



# Social Return On Investment (SROI)

## Case Study: Family Diversionary Program

Investing to strengthen society

### Fast Facts

#### About Closer to Home:

Closer to Home Community Services (CTH) provides a continuum of programs designed to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families. CTH is known for demonstrating flexibility and creativity in developing programs that respond to identified needs within the community.

Services range from early intervention programs to group homes. They are consumer driven, community based and guided by a commitment to quality assurance, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

Closer to Home is fully integrated with community, municipal, provincial, and federal support systems. Formal and informal relationships allow a variety of resources to be accessed that meet unique needs of children and families within their own communities.

**Web site:** www.closetohome.com

**Subject of SROI:** Family Diversionary Program

**SROI Overview:** The Family Diversionary Program provides essential support functions that focus on reducing isolation and connecting families to the community. They provide education on parenting skills that help to prevent future problems among family members.

**Three-year weighted average SROI:**  
\$1 : \$5.99

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**“This program is educational and impacts our lives. It makes life easier!”**

- A participant in the **Family Diversionary Program**

### Program Background:

The Family Diversionary Program (FDP) supports at-risk families by providing both specialized parenting education programs and organized, informal, networks that connect parents facing similar challenges.

Many of the children involved in the Family Diversionary Program are vulnerable, troubled and at-risk however, many of their difficulties are the result of underdeveloped parenting skills. Through Closer to Home, parents learn skills that are essential to keeping families together. These include skills such as learning how to manage conflict and how to establish achievable family goals that will contribute to the overall stability of the family unit.

Family Support Workers provide assistance, coaching and mentoring throughout this learning process. This increases the likelihood that at-risk families will become successful at setting goals, at achieving those goals in the short term and then maintain a goal-orientation into the future. This increases the likelihood they will stay together.

### Social Value Created

Families that successfully engage with diversionary services reduce their reliance upon police services, walk-in medical clinics, medical interventions as a result of mental health problems, in-school

counseling and other counseling services. Successes achieved via engagement with diversionary programming enables the above municipal and provincial services to be reallocated to other Calgarians in need.

The value of increasing family stability can be projected for many years into the future. Without the learning and support offered by programs such as

the Family Diversionary Program, families will remain stuck in challenging circumstances for an indefinite period of time, or separated.

Children of strong families are more likely to become self-sustaining, contributing members of society in the future. Children and youth that are engaged through diversionary programs are less likely to enter foster care or to require future services provided by shelters.

Over a three year period alone, the social value created for one family stabilized through the Family Diversionary Program is \$182,400. This is a \$10 return on every \$1 invested.

### Theory of Change

*If parents at-risk of separation from their children learn how to set family goals, to find needed resources and to improve their parenting skills, they will be more able parents, and more likely to successfully keep their families together.*

### Family Diversionary Program Clientele

Three profiles of families engage with Closer to Home through the Family

Funding provided by:



Learning with:



SROI Facilitated Learning Group (07-08)

Convened by:



Diversionary Program. The first profile typically includes five to six families annually, families who are at serious risk of being separated for a variety of reasons. These families will likely be living close to the poverty line and will be at-risk of homelessness. The Family Diversionary Program is organized to engage these families through skilled counselors in their homes for up to 20 hours a week.

The second profile of a family who engages with the Family Diversionary Program is considered to be at medium risk of a family break-up. They do not require in-house counseling, yet access three to five training opportunities provided by Closer to Home each week. Their training will range how to manage a family budget, how to improve nutrition and how to cook healthy meals, or how to be an effective support when homework is required. Closer to Home will also assist

parents to assess whether they qualify for daycare subsidies or another form of social assistance. In 2007, this second profile group included approximately 240 parents and children.

The final family profile represents almost 750 parents and children. These families engage with the Family Diversionary Program less frequently, yet the services that they seek out have an important and positive impact on family life. Families within profile three will access one-on-one interventions, benefit from parenting classes, homework sessions and subsidized daycare. They may be referred to other community resources. Profile three families are supported in small but meaningful ways that seek to strengthen the family unit and to prevent them from progressing into the medium or high risk profiles.

## Case Study— Social Value Created: Family Profile One

*The following is a snapshot of a typical Profile One family, followed by an overview of how involvement in the Family Diversionary Program creates social value.*

Alicia is a single mother of two children. The family lives in poverty, is at-risk of being homeless and the children may soon be placed in foster care as their circumstances are so unstable. Alicia has mental health issues and has been hospitalized before. She lives in constant fear that her husband may return, which would re-establish a too familiar cycle of domestic and family violence.

Alicia has a history of addictions to alcohol and illegal drugs.

Worried about her children’s safety, Alicia continues to use alcohol/drugs, jeopardizing her routine of prescription medicine. She has difficulty providing the basic needs of her children. Her eldest is having behavioral problems at school, has begun stealing and is experimenting with alcohol. Alicia’s husband is not paying child support.

After accessing a women’s shelter, Alicia finds housing but the rent is almost 50% of her monthly income. Her family is again at-risk of homelessness. She continues to experience mental health problems and frequents walk-in clinics three times a week. She is admitted to the hospital three times in four months. The police are called to her home twice in two months as a result of dealing with her son’s escalating poor behaviour.

When Alicia first accessed the Family Diversionary Program, the Family Support Worker helped the family to identify goals to increase their security, their independence and

stabilize the family. Together, Alicia and her children worked towards developing routines to keep their home clean and everyone organized. The children were assigned chores and they agreed a family safety plan. They found a family doctor, with whom Alicia met once a week for five weeks in order to stabilize her medication. She found a personal counselor. Alicia also worked with her Family Support Worker and in-school guidance counselors to develop a school-based intervention program to address her eldest son’s behavior.

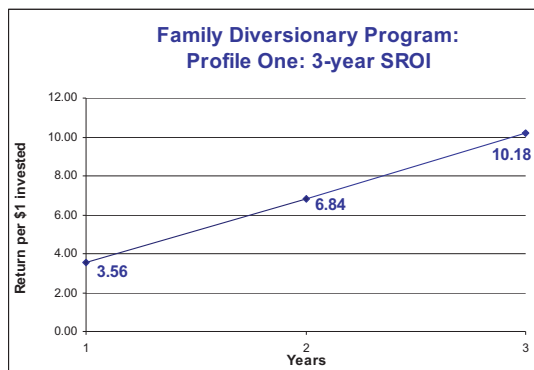
Alicia met with the Family Support Worker three times per week, for four weeks and twice a week for the next eight weeks. She kept in contact with the Family Support Worker

for six months as she focused on achieving her goals.

At the end of the first month, Alicia had enrolled in a life skills program. Her son had experienced only one incident of problematic behavior at school. After three months, Alicia had enrolled in school. She and her son were in counseling. After six months, Alicia had a full time

job, with health benefits. She had moved her family into subsidized housing.

The opportunity to access a Family Diversionary Program Case worker stabilized their family situation. Alicia and her children no longer call upon emergency shelter services, police services, financial support through social assistance, intensive counseling, walk-in clinics, additional school resources, frequent hospitalization. The family stayed together.



## Social Value Created: Profile One

The SROI calculation specific to Profile One families illustrates the social value associated with teaching the head of an at-risk family strong parenting and life management skills. Not only do these skills stabilize a family, they can also often contribute to enabling parents to find more secure employment in order to better care for their children.

This reduced the need to place children in foster care and will contribute to breaking other negative cycles that would otherwise continue indefinitely and affect the entire family. The SROI calculation projects value for three years, however in reality, the changes can be valued over a much longer period of time.

Profile One Social Value Calculation: Three Year Period, One Family				
SROI Indicators	Total Value YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Notes
1 Police time avoided	\$2,052	\$2,093	\$2,135	\$342 per call, 6 calls avoided
2 Children not in foster care	\$36,500	\$37,230	\$37,975	2 children @ \$ 50 per day
3 No regular need for walk-in clinics	\$2,520	\$2,570	\$2,622	\$28/visit, 90 visits avoided
4 Reduced use of hospitals	\$14,000	\$14,280	\$14,566	\$500/day @ 4 weeks
5 Gov't - social assistance	\$4,942	\$5,041	\$5,142	No longer received
6 Gov't - subsidized housing (increased cost)	-\$3,600	-\$3,672	-\$3,745	Received subsidized housing
7 Gov't - receiving tax payments	\$7,092	\$7,234	\$7,379	Taxes paid
8 No more medication	\$343	\$350	\$357	No longer needing meds.
Profile One SROI Summary: Three Year Period, One Family				
A Social value created annually per family:	\$63,849	\$65,126	\$66,428	Calculated to reflect inflation @ 2.0% per year.
B Present value of social value created (per family over 3 years)	\$182,400			Interest rate of 3.5%
C Investment per family (in year one)	\$17,917			See E below. Divided by 6.
Profile One SROI Summary: Three Year Period, Six Families				
D Present value of social value created (for 6 families over 3 years)	\$1,094,399			For six families.
E Investment (for six families in year one)	\$107,502			\$57,000 invested in this program, plus \$50,000 taken into account for the investment into Profile Three.
F SROI Ratio (one year)	\$1 : \$3.56			
G SROI Ratio (over 3 years)	\$1 : \$10			

## Case Study— Social Value Created: Family Profile Two

The second family profile is considered to be at medium risk of family break-up. These families are fairly isolated from their surrounding community and the parents do require parenting education on how to address problems in order to avoid them in the future. In 2007, there were 240 parents and children within Profile Two: 80 parents and 160 children.

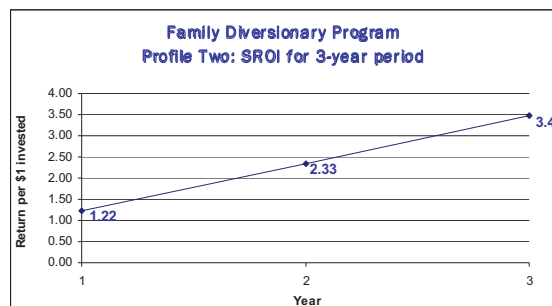
These families do not require in-house counseling, but do interact regularly with Family Support Workers as they access training that is organized in local community centres. On average, families within profile two regularly access three to five services offered through the Family Diversionary Program, each week. The programs available

range from involvement in early literacy, i.e. *Mother Goose*, parenting workshops such as *Common Sense Parenting* or the toy lending library. Teens have access to homework clubs and social support clubs such as *Girls Talk*.

Family Support Workers organize informal parent networks, providing isolated parents with a local network of people sharing similar experiences and concerns.

In 2007, there were 160 children and 80 parents within Profile Two. While

these families are not at the same risk of family break-up (as is the case among the families in Profile One), many of these 160 children have behavioural issues that make them likely candidates for foster care should the relationships



## Social Value Created: Profile Two

with their parents not improve. Conservatively, Family Support Workers estimate that *at least* 10% of the 160 children would have otherwise been placed in foster care if their issues had not been resolved. Enabling 10 children to stay with their families for one year creates a social value of \$182,500 annually.

Profile Two Social Value Calculation: Three Year Period, 10 Children				
SROI Indicators Included:	Total Value YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Notes
1 Children not in foster care	\$182,500	\$186,150	\$189,873	Calculated to reflect inflation @ 2.0% per year.
Profile Two SROI Summary: Three Year Period, 10 Children				
A Annual Social Value Created	\$182,500	\$186,150	\$189,873	
B Present value of social value created (over 5 years, 3.5% interest rate)	\$856,455			Return rate of 3.5%
C Total FDP Annual Investment	\$150,000			\$100,000 invested in this program, plus \$50,000 taken into account for the investment into Profile Three.
D SROI ratio (In year one)	1:1.22			
E SROI (over 3 years)	1:3.48			

As children who enter foster care will tend to remain in foster care until they become adults, the SROI ratio for profile two can conservatively be projected 1: 3.48 over a three year period. The SROI for profile two provides an example of the importance of investing in the group of 240 parents and children, in order to reduce the risk of a child being separated from his or her family. Improving

parenting skills and inter-family communication through counseling, diversionary and recreation programming and other methods to strengthen family bonds can have a lasting, essential impact on family strength and functionality over the longer term.

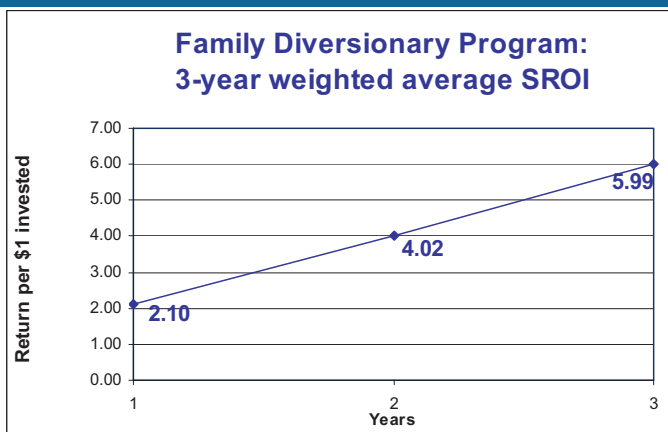
## Social Value Created: Profile Three

The third family profile totals a group of 750 parents and children. They access more than 100 Family Diversionary Programs such as a clothing exchange and financial assistance programs regarding bill payments, tax filing and applications for day care subsidies. 50% of this group will participate one time only, the remainder will gravitate into profile two, possibly profile one, based upon their need. Essentially, the Family Diversionary Program Support Workers need to get to know the families in order to assess their needs. Therefore, the cost of providing services to families in Profile Three (\$100,000) has been divided equally and added to the investment into services for Profiles One and Two.

## Conclusion

In order to portray a full picture of the social value created by the Family Diversionary Program, the investment into the families of profile three has been incorporated into the amount invested into profiles one and two.

The characteristics of each family profile are different and the 3-year SROI ratios are 10.18 and 3.48 respectively. The weighted average of the social value created by strengthening families at-risk is 5.99.



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