

Fast Facts

About Closer to Home (CtH):

- Provides a continuum of programs designed to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families
- Known for demonstrating flexibility and creativity in developing programs that respond to identified needs within the community.
- Services range from early intervention to group care programs.
- Stakeholder driven, community based and guided by a commitment to quality assurance, accountability, and measurable outcomes.
- Fully integrated with community, municipal, provincial, and federal support systems.
- CtH has community relationships allow a variety of resources to be accessed that meet unique needs of children and families within their own communities.

Web site:

www.closertohome.com

Family Matters Program stats:

- 94% of children remain with their families at the end of the program.
- 84% of children continue to remain with their families one year later.

1 Year SROI 1 : 3.22

Contact Details:

Diane Jaeger, Executive Director
+1 (403) 543-0550
djaeger@closertohome.com

Karen Olivier, Executive Director
+1 (403) 543-0550
kolivier@closertohome.com

"The people from Family Matters are not judgmental. They really care about what is best for our family and don't judge us for what our issues are. Rather, they take the time to help us learn different ways of doing things".

- A participant in Family Matters

Program Background:

The Family Matters Program provides 6-8 weeks of in-home support for families in crisis. Family Matters Support Workers make unlimited visits a week to improve overall family functioning in order to address child welfare concerns raised by The Ministry of Alberta Children and Youth Services. Failure to effectively address those concerns will often otherwise lead to the removal of the children from the family unit. Admission to the program is often a last attempt to prevent a child from going into foster care.

Program support workers work with each family for up to a year. They empower parents by teaching them to communicate more effectively, to address inappropriate behaviour with confidence and to manage crisis. Support workers coach and mentor parents as they learn how to set family goals, implement those goals and maintain those goals over the longer-term. Parents are connected to local resources that can assist them to keep the family on-track. Re-enrolment in the program is encouraged if a support worker believes the family would benefit.

Social Value Created:

Success is defined by Family Matters as enabling a family to stay together. Access to support workers (24/7) enables families to reduce their reliance on crisis support from services such as child welfare, the Calgary police or emergency medical care.

Success is measured at two important stages: first when the family completes the program and second, one year later. To date, Family Matters has an average success

rate of 94% at the time of discharge. One year later, 84% of children remain with their families. In addition, preventing children from going into care decreases their likelihood of substance abuse as young adults and of pre-term pregnancy among young women.

Families that do not have the opportunity to access programs such as Family Matters often rely on emergency services and community resources that do not provide successful long-term solutions. Statistics show that the children of children who grow up in foster care often grown up in care themselves. Enabling families to stay together creates short term, medium term and longer term value for society.

Theory of Change

By empowering parents to feel confident in their parenting skills through learning to address inappropriate behaviour, and then to recognize & reinforce appropriate behaviour, families are significantly more likely to have the necessary skills and access to resources to keep the family together long-term.

For a one year period the social value created for 45 children is **\$1,058,933**. This is a **\$3.22** return on every **\$1** invested.

Family Matters Clientele:

All families that engage with Closer to Home through the Family Matters Program are at serious risk of separation for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, these families have already been investigated and referred by the Alberta Child and Family Services Authority. The children are at high risk of removal from the family unit and of placement into foster care.

Secondly, the majority of children that are referred report feeling rejected by their family members and demonstrate poor communication skills.

Thirdly, most parents report the conflict between themselves and their child to be extremely serious. They are concerned about their child's aggressive tendencies at home, at

school and in the community.

As they struggle to meet their child's behavioural and emotional needs, parents report being at risk of losing their jobs. Most are unaware of available community resources and will engage emergency services to have their child removed from the home if they feel overwhelmed, hopeless or scared by their child's behaviour. Some parents are driven to force their child onto the streets to live independently.

Child behaviours at time of intake	Percentage of children
Feelings of rejection	51.6%
Serious parent-child conflict	43.5%
Aggressive toward others	38.4%
Emotionally abused/neglected (confirmed) by parent/other	35.6%
Defiant of authority/out-of-control	33.7%
Exposure to inappropriate threats, criticisms and humiliation	32.0%
Deprivation of affection/stimulation	31.7%
Withdrawn	27.9%
Depressed	27.6%
Hyperactive	22.8%

Case Study— Social Value Created: SROI Calculation

The SROI calculation in **Table 1** projects value for only one year, however in reality, the value of these changes endures over a much longer period of time.

The Family Matters Program creates social value in a number of ways. When participating in Family Matters, families can access counseling services, through which they learn important skills in stress and conflict management.

72% of the families in the program reported feeling at-risk of losing their jobs as a result of the conflict within the family. In all likelihood, 25% would have otherwise lost their jobs without the opportunity to enroll in the Family Matters program. If those participants would have lost their jobs, they would have had to rely on income assistance. The

amount of income assistance for a single adult with one child who is expected to work and live in private housing is approximately \$732 (total core benefits) + \$166 (National Child Benefit Supplement) per month.

Closer to Home assess impairment in day-to-day functioning of children ages seven and over with the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) and the Pre-school and Early Childhood Functional Assessment Scale (PECFAS) for children ages three to seven. Children are assessed by support workers trained in the methodology to determine appropriate treatment. They are re-assessed every three months. If a child scores higher than 20 on the assessment, they are exhibiting major or persistent

Table 1

Monetizable SROI Indicators:		\$\$ value per change in Year 1	% of client base experiencing this change.	\$\$ value for entire group (45 participants)	Notes There are a total of 45 participants within the client base
1	Counselling sessions	-\$400	85%	-\$15,300	85% of participants will receive an average of 4 counselling sessions @ \$100 each.
2	Value of maintaining a job	\$10,776	25%	\$121,230	Assuming 25% of participants would have actually lost their job if it wasn't for Family Matters.
3	Avoidance of placement in Child Welfare	\$24,090	84%	\$910,602	84% of client base has been prevented from entering the child welfare system at the end of one year. \$66 per day, per child. Per Closer to Home Fee for Service
4	Avoidance of hospital stay	\$1,038	25%	\$11,678	25% of participants would have a one-day hospital stay for self-harm assessments. Cost of hospital stay, per day = \$1,038.
5	Reduced need for emergency room admission	\$231	25%	\$2,599	Cost of \$231 per admission. (applies to approximately 25% for self harm behaviour.)
6	Avoidance of Police Calls	\$625	100%	\$28,125	\$625 is cost of a police call. (applied to 100% of client base) If a parent calls police due to issues with children, police will make visit the home.
Social value created annually for group of 45 participants:				\$1,058,933	
Total annual investment in group of 45 participants:				\$328,754	
SROI attributed to Family Matters program (in Year 1)				3.22	

disruption in their behaviors. Children that score close to 30 (the maximum) on the CAFAS/PECFAS scale exhibit severely disruptive behavior, or complete incapacitation.

Approximately 25% of the children who participate in the Family Matters program exhibit some form of self-harming behaviour. Through Family Matters, the parents and children learn how to cope with situations that might lead to

self-harm by the child. By learning new skills and accessing support, the self-harming behaviour is reduced, which reduces hospital admissions and emergency room visits.

The changes experienced by families as a result of their participation in the Family Matters program creates \$1,058,933 in social value annually, based on an investment of \$328,754. This represents an SROI ratio of **1: 3.22**.

Conclusion

The Family Matters Program improves family functioning and helps families address concerns which could lead to the removal of their children. Families reduce their need for police services, have a better chance of staying employed, receive counseling support and reduce their use of emergency and hospital services.

Unlimited visits provided by Family Support Workers, one year of follow-up visits, access to community resources and the new skills learned by both parents and children all contribute to keeping the family unit intact. They significantly improve the ongoing interaction of the family as a unit.

Success Story:

Mike is a single parent of two daughters. He contacts social services in hopes of having his older daughter removed from the home. Instead, Mike is offered and accepts to participate in the Family Matters program for eight weeks as an alternative to placing his older daughter into care.

At the time of intake, Mike's older daughter has dropped out of school, is living with a friend and has received no supports in addressing her suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviours. Mike's younger daughter has become withdrawn and struggles with the emotional rejection of her biological mother. As Mike attempts to meet both of his daughter's needs, he continues to have serious marital conflict with his ex-wife. Mike feels hopeless of any positive change.

For the first three weeks of Family Matters, Mike meets with the family support specialist three times a week. He learns important parenting skills that best fits his family values. His daughters learn important basic communication skills that help them be more effective when communicating with one another in the home. At six weeks, Mike and his ex-wife are able to work out an effective custody plan between them with their younger daughter. Mike's older daughter returns home. Together they apply their newly learned skills on a

daily basis. As the older daughter continues to access counselling, she has no incidents of self-harm throughout the intervention.

Family Mission Statement

We strive for increased cooperation, communication and showing more respect for one another. Our family is working towards increased caring and understanding in our home. We will be rewarded with more responsibility and trust when we can follow these guidelines. We believe in spending time together as well as being open and supportive.

After one year, Mike and his two daughters still report having some challenges, but identify that they have the necessary tools and skills to effectively work out confrontation. By continuing to apply their newly learned communication and goal-setting skills, the family avoids the need to contact the police. The older daughter uses her new skill in expressing her emotions appropriately, which eliminates the urge to harm herself. She is

attending a school that best fits her interests and is continuing her bi-weekly counselling sessions.

Mike's younger daughter visits her biological mother regularly and reports having a stronger and better relationship with all her family members.

With the support and guidance of the Family Matters Program Mike has learned important parenting and communication skills. He has become familiar with community resources to support his family needs. Mike continues to work towards reaching his family's mission statement goals and towards keeping the family unit intact.