

SOCIAL RETURN ON **PLAY2LEARN**

Why investing in early childhood
playgroups will give more Australians
positive outcomes in life.

Investing in early childhood development promotes positive outcomes for life. We know this because an independent review of our Play2Learn programs was conducted in Western Adelaide, South Australia to find out more about the long-term impacts. What we learned is that for every \$1 invested in Play2Learn, the community gets nearly \$5 in benefits.

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THE COMMUNITY GETS NEARLY \$5 IN BENEFITS.**



Play2Learn

Providing young children with the chance to learn, grow and develop through safe and supported play is crucial in shaping a child's cognitive, social and emotional health, and consequently their behaviour in adult life.

But supported playgroups don't only benefit children. They also provide parents with access to support in a friendly, non-judgemental environment.

Our Play2Learn program is the largest of our Early Childhood Care and Development programs in Australia and has been running for more than 30 years. We hold more than 200 Play2Learn groups for children and parents across Australia – each designed to for children under six from a range of backgrounds, including culturally and linguistically diverse, newly arrived and refugee, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



Early intervention support in child health, learning and development concerns through referrals to specialist services



Peer support for parents through the supportive, friendly and inclusive delivery model



Parenting support through role modelling, information dissemination and referrals



Playgroup-based case management to address issues impacting on child wellbeing and family functioning



Weekly high-quality playgroups to support children's early development, wellbeing and school readiness

OUR IMPACT

NOVA Smart Solutions investigated how our Play2Learn programs were benefiting communities. NOVA, looked at the program in Western Adelaide, South Australia, through a Social Return on Investment forecast analysis.

The research revealed Play2Learn will generate substantial results across six key outcomes:

For every \$1 invested in Play2Learn, the community gets nearly \$5 in benefits.

Improved family functioning

Increased social networks and community participation

Children's age-appropriate development

Enhanced mental health, wellbeing and self-care

More positive parenting skills

Opportunities for employment, education and training

THE RESEARCH

NOVA Smart Solutions looked at key outcomes of the Play2Learn program. They calculated that over 12 months, investment in the program by Save the Children, donors and parents came to \$147,000. However, when they monetised the benefits gained from the program, they calculated the social and economic return to be more than \$400,000.

This allows us to confidently say that the forecast Social Return on Investment ratio for this program is 1:4.95. In other words, for every dollar invested in Play2Learn, the community gets back nearly five dollars.

To do this, NOVA used 'financial proxies' – outcomes like stronger family functioning. They considered the mental health of families and the avoided healthcare costs associated with families who were able to create nurturing and positive environments.

Although this analysis focused on Play2Learn in Western Adelaide, all our Play2Learn programs across Australia are based on the same model and so we are confident that our Play2Learn programs deliver similar benefit nationally.

It is clear that greater investment in the early years of a child's life through supported playgroup models delivers positive outcomes for all Australians.



Save the Children

NOVA
SMART SOLUTIONS