

Student & Research Projects at Ngala 2020

Student Projects and Postgraduate Research Opportunities at Ngala for 2020

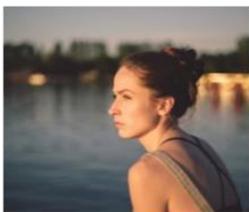
Research Unit

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Please note that the list of projects provided, including their scope and project length, are a guide only. NOTE: Many of these projects will require HREC approval.

Ngala's research focus areas



Perinatal anxiety
and depression



Early years
development



Parent-child
relationships



Parent skill
development



Families in
community context



Workforce
development



Historical
perspectives



Culturally sensitive
parenting

Welcome to Ngala

In WA, the name Ngala is synonymous with parenting and children's development and was established in 1890, with 129 years of service to the community. Ngala has a passion for supporting families with children 0-18 years through the journey of parenting and is widely respected for its knowledge and evidence-informed services, as well as community engagement work.

Over the past decade, research and evaluation have been major areas of development within Ngala. In 2007 the decision to forge formal links and articulate an interdisciplinary research framework to promote a research culture amongst the organisation was made. Following this decision, a two-year action learning project was undertaken with the involvement of researchers, managers and practitioners across a number of disciplines. This project focused on the development of a research framework to guide future planning within the organisation.

Ngala's Research Framework emphasises the importance of knowledge seeking and sharing amongst practitioners, implementing continuous action learning cycles, and building stronger and more coherent connections between current research and service delivery. Ngala's research policy is "to support an agenda for work in parenting and early childhood that is responsive to the needs of the community and fits with Ngala's purpose in serving the community by providing evidence-based services".

Enclosed is a list of prospective research projects that might be of interest to students in their final year placements, honours and postgrad students. Projects may be relevant to students from a variety of backgrounds, with topics ranging from evaluation of data and reflective practice, to early childhood projects, community development and fatherhood.

Ngala has a strong commitment to WA students and encourages any questions, comments, request or ideas to our research team at: research@ngala.com.au

We look forward to hearing from you.



Dr Elaine Bennett, Director Research, Ngala



Become a volunteer Research Assistant at Ngala

Are you a student wishing to increase your skills in research and evaluation and can work within a team that supports tasks contributing to larger projects?

We can support and mentor you so you can gain more experience.

If you are interested in volunteering contact the Research Unit on research@ngala.com.au

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Research Focus Area 1: Perinatal anxiety and depression

Project 1: Evaluation/Research retrospective data – Residential Services

Service Area: Family Services

Estimated length of project: 120 hours (negotiable)

Most suitable study course: Undergraduate or practicum placement

Scope of project: Ngala has a number of years' worth of data taken during the residential services with parents:

- The EPDS at initial assessment on admission
- The Karitane Parenting Confidence Scale – pre and post

There are a range of questions that could be asked of the data, including a conversation with Karitane in NSW on the types of projects that they have ongoing and the potential for joint site projects.

Examples for analysis:

- What are the demographics and emerging issues for parents?
- Assess what current primary presenting issues relate to high EPDS scores and low confidence ratings.
- Assess the relationship between complex presenting issues and confidence levels.

The project will assist with the development of an evidence-base for specific strategies for parents and professionals in this area of work, with implications for future practice.

Ethics approval required: No

Skills required: Data analysis, good use of Word and Excel.

Project 2: Exploration of fathers' experiences in visa detention facilities

Service Area: Research Unit

Estimated length of project: To be determined

Most suitable study course: Postgraduate student for health or social sciences

Scope of project: Men who are fathers and who have violated their visa requirements are detained in a specific facility. This experience can have an impact on their mental health and wellbeing. They are often isolated from their families and children. A number of small projects could be linked with these fathers in detention, such as:

- Investigating the fathers experience following detention,
- Assess their needs in relation to fatherhood and parenting
- Piloting a comprehensive program for men based on their needs,
- Apply a range of measurement scales to assess men's mental health and overall wellbeing.

Ethics approval required: Yes

Skills required: Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods, literature reviews and interviewing.

Research Focus Area 2: Early Years Development

Project 3: What is the impact of antenatal sessions for prospective fathers?

Service Area: Research Unit

Estimated length of project: 120 hrs

Most suitable study course: Postgraduate student for health or social sciences

Scope of project: In becoming a father, men undergo a major life change with new responsibilities and roles. While the birth can be a time for celebration and joy there will be many challenges for fathers in supporting the mother and taking up their relationship with the new infant. A number of small projects could be linked with antenatal sessions and follow up of fathers to see what support was required in the transition from pregnancy and post birth. Other areas of focus could include –

- finding out what fathers are doing to prepare for parenting,
- piloting a more comprehensive antenatal class for men,
- piloting a follow-up of fathers post-birth.

Ethics approval required: Yes

Skills required: Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods, literature reviews and interviewing.

Project 4: Development of early parenting resources

Service Area: Research Unit

Estimated length of project: Several projects available

Most suitable study course: Child Health Nursing postgraduate

Scope of project: In the past, Ngala has produced print copies of books and tip sheets for parents that focus on areas of sleep and nutrition. With the launch of Ngala's new website in August 2019, there is an opportunity for new parenting resources to be developed that can be further developed into e-resources for parents to purchase through the website. The content for these new resources needs to be developed aligning with current best practice and Ngala's e-practice guide. Possible resources include:

- Toileting/hygiene
- Personal safety/cyber safety/Talking about my body
- Developing language and school readiness
- Brain development (Ngala has existing extensive knowledge and resources)
- Family diversity
- FIFO/DIDO families

Ethics approval required: No

Skills required: Must have nursing practice knowledge, preferably child health.

Research focus area 3: Parent/child relationships

Project 5: Supporting the parent to enhance a toddler's ability to self-regulate

Service Area: Family Services/ Research Unit

Estimated length of project: Negotiable

Most suitable study course: Postgraduate student for health or social sciences

Scope of project: Families are looking for solutions when their toddler presents with challenging behaviours.

It is anticipated a literature review is required and a needs analysis with parents that would develop the evidence for the next phase of developing specific strategies for parents and professionals in this area of work, with implications for future practice.

Areas of focus could include:

- Parental expectations and needs with toddlers presenting with behavioural issues.
- Assess evidence –based programs available for parents toddlers with complex needs
- Co-design a cost effective program for parents to facilitate earlier intervention
- Develop a formative intervention that would work for parents with low literacy levels and special needs
- Given the gap in services for toddlers in WA develop a primary health care intervention for those parents who have identified issues with their two year old using play based programs and psycho-educational strategies.
- Evaluate effectiveness of developed programs.

Ethics approval required: Yes

Skills required: Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods, literature reviews.

Research focus area 4: Parent skill development

Project 6: Sleep issues & solutions for families with children with ASD and ADHD and other related issues.

Service Area: Research Unit

Estimated length of project: To be determined

Most suitable study course: Postgraduate project

Scope of project: Families are looking for sleeping and settling solutions for babies and children with neurological disorders, sleep disorders and medical disorders. There is a large cohort of families with children with ASD and ADHD and other related issues who have 0-10 year olds with ongoing sleep issues. They often try the traditional solutions (they say they “failed” Ngala) and are desperately seeking solutions. It is anticipated a literature review is required and a needs analysis with parents that would develop the evidence for the next phase of developing specific strategies for parents and professionals in this area of work, with implications for future practice.

Ethics approval required: Yes for honours or postgraduate project

Skills required: Qualitative and quantitative research methods, literature reviews, survey development.

Project 7: An exploratory study on fathers access to parenting education-support resources

Service Area:	Research Unit
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Postgraduate student for health or social sciences Journalism/creative writing/graphic art/digital design/digital and social media

Scope of project: Ngala currently provide a range of education support services for families. It is an ongoing endeavor to engage with fathers and find creative ways to provide information and support relevant for their needs.

There are two possibilities:

- A scoping study on fathers to assess their needs and what is beneficial for their fathering role? If there was an online resource like an App - What does it look like and how might it be used?
- Ngala currently provides digital video technologies for individual and group parenting education. It is mostly women who participate through these services. Investigate rural fathers' needs in relation to how these digital technologies can support fathers – both during pregnancy and early parenting?

Ethics approval required:	Yes
Skills required:	Design skills, copy writing, excellent language skills, previous knowledge and experience working creating or generating e-documentation.

Research focus area 5: Families in community context

Project 8: Evaluation/Research of Ngala's Facebook page

Service Area:	Research Unit/Marketing
Estimated length of project:	Negotiable
Most suitable study course:	Honours year/master's student for health or social sciences/information technology/Digital and social media (this project could be modified to suit an undergraduate program).

Scope of project: Facebook provides an opportunity for a research and evaluation project, considering a range of parenting questions via a survey from the users of Ngala's Facebook page. For example:

- To ask questions in relation to breastfeeding and parental expectations.
- To target fathers and check if parenting information is father inclusive and relevant for fathers.
- To focus on how parents manage their young children 0-4 years with iPads/tablets/screen time.
- To align with what parents want or find useful as a resource.

Ethics approval required:	Yes if this project is to be published
Skills required:	Social media, surveys, and intermediate knowledge of Microsoft Office (Word and Excel).

Project 9: Review of early parenting resources and development of e-resources.

Service Area:	Research Unit
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Journalism/creative writing/graphic art/digital design/digital and social media

Scope of project: Ngala has produced print copies of books and tip sheets for parents that focus on areas of sleep and nutrition. These resources need reviewing and updating and developed into e-books that are easily accessible for parents using all forms of electronic media (i.e mobile phone, tablets and desk top computers). Ngala has recently rebranded and all existing resources need to be updated using new logos and colours. This project would also need input from some of Ngala's practice staff to ensure that content is aligned with current practices and Ngala's e-practice guide.

Ethics approval required: No

Skills required: Design skills, copy writing, excellent language skills, previous knowledge and experience working creating or generating e-documentation.

Project 10: Evaluation/Research of Ngala's Parenting Line data

Service Area:	Family Services
Estimated length of project:	120 hours (negotiable)
Most suitable study course:	Undergraduate or practicum placement

Scope of project: Ngala has 25 years of Parenting Line data ready for a student. There are a range of questions that could be asked of the data, including demographics for each caller in WA and parenting line call issues related management and referral data. In Dec 2016 Ngala has expanded the Parenting Line to parents of children 0-18 years.

Ngala runs the service from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. A student is required to help with the analysis of various sources of data. Examples for analysis:

- What are the emerging issues for parents of school-aged children and adolescents?
- Assess whether the current primary presenting issues 0-6 years are different and/or more complex than past primary presenting issues;
- Assess if there is a correlation between birth rate per geographical area and number of HL calls from that area.
- To determine if families with new babies are using the service;
- Assess the impact of new community services or conversely closure of services on Parenting Line calls within geographical areas.

The project will assist with the development of an evidence-base for specific strategies for parents and professionals in this area of work, with implications for future practice.

Ethics approval required: No

Skills required: Data analysis, good use of Word and Excel.

Research focus area 6: Workforce development

Project 11: LGBTQI families

Service Area:	Research Unit
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Honours or postgraduate project

Scope of project: Access and inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) families to early parenting services is crucial. A study undertaken several years ago analysed the attitudes, knowledge and beliefs of Ngala staff around working with LGBTQI families¹. The results demonstrated that work is needed to promote acceptance of diversity and the inclusion of LGBTQI families in planning, developing, evaluating and accessing early parenting services.

Since this time Ngala has developed an Access and Inclusion Framework and policy and undertaken staff development opportunities. It is timely to reconsider a further audit or survey to reassess for any change or further areas of staff development is required. The project will assist us to answer if the access and inclusion framework made a difference to:

- staff attitudes,
- accessible and culturally sensitive services, and
- practice implications.

Ethics approval required:	Yes (if publication of results), No for Ngala purposes.
Skills required:	Knowledge of survey development, data analysis, literature reviews.

Project 12: Explore the complexity of concerns for parents at the Residential Parenting Service

Service Area:	Ngala Residential Parenting Service
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Post graduate student in Nursing, Psychology or Social Work

Scope of project: There are a large percentage of parents who attend Ngala's residential parenting service, in day stay or extended stay services, who have reported complex issues that may impact on their parenting. These issues include mental health, stress, co-morbidity, relationship issues, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug issues. The research will analyse the data that is currently collected through the use of tools and scales for parents admitting into the service. The student will be required to undertake analysis of existing data, research scales and tools used in other RPS in Australia, and produce a report that makes recommendations to improve service delivery, staff training and workforce development, increased funding and suggest tools that could be used that are more suitable for the service.

Ethics approval required:	Yes, for publication of results.
Skills required:	Word, Excel and familiarity with scales and tools used, such as the EPDS.

1. ¹ Bennett E, Berry K, Emeto TI, Burmeister OK, Young J, Shields L. Attitudes to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents seeking health care for their children in two early parenting services in Australia. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, SEPT 2016, doi:10.1111/jocn.13595.

Project 13: Ngala Reflective Practice Supervision

Service Area:	Research Unit
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Honours or Postgraduate studies in community psychology, health or social sciences.

Scope of project: Ngala are in the process of developing a community of practice approach to integrate reflective practice supervision (RPS) across Ngala. A community of practice approach where a monthly seminar series highlighting reflective practice competencies has been adopted. Seminars are held at a different Ngala sites and available via video technology. Although RPS competencies are aligned to practice, these seminars are open to all staff to increase awareness of, and develop an organisation wide culture of reflective practices. Potential projects related to RPS at Ngala include:

- Qualitative evaluation of practitioners' experiences of the Ngala RPS seminar series and integration of the principles and competencies into everyday practice.
- Evaluation of how community of practice model (approach) builds organisational readiness for implementation of RPS model. Identify factors that contribute to organisational readiness for implementation of RPS across a range of sites
- Case study analysis of implementation of the RPS seminar series across Ngala.

Ethics approval required:	Yes
Skills required:	Qualitative and quantitative research methods, data analysis.

Project 14: Data collation and analysis to support strategic and service planning

Service Area:	Research Unit
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	To be determined

Scope of project: A lot of data is collected by other agencies and organisations that could support Ngala's strategic and service planning. In order to be usable and relevant, it requires collation and a way to readily extract and analyse data for specific areas. This includes demographic data and other measures such as socioeconomic (SEIFA) and developmental (AEDC, NAPLAN).

This project could include:

- Mapping to overlay the AEDC boundaries as provided on the AEDC website;
- Collation of data from AEDC, NAPLAN, ABS, LGAs, workforce surveys, birthrates from Department of Health;
- Identifying trends or patterns in areas where Ngala has a presence; and
- Identifying areas of potential need and/or growth where Ngala does not have a presence.
- Identify opportunities for workforce development.

Ethics approval required:	No
Skills required:	Good use of Word and Excel, knowledge and skills in conducting literature reviews.

Research focus area 7: Historical Perspectives

There are currently no projects identified in this research focus area, however, any student wishing to undertake a postgraduate project with a focus on historical practices with a nursing and early parenting focus is encouraged to contact the Research Unit to discuss. Ngala has a rich collection of archived material stored at the Batty Library, Perth.

Research focus area 8: Culturally sensitive parenting

Project 15: Can the Ngala Parenting Line support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents?

Service Area:	Family Services
Estimated length of project:	To be determined
Most suitable study course:	Aboriginal studies, health or social sciences, early childhood education.
Student:	Honours year, part of a master's degree or PhD. Preferably an Aboriginal student (in keeping with 50D guidelines).

Scope of project: The Parenting Line is Ngala's main contact point for parents with children aged 0 -18 years who seek to discuss their parenting concerns. Statistics are currently collected on the number of calls, the postcodes of callers and the key concerns and issues raised by callers. Ngala does not currently collect information on the ethnicity or cultural background of parents who use the Parenting Line, so is unable to evaluate the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents who use the service, or if the service is an appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

There is very limited evaluated evidence of the efficacy of helplines for Aboriginal people generally, and specifically if such a service would be used or be considered useful by Aboriginal parents. Furthermore, if such a service were to be offered how this could be offered in a culturally secure way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The objective of the project will be to establish recommendations following consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families about:

- where they currently seek parenting information from and what influences those choices;
- whether or not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents would find a parenting line service useful, under what circumstances they would most likely use the service and the barriers to them using the service; and
- What a culturally secure parenting line service would look like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Ethics approval required:	Yes
Skills required:	Skills and knowledge of literature reviews, knowledge of culturally safe practices in a work environment, skills in interviewing and yarning.