



# Brave Foundation

## *Measuring the value of SEPT*

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS FOR THE BRAVE  
FOUNDATION'S SUPPORTING EXPECTING AND PARENTING TEENS  
(SEPT) PROGRAM | EXTRACT

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This report has been prepared by Think Impact on the instructions, and for the benefit, of the Brave Foundation in relation to supporting the understanding of the social value created by the Supporting Parenting & Expecting Teens (SEPT) program. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

Think Impact is a specialist social impact consultancy based in Melbourne. Our focus is to support organisations, across all sectors, to manage for better impact.

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Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material and the integrity of the analysis presented herein, Think Impact accepts no liability for any actions taken on the basis of the contents of this report.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Report overview

Think Impact was commissioned by the Brave Foundation (Brave) to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the social value created by the Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens program.

This summary report presents the findings of the evaluative SROI, which was conducted during October and November 2023 to analyse the value created through mentoring of 116 participants between 30 June 2022 and 30 July 2023.

The full report is available by contacting Brave Foundation at [info@bravefoundation.org.au](mailto:info@bravefoundation.org.au).

## 1.2 About the Brave Foundation

Founded, designed, and led by women with diverse lived experience, Brave is Australia's first national not-for-profit dedicated to assisting expecting and parenting young people. Brave equips expecting and parenting young people with resources, referrals and education opportunities to facilitate happy, healthy, and skilled families. Brave's vision is to see future generations thrive and they do this by unlocking the boundless potential of young parents.

Brave's initial focus has been its flagship program, the mentoring program Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT). The SEPT program was funded in 2018 under the Try, Test and Learn (TTL) Fund. A 2018–20 independent evaluation of a national SEPT trial by the Peter Underwood Centre found the program provides a much-needed and well-timed mentoring service for young people who face complex and intersecting challenges at the beginning of their parenting journey.<sup>1</sup> Grounded in an agile and nationally coordinated organisation that provides responsive backbone support, the SEPT model's community focused and collaborative approach enables the provision of locally tailored and individualised intervention and advocacy for young parents.

In addition to its flagship program, Brave's Model of Participation has established a framework for a youth advisory group, the Brave Representative Advisory Group (BRAG). This is a whole of organisation approach that provides an authorising environment and recognises that young people are experts of their own lives, and their active participation in co-design processes will help develop meaningful enhancement and critique of service design and delivery.

Brave's unique expertise, developed in partnership with youth participants and community stakeholders, means that Brave is well-positioned to understand the needs and advocate for the healthy development, wellbeing, rights and safety of expecting and parenting young people and their children. Brave promotes best practices, supports continuous improvement through program monitoring and research, and provides thought leadership and advocacy in what works for expecting and parenting young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Bakhtiar, A., te Riele, K., Sutton, G., Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, University of Tasmania (2020). Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT) trial – independent evaluation.

Brave is also preparing to establish a program for young fathers through a co-design pilot program to commence in 2024 and will continue to explore opportunities for program enhancements that ensure all programs delivered are culturally safe.

### 1.3 About the SEPT program

Expecting and parenting young people in Australia are more likely to live in poverty and to have experienced trauma and mental ill health than older parents. This makes the concurrent transitions to adulthood and parenthood particularly challenging. Unfortunately, age-based stigma and discrimination directed towards young parents mean accessing necessary supports and services to ensure their own and their children's wellbeing is that much more difficult.<sup>2</sup>

In recognition of these challenges, Brave's SEPT program provides young parents with 1:1 professional place-based and virtual mentors who provide for holistic wellbeing and goal achievement success. Brave mentors also act as system navigators, coordinating resources and opportunities, and walk alongside expecting and parenting young people to facilitate their access to essential supports and services for their families' wellbeing. Mentors work intensively with young parents to build a trusting relationship and develop self-identified goals that are integrated into individualised pathway plans. Importantly, mentors also link young parents to support and resources that will help them overcome barriers to goal achievement. The mentors are trusted guides, walking alongside their participants throughout the pathway program – from initial referral and first contact to celebrating their achievements and graduation from the program. SEPT participants also recognise their mentors as positive role models and an important source of emotional and informational support.

Mentors work together with the expecting or parenting young person on what is important to them, including (but not limited to):

- educational and workforce participation
- health and wellbeing
- family safety
- financial or housing assistance programs
- parenting support
- transport.

The place-based, system-linking and intergenerational foci of the SEPT program creates potential for long-term systemic impact. This potential has led to calls for further investment and expansion of Brave's services.<sup>3</sup>

*'I was overwhelmed. Just thinking about being a single mum and it was amazing just to have someone outside my family to support me ... knowing she [mentor] was there to support me and help me with the change to be a single mum, it was just so helpful ... and just someone who is accepting of who you are.'* – SEPT participant

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<sup>2</sup> Beauchamp, T. (2020). Improving outcomes for young parents and their children. Effective policy settings and approaches. Uniting. <https://apo.org.au/node/307596>

<sup>3</sup> Bakhtiar et al., 2020



## 1.4 Methodology

### 1.4.1 Social Return on Investment

SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for the broader concept of social value. It tells the story of how change is being created for the people and organisations that experience or contribute to that change. It does this by identifying and measuring social outcomes.

SROI is a principles-based approach that draws on well-established methodologies in economics, accounting and social research.

An SROI calculation provides an indication of cost effectiveness, by comparing the investment required to deliver the activities with the value of the outcomes experienced by all beneficiary stakeholders. Social value is calculated by placing a financial value on the quantified change using what are known as *financial proxies*. SROI seeks to understand all types of value – social, economic and environmental – and represent this in a language which is widely understood by funders, investors, policy makers and decision-makers.

### 1.4.2 Project scope

This SROI assesses the value associated with the SEPT program for participants whose cases were closed in the 2023 financial year. The participants captured within this time period commenced with the program at different times. The period of mentoring is typically up to 12 months.

The analysis captured all locations where SEPT is delivered, with the exception of Darwin, where the service delivery model is tailored to the unique geographic and population characteristics. The locations are New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and national virtual delivery.

This SROI builds on work undertaken by Brave guided by the Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the SEPT program. The analysis drew on data collected from participants during the mentoring period, complemented by a survey of participants conducted in October 2023. The story of the value created and the data to evidence the value has been gathered from the participants, mentors and partner organisations. It has not been possible at this stage to engage with other stakeholder groups who are potentially experiencing outcomes through the delivery of the SEPT program, such as the co-parent of the children of participants and the extended family of participants. This first SROI conducted on the SEPT program provides the information that is currently known about these other stakeholder groups as the foundations for their inclusion in future SROIs.

## 1.5 About the report contributors

This SROI was conducted by Think Impact consultants working alongside members from the Brave Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team.

Think Impact is a social impact consultancy working to create positive change for business, government, philanthropy and the community. It helps organisations understand, communicate, and transform the impact of their work. Think Impact has one of the most experienced SROI teams in Australia. The Think Impact authors include two accredited SROI practitioners and one of only two people in Australia qualified to deliver SROI training.

Members of the Brave MEL team worked alongside Think Impact to build capacity within Brave to conduct SROI analyses in future. Three Brave team members attended Think Impact's SROI training in August 2023. These team members contributed previously undertaken research in relation to the outcomes of the SEPT program, including the theory of change and data extracted from Brave's case files in relation to participant profiles and outcomes. The Brave team was also involved in survey design, survey data analysis, modelling and report writing.

## 2. The value created by SEPT

### 2.1 SROI findings

An investment of \$3.19 million by Brave and other contributors to deliver the SEPT program creates additional net present value of \$14.4 million for stakeholders.

For every \$1 invested in the SEPT program, \$4.51 of value is created.

This shows that the SEPT program is creating positive social value for the investment made into the program.

The SROI process requires judgement and assumptions and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. For this reason, a sensitivity analysis has been conducted to understand the influence that variation in some inputs would have on the SROI ratio. When variables were modified as part of the sensitivity analysis, the ratio **ranged from \$2.14 to \$5.29**. Even when highly conservative inputs are modelled, the ratio remains positive.

The investment required to deliver SEPT is presented in Table 1. This includes both monetary and in-kind contributions from a number of contributors. Delivery of the SEPT program constitutes the bulk of the activity of Brave Foundation, therefore the majority of the organisation's costs represent the investment in SEPT.

The costs to deliver the SEPT program in Darwin have been removed as this location is not included within this SROI analysis. The costs associated with the Social Economic Empowerment Department (SEED) which focuses on systemic advocacy are also not included.



**Table 1 Summary of investments in the delivery of SEPT**

Stakeholder/investor	Item	Description	Value
Office for Women (Australian Government), Premier and Cabinet (Tasmanian State Government)	Direct staffing cost	Programming staff wages and overhead costs.	\$1,455,845
Women's Leadership and Development Program of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Premier and Cabinet (Tasmanian State Government)	Direct delivery costs	Mileage (approx. \$86,000), brokerage & scholarships (approx. \$25,000)	\$112,099
Paul Ramsay Foundation and Women's Leadership and Development Program of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet	Indirect staffing costs for SEPT	Estimated 80% of indirect staff costs. Includes Communication, MEL, Partnerships, Government Relations, CEO, CEO assistant and Head of Operations.	\$655,795
Brave Foundation	Board costs	Travel to Board meetings, catering and room hire costs, board portal.	\$26,891
Board members	Governance (in-kind contribution)	Estimated hours based on allocation per Director. Includes financial and Fraud/Risk Support gifted as in-kind services.	\$376,700
Givit, Tasmanian Premiers Fund, Archdiocese of Hobart, general public	Material aid for participants	In-kind donations of goods and services provided to participants (e.g. vouchers, driving lessons, training courses)	\$105,697
Brave Foundation	Operations costs	Includes IT, HR, Finance, Insurances, Travel & Mileage, Marketing and Events, RME activities and external consultants.	\$460,982
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT</b>			<b>\$3,194,009</b>



A summary of the value by stakeholder group is provided in Table 2. These figures have been rounded to reflect their indicative nature.

**Table 2 Summary of value by stakeholder group**

Stakeholder	# of stakeholders	Value per stakeholder	Total value	% of total
SEPT participants	116	\$42,000	\$4,820,000	33%
Family unit	116	\$6,000	\$730,000	5%
Children of participants	162	\$44,000	\$7,070,000	49%
Government	1	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	10%
Service system	1	\$260,000	\$260,000	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$14,380,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

The key findings of the analysis are:

- Almost 90 per cent of the value is experienced by the SEPT participants and their family unit. The mentoring of the parent benefits the parents themselves as well as those around them, specifically their children and others in their immediate household.
- The **expecting and parenting teens** who receive mentoring as part of the SEPT program are experiencing approximately 30 per cent of the value. These outcomes will vary for individuals depending on their presenting needs and future goals, but generally relate to their stability, health and wellbeing and establishing their parenting skills and identity.
- The **children of participants** are the largest beneficiary group, by stakeholder number and value (49% or \$7.1 million). Children are benefitting through the stable environment and improved attachment with and attunement of the parent that flows on from the outcomes experienced by the parent.
- The outcomes that apply to the **parent, their children and possibly other immediate household members**, are attributed to the family unit. These outcomes include improved safety, improved housing stability and improved financial wellbeing. While it is the SEPT participant receiving the mentoring and taking action, the broader household benefits.
- When the parents and children benefit, there is value created for **government** through avoided costs for services such as homelessness, family violence and child protection. Those parents who set and achieve goals in relation to employment may receive reduced income payments and pay income tax. This value is created for the federal, state and territory governments that fund these social services and payments.
- The Brave mentors closely collaborate with other providers of services being delivered to the SEPT participants. This includes referrals to and from specialist services, collaborative practice in relation to individuals (where the participant has provided consent) and capacity building in relation to the needs of young parents. This collaboration enables a more efficiency and effective **service system** where the impact of each organisation is maximised thorough being able to support more clients and focus on relative expertise.
- It is likely that the total value, and therefore the ratio, is understated as it has not been possible to calculate the value experienced by some stakeholder groups, including the participant's co-parent and extended family. It is recommended that Brave Foundation conducts research in subsequent years to understand more about the experience of these potentially material stakeholders.

The theories of change for the young parents and their children are following.

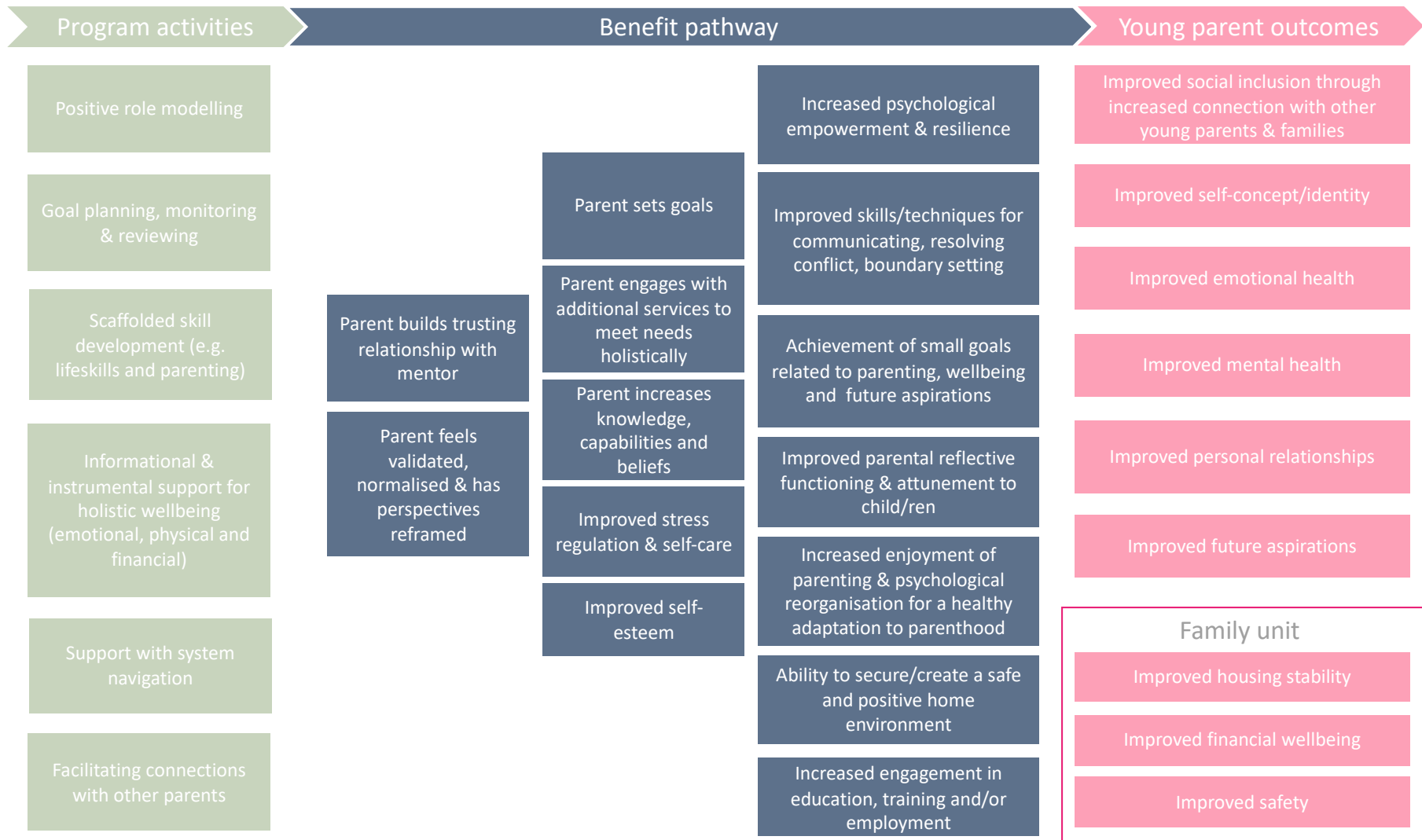


Figure 1 Theory of change for young parents participating in the SEPT program

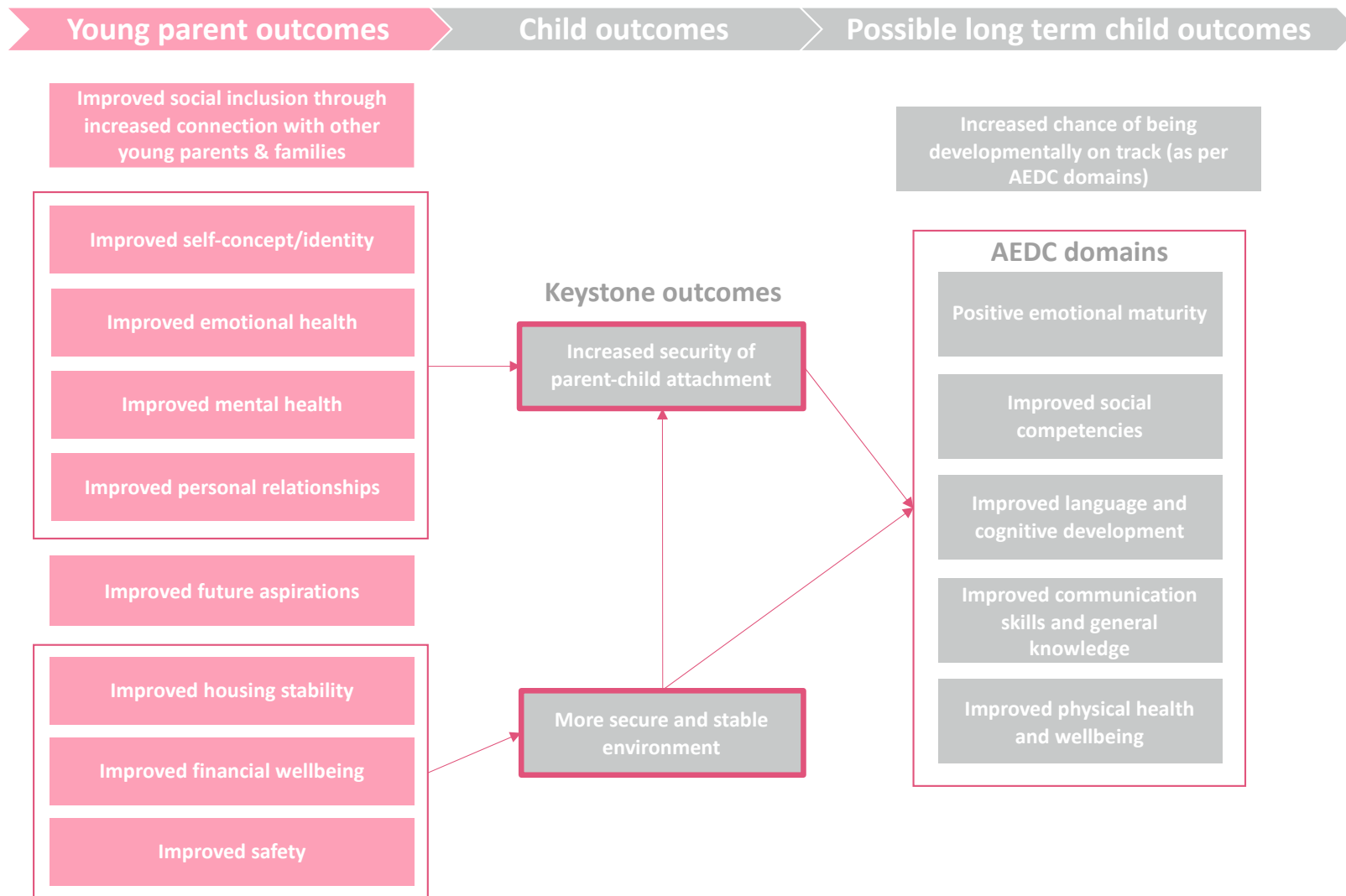


Figure 2 Theory of change for the children of young parents

### 3. Conclusion

The Brave Foundation's SEPT program provides critical support for young parents who experience significant barriers to realising their goals whilst navigating the difficult transition from adolescence to adulthood. Through providing personalised, one-on-one mentor support for young parents, this unique program creates a safe space for participants to share their dreams and provides them with support and tools to realise those dreams.

This SROI evaluation has conservatively determined that for every \$1 invested into the SEPT program, \$4.51 of value is created for participants, their children and families, partner organisations and government. Ultimately, the enduring value created by the program for these young parents and their children cannot be measured. As a result of the SEPT program, young parents are empowered to achieve their goals and create a safe, happy and healthy life for themselves and their children.





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