An Exploration of the Past, Present and Future of Nursing in Early Parenting Services in Australia

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An Exploration of the Past, Present and Future of Nursing in Early Parenting Services in Australia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Nursing

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# Contents

Contents ........................................................................................................................................... i  
Declaration of Authorship ............................................................................................................. v  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... vi  
List of Appendices .......................................................................................................................... viii  
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................. ix  
List of Photos ................................................................................................................................... xiii  
List of Tables ................................................................................................................................... xiv  
List of Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................... xv  
Abstract ............................................................................................................................................ xvii  
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background .......................................................... 1  
1.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1  
1.2 Background to the Research Topic .................................................................................... 1  
1.2.1 Early Parenting Services .......................................................................................... 1  
1.2.2 Ngala in Perth, Western Australia ............................................................................ 3  
1.3 Topic and Purpose .............................................................................................................. 4  
1.4 Significance of Study .......................................................................................................... 4  
1.5 Research Questions ............................................................................................................ 6  
1.5.1 The Research Questions and Related Literature ...................................................... 6  
1.6 Literature Providing a Broad Context to Nursing in EPS ............................................ 7  
1.6.1 The Rise of the Infant Welfare Movement ............................................................. 7  
1.6.2 Nursing Roles and the Development of Advanced Nursing Practice ................. 8  
1.6.3 Collaborative and Partnership Approaches ............................................................ 11  
1.6.4 Interprofessional Education and Practice ............................................................... 12  
1.6.5 Changes in Government Policies ............................................................................. 13  
1.7 Literature Providing a Context to Nursing in EPS and the Gaps Identified ............... 14  
1.7.1 The Nursing Context within National Early Parenting Services ......................... 15  
1.7.2 The Nursing Role within Interdisciplinary Teams .................................................. 16  
1.7.3 Nursing Workforce Priorities within Early Parenting Services in Australia ........ 21  
1.8 Chapter One Summary ....................................................................................................... 23  
Chapter 2: Methodology ......................................................................................... 25  
2.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 25  
2.2 Research Paradigm ............................................................................................................ 25  
2.2.1 Integrating Research Paradigms ............................................................................. 26  
2.2.2 Case Study ................................................................................................................. 27  
2.2.3 A Mixed Methods Approach ................................................................................... 30  
2.2.4 Triangulation .............................................................................................................. 30  
2.2.5 Rigour ......................................................................................................................... 32  
2.3 Phase One ........................................................................................................................ 34  
2.3.1 Introduction............................................................................................................... 34  
2.3.2 Sampling Phase One ............................................................................................... 35  
2.3.3 Data Collection Methods Phase One ....................................................................... 39
5.4.5 Identify the Skill Mix for the Various Practice Contexts of EPS ............ 337
5.4.6 Identify Further Research Areas Relevant to EPS .................................. 338
5.4.7 Marketing of EPS Work ........................................................................ 340
5.5 Comparison of Findings with Theory ........................................................... 341
  5.5.1 Role Theory .......................................................................................... 341
  5.5.2 Interprofessional Education and Practice Theory .................................... 344
5.6 Chapter Five Summary ............................................................................... 350

**Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations** .......................................... 351
  6.1 Introduction ................................................................................................ 351
  6.2 New Knowledge Generated from this Study .............................................. 351
  6.3 Significance of the Findings for Nursing .................................................... 352
    6.3.1 Implications for Clinical Practice ......................................................... 353
    6.3.2 Implications for Education ................................................................... 354
    6.3.3 Implications for Research .................................................................... 355
    6.3.4 Implications for Organisations in Early Parenting Services ............... 356
  6.4 Summary of Recommendations ................................................................. 357
    6.4.1 For Clinical Practice ............................................................................ 357
    6.4.2 For Education ....................................................................................... 357
    6.4.3 For Research ......................................................................................... 357
    6.4.4 For Organisations ............................................................................... 358
  6.5 Study Limitations ....................................................................................... 358
  6.6 Final Reflections ......................................................................................... 359

**References** .................................................................................................. 361

**Appendices** ................................................................................................ 379
Declaration of Authorship

This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institution.

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, the thesis/dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

____________________________   ____________________
Elaine Bennett     April 2013
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The inspiration for this study is my family and my belief in the importance of those first three years of life, as well as the longevity of my work through many contexts of working with families with young children. My first grandson Lachlan is three now and is rather special—he is as old as this study. Therefore, my relationship with this little man throughout the process of this research has nurtured my creative spirit with the amazing growth and development that occurs during this period of time. One day Lachlan when you read this I hope you will see how your influence in my life was so important during this time. Now with a second little man, Jayden, I am relishing again this special time of being a grandmother.

Nursing has been a large part of my life, given I will be entering into my sixth decade very soon. This profession has taught me so much, and my hope is that this study in a small way will contribute to the future directions of nursing in this very important work of early childhood and parenting.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1a: Ethics committee approval letters, Notre Dame University, Dean of School of Nursing & Widwifery, UNDA 18/11/10 ......................... 380
Appendix 1b: Ethics committee approval letters, Notre Dame University, The Human Research Ethics Committee for Low Risk Ethics Clearance 11/1/11 .................................................................................... 381
Appendix 2: Ethics approval from eight national sites. Letter sent to organisations .................................................................................. 382
Appendix 3: Case study protocol ......................................................................................................................... 383
Appendix 4: Letter to organisation—site of study ..................................................................................... 388
Appendix 5: Confidentiality form ................................................................................................................... 389
Appendix 6: Approval for access to archived records, Battye Library, Perth ........................................... 390
Appendix 7: History of Ngala in the Western Australian context ............................................................ 391
Appendix 8: Protocol for focus groups ....................................................................................................... 393
Appendix 9: Information sheets for focus groups/interview and teleconference .................................. 395
Appendix 10: Consent form for focus groups/interviews and teleconference .......................................... 397
Appendix 11: Pre-reading for the webinar ................................................................................................. 398
Appendix 12: Protocol for webinar .............................................................................................................. 401
Appendix 13: Protocol for national teleconference .................................................................................. 403
Appendix 14: Participant pre-reading for teleconference ...................................................................... 404
Appendix 15: Teleconference PowerPoint presentation slides ................................................................. 406
Appendix 16: Teleconference group questionnaire ................................................................................ 412
Appendix 17: Teleconference questions .................................................................................................. 413
Appendix 18: Summary and comments from national teleconference—January 2011 ......................................................... 414
Appendix 19: Phase three planning and process for data collection .............................................................. 416
Appendix 20: Expert survey validation tool ........................................................................................................ 418
Appendix 21: Expert reviews of survey, summary ............................................................................... 424
Appendix 22: Marketing postcard for national survey ............................................................................. 428
Appendix 23: Protocol for planning and distribution of national survey ................................................. 429
Appendix 24: Information sheet for national survey ................................................................................ 430
Appendix 25: Attachment to survey—the study so far ............................................................................. 431
Appendix 26: National questionnaire .......................................................................................................... 434
List of Figures

Figure 1. Early Parenting Services in Australia ........................................................... 3
Figure 2. Intervention applied to C-Frame (Hauck et al., 2011, p. 55) ...................... 21
Figure 3. Phases of the case study strategy for ‘An exploration of the past, present and future of nursing in EPS in Australia’ ............................................ 29
Figure 4. Visual representation of phase one ........................................................... 35
Figure 5. Example of a document and its corresponding notation by the researcher, 28/2/11 ................................................................. 41
Figure 6. Example of coding the transcripts ............................................................. 45
Figure 7. Example of searching for themes and reviewing themes ......................... 46
Figure 8. Reviewing themes ................................................................................... 47
Figure 9. The theme of nursing role in EPS and a breakdown of one sub-theme.... 48
Figure 10. Visual representation of phase two ......................................................... 49
Figure 11. Visual representation of phase three ....................................................... 56
Figure 12. Example of coding the transcripts in Survey Monkey ......................... 61
Figure 13. The themes for ‘there are concerns nationally for the future of nursing in EPS’ ............................................................... 62
Figure 14. Example of coding quantitative data using Survey Monkey ................. 63
Figure 15. Example of correlation of variables—age and state of respondents..... 63
Figure 16. Ngala 1978 Annual Report (Ngala, 1978) .............................................. 74
Figure 17. The case ................................................................................................ 83
Figure 18. Clock Face for Four-Hour Feeding (Bryder, 2003b, p. 42) ..................... 87
Figure 19. Plunket celebrates 100 years (Anonymous, 2007) ................................. 88
Figure 20. Admission statistics 1969–1970 (Queensland Department of Health, 1971, p. 31) ................................................................. 100
Figure 21. Child Health Nurse’s Assignment 1970 (Ducrow, 2011) ...................... 104
Figure 22. Annual report 1911 ............................................................................ 111
Figure 23. Annual report 1912 ............................................................................ 111
Figure 24. Annual report 1913 ............................................................................ 112
Figure 25. Annual report 1914 ............................................................................ 112
Figure 26. Newspaper article, West Australian 1926 ........................................... 116
Figure 27. Newspaper article West Australian 1935 (Hobbs, 1980) ...................... 117
Figure 28. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (1) .......................................... 122
Figure 29. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (2) ......................................... 122
Figure 30. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (3) ......................................... 123
Figure 31. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (4) ......................................... 123
Figure 32. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (5) ......................................... 124
Figure 33. Brochure of the Governor’s visit to Alexandra Home for Women and Babies and Mothercraft Training School (6) ......................................... 124
Figure 34. Medical treatments advertised in 1951 ................................................ 128
Figure 35. Nursing notes 1959 (Ngala, 1959b) ....................................................... 129
Figure 36. Nursing notes 1960 (Ngala, 1960) .......................................................... 130
Figure 37. Promotional brochure for Ngala 1958 (1) (Ngala, 1958, p. 1) ............... 131
Figure 38. Promotional brochure for Ngala 1958 (2) (Ngala, 1958, p. 5) .......... 131
Figure 39. Promotional brochure for Ngala 1958 (3) (Ngala, 1958, p. 8) .......... 132
Figure 40. Promotional brochure for Ngala 1958 (4) (Ngala, 1958, p. 9) .......... 132
Figure 41. Promotional brochure for Ngala 1958 (5) (Ngala, 1958, p. 10) ....... 133
Figure 42. Excerpt from Oral History of Helen Duncan (Duncan, 1977, p. 18) ..... 133
Figure 43. Excerpt from Minutes of General Meeting—The appointment of the Matron at Ngala (Ngala, 1959a) .............................................................. 134
Figure 44. Excerpt from Minutes of General Meeting of the Ngala Committee 1959 ......................................................................................................... 135
Figure 45. Ngala Promotion (1) (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................ 136
Figure 46. Ngala Promotion (2) (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................ 137
Figure 47. Ngala Promotion (3) (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................ 137
Figure 48. Ngala Promotion (4) (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................ 137
Figure 49. Ngala Promotion (5) (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................ 138
Figure 50. Excerpt from Minutes Medical Advisory Committee 1967 (Ngala, 1967) ........................................................................................................ 141
Figure 51. Promotional Ngala booklet—Excerpt from The Medical Advisory Committee (Ngala, 1960) ........................................................................ 142
Figure 52. Promotion for opening of Ngala Child Care Centre (1) ......................... 143
Figure 53. Promotion for opening of Child Care Centre (2) .................................. 143
Figure 54. Ngala Child Health Nurse curriculum 1978 (1) .................................... 144
Figure 55. Ngala Child Health Nurse curriculum 1978 (2) .................................... 145
Figure 56. Excerpt from Booth Report (1) (Booth, 1980, p. 2) ............................... 147
Figure 57. Excerpt from Booth Report (2) (Booth, 1980, p. 77) ............................. 148
Figure 58. Annual report 1980 (Medical Advisory Committee report) .................. 149
Figure 59. Ngala Brochure early 1980s .................................................................. 150
Figure 60. The DCS report and the child health nurse role (Department for Community Services, 1986, p. 23) .............................................................. 151
Figure 61. Parliamentary papers—Questions without notice, July 1986 ................. 152
Figure 62. The DCS report recommendations (Department for Community Services, 1986, p. 23) .............................................................. 153
Figure 63. The DCS Review presented a different model for considering the flow of children and families ................................................................. 154
Figure 64. The cessation of mothercraft nursing (Pringle, 1989) ............................ 155
Figure 65. Drawing by Rae Walter—Her vision for the future ................................ 156
Figure 66. Ngala nurses on strike, ANF Newsletter, 1997 ...................................... 157
Figure 67. Review of Services at Ngala (Ngala, 2000b) ........................................... 159
Figure 68. Tuned in Parenting poster presentation, 2008 ...................................... 160
Figure 69. Ngala’s Service Delivery Model 2012 (revised version) ....................... 162
Figure 70. Ngala research agenda—Article (Bennett, Hauck, Bindahneem et al., 2012) and poster .............................................................. 163
Figure 71. Ngala online technology and resources (www.ngala.com.au) ............ 165
Figure 72. Ngala Celebrates 120 years ................................................................. 168
Figure 73. Ngala rural and remote services in WA ................................................ 169
Figure 74. Ngala services in metropolitan Perth .................................................... 170
Figure 75. Nursing role 1940s to 1980s at Ngala .................................................... 183
Figure 76. Changes influencing nursing in EPS ..................................................... 188
Figure 77. Overall nursing role in Early Parenting Services .................................. 195
Figure 78. Category 1—Early Parenting Nursing Practice ........................................... 196
Figure 79. Early Parenting Nursing Practice—Coordination and Planning ............. 204
Figure 80. Category 2—Application of Evidence ..................................................... 208
Figure 81. Category 2—Application of evidence, with sub-categories ...................... 208
Figure 82. Category 3—Linking with others .............................................................. 212
Figure 83. Linking with others, with sub-categories .................................................. 213
Figure 84. The nursing role within an interdisciplinary team .................................... 217
Figure 85. The uniqueness of the nursing role within an interdisciplinary team ......... 218
Figure 86. Some differences in the perception of the Early Parenting Nursing Role .......................................................... 222
Figure 87. Nurses’ and allied professionals’ perceptions of working together ........... 226
Figure 88. The concept of the EPP ................................................................. 238
Figure 89. The skills and knowledge for an EPP ...................................................... 238
Figure 90. Workforce planning .............................................................................. 246
Figure 91. Survey response rate by State ............................................................... 250
Figure 92. Response to ‘Please indicate your age category’ .................................... 251
Figure 93. Response to ‘Longevity of work within EPS’ ........................................ 252
Figures 94. Response to ‘Nurses indicating continuation of work within EPS’ ....... 253
Figure 95. Nurses’ breakdown of qualifications ...................................................... 254
Figure 96. Response to ‘Working closely with other disciplines at your site’ .......... 255
Figure 97. Response to ‘indicate how you work with allied professionals’ ............... 256
Figure 98. Response to ‘It is essential that nurses working in EPS are experienced’ ........................................................................................................................................... 257
Figure 99. Qualitative response categories for ‘nurses working in EPS are experienced’ ........................................................................................................................................... 258
Figure 100. Response to ‘Nurses maintain a unique role when working within a collaborative partnership model with other disciplines’ .............................. 260
Figure 101. Qualitative responses to ‘nurses maintain a unique role within EPS’ ... 261
Figure 102. Responses to ‘There are concerns nationally for the future of nursing in EPS’ ........................................................................................................................................... 266
Figure 103. Qualitative responses to ‘there are concerns nationally for the future of nursing’ ........................................................................................................................................... 266
Figure 104. Responses to ‘Increase the development and availability of innovative options for post-qualification education in the early parenting sector’ ...................................................................................................................................... 272
Figure 105. Qualitative responses to ‘increase the development and availability of innovative options for post-qualification education’ ...................................................................................................................................... 273
Figure 106. Responses to ‘the need for innovative national professional development opportunities’ ...................................................................................................................................... 275
Figure 107. Qualitative responses to ‘the need for national professional development opportunities’ ...................................................................................................................................... 276
Figure 108. Responses to ‘the need to identify further research areas relevant to the EPS workforce’ ...................................................................................................................................... 278
Figure 109. Qualitative responses to ‘the need to identify further research areas relevant to EPS workforce’ ...................................................................................................................................... 278
Figure 110. Responses to ‘in order to plan for the next 5–10 years there is a need for a workforce development strategy in EPS’ ...................................................................................................................................... 280
Figure 111. Qualitative responses to ‘the need to develop a workforce development strategy’ ...................................................................................................................................... 281
Figure 112. Responses to ‘the need to identify the skill mix for the various practice contexts of EPS’ ................................................................. 283
Figure 113. Qualitative responses to ‘the need to identify the skill mix for various practice contexts of EPS’ ................................................................. 283
Figure 114. Responses to ‘the need to develop marketing and recruitment strategies for a future multi-generational workforce’ .......................... 286
Figure 115. Qualitative responses to ‘develop marketing and recruitment strategies for a multi-generational workforce’ ........................................ 287
Figure 116. Responses to ‘consider sustainable strategies to support a future multi-generational workforce’ ...................................................... 289
Figure 117. Qualitative responses to ‘consider sustainable strategies to support a future multi-generational workforce’ ........................................ 289
Figure 118. Responses to ‘the need to develop retention strategies for the ageing workforce’ ................................................................. 291
Figure 119. Qualitative responses to ‘develop retention strategies for the ageing workforce’ ................................................................. 291
Figure 120. Three highest-ranked priorities for the next 3–5 years ......................... 293
Figure 121. Highest-ranked priorities for the next 5–10 years ................................ 295
Figure 122. Qualitative responses to ‘identification of any further strategies’ .......... 296
Figure 123. Workforce development strategy for EPS .............................................. 300
Figure 124. The early parenting professional .......................................................... 301
Figure 125. The addition of an Enrolled Nurse with EPS certificate ....................... 302
Figure 126. A visual representation of the past, present and future of nursing in EPS ......................................................................................... 308
Figure 127. Figures for universal scheduled child health checks in WA (WA Auditor General’s Department, 2010) ......................................................... 317
Figure 128. Collaborative practice process and outcomes (D’Amour & Oandasan, 2005, p. 15) ........................................................................ 348
Figure 129. Interprofessional capability framework (Nicol, 2013, p. 24) ................. 349
List of Photos

Photo 1. The commencement of the Webinar with the researcher, November 2011..................................................53
Photos 2 and 3. SCGH PTS May 1971—Elaine (left) with Lesley and whole group .........................................................67
Photo 4. Amy Dusting 2008 at Fremantle Hospital.................................................68
Photos 5 and 6. Elaine with Helen and an Aboriginal boy at PMH 1973 ..................69
Photos 7 and 8. Elaine with a medical student at SCGH, 1973 .................................70
Photos 9 and 10. Elaine in special care nursery, KEMH, 1976 ...............................71
Photo 11. Elaine at Midwifery graduation, 1977 .....................................................71
Photo 12. Elaine at Midwifery graduation receiving Director of Nursing’s prize, 1977 ...........................................................................................................72
Photo 13. Elaine at KEMH with two babies for adoption, 1977 ...............................72
Photos 14 and 15. Elaine with colleagues undertaking the Child Health Certificate at Ngala, 1978; Elaine with two babies for adoption, 1978 ..........................73
Photo 16. Collection of badges from all training schools of nursing ..........................73
Photo 17. Flying to Flinders Island with colleague DON Dianne Kent, 1991 ..........76
Photo 18. Graduation of Master of Nursing with supervisor, 1998............................77
Photo 19. Poster presentation at the First Congress of Women’s Mental Health in Berlin, 2000.................................................................77
Photo 20. Time at Newman & Nullagine ....................................................................79
Photo 21. Time at Exmouth and Coral Bay .............................................................80
Photo 22. Curtin Award .............................................................................................81
Photo 25. The House of Mercy 1890 .......................................................................109
Photo 26. The Alexandra Home 1951 .................................................................119
Photo 27. Matron Ulrich with Nurses in 1949 ............................................................119
Photo 29. Beryl Grant 1959–1980 (Lang, 1980, p. 60) ........................................134
Photo 30. Matron Beryl Grant with artwork at front entrance of Ngala .................138
Photo 31. Toddlers at Ngala in Dining Room (Ngala, 1961) .............................139
Photo 32. Deputy Matron Dreger lecturing RNs in child health (Ngala, 1963) ....140
Photo 33. Dr Dugdale, an Honorary Paediatrician (Ngala, 1963) .........................142
Photo 34. Beryl Grant 1980 .....................................................................................146
Photo 35. Rae Walter with the new Board of Management, 1989 .........................156
Photo 36. Photo Rae Walter, Elaine Bennett and Beryl Grant, 2011 .................171
List of Tables

Table 1. The service parameters of the APN role, adapted from the Strong Model of Advanced Practice (Gardner et al., 2007, p. 388) ........................................ 10
Table 2. Summary of the integrated research paradigm ........................................... 26
Table 3. Participants in phase one ......................................................................... 179
Table 4. Current demographics of the nursing workforce at Ngala (as at Oct 2012) ........................................................................................................ 179
Table 5. Current demographics of the allied professional workforce at Ngala ...... 180
Table 6. National numbers of nurses in EPS (January 2011) .................................. 242
Table 7. National teleconference participants ......................................................... 242
Table 8. Summary teleconference questions .......................................................... 243
Table 9. Response rate to the survey by State....................................................... 250
Table 10. Age of respondents .............................................................................. 251
Table 11. Longevity of work within EPS ............................................................. 252
Table 12. Nurses indicating continuation of work within EPS ............................. 253
Table 13. Three issues on which a national perspective was sought ................. 256
Table 14. Rate of positive response about the future of nursing in EPS ............. 271
Table 15. Responses to ‘rank the above mentioned strategy statements according to your perception of their priority for the next 3–5 years’ ............. 293
Table 16. Responses to ‘rank the above mentioned strategy statements according to your perception of their priority for the next 5–10 years’ .......... 294
Table 17. Selected characteristics of nurses working in child health in Australia (2008) ........................................................................................................ 315
Table 18. Example of generational characteristics ............................................... 336
**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPCH</td>
<td>Australian Association of Parenting and Child Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHPRA</td>
<td>Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARACY</td>
<td>Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;FHN</td>
<td>Child and Family Health Nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>culturally and linguistically diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPS</td>
<td>Child Health and Parenting Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Canberra Mothercraft Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>Child Welfare Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCS</td>
<td>Department for Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Enterprise Bargaining Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>Expression of Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>Early Parenting Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>Early Parenting Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPTP</td>
<td>family partnership training program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>human resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDT</td>
<td>interdisciplinary team</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHA</td>
<td>Infant Health Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPE</td>
<td>interprofessional education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPP</td>
<td>interprofessional practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEMH</td>
<td>King Edward Memorial Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGH</td>
<td>Launceston General Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBE</td>
<td>Order of the British Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS</td>
<td>Preliminary Training School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYPS</td>
<td>Pregnant and Young Parent Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEC</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>QEII</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth II</td>
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RO  Research Officer
SA  South Australia
SCGH  Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
SHWCV  Society for Health of Women and Children of Victoria
SPSS  Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TASA  the Australian Sociological Association
TSIT  Tasmanian Institute of Technology
UK  United Kingdom
UNDA  University of Notre Dame Australia
VBHCA  Victorian Baby Health Centres Association
WA  Western Australia
WAIT  WA Institute of Technology
WANA  WA Nurses Association
WHO  World Health Organisation
Abstract

Nursing has a long history of providing services to families and children over the past century and more within Early Parenting Services (EPS) in Australia. Much has been written on issues regarding the general nursing workforce and requirements for the future, but little is known about the role of nursing within the EPS area around Australia in the context of an interdisciplinary team.

The aim of this study was to describe how nursing has responded to the changing needs of EPS in Australia and to investigate nurses’ and allied professionals’ perceptions of the nursing role within an interdisciplinary team. This enabled further reflection on, and consideration of, the future nursing workforce priorities required for EPS nationally.

A case study strategy using a mixed methods approach provided an in-depth analysis of the organisation Ngala (a not-for-profit EPS in Perth, Western Australia), as part of a broader network of EPS organisations around Australia. The study involved a three-phase approach, commencing with the focus on Ngala and then moving to the broader context of national services. The first and second phases used qualitative methods. The first phase employed several sources of data collection, such as archived documents, focus groups, interviews and nurses journals. Thematic analysis using the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) informed the second phase—the national teleconferences. The data from phases one and two informed the third phase, which utilised the instrument design model of Creswell, Fetters and Ivankova (2004) to inform the development of the survey instrument. This approach ensured a strong link between the qualitative methods used and the move to the development of the quantitative phase. A commitment to a quality result in the measuring instrument meant that a reliability and validity criterion was applied. The survey had a 37 per cent response rate via online and postal responses. These data were analysed through survey monkey software. The findings were then compared with relevant literature and theories.

The three phases have informed a framework for future direction in the form of a workforce development strategy. Role theory and interprofessional practice theory
have contributed to both an understanding of the findings and the recommendations for organisations, nursing practice, education and research. The study conclusions for nursing and early parenting work will assist in future workforce planning at Ngala and EPS around Australia.