

Strategic Plan 2025–30

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Kids Research Institute Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We also acknowledge the Nyoongar Wadjuk, Yawuru, Kariyarra and Kurna Elders, their people and their land upon which the Institute's sites are located and seek their wisdom in our work to improve the health and development of all children.

The Healing Kids, Healing Families team acknowledges the strength, leadership, and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, without whom our work would not be possible. We are grateful to the Elders, families, and communities who guide us. Their resilience, stories, and commitment to healing shape our work and inspire a better future for all children and communities. To everyone who shows up and shares their voice – thank you. This future is being built with you, and because of you.

VISION

The Healing Kids, Healing Families team strives to understand how trauma and adverse circumstances can impact a child and their family, and how we can help them to recover from these experiences.

Broadly, the team aims to:

- Promote recovery pathways for children and families, such that those who are affected can enjoy optimal developmental trajectories
- Transform our current healthcare services to be trauma-informed and culturally responsive, which encourages healthy recovery
- Investigate effective and efficient treatment options and services to improve outcomes for children.

VALUES

While we incorporate and support the values of The Kids including Collaboration, Courage, Evidence and Respect, our team also upholds the following values:

Heart & Humanity



We lead with compassion, empathy, and authenticity. Our work is grounded in respect for lived experience, and a deep commitment to walking alongside children and families on their healing journeys.

Connection & Collaboration



We build strong, respectful partnerships with families, communities, clinicians, and researchers to co-design meaningful and sustainable solutions. We recognise that trust, shared knowledge, and working together are essential for effective and lasting change.

Cultural Integrity & Equity



We centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, knowledge, and cultural governance, guided by Indigenous research methodologies. We draw on diverse knowledge systems, alongside Western paradigms, to innovate in research and systems change.

Belonging for every child and family



We strive to create inclusive, trauma-informed systems where every child and family feels seen, heard, and valued. We champion environments that foster safety, dignity, and genuine belonging.

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREAS

Strengthening wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

To investigate ways to alleviate and disrupt intergenerational trauma, and to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Addressing challenges and trauma in the perinatal period

Understanding how a parent's trauma history and recovery influence pregnancy, early life, and beyond, for both them and their child.

Improving trauma-related outcomes

To understand the developmental trajectory of trauma reactions, focusing on dissociation symptoms. This includes developing ways to assess reactions to trauma, and how to support recovery.

Supporting wellbeing after disease or medical trauma

Chronic and serious acute medical illness or injuries can mean challenging treatment and management. This stream aims to understand healthcare- or health- related trauma for children and their families.

Trauma-informed tertiary healthcare in Western Australia

To understand how the principles of trauma-informed and relational care can be implemented in every-day healthcare for children and adolescents.

OUTCOMES

Our efforts must be targeted and outcomes-focused to have the greatest healing impacts. In five years, we aim to:

Advance knowledge of trauma causes and impacts

- High-quality evidence will be generated and shared to deepen understanding of how trauma (acute and chronic, direct and indirect) affects children and families, laying the groundwork for more effective prevention, intervention, and support.
- Findings will be communicated through meaningful, accessible engagement with stakeholders and communities.

Provide evidence-based, effective treatment and service models

- Research will rigorously identify and test interventions and services that improve trauma recovery outcomes for children and families.
- Effective, scalable, and sustainable treatment models will be developed and evaluated for implementation across health and mental health systems (e.g., trauma-informed care and practice).
- Workforce and community capacity will be strengthened through targeted training and knowledge-sharing initiatives grounded in trauma-informed and culturally safe principles.

Influence systems and policy through research

- Systemic change will be driven through research that informs, shapes, and co-designs policies embedding trauma awareness, culturally safe practices, and equitable access to care.
- Insights from our work will support implementation of trauma-informed approaches across services, improving consistency, accountability, and cultural responsiveness at all levels.

Champion culturally led, Aboriginal-driven research and partnerships

- Research will be co-designed and led by Aboriginal communities, centring self-determination and cultural governance.
- Culturally safe, community-driven mental health solutions will be advanced through Aboriginal-led initiatives tailored to the needs of Aboriginal children and families.
- Collaboration between Aboriginal researchers, health services, and communities will be strengthened to improve social and emotional wellbeing outcomes.