



# Research Agenda

2025 – 2028

*"No research without action, no action without research"* Kurt Lewin





**Uplyft.**  
strong young futures

## Purpose

The purpose of this Research Agenda is to guide Wanslea's research efforts over the coming years.

The aim is to deliver positive and lasting outcomes for children and young people.

Wanslea will achieve this by working closely with children, young people, families and other key stakeholders; utilising ethical, evidence-based approaches that protect and uphold the rights of children. Research findings will be used to advocate for change that improves the lives and opportunities provided to children and young people.

This agenda will be a living document that is responsive to the changing needs of society and will be updated based on new and relevant information.

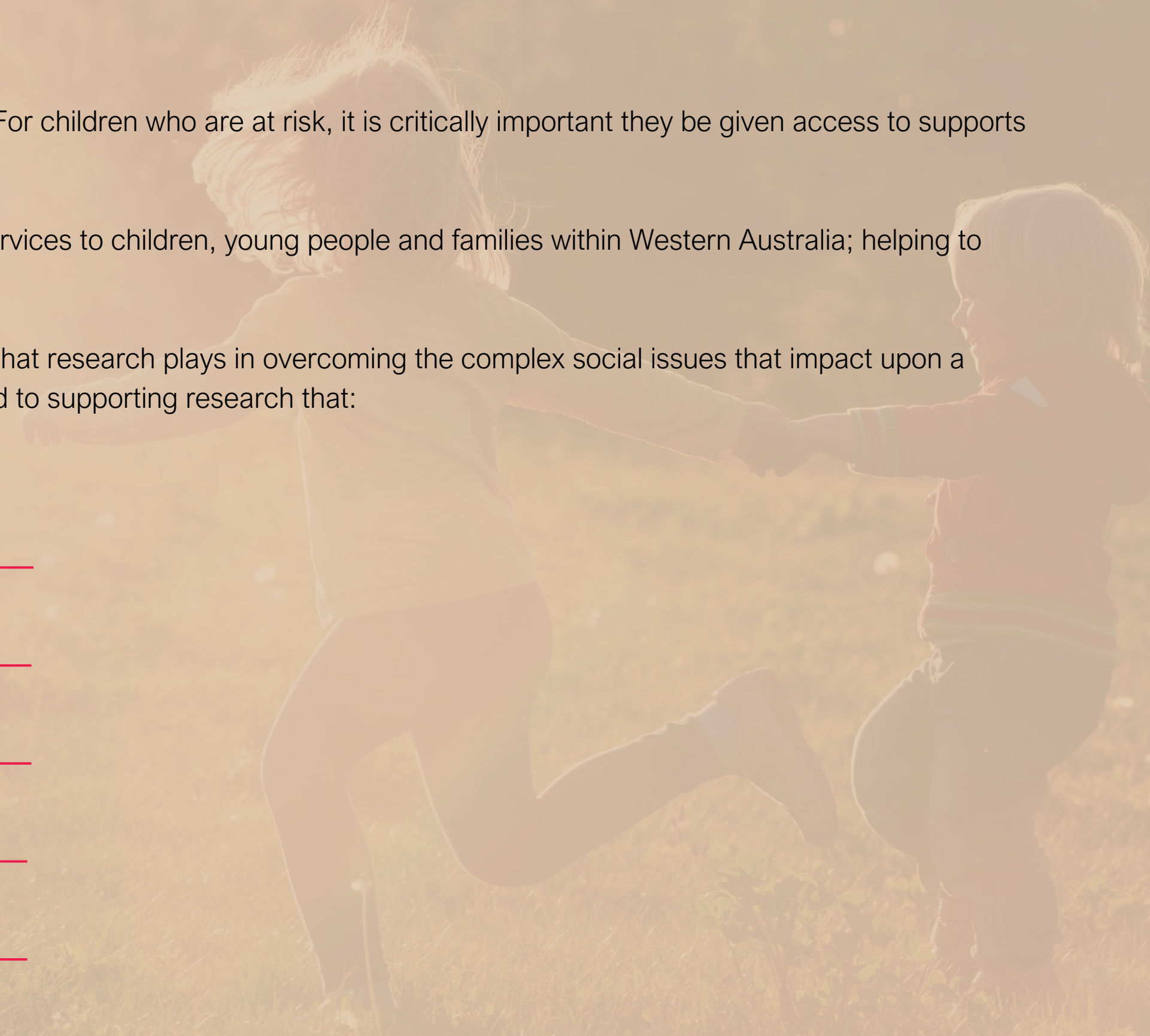
---

## Wanslea's Commitment to Research

All children and young people have the right to be safe, supported and valued. For children who are at risk, it is critically important they be given access to supports that prevent or minimise harm thereby enabling them to thrive into the future.

For more than 80 years, Wanslea has been delivering a wide range of quality services to children, young people and families within Western Australia; helping to shape a brighter, better future for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

In addition to providing direct supports, Wanslea recognises the important role that research plays in overcoming the complex social issues that impact upon a child's development and wellbeing. For this reason, Wanslea remains committed to supporting research that:

- Protects the rights, interests and safety of children and young people.
  - Supports the self-determination of children and young people.
  - Improves outcomes for children and young people.
  - Advocates for change that delivers positive social impact.
  - Shares findings to improve best practice approaches.
  - Informs policy and future planning.
- 

## Vision and Mission

### Wanslea's research vision is to:

Produce high quality evidence and generate solutions that build a safer, brighter and better future for children and young people, primarily living in Western Australia.

Enact an instrumental role in shaping social policy within communities, informing best practice and delivering positive outcomes for children and young people.



### Wanslea's research mission is to generate positive and lasting:

#### ➤ **Social Impact**

Improved outcomes for children, young people, families, and communities.

#### ➤ **Brand Impact**

Positioning the organisation as a leader in contemporary and progressive thinking.

#### ➤ **Financial Impact**

Attracting increased organisational and sector-wide funding and investment.

## Research Principles

To ensure the welfare and interests of children and young people remain protected at all times, the following principles and practices will be embedded across all research related activities conducted by Wanslea



### Child/Youth-centred

As an accredited safeguarding organisation, the safety, well-being, rights and views of all children and young people will be protected throughout the research process; empowering them to speak up, be heard and contribute to decisions that improve life outcomes. Researchers will understand and value each participant's strengths, needs and interests, with consideration given to their social and cultural background. Using participatory, child/youth-centred approaches, children/youth will be supported to feel safe and empowered to express their views on matters important to them.

### Collaboration

Joint research initiatives will be aligned with our purpose and values; with strengths acknowledged and differences respected. Research partnerships will extend Wanslea's reach and encourage shared decision-making and collaboration to achieve the goals of this research agenda.

### Knowledge Translation

Research findings will be shared widely with the community where possible, to build capacity and optimise the development of children and young people. Dissemination plans will include strategies to ensure, where possible, the findings are accessible to policy-makers and the community to enable impact within the groups engaged in the projects.

### Ethical Research

Wanslea will ensure strict adherence to the ethical conduct of research; ensuring integrity, transparency, respect and accountability. Formal ethics processes will be implemented where required and also whenever possible for research with collaborators fully engaged in these practices. Informed consent and assent will be gained from all research participants as partners within the projects.

### Inclusivity and Diversity

Engagement of people from diverse backgrounds will at all times be respectful and inclusive with understanding and recognition of the impact caused by the inequities experienced by culturally diverse minorities. Collaboration with Wanslea's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisory and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committees' will ensure respect for all participants and lived experience will be consulted wherever possible.



---

# Research Principles

## **Evidence-based Decision Making**

Research decisions and recommendations will be based on objective and robust research methodologies and findings. The research team will maintain appropriate qualifications and experience of its members to ensure compliance with contemporary research theories and practices with ongoing connections with academic institutions maintained where possible.

---

## **Flexibility and Responsiveness**

Research priorities and approaches will be responsively adapted, considering emerging and changing community needs and priorities. This framework will guide research decision-making; however, there will remain flexibility to engage in projects as they arise, as long as they align with Wanslea's strategic goals.

---

## **Equity and Justice**

Research endeavours will raise awareness and advocate for a more just society; protecting the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. All research will be planned for a positive impact for participants and to contribute to improved outcomes for children and youth within the community.

---

## **Strengths Based**

Research will regard all individuals as the expert in their own lives, possessing strengths with the capacity for growth. By focussing on strengths rather than deficits, research will focus on engaging with children and youth lived experience as a means of identifying mechanisms and/or solutions that foster growth and resilience.

---

## **Capacity Building**

Research projects will be planned and implemented to support and empower children and young people to build upon their strengths and resources. Research may also focus on building the capacity of communities to work together to build more inclusive and supportive communities. Through strong partnerships and co-design, the research team will engage participants in ways that empower them to grow, learn and develop within their immediate community.

---

## **Trauma Informed Practice**

Research will recognise the high rates and damaging effects of trauma, with the need to create safe spaces that promote healing and recovery. Research conducted by Wanslea will embed the six (6) guiding principles of a trauma-informed research approach as developed by Dietkus (2022) (SDN | Trauma-Responsive Design Research: A New Model for Change ([service-design-network.org](https://service-design-network.org)) sourced 28/6/24

# Research Priorities

## High Priority

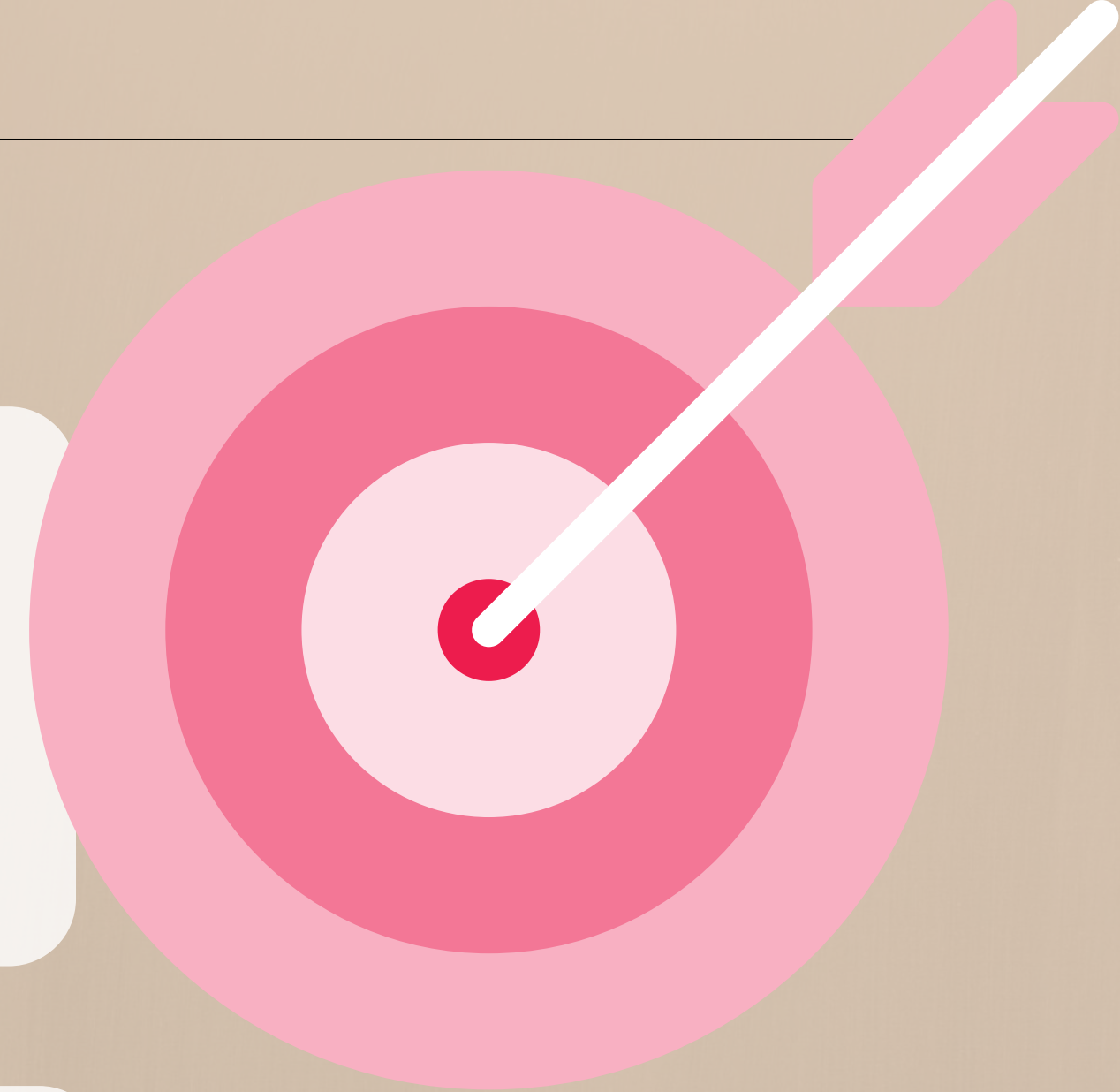
- The research supports Wanslea's mission and strategic objectives.
- The research focus aligns with Wanslea's Research Areas.
- The research addresses gaps in knowledge that will drive social change and outcomes for children and young people.
- The research project is considered feasible, practical and achievable within the resource constraints of the organisation.
- The research does not duplicate the efforts of others.
- The research has high magnitude scale and reach across the sector.

## Medium Priority

- The research responds to the policy context and positively influences decisions relating to policies and practices that support children and young people.
- The research fosters external partnerships and develops internal capability.
- The research directly translates to existing services provided by Wanslea and has the potential to increase or expand our market share.

## Low Priority

- The research uses a co-design, participatory approach to strengthening communities.
- The research is inter-disciplinary.
- The research addresses a potential community need.



# Research Areas

## Population Groups



Children and young People, aged birth to 25 years



Vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children and young people



Children and young people living in regional and remote areas of WA

## Systems and Society



Child Safeguarding



Physical & Mental Health and Wellbeing



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Early Childhood Care, Development and Education

## Specific Focus

Upholding the safety and rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.

Ensuring the health and wellbeing of children, young people and carers in the Grandcare system.

Improving access to effective mental health supports for children, young people and families.

Facilitating equity and inclusion for children and young people who face isolation and exclusion.

Improving developmental and educational outcomes for children at risk through earlier Identification and Intervention.

# Main Focus of our Research

1

## Upholding the Safety and Rights of Disadvantaged Children and Young People.

Our research will deepen understanding of how organisations and systems can effectively uphold the safety, rights, and voices of disadvantaged children and young people. This includes examining the implementation of child-safe principles, participatory approaches, and inclusive governance frameworks. The goal is to ensure every child is protected, respected, and empowered to have a say in the decisions that affect them.

2

## Ensuring the Health and Wellbeing of Children, Young People, and Carers in the Grandcare System.

This research stream will explore the health, wellbeing, and relational dynamics of grandparent-led care arrangements. By identifying both strengths and challenges within the Grandcare system, we aim to inform policies and practices that better support carers and the children they nurture, promoting stability, resilience, and long-term wellbeing for families in kinship care.

3

## Improving Access to Effective Mental Health Supports for Children, Young People, and Families.

We will focus on identifying and evaluating early, family-centred, and community-based approaches to mental health support. This research will seek to reduce barriers to access, strengthen pathways to care, and promote evidence-based interventions that foster mental wellbeing from early childhood through adolescence.

4

## Facilitating Equity and Inclusion for Children and Young People Who Face Isolation and Exclusion.

Our work will generate insights into how education, community, and service systems can collaborate to remove barriers and create inclusive environments. This includes children and young people experiencing disability, gender, cultural or geographic isolation, or socioeconomic disadvantage. The aim is to promote equity, belonging, and participation in all aspects of life.

5

## Improving Developmental and Educational Outcomes for Children Who Are Developmentally at Risk through Earlier Identification and Intervention.

This research will focus on early identification, intervention, and support strategies within early childhood and school settings. By understanding what works to strengthen developmental foundations, particularly in the early years, we aim to improve learning, social-emotional, and wellbeing outcomes for children who may otherwise fall behind.