



# Research and Advocacy Framework





## Acknowledgement of Country

**Ngala kaaditj Whadjuk Noongar  
moort keyen kaadak nidja boodja**

Parkerville Children and Youth Care respectfully acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of their culture, land and waters on which we work, live, and meet.

We pay our respect to all Elders past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions, and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal Australia.



Artwork by  
Buffie Punch

# Our Commitment to Impact and Influence

Parkerville’s research and advocacy work strives to effect positive change for children, young people, and families in Western Australia. By putting their needs, rights, and voices at the forefront, and by harnessing a diverse and strong knowledge base, we contribute to a robust foundation that can offer comprehensive services, tackle social issues, push for early intervention, identify best practice, and ensure that children’s voices are better placed to influence policy-making. In doing this, we share our insights openly, valuing the input from those we serve.

Our Framework showcases Parkerville’s commitment to research and advocacy, detailing how they inform and strengthen each other to support the work that we do, and the system change that we want to see. They both rely and thrive on collaboration with individuals, teams, partners, and the community that we serve. We approach this responsibility with great care and respect, honouring all contributions along the way and ensuring a collective effort towards meaningful change.



# Introduction

Parkerville annually supports more than 13,000 children, young people, and their families to address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences through a constellation of programs, including out-of-home care; child advocacy, therapeutic and clinical psychology services; early intervention/prevention early years services; targeted intervention for educationally at-risk young people; and youth homelessness services. We develop innovative and culturally safe services in partnership with government, other for-purpose organisations, and ACCOs. Parkerville was the first Child Safe-accredited organisation in WA; we continue to build our reputation for compassionate, child and family focused, and innovative evidence-based services.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose as an organisation is to support children, young people, and their families to build skills and capacity, address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and develop capabilities that will enable them to be the best versions of themselves.

## Our Vision

We see a future where Western Australia is the safest place in the world and all children, young people, and their families feel safe to dream, to thrive, and to reach their fullest potential.

## Our Values



**Bold and courageous**  
We stand up for what is right and amplify the voices of the children, young people, families, and communities we support.



**Curious and humble**  
We search out information and data that will help us remain at the forefront of all that we do.



**Caring and respectful**  
We acknowledge and embrace the diversity and individuality of everyone we meet and those we serve.



**Hopeful**  
We believe in the power of positivity and are optimistic about change, having faith that together we can overcome any challenge we may face.



**Truthful and accountable**  
We are committed to being open, honest, and taking responsibility for our actions.

# Creating positive change for children, young people, and families

Parkerville's research and advocacy agenda supports our efforts to create positive change for children, young people, and families in Western Australia; and in everything that we do, centre their needs, rights, and voices.

We do this by actively drawing on different forms of knowledge, and creating and utilising a relevant and robust knowledge base as a critical support to Parkerville's work to promote holistic, coordinated support services; address root causes of social challenges; advocate for early detection and intervention; identify and amplify best practice; and ensure that children's and young people's voices are heard and respected in policy-making.

In all these efforts, we seek to freely share our knowledge, and the knowledge that we have been fortunate enough to receive from those we serve.

The two Frameworks which comprise this document aim to provide a clear understanding of why we are committed to research and advocacy, how they inform and support each other, and how we will work to embed the commitments made below.

Both research and advocacy are collaborative processes, involving individuals, teams, and partners from both within and beyond Parkerville. This includes the stories, voices, and perspectives of the children, young people and families that we serve. We are deeply mindful of the responsibility to hold and safeguard this information with great care, and to honour all lived experience contributions throughout our research and advocacy activities.



# Research

This Research Framework seeks to support evidence-based decision-making, service design, and policy advocacy in the field of child, young person, and family wellbeing. It is structured around key thematic areas identified in Parkerville's Advocacy Framework, with a focus on generating actionable insights to inform policy and practice.

## The *what* and *why* of Research in the For Purpose sector

Research is, "the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings"<sup>1</sup>: increasing knowledge by collecting, organising and analysing evidence, to be assessed through reason and calculation. Research must advance a new understanding of a situation or behaviours under examination. It aims to unsettle assumptions and produce arguments backed by data (qualitative and quantitative) used as evidence, and with demonstrably rational analysis.

With this understanding of research's nature and function, this Framework sets out our intention to build a robust and accessible evidence base, as a crucial contributing foundation for achieving our vision, and delivering on our purpose as an organisation, by:

- Helping to demonstrate that our work is scalable, best practice and/or innovative, cost-effective, and fundamentally, meeting the needs of the people that we serve.
- Providing a strong tool for advocating to governments and policy makers for policies and system responses that are more equitable, targeted, and effective.
- Creating space for ways of knowing that draw on experts by experience and empirical knowledge (including lived experience, and practice expertise).

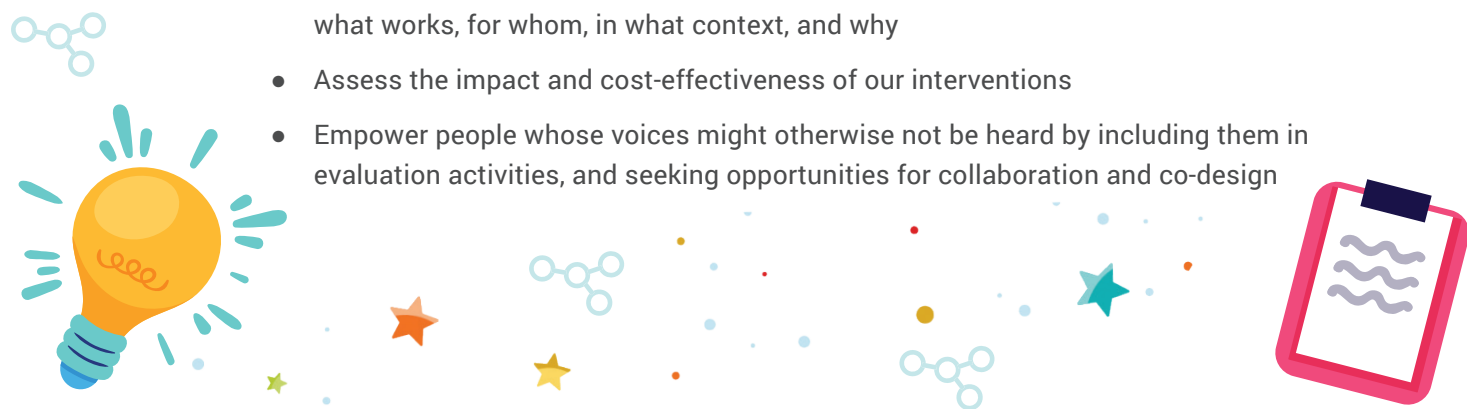
## Objectives

To achieve this, we will pursue the following objectives:

**01 Bridge the research-to-practice gap:** Keep up to date with the existing and emerging body of high-quality evidence, ensuring that it is available for use in our programs, service design, and advocacy - and that these are responses to the real and evidenced needs of the situation and community.

**02 Commission high-quality program evaluations:** In partnership with research institutions and experts in the field, conduct robust evaluations to:

- Generate new evidence from our programs to understand, describe, and analyse what works, for whom, in what context, and why
- Assess the impact and cost-effectiveness of our interventions
- Empower people whose voices might otherwise not be heard by including them in evaluation activities, and seeking opportunities for collaboration and co-design



## 03

### Undertake primary and/or applied research to support practice-based innovation:

In partnership with research institutions and experts in the field, design research to:

- Help test new practice approaches and innovations
- Empower people whose voice might otherwise not be heard by including them in research activities, and seeking opportunities for collaboration and co-design, and/or,
- Apply innovative research methods to our practice and programs to create a new evidence base or challenge practice and research orthodoxies

By utilising these approaches to engagement with and generation of evidence, this work will support a culture of evidence-based decision-making within the organisation, encourage us to test our own ideas and assumptions, and respond to what we find. It also gives a solid foundation for external advocacy to the public and policy makers, helping to establish credibility and providing substantive grounds for our Advocacy platform.

## Principles

All research conducted or commissioned by Parkerville will be guided by seven key principles.

## 01

The objectives and conduct of any research must align with Parkerville's purpose and values.

## 02

Decisions about Parkerville engagement in research will be made with regard to available funding, value for money, and strategic priorities.

## 03

Research must meet the highest ethical standards of research with children and young people<sup>2</sup>, and be developmentally- and trauma-informed by design and in implementation.

## 04

Recognising that not just what, but how we research matters, all research that we conduct or commission must be inclusive, participatory and collaborative, ensuring that we draw on diverse sources of knowledge and create processes and outputs that are safe, sensitive and effective.

## 05

Research should prioritise and integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and knowledge and respect cultural norms throughout the process, including methodology, data analysis, and data sovereignty.

## 06

Parkerville and any research partners will, at all times and in line with our policies and relevant legislation, respect and protect the safety and privacy of the people we serve, and ensure the appropriate use of sensitive data.

## 07

Due regard should be given to making any knowledge generated from research freely accessible and available.



<sup>2</sup> In line with the International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children <https://childethics.com/charter/>

# Research Pillars

Setting research priorities helps to identify evidence gaps, and ensures that research efforts make the best use of limited resources. The Pillars do not encompass the full scope of Parkerville's research interests; rather they are a guide to help shape our efforts to build knowledge in a more systematic way and signal the research areas that best inform and support our advocacy areas.

01

## Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Children's Mental Health

Research interests:

- The nature and effectiveness of coordinated/integrated, therapeutic and psychosocial interventions for children and young people affected by CSA to heal and prevent potential re-victimisation/secondary victimisation
- The long-term mental health outcomes of early intervention programs, particularly for children and young people at higher risk of developing mental health difficulties

02

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Child Development

Research interests:

- Protective factors that mitigate the impact of ACEs on child development and wellbeing, particularly over the medium- and longer-terms
- Efficacy of trauma-informed care practices in various settings

03

## Structural Drivers of Poverty and Disadvantage

Research interests:

- Intersections of poverty, housing instability, and child wellbeing outcomes
- The impact of targeted interventions on breaking intergenerational cycles of disadvantage

04

## Early Intervention and Prevention

Research interests:

- The impact of early intervention on outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people across age and developmental stages, from antenatal through to adolescence and young adulthood
- The barriers to accessing early intervention services for vulnerable populations

05

## Child-Centred Research

Research interests:

- Development of methodologies for meaningful participation of children and young people in research and evaluation
- Creation of research outputs that are accessible to, and have meaning for, children and young people

## Methodological Approaches

This Framework does not establish specific parameters around research design or methodologies, provided that there is alignment with the above Objectives and Principles – including that Aboriginal methodologies and perspectives are respected and integrated, and that research is sensitively and effectively integrated with our programs and interventions. Research projects may include one or more of the below:

- Mixed-methods designs combining quantitative and qualitative data, with particular emphasis on seeking opportunities for quasi-experimental designs to better evidence impact of our interventions
- Longitudinal studies to track long-term impacts of interventions
- Participatory research methods – including codesign – involving and in partnership with children, young people, families, and community
- Systems analysis to understand complex interactions between different policy areas
- Economic evaluations – including Social Return On Investment and Cost Benefit analyses - to assess cost effectiveness and longitudinal cost savings of our interventions

## Key Deliverables

- Seeking alignment of advocacy activities to these Pillars
- Engaging collaboratively with internal partners to identify areas for research and evaluation
- Managing the delivery of mandatory (per contract) evaluations in line with the Objectives and Principles outlined above
- Seeking funding and partnership opportunities to deliver evaluations not funded by contract
- Seeking funding and partnership opportunities to undertake applied research
- Endorsements of/contributions to sector and/or stakeholder research, as relevant and appropriate
- Other support to development of organisational resources as required

## Monitoring and Review

The Research and Advocacy team will regularly monitor:

- Progress made on the deliverables outlined above, including tracking reach of our research, evaluation, and other relevant activities.
- Any relevant changes in the research landscape as they relate to the above Pillars. In response to changes of significance, the Pillars will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

This Research Framework aligns with Parkerville's policy advocacy goals by generating robust evidence to inform systemic change, improve service delivery, and ultimately enhance the well-being of children, young people, and families in Western Australia.

# Advocacy Framework

Our advocacy is driven by a belief in the need for a systems approach to improve child, youth, and family wellbeing, noting that impactful systems approaches are purposeful, collaborative and inclusive; and put the value, voices, rights, opportunities and outcomes of children, young people and families at the core. Parkerville sees our part in, and the contribution that we can make to, the systems and communities in which we operate and are situated. Our advocacy areas leverage our practice knowledge and experience, focusing on areas in which critical social and systems changes are required in order to see an inclusive and fair society in which children, young people and families are safe, healthy and free from harm; financially secure; live in stable and appropriate housing; and connected to community and culture.

## The *what* and *why* of policy advocacy

Policy advocacy is a deliberate process to bring about structural and systemic change, through:

- **Developing policy influence and impact:** influencing and supporting decision-makers, institutions and civil society to demand, develop, implement and uphold legislation, policies, and evidence-based decision-making that improve the lives of children and young people, and ensure the full enjoyment of their rights.
- **Broadening policy horizons:** providing evidence-informed perspectives, new alternatives, and re-framings of issues, that have not been previously considered or applied, to support a culture of learning and openness in policy making.
- **Translation of practice and research evidence:** synthesising learning from frontline practice and research into evidenced policy recommendations that are likely to have tangible positive impact for the children, young people, and families that we serve.

Through Parkerville's work serving the children, young people, and families of Western Australia, we see the structural and systemic issues that shape their lives: structures and systems that can create and entrench poverty, enable abuse and victimisation, and prevent access to – or provision of – effective supports. Our policy advocacy efforts aim to challenge these system-level barriers to equality, social justice, and wellbeing.

We do this through an evidence-informed and strengths-based agenda; influencing social policy through submissions and research, engaging policy makers, collaborating with community and sector partners, supporting broader campaigns, and drawing on Parkerville's practice excellence and innovation to advocate for the rights and interests of the children, young people, and families that we serve.





## Policy Pillars

01

### Recognising and reducing the structural drivers and impacts of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), child development challenges, and maltreatment on children and young people

- Children and young people impacted by trauma and adverse experiences deserve coordinated, wrap-around, and evidence-based supports to transform their social and developmental outcomes.
  - .....▶ Our advocacy calls for holistic and systemic responses: integrated, accessible, child- and family-centred services that break down siloes, adapt around the child and family, enable people to exercise agency, and operate without duplication, system barriers or secondary victimisation.
  - .....▶ Through the scope of our supports to children, young people and families, we particularly focus on all forms of child abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation; children and young people as victim-survivors of family and domestic violence (FDV) in their own right; and the implications for child and young person mental health.

02

### Intervening earlier and better through investment, innovation, and collaboration

- A child's ecosystem is influenced by social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that impact healthy development and wellbeing. These influences start before birth and have an impact throughout an individual's life and across generations.

We advocate for re-orienting systems with which children and families interact towards enhanced early detection and intervention in response to adversity and trauma – both early in life, and throughout childhood and adolescence – to support children and young people to thrive, remain safe, and connected to family, community and culture.

#### In the Early Years

We echo the priority focus areas of the Early Years Strategy: value the early years; empower parents, caregivers and families; support and work with communities; and strengthen accountability and coordination.

- .....▶ Our advocacy emphasises the need to make stronger, more targeted efforts to ensure meaningful impact of these principles for children who face intersecting experiences of disadvantage and vulnerability: 'stacking the scales' with protective factors for children in out-of-home care, or affected by homelessness and multidimensional poverty, or recovering from complex trauma, means taking a truly robust, bold, and systemic approach through proportionate universalism.<sup>3</sup>

#### In the middle years and beyond

Early intervention does not mean specialist supports in the Early Years only. There are opportunities throughout childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood to prevent crisis by addressing issues before they escalate, from FDV, family conflict, mental health, and educational engagement and attainment.

- .....▶ We advocate for joined-up, multi-agency and collaborative efforts to shift the focus from crisis response to maximising or creating opportunities to intervene earlier: working with the family system to support connection by default, and asserting the need for integrated systems that build protective factors and mitigate against secondary victimisation.



### Ending poverty and entrenched/multiple disadvantage

- Our advocacy emphasises:
  - .....▶ The long-lasting and insidious impacts of poverty on child health and wellbeing across all domains.
  - .....▶ The structural barriers and systemic failures that create and deepen multidimensional poverty for children, young people, and families: how material, opportunity, and relational poverty interact to limit children's and young people's development and wellbeing.
  - .....▶ The entrenched disadvantage facing many children, young people and families, with complex risk factors including FDV, drug and alcohol use, mental health, school disengagement, homelessness, and contact with the criminal justice system.

### Move children and young people up the public policy agenda: prioritising their rights and needs in Government planning and implementation

- Children and young people should be at the centre of public policy conversations. Their wellbeing is a prerequisite and core facet of social change; there are no policy-making domains which do not have implications for children and young people now and into the future.
- We recognise the rights and needs of children and young people in their own right. As such, we advocate for mainstreaming a child- and young person's-lens in service design, decision-making, and legislation, whilst providing incisive and focused advocacy on key (traditional) policy-making domains for children, young people, and families.
- Our work under this pillar includes taking meaningful steps to give voice to the experiences and perspectives of the children, young people, and families that we serve through our policy advocacy; in a manner that enshrines confidentiality, champions intersectionality and inclusivity, and recognises and celebrates individual, family, and community strength and resilience.

### Key Deliverables

- Submissions to Government/s, Parliamentary Committees, statutory and/or peak bodies as required by opportunity or invitation
- Seeking alignment of research and evaluation activities to these Pillars
- Engaging collaboratively with internal partners to identify key areas for advocacy
- Endorsements of/contributions to sector partner advocacy or campaigns, as relevant and appropriate
- Support to other organisational activities and development of resources as required

### Monitoring and Review

The Research and Advocacy team will regularly monitor:

- Progress made on the deliverables outlined above, including tracking reach of our submissions and other relevant activities.
- Any relevant changes in the policy landscape as they relate to the above Pillars. In response to changes of significance, the Pillars will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

03

04



Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc)

Phone: 08 9235 7000 | Email: [adminteam@parkerville.org.au](mailto:adminteam@parkerville.org.au)

1 Watertank Way, Midland WA 6056

**[www.parkerville.org.au](http://www.parkerville.org.au)**

ABN: 86 437 092 401

