

Our Programmes

The essence of the Big Brother Big Sister programme is rooted in the most fundamental human relationships: a caring interaction between two people, one older than the other. Out of this interaction young people develop in ways that will make them more likely to succeed in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Our programmes are delivered in two main settings:

Community-based matches

These are matches made between an adult volunteer Big Brother/Sister and a Little Brother/Sister, with a commitment to meeting at once a week for a year, in a location of their choice within the community. In the first year matches focus on developing a friendship between the Big and the Little as research shows this produces the most effective results.

The community programme forms friendships between an adult volunteer and a young person, who will benefit from extra support. Big Brothers/Big Sisters are carefully screened and receive training before they are matched to a young person. The Big Brother/Big Sister spends 1-2 hours a week with the young person in the community setting, and commits to being matched for one year. Activities are decided on by each match and may include; watching a football match, browsing the shops, playing snooker, going to the cinema, cooking or even just having a coffee and a chat!

"This programme has made me more outgoing and confident. It has made me realise how important it is to make an effort and to be on time. I think this has helped me with getting involved with others." Big Sister

School-based matches

These generally involve older students (in transition or fifth year) as Bigs, mentoring first- year students. Mentoring activities take place in school premises and can therefore be monitored and supported by a member of the school staff dedicated to the programme. SBMs can be effective at improving school retention and academic performance and addressing the issue of bullying in schools.

BBBS is based on the idea that a created relationship between an older and younger person will act to prevent future difficulties and be a support to a young person facing adversity in their lives.

School Programme

BBBS operates a mentoring programme in schools. The aim is to provide additional support to young people who have made the transition from primary to secondary education. The programme matches first year students with fourth/fifth/sixth year students. They meet once a week, for a school year and participate in games, sports, making lunch etc. in the school.

Recruitment, training and supervision techniques are provided by BBBS for the schools programme. A designated teacher facilitates the programme in each school and links in with the local BBBS Officer. The schools programme is currently operating in over 50 schools throughout Ireland.

Pre-requisites for the Programme

1. The program is voluntary for all parties involved
2. The program is professionally managed
3. All volunteers are screened for their appropriateness, ability and safety
4. All volunteers are provided with an orientation and training about mentoring and child development
5. The needs of all children and youth are assessed before being matched
6. All 'matched' relationships are supervised by a professional
7. Matches are professionally closed and all parties informed in writing
8. A board of volunteers provides connections with the community, monitors the service delivery system and assists in fund raising
9. Policies and procedures for service delivery are developed that adhere to international standards and reflect the community in which the programme is to be carried out
10. Steps are taken to measure the impact of the mentoring relationship and to ensure quality and safety.

UNESCO/NUI Galway Research carried out on the BBBS Programmes

Report 1: [Randomised Controlled Trial and Implementation Report](#) [1]

Report 2: [Qualitative Evidence](#) [2]

Report 3: [Summary Report](#) [3]

Report 4: [School Based Mentoring Programme Evaluation](#) [4]

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Links

[1] <http://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/BBBS%20Report%201.pdf>

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