

# Ngala

Parenting with Confidence

## Service Delivery Model

### *Executive Summary*

September 2012

Ngala works towards a community where:

- Children are healthy, safe, respected and develop to their full potential.
- Parents are knowledgeable, skilled, confident and supported.
- Parents and children enjoy positive interactions and relationships.

## Executive Summary



The purpose of this document is to provide clear documentation of the service delivery model for Ngala. It was developed over an 18-month period through an action learning approach and first published during 2008.

The document gives an overview of the context to the work of Ngala and why Ngala exists. It reflects where we are now and aspects of where we would like to be in the future. It is now well known that the effects of early life last a lifetime and that there is substantial evidence that factors operating in early life, including pregnancy and early childhood, set the foundation for a child's future social, physical, emotional and mental wellbeing throughout life. The document also outlines the frameworks which underpin service delivery strategies, the scope of care and linkages and partnerships. Managing, leading and organising services to meet the demands and needs of parents of young children as well as future workforce requirements will continue to be a challenge in the 21st century.

Ngala as an organisation has been evolving and changing over more than a century, and has always striven to be relevant to the context of community at any point in time. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and now into the new millennium, the history, context and evidence provides a strong direction for Ngala's work in early childhood and parenting.

The service delivery model and the strategic plan inform each other. The model is a foundational document which will be adapted as substantial new evidence comes to light. The strategic direction has a focus of five years after which time it is reviewed and changed. Ngala is now Western Australia's leading non-government organisation in early parenting and is known and respected throughout WA for its knowledge and evidence-informed approach to child development, and for its support to parents of babies and young children particularly in the 0-6 year age group. Ngala works from a holistic perspective and routinely involves fathers and other family members in its services. Ngala has

successfully undertaken community development activities alongside service delivery in several locations and is working to ensure resources and supports are available broadly in the WA community.

The model gives an umbrella framework to which there is an underlay of service documents for each service area and the various practice frameworks. Ngala focuses on promoting and protecting the interests and rights of children and recognises that the family remains the primary means for meeting the needs of young children. Working in partnership with families, Ngala ensures that the rights of the child are central to any decisions taken and seeks to maximise positive health outcomes for parents, babies, young children and all family members, while strengthening and promoting healthy physical, social and emotional development. We know that it is important to view children in the context of broader ecologies — families, schools, neighbourhoods, churches, and communities. We also know there are almost no quick fixes that actually work.

The focus of Ngala services will offer families support and assistance through a range of strategies and at various locations throughout WA. We cannot do this on our own as it is a collaborative effort with sponsors, partners, universities, government and non government services. A transformational approach to services has to involve strong partnerships and must be delivered locally to families. To improve the quality of life of children and families we need to take a preventative and long-term approach that is developmental in nature and one that operates in co-ordination with other forces in a child's life. Effective activities need to be linked with other systems of support and intervention to ensure they can produce and sustain their impacts over time. They are also based upon research, service development, quality staff having effective management support structures in place and ongoing staff development opportunities.

# Ngala Service Delivery Model

Ngala is committed to social inclusion which provides a way of looking at the well-being of children and families and contributes to the dialogue around the creation of a just, healthy and inclusive society. This commitment affirms the need for targeted services for vulnerable groups and for activities that aim to reduce the distance between the everyday lives and the life outcomes for vulnerable and other children.

Targeted services, whether they are mainstream or discrete, acknowledge that children and families, who are vulnerable for whatever reason, will need additional support and resources if their childhoods are to be healthy and rich in relationships and interactions that support their social and emotional health, general wellbeing and development. Universal Ngala services provide the framework of commitment to all children within which to place the targeted services necessary to achieve the social inclusion of all children<sup>1</sup>.

## Service Delivery Model Overview

The reason Ngala exists and the evidence and research available, validates the work at Ngala with parents of young children. A changing social, cultural and political climate contribute to the sense of challenge and the need to keep abreast of new and emerging evidence.

Effective services do not offer a fixed model to all families, regardless of their preferences and circumstances. One-size-fits-all approaches fail to adapt to the needs of particular children, families and communities, and are therefore less effective<sup>2</sup>. Effective services seek to build partnerships with parents, children and communities. When service providers and families work as partners to determine what action should be taken, there is greater

probability that the desired outcomes will be achieved<sup>3</sup>.

The Ngala service delivery model presents a unique and effective way of articulating the why, what, where and how of services available to children, families and the communities of WA.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of the key components of the model. This model for describing Ngala places the child, family and community uppermost and central to the model. The strategic plan and the framework for results-based accountability provide the underpinnings of the model. The left-hand circle represents the foundation for development and establishment of the service delivery model. The centre circle highlights the importance of strategic, operational and practice frameworks which guide Ngala activities. All of this impacts on the way we deliver our service.

Leadership at all levels of the organisation is crucial to engaging and driving change in a positive way which influences and impacts on the health and well-being of children and families. Ngala continues to use action learning which creates the dynamic of constant change and developing people as well as the organisation.

The blend of Ngala services underpinned by the Service Delivery Model enhances the health and well-being of families with young children. These services are provided for individuals, groups and communities using universal, targeted and intensive strategies within the scope of care and strive to extend Ngala's geographical reach throughout Western Australia. Also the corporate and service support functions at Ngala are seen as the backbone to the work with children and families.

The components of the Service Delivery Model, including its foundations, frameworks and strategies, are described in greater detail in the full version.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Early Childhood Association Inc., 2008, A response towards a national agenda for early childhood.

<sup>2</sup> Scott S, O'Connore T, Futh A. 2006, *What makes parenting programmes work in disadvantaged areas?* York, UK: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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<sup>3</sup> Silberberg S, 2001, *Searching for Family Resilience*. Family Matters, No. 58 (Autumn), 52-57.

Figure 1. Ngala Service Delivery Model



## The key components

The Ngala Strategic Plan operates alongside the Service delivery model and includes a shared vision and purpose as well as shared principles and outcomes.

Ngala has developed specific strategies and performance measures to achieve its outcomes. The outcomes described in Ngala's strategic focus are realistic, specific, achievable and incorporate results-based accountability for Ngala services.

Ngala's Service Delivery Model outlines the context, evidence-base and ways of work at Ngala. It is complemented by an Integrated Service Framework that explains how Ngala facilitates both a seamless service for clients being referred, as well as how Ngala staff work with each other and with external service providers and partners.

Ngala's services are provided across three particular areas:

**Universal Services:** Those services that are aimed at the general population such as the Ngala Website, Helpline and Parent Education services.

**Targeted Services:** This can be a geographical location such as Ngala's Parenting and Play Time at Merriwa, Noranda, Mirrabooka, Kwinana and Rockingham; and/or services tailored to specific parenting needs including vulnerable families such as the HIPPY Program (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) and Ngala's Indigenous Parenting Service.

**Intensive or specialised services** Where an intensive response for parents with young children are required. This includes Ngala's Day Stay and Overnight Stay Services and the Parenting Advice and Support Service at Bandyup Women's Prison.

The principles for service delivery reflect the focus of the strategic plan and the way of work for Ngala. The principles are based on a premise of providing an evidence base underpinning the delivery of services. The seven key principles are:

1. Accessibility
2. Valuing Diversity
3. Adaptable and Creative
4. Strengths-Based/Solution-Focused Approach
5. Working in Partnership
6. Prevention and Early Intervention
7. Advocacy.

Ngala is committed to continuous improvement in service delivery and as such places a high importance on the evaluation of service areas and projects. Client feedback mechanisms are incorporated into each service area with regular reporting of outcomes.

## Evaluation is about.....

“the use of the scientific method, and the rigorous and systematic collection of research data to assess the effectiveness of organisations, services, and programs...in achieving predefined objectives [outcomes]”<sup>4</sup>; and is “a continuous process of asking questions, reflecting on the answers to those questions and reviewing ongoing strategies and actions. These evaluation processes occur within an agreed framework and plan. The processes are the same whether evaluation is undertaken at the planning stage of an initiative, during its implementation or at its conclusion”<sup>5</sup>.

It is important for Ngala to consider and determine whether the services being offered are actually achieving better outcomes for children and families. It is essential to have a clear understanding, at all levels of the organisation, of the outcomes that are to be achieved.

## Results-based accountability.....

The outcomes-based (Results-Based Accountability [RBA]) model of Friedman<sup>6</sup> starts with the desired ends and works backward towards the means to achieve them.

There are four steps:

1. Identifying the outcomes sought;
2. Selecting strategies for achieving these objectives on the basis of program logic and evidence-based practice;
3. Translating strategies into specific activities or services; and
4. Identifying indicators to measure the progress made<sup>7</sup>.

## Quality & Continuous Improvement

Ngala is committed to conducting business activities in a way that provides a consistently acceptable level of quality.

Ngala maintains a Quality Management System, consistent with the AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 – Quality Management Systems standard, with an emphasis on compliance and continual improvement.

Quality performance, as identified in Ngala’s Business Plan is monitored and reviewed annually against set strategies and performance measures to ensure continuous improvement.



Client feedback is an outcome measure in the Strategic Plan and is one of the ways that Ngala assesses its services. Clients and employees are encouraged to provide feedback in order for Ngala to streamline its services.

<sup>4</sup> Bowling A, 2002, *Research Methods in Health: investigating health and health services*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Buckingham: Open University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health and Aged Care, 2001, *Evaluation: A guide for good practice*, Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>6</sup> Friedman M, 2005, *Trying hard is not good enough: how to produce measurable outcomes for customers and communities*, Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> Moore T, 2007, *Building integrated early childhood and family support services: an outcomes-based approach*, Plenary paper presented at Marymead Early Childhood Conference – what works for children: Bridging the gaps – Canberra, Aug.

## Context for Ngala's work

Ngala operates within a state-wide context in Western Australia and is recognised as a leading resource for families with babies and young children. Ngala is one of Western Australia's oldest charities. Ngala's diverse and rich history reflects the changing nature of the families and communities it serves, as well as organisational adaptation, continual improvement and renewal.

The factors influencing the provision of services are many and include issues such as demand for services, workforce recruitment and retention, the WA context, partnerships and scope of care and linkages.

## Governance

The organisation is governed by a Board of Directors that consists of 8 members. The Board is balanced in its composition with each member bringing a range of complementary skills and expertise to the organisation. Board sub-committees provide the ongoing monitoring of governance processes. For example, the Professional Advisory Committee includes board members, senior staff and external stakeholders who advise on clinical governance/quality issues, project development and research.

The Chief Executive Officer, together with the Director, Managers and Coordinators are responsible for implementing Ngala's Strategic Plan, annual business plan, service plans and budget.

## Evidence

The model covers the following areas:

1. The Enhancement and Protection of Children;
2. Ecological View;
3. Health Promotion Focus;
4. The Importance of the Early Years;
5. Early Brain Development;
6. Parenting and the Factors that Influence it;
7. Family Mental Health in the Early Years;
8. Infant Mental Health and Parent-Child Attachment;
9. Children and Child Care (Early Learning and Development);
10. Social Determinants of Health;
11. Help-Seeking Behaviour;

## 12. Contexts and Issue of Focus for Families (from the literature)

- The Importance of Involving Fathers
- Indigenous Families
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Parents
- Separation and Divorce
- Step Families and Blended Families
- Grandparents or Alternative Carers
- Parents Affected by Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Families in Rural and Remote Contexts
- Partners Working Away from Home
- Parent with a Disability or Child with a Disability
- Family Violence.

## How we work...

### 1. Interdisciplinary Team Approach

A team of professionals represent several different disciplines and this service delivery model is dependent on the team functioning as a cohesive group of people. By this, it is expected that they share a common philosophy of practice, recognise and freely exchange knowledge and skills and work effectively together for the achievement of a set of common goals.

### 2. C-Frame

C-Frame is a strengths-based, solution-focused approach for working with families and with each other. Ngala adopted the C-Frame (Parenting Skills Development Index) in 2004.

The name C-Frame encapsulates the three action c-words embedded in the framework - connect, collaborate and change. This framework provides a process and tools for practitioners to connect on the one hand with families and work collaboratively with them towards positive change, and on the other hand to connect with colleagues and work collaboratively towards positive change as well as an increase in skills in the work place.

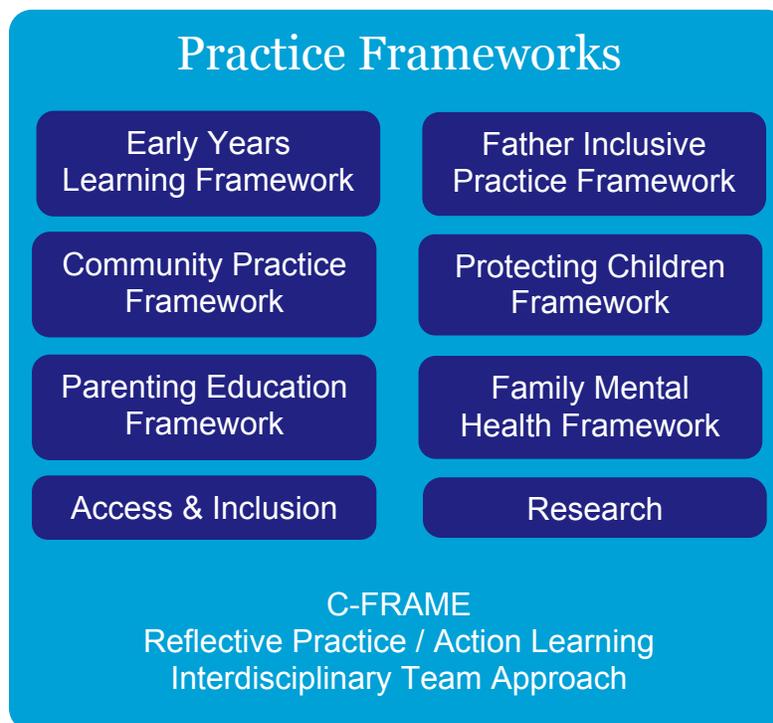
One of the important tasks embedded in the C-Frame is the requirement that practitioners

engage in regular, scheduled and ongoing reflective practice.

### 3. Practice Frameworks

Building on the strategic focus and the evidence base, Ngala has developed and continues to develop practice frameworks which guide the work of the organisation. This enables practice to be built on a stronger foundation and facilitates a language for interdisciplinary team work. The resulting consistency of approaches directly impacts on outcomes for clients using Ngala services.

**Figure 2. Ngala's Practice Frameworks**



Working in partnership with families,  
Ngala seeks to maximise positive health outcomes  
for parents, babies and young children and for all family members,  
while strengthening and promoting health and wellbeing.

For more in-depth information please visit the Ngala website [www.ngala.com.au](http://www.ngala.com.au)

**Ngala**

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