The Golden Hour Initiative was a pilot initiative designed by the Human Resources (HR) Unit to help DCYA staff who are parents to balance home working and care during the COVID-19 pandemic response. The initiative consisted of an hour from 12:00-13:00 on working days, during which parents were encouraged to spend time at play with their children.

The HR Unit piloted the initiative in the Department during the months of May and June 2020, while schools and Early Learning and Childcare facilities remained closed. The Research and Evaluation Unit evaluated the initiative on behalf of the HR Unit to ascertain whether the initiative was meeting its primary objective of supporting parents to balance home working and care, while meeting the needs of staff and the operation of business. The evaluation consisted of two surveys conducted at the middle and end of May, followed by six one-to-one interviews with staff serving at Assistant Principal Officer and Principal Officer grades.

The Research and Evaluation Unit, as the representative of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) within DCYA, is responsible for conducting evaluation.
projects in policy areas across the Department, in fulfilment of Public Spending Code requirements.

Projects include Focused Policy Assessments, Value for Money and Policy Reviews and engagement in Spending Review cycles, with technical and evaluation inputs also provided to Units across the DCYA on an ongoing basis.