

Bestest Foundation

Theory of Change

Bestest believes that no child should be 'falling between the cracks'. And that every child deserves a chance to thrive, free from disadvantage, and able to realize their full potential.

1. Problem Statement

Too many severely disadvantaged and at-risk children are 'falling between the cracks' - falling outside the structured support systems of the larger charities and government.

- This lack of support leads to a diminished quality of life, limited social inclusion, and reduced opportunities for personal development and fulfillment.
- As a result, these children face significant challenges including: poor health and nutrition; physical disabilities; mental and behavioural issues; educational disadvantage; unstable family situations; and other situations that limit their opportunities for personal growth and hinder their ability to reach their full potential.
- Without intervention, these children are at high risk of experiencing ongoing cycles of hardship, which typically lead to poor academic performance, limited employment opportunities, and negative health and mental outcomes.

2. Delivery Mechanisms

Bestest Foundation is a small charity, dependant on the efforts of volunteers. To deliver its programs, Bestest has developed and utilised two innovative delivery channels to implement its program activities towards addressing the critical problem that too many disadvantaged and at-risk children are 'falling through the cracks' in receiving the assistance they need to achieve their full potential.

This has involved delivering its programs via two key channels, namely:

- Leveraging the specialist resources and expertise of front-line social, health, and educational organisations, and other charities, to deliver Bestest stipulated interventions.
- Direct funding of parents and at-risk children, and front-line services, to provide support technologies, services and other interventions.

3. Target Group

Disadvantaged children and youths (babies to late teens) facing enormous challenges, whether it be battling an illness, obtaining needed equipment to help with their disabilities, gaining access to educational opportunity, or getting urgent assistance when they are at risk.

The specific focus is on children whose needs fall outside the structured boundaries of larger established charities and government, and hence are 'falling through the cracks'.

4. Key Assumptions

- Every child, regardless of their background, deserves a chance to thrive, free from disadvantage, and protected from experiencing adverse childhood events.
- All children have the potential to thrive, if provided with the right support, resources, and environment.
- The provision of needed support enhances a child's resilience and long-term development, whether it be through physical or medical aids, food and nutritional support, or through targeted support from mentors and caregivers.
- Strong partnerships are vital in amplifying the impact program activities, such as leveraging the expertise and experience of other organisations and collaborations with families, front-line workers, schools, and other community organizations.
- Early intervention is crucial. Providing support to children at a young age has a most significant and lasting impact.
- Addressing a child's needs across multiple domains (education, health, social and emotional well-being) is key to their development.

5. Inputs

a) Programs:

- Provision of health, disability and well-being support, technology and aids.
- Funding for educational and mentoring programs and services.
- Child and family support.

b) Resources:

- Donors.
- Experienced volunteers.
- Partnerships and referral relationships with other organisations, front-line workers, local hospitals and other community organizations.
- A special partnership with Australia's leading chefs, who volunteer their time, staff and resources to cook for guests at Bestest's major fundraising Gala Dinners.

c) Community Engagement:

Community engagement is exercised via:

- Partner organisations which create a network for program delivery, referrals, support, resource sharing and engagement.
- Regional and local community organizations.
- Front-line worker networks.
- Direct contact with parents.

6. Activities

a) Provision of Health, Disability and Well-being Support, Technology and Aids:

- Provision of health-related instruments and technologies, such as:
 - cochlear implants;
 - insulin pumps; and
 - advanced mobile phones to support critical health applications, etc.
- Provision of disability and mobility aids and equipment, such as:
 - specialist wheelchairs;
 - daily living needs aids, including bathroom, bedroom and eating aids; and
 - specially modified vehicles, such as for families with more than one child with a neurodegenerative illness.
 - Support for cognitive, social, and emotional health development

b) Funding for Educational and Mentoring Programs and Services

- Funding for school and other education experiences and excursions, including school scholarships.
- Provision of technology and other learning resources to improve educational outcomes, such as computers and access to books.
- Pairing children with local mentors to deliver guidance, emotional support, and inspiration.

b) Child and Family Support:

- Financial assistance through the provision of food and fuel vouchers to help address short-term family challenges where children are at-risk, including where mothers with young children are fleeing domestic violence, and struggling families with children in fire-ravaged areas and drought-stricken regions.
- Connecting parents with local front-line workers and resources to address family challenges involving or impacting disabled, at-risk, or otherwise disadvantaged children.
- Support for cognitive, social, and emotional health development, including funding target and personalised interventions.

7. Targeted Outcomes

a) Short-Term

- Improved quality of life.
- Reduction in physical, situational and mental disadvantage.

- Enhanced social and emotional well-being, self-esteem and confidence.
- Greater engagement in school and educational activities.
- Improved academic performance.
- Better life balance.
- Adequate food and warmth.
- Less at-risk children from problem family situations.
- More at-risk children now living nurturing environments.

b) Medium-Term Outcomes

- Resilient, confident children, realizing their full potential.
- Higher rates of school attendance, progression, and graduation.
- Success in finding work or ongoing study opportunities.
- Disadvantaged and at-risk children in more supportive and stable family situations.
- Reduced incidence of behavioural issues or involvement in crime and delinquency.

c) Long-Term Societal Impacts

- Disadvantaged and at-risk children gaining fair access to opportunities for personal and academic success, enabling them to realize their full potential, without having their potential buried beneath the weight of circumstance.
- Reduced intergenerational poverty and disadvantage within the community as disadvantaged, disabled and at-risk children grow into empowered, economically stable adults.
- Stronger communities through enhanced well-being of children and their families, and equitable access to opportunities for all, irrespective of disability or disadvantage.

7. Summary

Bestest Foundation envisions a future where all children, regardless of their background, have the support and resources they need to thrive and succeed.

By investing in supporting children that are disadvantaged, disabled or at-risk and who are 'falling through the cracks', Bestest is seeking to break the cycle of disadvantage and to create lasting, positive change in the lives of these children so that they can realize their full potential.

Attachment – Bestest Foundation’s Theory of Change Model

