



# The Mentoring Effect: Francophone Youth



---

## The Mentoring Effect: Francophone Youth

Supportive relationships with adults, including mentoring relationships, foster young people's positive development and can provide significant psychological protection in the face of adverse life circumstances.<sup>1</sup> In the winter of 2020, Mentor Canada surveyed 2,838 young adults in Canada to learn more about how mentors supported them growing up. Of these young adults, 12% were francophone and 22% were located in Quebec.<sup>2</sup>

Among francophone respondents, 43% reported having faced at least 2 risk factors during their teen years compared to 39% of all respondents. Mentoring relationships can play an important role in offsetting some of the adverse life circumstances newcomer youth face. However, the proportion of francophone youth and Quebecer youth who did not have access to mentorship was higher than that of all respondents. Indeed, 51% of francophone youth and 47% of Quebecer youth did not have a single mentor between the ages of 6 and 18 compared to 44% of all survey respondents.

# What is the effect of mentoring for francophone youth?

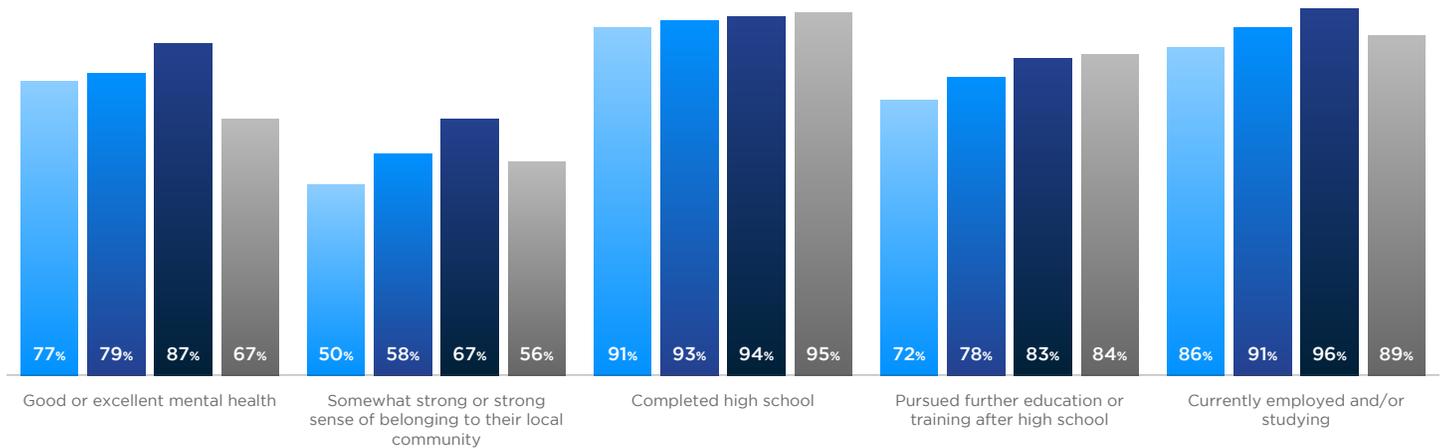
The Mapping the Mentoring Gap study determined that survey respondents who were mentored growing up were statistically more likely to report several positive outcomes as young adults compared to their peers who did not have access to a mentor.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly half of francophone youth (49%) and Quebecer youth (53%) had at least one mentor during their childhood or adolescence. The majority of them formed natural or informal mentoring relationships with adults in their surroundings. A smaller proportion of these young people participated in a structured mentoring program and had a formal mentor: approximately 16% of francophone youth and 14% of Quebecer youth.

Francophone young adults who were mentored growing up reported positive outcomes related to mental health, education, and employment in slightly higher proportions than their peers who were not mentored. This gap in outcomes between mentored and unmentored francophone youth is even greater for those who participated in a formal mentoring program. However, mentored francophone youth report having completed high school in slightly lower proportions than all respondents who were mentored.

## Francophone youth outcomes based on access to mentorship

- Unmentored francophone youth
- Mentored francophone youth (informal and formal mentoring)
- Formally mentored francophone youth
- All mentored youth (informal and formal mentoring)



---

# How do mentors support francophone teens?

A slightly lower percentage of francophone respondents had at least one mentor during their teen years compared to all respondents: 33% compared to 41%. Furthermore, while 22% of all respondents reported that their most meaningful mentor during their teen years was a teacher or member of school staff, only 13% of francophone youth indicated that their most meaningful mentor came from a school setting.

Nevertheless, mentors supported several areas of francophone teens' lives and development in meaningful ways. Francophone youth's most meaningful mentors helped them manage interpersonal relationships, build connections, acquire essential skills, and navigate the transition to adulthood.

## Relationships

Mentors offered socioemotional support, including spending time talking with their mentees about their interpersonal relationships:

- 48% discussed their relationships with their parents or guardians with their most meaningful mentor;
- 46% talked about their relationships with their friends with their mentor.

## Connections

Mentors helped young people create important connections and links with their culture, their community, and with additional services to support them:

- 46% took part in community events or offerings with their most meaningful mentor;
- 42% helped them connect to services and supports;
- 41% helped them connect to their culture.

The proportion of francophone respondents who indicated that their mentor helped them build these connections is higher than that of all respondents.

## Academic journey

Some mentors supported their mentee's academic achievements:

- 46% acquired academic or school-related skills with their most meaningful mentor's help;
- 23% stayed or returned to school with their mentor's support;
- 15% adapted to a new school with their mentor's help.

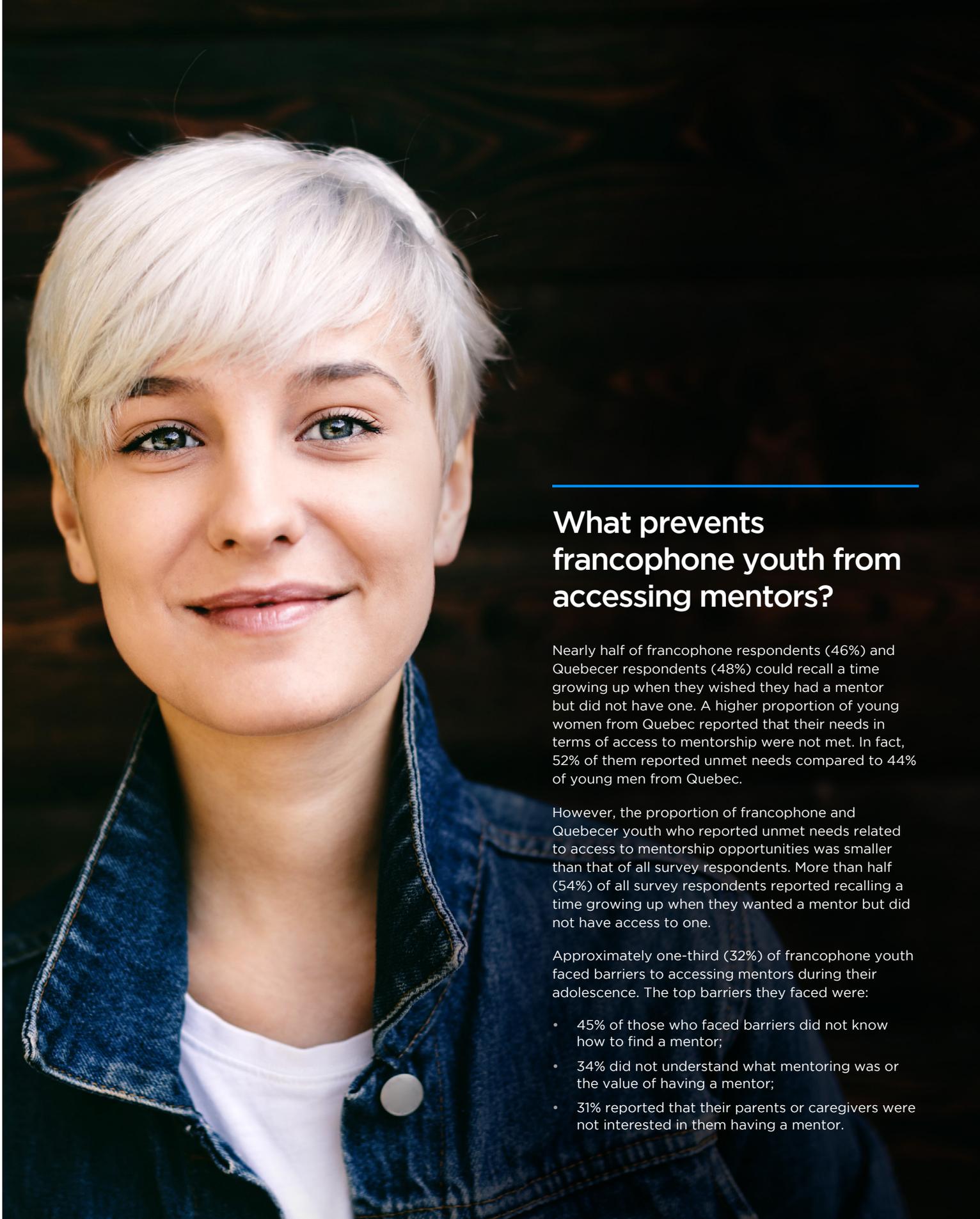
## Professional journey

Francophone youth's most meaningful mentor also frequently supported their career pathways:

- 42% acquired job-related skills with their mentor's help;
- 28% reported that their mentor helped them shape their career aspirations;
- 24% got their first job with their mentor's help.

Francophone respondents who had a mentor during their adolescence reported that their most meaningful mentor had a significant influence on several areas linked to their mental health and resilience:

- 70% reported that their mentors influenced their confidence in their abilities;
- 64% their hope and optimism for the future;
- 63% their sense of pride and self-esteem.



---

## What prevents francophone youth from accessing mentors?

Nearly half of francophone respondents (46%) and Quebecer respondents (48%) could recall a time growing up when they wished they had a mentor but did not have one. A higher proportion of young women from Quebec reported that their needs in terms of access to mentorship were not met. In fact, 52% of them reported unmet needs compared to 44% of young men from Quebec.

However, the proportion of francophone and Quebecer youth who reported unmet needs related to access to mentorship opportunities was smaller than that of all survey respondents. More than half (54%) of all survey respondents reported recalling a time growing up when they wanted a mentor but did not have access to one.

Approximately one-third (32%) of francophone youth faced barriers to accessing mentors during their adolescence. The top barriers they faced were:

- 45% of those who faced barriers did not know how to find a mentor;
- 34% did not understand what mentoring was or the value of having a mentor;
- 31% reported that their parents or caregivers were not interested in them having a mentor.



---

## Closing the mentoring gap for francophone youth

Overall, mentoring relationships are less common for francophone respondents than for all the survey respondents. Nevertheless, these relationships had a significant influence on several francophone youth growing up. The large majority of francophone youth who had a mentor during their teen years reported that they had a positive experience and only 8% reported that their mentoring experience was either neutral or negative.

There is an opportunity to increase the awareness of francophone youth and adults about the benefits that mentoring relationships offer in order to increase young people's access to these important relationships which can foster their positive development.

Furthermore, the proportion of most meaningful mentors who supported francophone youth's educational and professional pathways is slightly lower than that of all respondents. Mentoring offers a flexible, supportive relationship which can respond to the unique needs of each young person. It could be useful to develop tools and strategies that would better equip mentors to support young people's academic and professional success. Additionally, school settings offer an important venue to raise young people's awareness of the benefits of mentoring and to increase their access to such opportunities. Teachers and school staff also play a more limited mentorship role for francophone youth compared to all survey respondents. In fact, as recommended by the young people who participated in the 2021 Canada We Want conference, "it is crucial that mentorship happens within public education settings".

---

## About Mentor Canada

Mentor Canada is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring. We are working together to build sector capacity and expand access to mentoring to empower every young person to reach their potential. *Mapping the Mentoring Gap* is one of 3 studies conducted by Mentor Canada as part of the State of Mentoring Research Initiative. Between January and March 2020, we surveyed 2,838 young adults aged 18-30 about their mentoring experiences growing up and their current lives.

Learn more about Mentor Canada and our research at [MentoringCanada.ca](https://mentoringcanada.ca).

In partnership with:



### Mentorat Québec

Since 2002, [Mentorat Québec's](#) mission is to promote and enable a culture of mentoring in Quebec by being a reference for organizations and individuals and by contributing to advancing knowledge about mentoring.

---



### L'Association Grands Frères et Grandes Sœurs du Québec

The mission of the Association Grands Frères et Grandes Sœurs du Québec is to represent and support Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations in Quebec and to act as a reference and leader for mentoring.

- 1 Resnick, M. D., Harris, L. J., & Blum, R. W. (1993). The impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and well-being. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 29(Suppl. 1), S3-S9. Werner, E. E. & Smith, R. S.(1992) *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adulthood*. Cornell University Press.
- 2 In this context, we use francophone to refer to survey respondents who chose to answer the survey in French. A large number of francophones were from Quebec but the category of analysis also includes French speakers from the rest of Canada. In addition, a number of respondents from Quebec chose to complete the survey in English and were therefore placed in the anglophone category.
- 3 Our analysis determined that there was an association between having had a mentor and positive outcomes (correlation) but could not determine if having a mentor caused or led to these positive outcomes. See the Mapping the Mentoring Gap study for more details.