Toward a comprehensive child mental health system:

a national workforce scoping project

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Emerging Minds.





Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the land on which we meet today and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples, their ancestors, the elders past, present and future from the different First Nations across this Country.

We acknowledge the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Scoping the child mental health needs and workforce in Australia

Children's need for mental health support

~4 million children aged 0-12

2021 Australian Census

500,000 need mental health care now

13% of 0-12s are estimated to have mental health conditions

1 million at risk of future mental health concerns.

22% developmentally vulnerable in first year of school, 11.4% severely so. (AEDC 2021)

Need is often higher in regional and remote

Regional data profiles

Workforce availability

Specialist workforce is small

~150,000 in specialist-level occupations.
6 specialist-hours per child per year

Potential child mental health workforce among generalists

~2 million workers in occupations that could support early intervention

Workforce is maldistributed

Availability often lowest in regions of highest need

Cultural competence is essential

Regional data profiles

Workforce capability to recognise and support child mental health

3,000+ National workforce survey respondents

Most find themselves supporting child mental health at work (85%)

Even when it's not their job (65%)

Child focus and child mental health practice is low

Considering needs of the child and knowing what to do

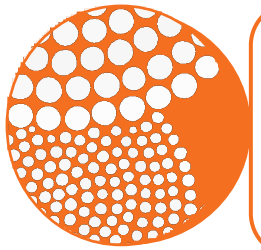


Knowledge and confidence are 'moderate'

But translation to practice is harder

Disaster and child mental health awareness is low

Unless worked through it before



Competence working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is very low

Rural workforce have some special skills

But overall could use more support

Only infant focused occupations understand infant mental health

Those who engage in workforce development rate their capabilities higher

Knowledge translation and implementation



Emerging Minds is feeding back this data and findings to sectors, professions and governments in webinars, data snapshots, regional profiles, presentations.

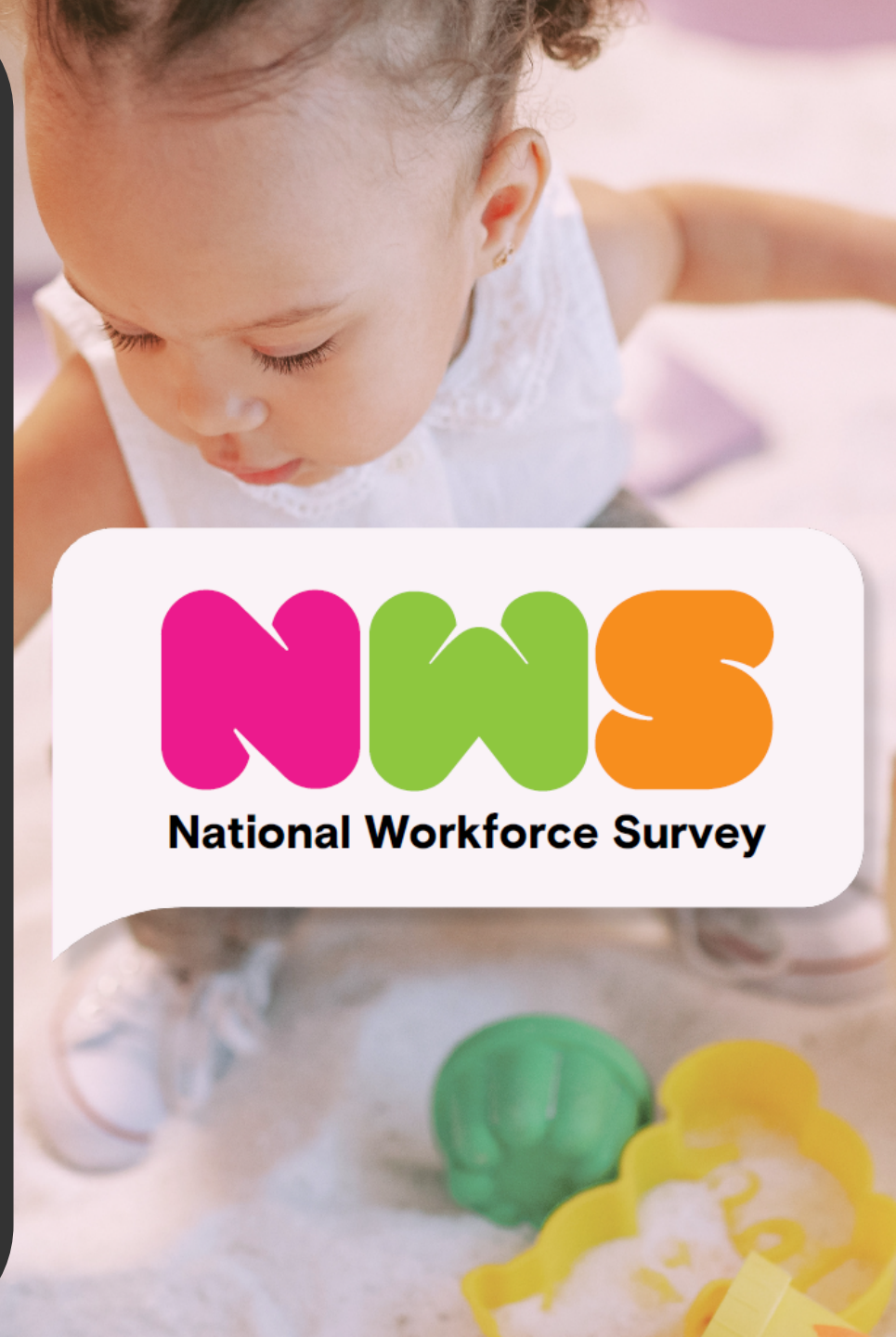


We are working with Primary Health Networks, departments and organisations around Australia to improve the capacity of systems to support children and families.



Sharing a model that recognises workforce development and training is part of the broader solution for creating a system of care that promotes and responds to children's mental health.

Make sure your sector is represented in the 2026 survey!



NWS

National Workforce Survey

- 25 mins and confidential
- Win an iPad **+ EXTRA HAMPER PRIZE AT EM BOOTH**
- Share with your networks (we can help you)
- Open now until 30 November
- Email Claire: marshc@emergingminds.com.au