



# Church Partner *Overview*

**Lionheart**<sup>™</sup>  
Children's Academy





*Empowering churches to reach more young families and children in their most spiritually receptive years.*

Lionheart Children’s Academy exists to empower the church to take leadership of the child care industry for the advancement of the Gospel. We partner with local churches to launch and operate academies in church facilities – offering full-time preschool, after school, and summer programs for ages infant to 12 years. Reaching more children is THE key strategy for significant incremental advancement of the Gospel, and the child care industry represents the best opportunity to do so. Lionheart blesses the church by attracting and assimilating more young families, generating additional funding for ministry, and handling all the operational concerns.

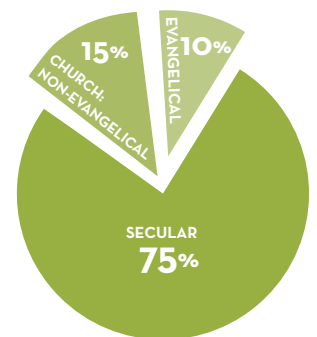
Research shows that unless we reach a person for Christ by the age of 13, chances are slim that we ever will.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the first seven years are the most important for spiritual development, and a person’s basic worldview and moral framework is largely formed by age nine.<sup>2</sup> Further, unreached adults are most receptive to the Gospel and church when they start having children.<sup>3</sup>

Providing high-quality, affordable child care is the ideal strategy to reach more children and parents with the Gospel during these most spiritually receptive years.

With most parents now working full-time, the vast majority of children are in preschool starting as early as 6 weeks old thru Kindergarten. During elementary school years, children are in afterschool programs till parents complete their work day and in daycare/camps all summer. Demographic trends with single and dual-income parents suggest that these percentages will only increase in the future.

Given these realities and the spiritual opportunity, it is shocking that 75 percent of the child care industry is controlled by secular companies with no faith orientation. Evangelical churches have less than 10 percent market share in perhaps the most critical industry for the future of the Gospel.

The evangelical church must take leadership of the child care industry in America. This is the strategy that can regain a proactive position for the Gospel, as new generations of children catch fire for Christ and establish God-centered heritages in their families. **This is the vision of Lionheart.**



Market Share

**THE GOSPEL SHOT CLOCK**

“If we don’t reach a child for Christ by their 13th birthday the chances are slim that we ever will.” – George Barna

## How Did We Get Here?

Providing full-time child care has become operationally complex and increasingly regulated, creating significant barriers to entry for churches. For this reason, many churches do not offer child care or only provide part-time programs like Mothers Day Out to serve their families.

While these programs provide a real benefit, they do little to reach unchurched families who need full-time care for their children. Churches do have excellent facilities (usually underutilized during the week) and lots of great people who care about children, positioning them well to attract unreached families if they did provide high quality full-time child care. What they need is an operational partner - Lionheart!

## The Solution

Lionheart partners with churches to launch and operate child care academies in church facilities to reach unchurched children and their parents. Lionheart runs the academies - providing operational and educational excellence on par with the best secular providers - while partnering with the church to be highly intentional in spiritual development with the children and outreach to their parents.

Lionheart is quickly revealing its power as a Gospel-advancing vision. With many academies already open, we see the impact for blessing the church spiritually, financially and operationally.

### Church is Blessed...

- 1 SPIRITUALLY** - reach more families and kids
- 2 FINANCIALLY** - generate funds for more ministry
- 3 OPERATIONALLY** - Lionheart does the "heavy lifting"



### ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO REACH YOUNG FAMILIES

*(John Meador, Senior Pastor Cross City Church)*

"Lionheart has been a fabulous partnership with Cross City

Church (First Baptist Euless, Texas). They bring excellent child care to our campus, along with dozens of new families who come through our facilities and visit our services. We had seven new Lionheart families at our Easter Sunday services. This is one of the best ways to reach young families in your community, and Lionheart does all the heavy lifting. We are planning to open more Lionhearts as we extend new satellites."



### REACHING THE COMMUNITY

*(Eric Herrstrom, Senior Pastor, The Lake)*

"Lionheart has given us a reach into the community that meets a family need and spiritual need.

God has allowed us to baptize entire families as a result. We are grateful for the ministry of excellence that Lionheart provides."



## Partnership Model

Key elements include:

- 1. Church provides** – the facility, all furniture/equipment needed and related expenses (utilities, janitorial, maintenance, refreshing). The facility must meet licensing requirements and be competitive with other local high-quality academies. The congregation uses Lionheart as a tool to introduce unreached friends to the church. Lionheart hires as many of the staff as possible from the church.
- 2. Lionheart Provides** – all operational oversight for the academy including hiring staff, day to day operations, marketing, finance/accounting, marketing, etc. Staffing includes an Academy Minister Leader (must be a member of the church) as the spiritual leader of the academy who ensures spiritual goals are achieved and maximizes opportunities to connect academy families to the church
- 3. Occupancy Fee** – the academy will provide the church with a fixed monthly amount, which will increase as we gain tenure in the coming years. This enables the church to plan its budget effectively for the year and keeps the focus on spiritual matters, while Lionheart continues to handle the day-to-day operations.

## Preliminary Considerations

### WHY WOULD WE DO THIS?

Child care academies can be both spiritually and financially fruitful. Lionheart has proven that childcare academies can attract unreached families and integrate them into the church if operated with high spiritual intentionality. They can also create a significant incremental funding stream for the church. Maximizing the spiritual impact requires investments in leadership and processes that potentially reduce “profitability”. Lionheart seeks to support churches that are

primarily motivated to maximize the spiritual impact of their academies – while recognizing that the financials have to be right as well.

### WILL IT WORK?

The viability of an academy is based on many factors including the church culture, location, facility, surrounding demographics and the amount and quality of competition. Lionheart provides full feasibility studies to assess the likelihood of success.

### KEY SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR CHURCHES INCLUDE:

- general health and heart for outreach
- young families in surrounding community
- facility that can accommodate 160 children

## Next Steps

### LEVEL 1: DEEPER MARKET DIVE

**Church pays:** \$500

**Purpose:** To gather more information to align with market, capacities, and financial feasibility.

### LEVEL 2: FEASIBILITY STUDY

**Church pays:**

- \$5,000 for flight location
- \$4,000 for overnight, driving location
- \$3,000 for non-flight, non- overnight location

**Purpose:** An in-depth written Feasibility Study showing the potential for an academy that includes:

- On-sight Visit to assess facilities
- Demographics
- Assess location
- Assess needed construction/changes
- Assess current FE&S
- Visit competitors
- Meet with Church staff
- Spiritual alignment

### LEVEL 3: FINANCIAL MODEL

**Church pays:** \$1,500

**Purpose:** Customized financial model, assess playground costs, mock FE&S order and evaluate kitchen needs.



## Testimonies from Pastors and Families



### Showing Christ's Love and Changing Lives

*(The Daba Family)*

When Michaela first visited Lionheart Children's Academy at The Lake, she was very anxious and guarded. This mother had a nanny quit unexpectedly, and then had a poor experience at another child care center. When she enrolled Julius, the staff immediately began to build a relationship with this family.

Even before Julius' first day at Lionheart, Michaela's family began visiting The Lake. Michaela shared with the Lionheart staff that she "never would have visited this church had it not been for Lionheart." They began attending worship and joined a Sunday School class.

When Julius had surgery that fall, the The Lake preschool minister and a Lionheart Academy Minister Leader went to the hospital to be with the family and pray with them. In December, the preschool minister and a Lionheart administrator visited them at home, and soon after Michaela emailed Senior Pastor Eric and asked about becoming a member of The Lake.

Michaela and her husband made professions of faith in Jesus and were baptized at The Lake on January 18, 2015. Michaela told a Lionheart staff member how different their lives have been since becoming part of Lionheart and The Lake. Now, the Daba family shares Bible stories with their children and prays together. This family's legacy of faith has forever changed.



### THE POWER OF FEELING WELCOME

*(The Farmer Family)*

Bill and Amanda's 4-year-old son, Caleb, and 20-month-old daughter, Riley, were

on Lionheart Children's Academy's waiting list, and indicated during their tour that they did not have a church home. When a Lionheart administrator called to let them know that their kids could start in a few weeks, they were thrilled, and Bill asked if they could come to church on Sunday. Lionheart's Academy Minister Leader met them at the front door on Sunday and got both children settled in their classes while Bill and Amanda attended worship. The church staff followed up with them, made good connections, and the Farmer Family came back the very next week, expressing how welcome they felt.



### A TOOL FOR HEALING

*(Jimmy Draper, President Emeritus, LifeWay)*

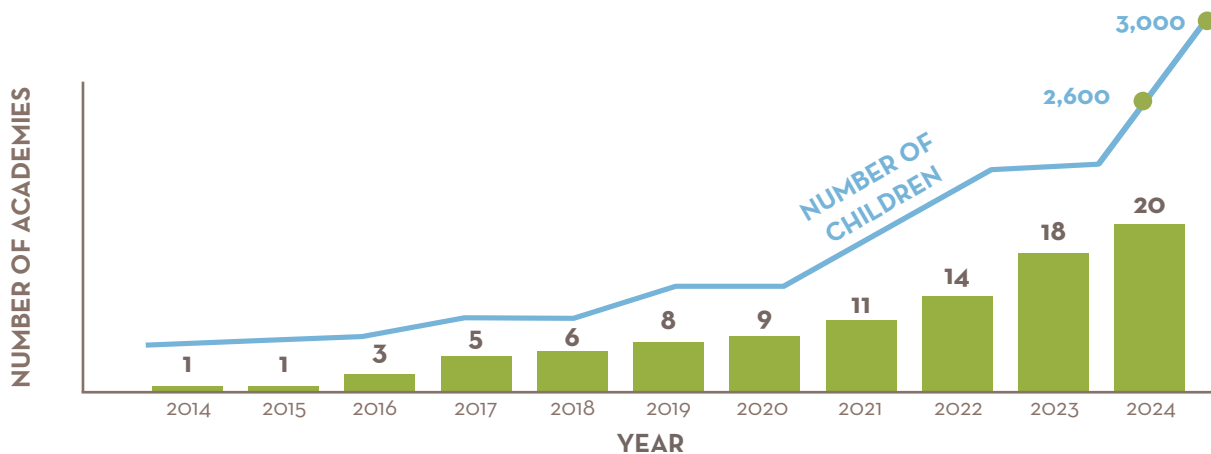
"We are living in a world where marriage and the family are being unraveled. At the same

time, the most fertile fields for reaching people with the Gospel are young children and their parents. Lionheart is a remarkable tool to reach these young families who are the future of our society and future leaders in our churches and nation."



## Where We're At and Where We're Headed

There are approximately 10 million children under the age of five in child care centers. Most are unchurched and using secular providers. Therefore, we have a massive opportunity to **“take back early childhood education for Christ.”** Take a look at the chart below to see our progress in this God-given goal:



### Partner with Lionheart

Lionheart desires to partner with your church because we are passionate about advancing the gospel. We love hearing how families have come to know Christ because of a Lionheart Academy being their first point of contact with the church. Providing child care for the community can be one of your greatest outreach tools in effect becoming an effective “front porch” for the church.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit [lionheartkid.org](http://lionheartkid.org) or email us at [churchpartners@lionheartkid.org](mailto:churchpartners@lionheartkid.org)



# Lionheart<sup>™</sup>

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