt of more training (pre-match and ongoing) felt closer to their mentees and were more likely to carry their match over into a subsequent school year than those mentors who received less support. Karcher (2005) similarly found that mentors who reported more contact with school contacts felt more important and viewed their relationships more positively than those mentors who had little staff contact.

Fifteen percent of mentors indicated School Contacts were not always helpful. The reasons for the lower rating were not confirmed. However, in 2011-2012, many of the School Contacts were counselors whose positions had been reduced to half time due to school budget constraints. Thus, they were responsible for completing a full work-load in a shortened workweek and were not always on campus when mentors were visiting. Additional inquiry is suggested, as School Contacts may need more support to increase their helpfulness.

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Mentor training and support was provided throughout the year for all mentors. Thirty-five percent of mentors attended at least one training in 2011-2012, and 41% of those attended 2 or more sessions. Overall, mentors reported the training sessions to be *Extremely* or *Mostly Helpful* and were more confident in their mentoring relationships as a result. Work schedules and weekend obligations were the primary challenges to additional training participation cited by mentors. Almost 50% of mentors who did not attend the Mentor Academy reported they would be more likely to participate in training if sessions were offered in a webinar format.

What do school contacts and teachers say about program implementation?

School contacts were highly supportive and complimentary of the program. They continued to rely on parents and teachers to identify children who were eligible to participate in the program. As children were identified, school contacts continued to report that signed permission slips were often difficult to obtain and families did not want others knowing their circumstances. While school contacts believed the mentors were high quality, they requested that more mentors be Hispanic, African-American, and/or Spanish-speaking.

Table 4. School contacts continued to rate the program highly.

Percentage of school contacts who…	2011	2012
received timely spport from a Mentor Director always or most of the time	100%	100%
reported Mentor Directors extremely or knowledgable of program procedures	100%	96%*
reported Mentor Directors were always or frequently partners in program implementation	100%	96%
rated Mentor Director customer service excellent or good	100%	96%
rated overall quality of Seedling mentors as excellent or good	100%	100%
rated preparation level of the mentors as extremely well prepared or well prepared	100%	100%

Source. Seedling School Contact Surveys, Spring 2011 and 2012.
Notes. * 4% responded *did not know*.

2012 Mentor Training

In addition to the orientation for new mentors, the annual Mentor Academy, and monthly newsletters, monthly training sessions were conducted and included the following topics:

- Transition to Middle School;
- Planting the College Seed;
- Activities to Engage Your Mentee;
- The Impact of Poverty;
- Ethics and Boundaries;
- What the New STAAR Test Means to Your Mentee;
- Dealing with Anti-social Behaviors; and
- Reflections on Mentoring.

"The information that is delivered is very informative and to the point. The training sessions start and end promptly. The speaker moves quickly and keeps us thinking and engages us on group activity. I am very pleased with every training I attend."

Mentor Spring 2012

School Contact & Teacher Surveys

School contacts and teachers were asked to complete short, online surveys. Considering school-level structures and resulting teacher-student relationships, only elementary level teachers were asked to complete a survey for Seedling participants in their homerooms. Seventy-eight percent of the school contacts, and 75% of the teachers responded. Both response rates were representative of the group at a 95% confidence level.

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What do mentors report about their mentoring relationships?

Overall, mentors reported excellent or good relationships with their mentees (Table 5). Returning mentors were slightly more positive in their ratings of their relationships, compared with new mentors. Ninety-one percent of all mentors saw their mentees weekly, compared with 86% in 2010-2011.

Of those who reported seeing their mentees less than once a week, 26% visited with their mentee three times a month, 52% visited with their mentee twice a month, and 21% visited with their mentees once a month or less. The primary circumstances that prevented mentors from seeing their mentees on a weekly basis included ongoing mentor health issues, unavailability of the mentee (e.g., school absenteeism or older student "no shows"), and unexpected work demands.

Table 5. Mentors reported excellent or good relationships with their mentees.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
New mentor	40%	50%	9%	1%
Returning mentor	48%	48%	3%	1%
All Mentors	45%	49%	6%	1%

Source. 2012 Seedling Mentor Survey, June 2012.

Most mentors (77%), new and returning, believed the mentoring relationships were *Extremely/Mostly Helpful* for their mentees (Figure 6). A higher percentage of new mentors (8%) did not know whether the relationships were helpful, compared with only 4% of returning mentors.

Top 3 Mentoring Activities:

- talking/listening (90%)
- eating lunch (81%)
- playing games (63%)

Twenty eight percent of all mentors helped with reading or academic development. A significantly higher percentage of returning mentors (27%) reported they helped mentees solve problems, compared with 15% of new mentors.

Why is this important?

Mentor attendance was a positive predictor for mentee changes in social skills, self-esteem, and self-management (Karcher, 2005). When mentoring relationships are caring and supportive, mentors can challenge negative views that the children may hold of themselves. Enduring mentoring relationships have been linked to significant improvements in children's perceptions of their relationships with their peers, family members, and other adults. (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, and Rhodes; 2011).

Figure 5. Most mentors described positive, meaningful relationships with their mentees.

"I have loved the opportunity to know this sweet little girl. I received beautiful feedback from her teacher a few months back that my mentee had blossomed with confidence both socially & academically since we had been meeting. It's hard to imagine that only 30 minutes per week can truly make a difference, but it does!"

2012 Mentor

"She opens up to me in waves, and I am there for her when she is ready to share things. It is great how after two years we are finally starting to get closer… She told me about how her dog was taken away … I said there is nothing wrong with loving something with your whole heart and then letting it go. It is normal to be sad, and it is normal to fall in love with things. It was a really precious moment."

2012 Mentor

"Whenever I wonder if what I'm doing matters, I just take in the big and genuine smile I get every week or the little hand in mine as we walk back to the classroom…and I know the relationship matters. My hope for next year is to build on this new relationship and take it wherever my mentee wants it to go."

2012 Mentor

Seedling's Promise: A Mentoring Program for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2011-2012

What do school contacts and teachers say about the mentoring relationships?

School contacts were highly supportive and complimentary of the program, with 96% reporting the relationships were *Extemely* or *Mostly Helpful*. All school contacts reported that mentors were high quality, and the relationships were helpful to the children.

> *"The mentees always ask about their mentors and I've seen some positive changes in the mentees--they smile more, have more self esteem, feel special that someone outside of school comes to visit them."*
>
> 2012 School Contact

Teachers also were overwhelmingly positive about the program (Figure 6). They recognized the importance of a positive and stable relationship for children who had an incarcerated parent. Many teachers reported their students experienced positive changes in their classroom engagement, relationships with others, academic achievement, and classroom discipline during the school year. In some cases, the teachers took the time to clarify that limited progress in academic achievement or continuing disciplinary problems were due to other circumstances in the child's life and were not a reflection on the mentoring program. On the spring teacher survey,

> *"They [mentors] mean so much to the kids, to get that level of attention on a individual basis, for some of our kids is a rare but special and much needed thing."*
>
> 2012 School Contact

- 91% said their students looked forward to seeing their mentor weekly,
- 99% recommended their student continue in the program, and
- 98% recommended the program for other children who have incarcerated parents.

Figure 6. In an open-ended survey question, most teachers described positive mentoring relationships between the mentors and the children in their classes.

> *"For this particular child the program was a very positive addition to his week. He became more confident and was able to focus on his work despite the 'stigma' of his parent being in jail. At the beginning of the year he was weepy and withdrawn and I had to take extra care to consider his needs. By the end of the year he was confident, assertive, and a good model for behavior and academics for his peers. I think the program helped him with this self confidence and not carrying the load of his parents issues as his own."*
>
> 2012 Teacher

> *"My student's mentor is amazing. She gives freely of her time again and again. Mentor and mentee have formed an incredibly supportive bond that has had positive effects in all areas of the student's life."*
>
> 2012 Teacher

> *"This program greatly helps students build confidence and self esteem in school, which shows in their academic and personal performance in the school setting and with their peers."*
>
> 2012 Teacher

> *"Please understand that my student has had a rough year at home. His/her family had been homeless, lived in a shelter, and mom had a baby. The survey above is not a reflection of his/her mentor or the program. This child needs a stable relationship in his/her life, and I think this mentoring program is perfect for that. I had a mentor last year for another student, and I still see them together at lunch. I think it is a wonderful program. Thanks for all you do!!"*
>
> 2012 Teacher

What do caregivers say about their child's mentoring relationships?

The most notable findings from the surveys included the following:

- 94.3% of the caregivers reported that their child talked about his/her mentor. This may be considered a positive indication of the development of a mentoring relationship, mentee satisfaction, caregiver's awareness of the satisfaction, and program-related communication occurring between caregiver and child.
- 90.8% of the caregivers *Strongly Agreed* or *Agreed* that having a mentor helped the child believe in his/her abilities, improve self-esteem, and want to set future goals.
- 87.8% of the caregivers *Strongly Agreed* or *Agreed* that the mentoring program helped them and their child to grow in their relationship, and 80.9% of the caregivers *Strongly Agreed* or *Agreed* that the child improved his/her behavior at home and has gotten along better with other family members. These responses indicated positive perception of how the program has affected the children's relationships at home with friends and family, even though the program is school-based.
- 85.4% of the caregivers remembered signing the permission slip or remembered someone in the family signing the permission slip for their child to participate in Seedling's Promise. This outcome may be a positive measure of recognition of the child's involvement in this activity. However, only 44.3% recognized the name Seedling's Promise.
- 59.3% of caregivers met the mentor. While the relationship with the caregiver is not a priority goal of the program, continued work to increase-participation in Caregiver Events has been identified in hopes of facilitating a meeting between the caregiver and the mentor. Programs whose parents, guardians, and other caregivers work with mentors and program staff are more likely to see positive changes in youth and improved program outcomes (USDE, 2005).

Caregiver Surveys

In the fall of 2012, Seedling Foundation staff surveyed the caregivers of children who had a Seedling's Promise mentor. The caregivers were asked to complete a survey if they were responsible for a child who had been in a mentoring relationship for 9 or more months. These criteria were consistent with national survey practices.

From a selected sample of 207 households, 59% of them completed a survey provided at a caregiver event, administered over the phone, or returned by mail. While the response rate might initially appear to be representative of the group at a 95% confidence level, it should be noted that responses were not always confidential (e.g., telephone interview) and reflect the perceptions of those who chose to participate in the survey. However, the results of the caregiver survey offer information to be considered in the evaluation of the program.

Why is this important?

When caregivers are informed about and involved in the mentoring process, they are more likely to have a positive view of their child's mentoring relationship and to be more supportive of the match (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). Additionally, the parent-child relationship can be enhanced. Program staff also may learn more about supporting the mentees when caregivers communicate concerns, questions, and important updates to program staff .

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What do the children say about the program?

Mentee survey results indicated the presence of a child-centered program where mentees are positively engaged and satisfied with their mentors (Table 6). Children who felt their mentor recognized their preferences and interests, who had positive feelings about their mentor, and who were satisfied with the relationship were more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than those who feel their mentors take less interest in them (NREL, 2002).

Table 6. Overall, mentees described their mentoring relationship to be child- centered, emotionally engaging, and highly satisfying.

Qualities of mentoring relationships	Composite score	% with composite score of 3 or higher
Child-centeredness	3.7	95%
Emotional engagement	3.0	73%
Satisfaction	3.8	98%

In regards to program outcomes, mentees reported the following:

- 94% felt good about themselves,
- 92% worked through problems better because of help from their mentors,
- 96% avoided drugs and alcohol,
- 90% made better grades because of help they received from their mentors,
- 93% made better choices about their behavior at school because of help they received from their mentors, and
- 96% looked forward to seeing their mentors.

"She cares about me all the time no matter what. She gives me good advice on my problems."

"She is very understanding, and I know that if I ever need her she is always there for me."

"I like my mentor because she is nice, helpful, fun, and always happy."

2012 Mentees

Mentee Surveys

Consistent with national survey practices, mentees who were 9 years old and who had been in a mentoring relationship for 9 or more months were asked to complete a survey. Eighty-two percent of the mentees completed a survey. The response rate was representative of the group at a 95% confidence level.

The first part of the survey uses questions from the *Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships* Survey, originally developed for the evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies. The questions address youth-centeredness, emotional engagement, and satisfaction in the relationship. The results of this section of the survey are analyzed by question type, as recommended in a technical assistance packet published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NREL). The second part of the survey contains questions designed to describe mentee perceptions of mentoring outcomes.

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Does mentoring result in academic benefits for students?

Attendance

In regards to school attendance, Seedling mentees had similar attendance rates, compared with other students attending the same schools (Table 7). This finding is considered positive, given that the mentees were a highly mobile population and have experienced circumstances that negatively influenced regular school attendance. Further, mentees reported on their surveys that they tried to be in school on the days their mentors were scheduled to visit.

Table 7. Seedling mentee attendance was comparable to students attending the same schools.

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Seedling Mentees	95%	94%	94%	94%
Comparison Group	94%	92%	94%	94%

Sources. AISD student attendance files, 2008-2009 through 2011-2012.
Note. The district attendance rate also was 94% in 2011-2012.

Discipline

In the area of student discipline, teachers reported positive changes in their students' dispositions and behaviors (Figures 7 and 8). In some cases, teachers explained that their students were experiencing great challenges and still had a ways to go; however, they were pleased with the progress that the children were making.

A higher percentage of Seedling mentees had discipline infractions, compared with their peers (Table 8, Figure 9). However, the average and maximum number of offenses decreased from the previous year for Seedling mentees and were not substantively different from the comparison group. While Seedling mentees had more instances of aggression with other students, they generally tended to get into the same type of "trouble" as their peers, with most of their offenses being low-level in nature and not requiring mandatory removal from the instructional setting (Table 9).

Figure 7. As a result of the child's participation in the mentoring program, his/her disposition improved throughout the school year.

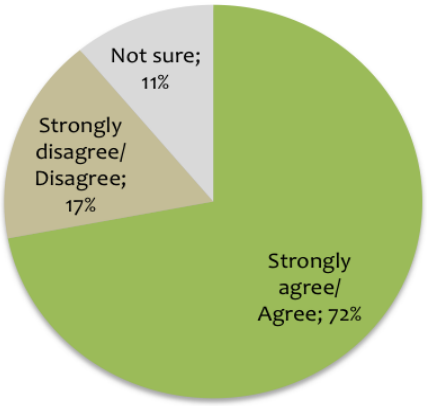


Figure 8. As a result of the child's participation in the mentoring program, his/her classroom behavior improved throughout the school year.

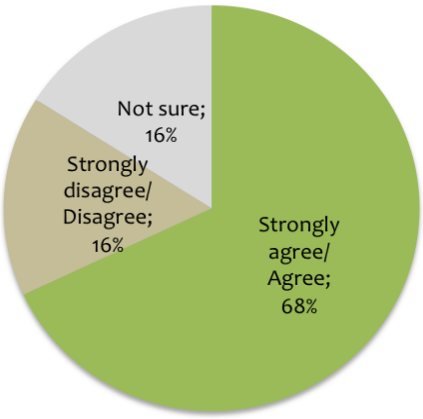


Table 8. A higher percentage of Seedling mentees had discipline infractions, compared with their peers.

	2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Seedling Mentees	Comparison Group	Seedling Mentees	Comparison Group
% of students with ANY disciplinary offense	33.0%	13.0%	35.6%	20.1%
Average # of Offenses	6	5	2.3	1.8
Maximum # of Offenses	42	26	97	103

Source. AISD student discipline files, 2010-2011 through 2011-2012.

Why is this important?

Researchers have found that children with incarcerated parents were more likely to exhibit physical aggression and classroom behavior difficulties than their peers (Trzcinski, Satayanathan, &Ferro, 2002). Overall, the Seedling student disciplinary outcomes were considered positive. While a greater percentage of Seedling students "got in trouble" at school, the types of behaviors were mostly similar, and the overall average number of infractions was not markedly different from their peers.

Figure 9. The distribution of Seedling students by number of disciplinary offenses was similar to that of their peers.

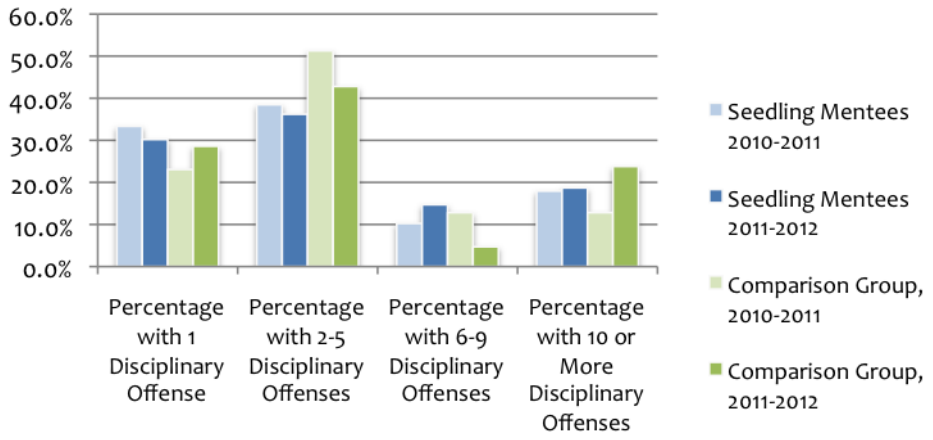


Figure 10. Seedling students had similar types of disciplinary offenses, compared with their peers.

Top 10 Disciplinary Offense Types, 2011-2012

	Seedling Mentees	Comparison Group
1	Disruption	Insubordination
2	Insubordination	Disruption
3	Physical aggression with student	Class cut
4	Rude to student	Rude to adult
5	Class cut	Leave without authority
6	Rude to adult	Physical aggression with student
7	Fighting	Fighting
8	Leave without authority	Threat or harassment of student
9	Physical aggression with adult	Threat or harassment of teacher
10	Violation	Rude to student

Source. AISD student discipline files, 2010-2011 through 2011-2012.

Academic Behaviors

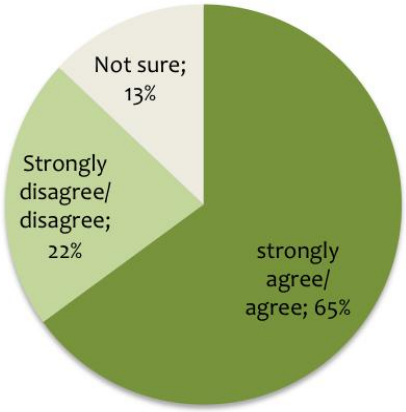
On the teacher survey, most teachers reported the mentoring experience supported their students' academic behaviors (Table 9). Engaging students is important because it enhances the student learning experience and helps students to commit to their own learning. This result may increase the likelihood that students are inclined to actively participate in lifelong learning and enriches the students' lives long term (Chalmers, 2007).

Table 9. Most teachers reported that mentees were academically engaged in their classrooms.

Percentage of teachers who strongly agreed or agreed the mentee in their class…	2011	2012
does the best he/she can	72%	67%
puts for effort on academic activities	72%	71%
participates constructively	75%	77%
is open and receptive to learning	74%	83%

Source. Seedling Teacher Surveys, Spring 2011 and 2012.

Figure 11. As a result of the child's participation in the mentoring program, more than half of teachers reported the child's academic efforts improved.



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

Beginning in spring 2012, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR for third through eighth grades assesses the same subjects that were assessed on TAKS. In high school, end of course exams (EOCs) will be taken in the four core subject areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. This year, the EOCs were taken by 9th grade students, and passing standards have been set for the 9th grade exams.

STAAR/EOC outcomes for Seedling mentees cannot be provided at the time of this report. Results are not yet available for STAAR tests for third through eighth grades. Passing standards for these tests will not be determined until fall 2012. Districts will not have the information until January 2013, according to the Texas Education Agency (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147504081). Results for Seedling student EOC results are available. However, a small number (n=9) of 9th grade Seedling students took the exam and results may be identifiable. Thus, they will not be reported at this time. An addendum to this report containing STAAR outcomes may be provided when results become available early next year.

What does all of this mean?

Consistent with previous years' findings, the program evaluation results revealed a program driven by the needs and the interests of the children, rather than the expectations of the adults. To achieve this goal, Seedling's Promise staff have employed strategies that are strong predictors for positive outcomes for children. These strategies included providing ongoing training and support of mentors (above and beyond initial training and orientation), communicating expectations related to the frequency of mentoring visits, and monitoring the mentoring relationships (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). As a result, this

"developmental" mentoring approach yielded relatively long-term positive mentoring relationships, positive mentee attitudes about their mentoring experiences, attendance and discipline outcomes that were often as good as their peers, and promising outcomes related to academic engagement.

What are the implications of these findings?

The findings from this report indicate that the program staff have prioritized and focused on the appropriate program development and implementation activities and support systems. Consistent with years past, program staff should continue:

- Identifying and securing additional and ongoing funding sources to continue the program's commitment to the children in the community.
- Using research-based practices to develop mentor training and support services and include innovative ways to extend support for mentors.
- Exploring the affective and academic outcomes for the mentees as mentoring relationships continue.

In Summary

1. *Are the children provided with long-lasting and child-focused mentoring relationships?* Yes. Most Seedling mentoring relationships last beyond the national average and exceed the threshold found to be beneficial for the child. Survey results indicate a developmental, child-focused approach to developing and maintaining the relationships.
2. *Do participants like the program and believe it to be valuable?* Yes! Teachers, mentors, and mentees highly rated the program and highly valued their experiences.
3. *Knowing that children who have incarcerated parents often have low academic performance, did Seedling mentees experience positive academic outcomes?* Yes. Most Seedling mentees had attendance rates that were as good or better than their peers. Teachers and mentees reported the mentoring experience had positive influence on academic behaviors in the classroom.
4. *Were Seedling mentees more likely to get in trouble at school?* Yes. On average, more Seedling mentees had at least one discipline infraction. However, on average, they did not have a higher number of offenses, and the types of offenses were generally similar in nature to those of their peers.
5. *Is this a good program?* Yes. The program is well structured and implemented. Results across data sources reveal consistently positive results for the children across program implementation years.

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