

# Parent Champions Social Return on Investment

## Parent Champions

Parent Champions for Childcare are parents who have positive experiences of using childcare and/or supporting their child's early learning and who act as advocates and peer advisers to other parents in their community.

Parent Champions for Childcare can:

- provide parents with accurate information about early education;
- help parents to understand the benefits of high quality childcare and early learning for their children;
- reach vulnerable families and break down barriers to families engaging with services;
- encourage parents to participate in early learning activities with their children inside and outside the home;
- encourage parents to participate in local childcare and early learning services, for example, by volunteering to help out at play sessions or becoming a parent representative on their children's centre advisory board; and
- develop the skills of the Parent Champions.

Being a Parent Champion can involve undertaking such activities as:

- drop-in information sessions;
- informal workshops in community locations;
- contact-building at children's activities such as stay and play and health sessions in children's centres and library reading programmes; and

- targeted door knocking in the community to reach parents that are not already in contact with services.

Working on Parent Champions since 2007, Daycare Trust has seen the many benefits of the scheme. However, it was decided that it would be beneficial to have an independent assessment of the benefits of the Parent Champions model to capture how much it is worth to society. In an era of tight budgets, Daycare Trust wanted to provide evidence that the Parent Champions model is an effective way of reaching parents and provides good value for money. The Liverpool Parent Champions project was assessed using the Social Return on Investment process.

## Social Return on Investment Process

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an analytical tool for measuring and accounting for a broad concept of the value created through investing in a project. It incorporates social, environmental and economic costs and benefits into an analysis of the outcomes for individuals, organisations and sometimes the State. A critical factor in the assessment is the ongoing involvement of stakeholders.

SROI is able to assign a monetary figure to the social and environmental value that is created.

The Liverpool Parent Champions project brought £12.79 return for every £1 pound invested.

# Daycare Trust Parent Champions SROI briefing

## October 2012

An in-depth SROI assessment involves:

- desk research;
- interviews and group discussion with stakeholders;
- an evaluation of the contribution of external factors to outcomes and the extent to which these outcomes would have been achieved without the project;
- an assessment of the rate at which the impact will diminish over time and how long the impact is likely to last; and
- the checking and rechecking of results and monetary values attributed to outcomes with interested parties.

Once the outcomes for the project have been identified, a monetary value is allocated to each one. The elements of investment in the project (inputs) are also measured, including investments in kind, staff and volunteer time and costs, for example, the cost of providing a parenting class or a nursery place for a child. At the end of the process, a figure is reached (the SROI ratio) that represents the monetary value for each pound that is invested.

### Liverpool Parent Champions Project

Liverpool Childcare and Family Information Service (CAFIS) was chosen as the prototype project, based on CAFIS and Vauxhall Children's Centres extensive experience of working with parent volunteers, particularly through the Volunteer into Placement (VIP) programme.

It was decided to focus the Liverpool project on some of the most deprived areas of the city where child poverty levels were highest, employment levels low and take up of pre-school childcare correspondingly low. Given the levels of deprivation in the area, and consequent low take up of paid

childcare, the priority that was identified was to inform parents about funded childcare opportunities, such as the free early education entitlement for two- and three-year-olds.

The Liverpool project ran from October 2011 to March 2012. It is the outcomes from this period for a range of stakeholders, and the investments required to achieve these, that have been analysed and had a value placed on them.

### Stakeholder benefits of the Liverpool Parent Champions Project

There are seven stakeholder groups involved in the project (numbers per stakeholder in brackets) these being:

- Parent Champions (6)
- Parents (589)
- Children's centres (4)
- Children (92)
- Children and Family Information Service (1)
- Daycare Trust
- The State

Having undertaken the evaluation and calculations, it was concluded that **the total benefit from the project in monetary terms was £1,075,567**. The total inputs of all stakeholders (the actual money invested by the Department for Education, plus staff and volunteer time, costs and investment in kind) gave **a total investment in the project of £84,092**.

The project demonstrated significant outcomes for each stakeholder group and **a ratio of £12.79 for every pound invested**.

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### The outcomes

The assessment concluded that there were a wide range of important outcomes for seven stakeholder categories:

- Parents had increased access to childcare, but there was also increased parental involvement and engagement in services, particularly for lone parents.

**Total impact value: £620,749**

- Children were able to access services at the children's centres.

**Total impact value: £63,068**

- The Parent Champions volunteers gained employment as a result of being involved in the project. They experienced increased wellbeing and saw their relationships with their own children improve. They also improved their confidence and generally increased their transferrable skills, as well as improved knowledge about childcare.

**Total impact value: £162,685**

- The Children and Family Information Service (CAFIS) benefitted from the project in terms of increased referrals to their service. Over the course of the project 217 extra referrals were made.

**Total impact value: £3,026**

- Children's centres experienced an increase in registrations and increased take up of services by parents and children.

**Total impact value: £98,938**

- The State, principally the Department for Work and Pensions, was also a beneficiary of the project as Parent Champions moved off benefits and into work as a result of being involved in the project.

**Total impact value: £47,448.72**

The total impact per stakeholder group is shown in Figure 1, below, and the greatest beneficiaries are parents, followed by Parent Champions.

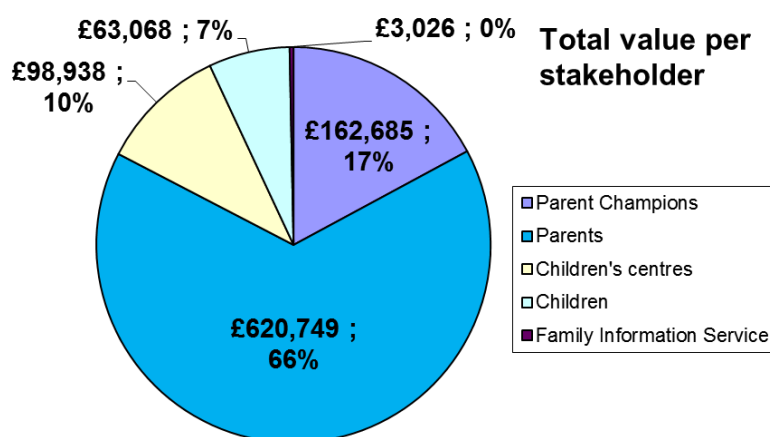


Figure1 Total impact value per stakeholder

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### Next Steps and the Parent Champions National Network

Daycare Trust manages the Parent Champions National Network, which consists of projects being run across the country, sharing learning and supporting families.

The full report, which contains a detailed breakdown of the costs and the benefits on Daycare Trust's Parent Champions Social Return on Investment, is available on the Daycare Trust website. For more information about Parent Champions visit:

[www.daycaretrust.org.uk/parentchampions](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/parentchampions) or contact 020 7940 7510.

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