

Jubilee+ Impact Research Group: Working with Children in Early Years



Progress Update October 2014

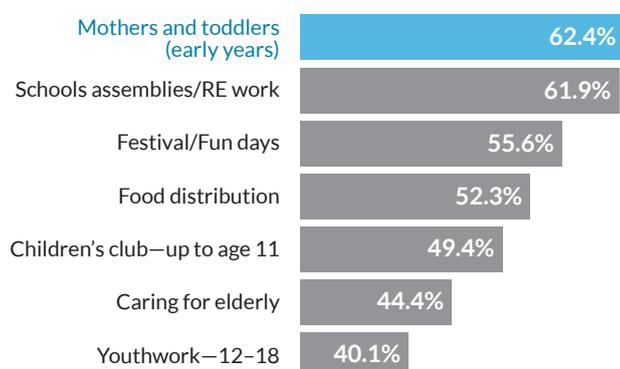
At Jubilee+ we are passionate about equipping churches of all denominations to engage more effectively with our communities and, particularly, to help them increase their capacity to serve the poor.

As part of that mission we engage in research projects, with the aim of understanding the impact of church-based social action and enterprise projects.

By doing so, we hope to be able to give the Church encouragement and evidence for the good it is doing, as well as providing material to inform social justice initiatives.

What is the Church doing?

Our 2012 national social action survey revealed that each church was, on average, undertaking 8.2 social action initiatives. The most common of these was mothers and toddlers groups, i.e. early years.



The importance of working with children in early years (aged 0-5)

There has been a large amount of academic and social policy research concluding that the single most important factor influencing a child's intellectual and social development is the quality of parenting and care they receive and the quality of the home learning environment that this creates.

While social action projects that focus on meeting crisis needs are fully justified, to tackle the root causes is argued to be more effective in dealing with economic, social and intellectual poverty.

Working with children in their early years, alongside giving support to their families, has been identified as a priority for Government and charities alike.

52%
of children in England access some form of parent and toddler group via churches¹

Up to 27,000 UK churches run early years projects²

It is family background, parental education, good parenting, and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life.³

Jubilee+ Impact Research – Early Years

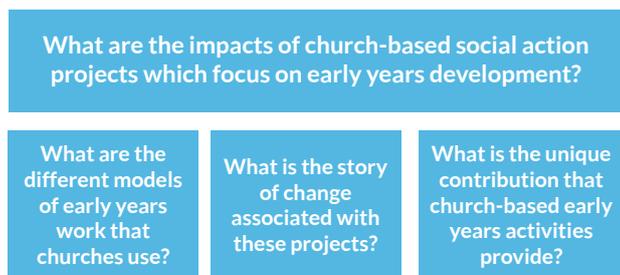
Between July and September 2014 we undertook a national survey to identify the scale and nature of the impacts that Church-based early years projects are having in the UK. This followed wide consultation with individual experts and networks/franchises working with families and early years groups, as well as a review of previous research.

The output of this research will be published before the end of 2014. However, in this update, we explain our methodology and highlight some of the early themes and conclusions that are emerging.

Impacts and Outcomes

It is relatively easy to measure the effort that goes in ('input') to making an activity ('output') happen.

It is more meaningful, however, to understand what change actually results from the activity undertaken: the 'outcome' or impact.



What we did

We worked with a number of national Christian networks, to utilise their experience in working with families and children.

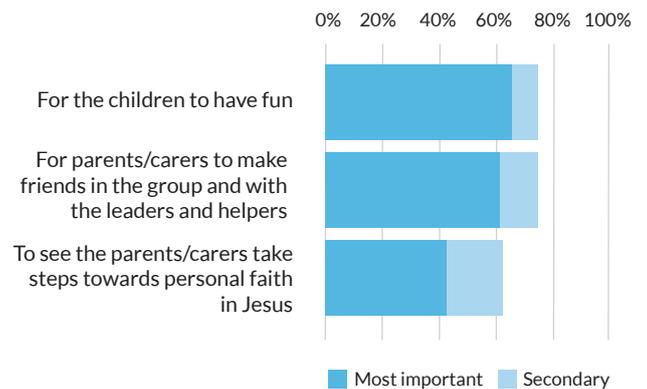
We then formulated an online survey to get answers related to our research question, using our own contacts and social media and those of these networks to primarily target responses from people who help to run church-based early years groups.



40% of groups surveyed reported affiliation with these networks. 34% stated that they are independent.

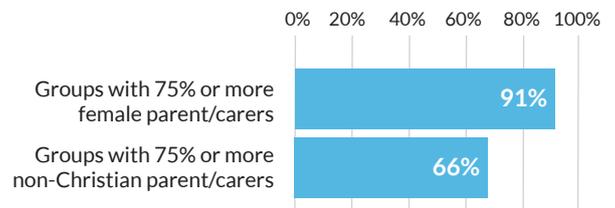
The most important primary goals for groups are fun, friendship and faith.

Percentage of groups with this goal

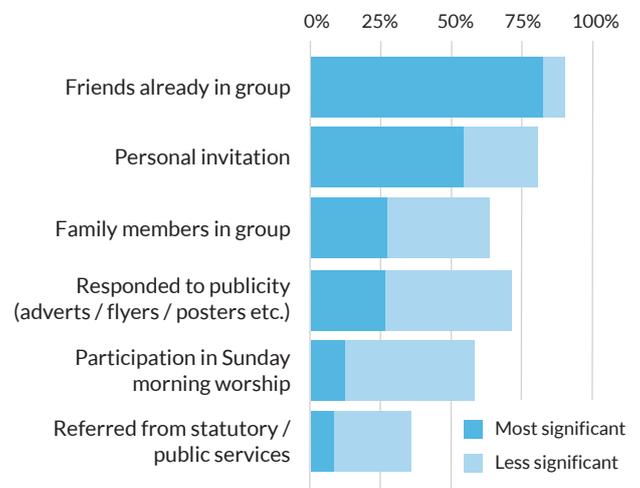


There are outcomes expected for everyone involved – children, parents/carers, group helpers, and churches.

The majority of parents/carers who attend groups are not Christians, and most are female



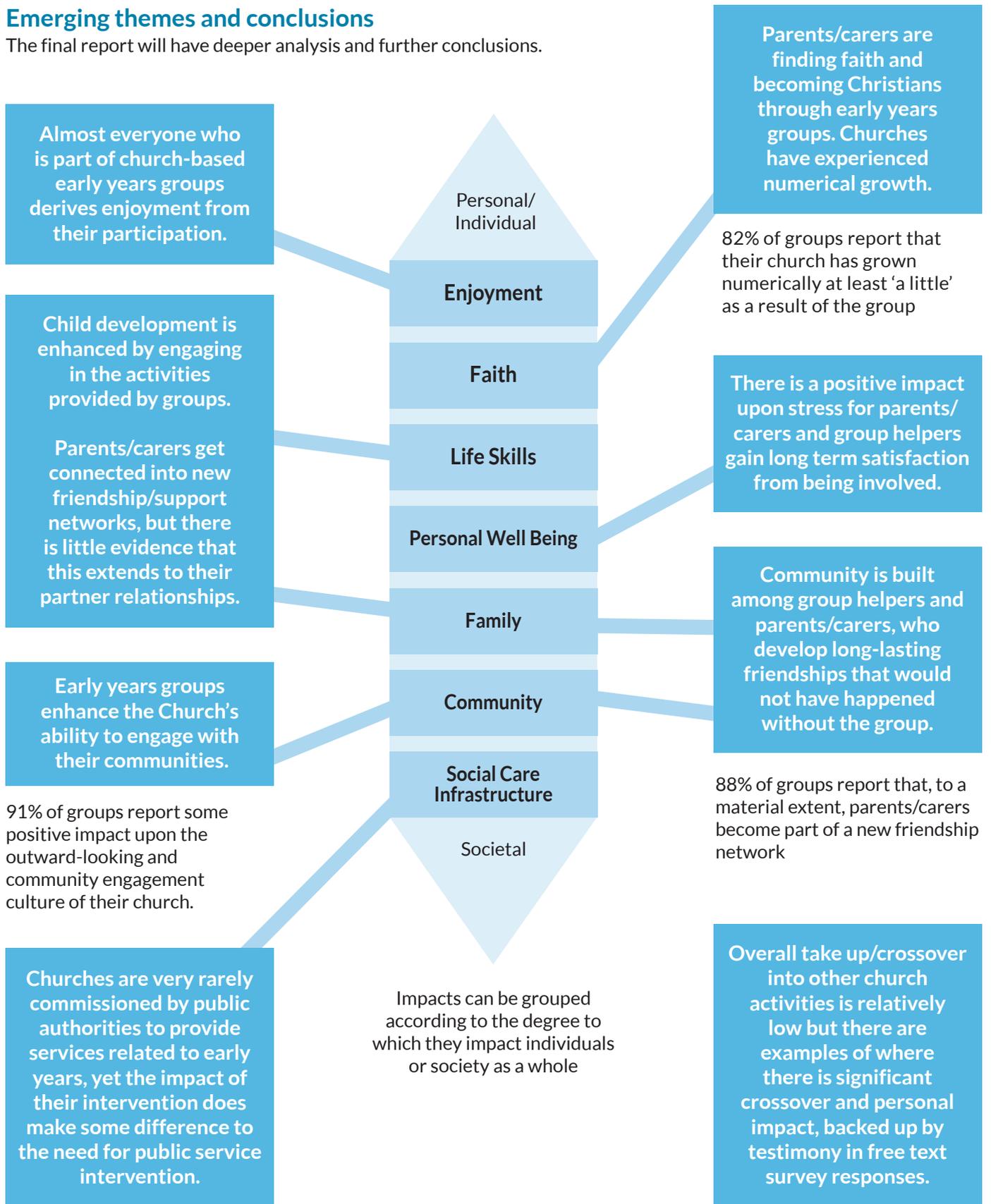
The most important factors in causing parents or carers to decide to join a group



Personal relationships are the most significant factor in persuading parents and carers to join the groups.

Emerging themes and conclusions

The final report will have deeper analysis and further conclusions.

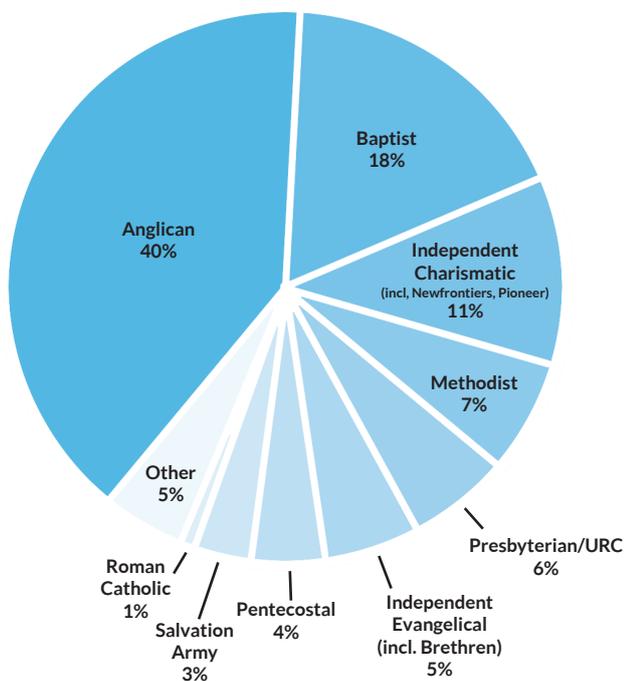


Large numbers of those who come to the groups are not Christians. They come because they are personally invited by friends and relatives. Many of them find long-lasting friendship and support and some find broader life-skill support and develop personal faith.

Who answered the survey?



30 parents/carers



References

1. Buttery, S., & Telling, M. (2009). More than Sundays: Discussing the contribution of the Church to the Children's Workforce in England. Examining and building on positive engagement in workforce reform. Bedford: Family Matters Institute.
2. 1277.org.uk
3. Field, F. (2010). The foundation years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances. London: HM Government

A quarter of respondents took the time to add free text responses sharing their stories and telling us in more depth about how the ways in which they 'Go the extra mile'.

In itself this indicates that there is impact worth writing about.

Our final report will outline our in depth analysis and provide space to reproduce more quotes like the one below.

" [The group has] only been going a year. We do have parents now attending church regularly who didn't before and we are just about to launch our first parents' Alpha. We have over 300 parents and toddlers each week and have been blown away from the doors God has opened. It's amazing."

Survey respondent

Jubilee +

Impact Research Group

We are a small, agile group who aim to work with professional quality and research methods, focusing on the impact that the UK Church is creating.

Like a small yacht, we aim to sail flexibly and fast in uncharted water, connecting up academic theory, think-tanks, franchise organisations and local churches.

If you'd be interested in coming on board with us, please get in touch!



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Want to know more?

Keep an eye out for the final report at www.jubilee-plus.org/research

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