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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

Elaine Bennett

MN, B.App.Sc.(Nsg)., RN.

School of Nursing and Midwifery

University of Notre Dame

2013

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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.

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List of Abbreviations

AAPCH	Australian Association of Parenting and Child Health
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
C&FHN	Child and Family Health Nurses
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHAPS	Child Health and Parenting Service
CMS	Canberra Mothercraft Society
CWA	Child Welfare Association
DCS	Department for Community Services
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
EOI	Expression of Interest
EPP	Early Parenting Professional
EPS	Early Parenting Services
FPTP	family partnership training program
HR	human resource
IDT	interdisciplinary team
IHA	Infant Health Association
IPE	interprofessional education
IPP	interprofessional practice
KEMH	King Edward Memorial Hospital
LGH	Launceston General Hospital
NSW	New South Wales
NZ	New Zealand
OBE	Order of the British Empire
PD	professional development
PTS	Preliminary Training School
PYPS	Pregnant and Young Parent Support
QEC	Queen Elizabth Centre
QEII	Queen Elizabeth II

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.