



Position Description

Position Title:	First Nations Community Researcher
Location:	Based in Darwin with travel to remote locations as required
Reports to:	Research & Evaluation Coordinator
Tenure:	Full time. Fixed term 12-month contract
Classification:	SCHCADS Modern Award Level 4-5 (dependent on experience)

Background

Children's Ground is a First Nations organisation. The Children's Ground Approach is designed and delivered through the leadership of First Nations people. We are committed to systems change to ensure dignity, justice and equity for all children and families. Our work focuses on national reform as well as evidencing a new way of working.

The Children's Ground Approach is a whole of community, whole of life approach, designed by First Nations people. We partner with a community over the course of a generation, being led by local expertise, vision and intelligence. Together, we create and deliver an integrated system that is centred on learning, development and wellbeing that responds to the child and their family through the key transition points from pre-birth to young adulthood. Our approach recognises the cultural, social and economic strength of communities and builds on this to equip children for opportunities locally, nationally and globally.

We celebrate First Nations children and families and back their vision and talent to transform their communities from extreme stress and economic disadvantage to communities of opportunity and wellbeing.

Children's Ground operates in the Top End and Central Australia in the Northern Territory, with support provided by a Melbourne-based Shared Services team.

In Top End we work in the communities of Minmarama, Kulaluk, Knuckey Lagoon, 15 Mile and Marlkawo.

Position Summary

The First Nations Community Researcher will work as part of the Research & Evaluation Team and alongside communities to support our monitoring and evaluation.

The focus of Children's Ground's evaluation and research is to demonstrate the impact of Children's Ground Approach for children, families and communities. Children's Ground is committed to monitoring and evaluation being led by Children's Ground First Nations staff, families and communities and privileging First Nations culture.

The Community Researcher will play a key role in supporting the collection, analysis, and communication of data and stories from the communities we work with. This role is central to ensuring that the voices and experiences of communities are recorded and reflected. This includes a focus on

supporting engagement of staff, families and communities in Children’s Ground’s evaluation and research. It will also involve supporting data sovereignty and sharing and learning research and evaluation knowledge within the communities. This includes talking with families about our daily data collection and long-term evaluation over 25 years.

The role involves working under general direction from the Research and Evaluation Coordinator, with responsibility for planning and organising work, setting priorities, and managing time effectively.

This role will work with all the communities in the Top End that are currently leading Children’s Ground, including Knuckey Lagoon, Minmarama, Kulaluk and 15 Mile around Darwin, Marlkawo (outstation) in West Arnhem and any new communities. The role includes working with people from many different Nations.

Key Relationships

Reports to: Research & Evaluation Coordinator Top End

Key Internal liaison: Top End Directors and Area/Team heads, Director Research & Evaluation

Working Partnerships: Top End teams of Learning, Family Health, Community Development and Employment, Central Australia First national Community Researchers, Data & Evaluation Officer

Key Responsibilities

This role will work with the Top End Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator and communities to support the implementation of the Children’s Ground monitoring, evaluation, and research through:

1. Engaging and working with First Nations families and communities about research and evaluation

- Contributing to engaging children, families and communities in research and evaluation.
- Always talking with people about Children’s Ground’s evaluation and research so that all staff and families become familiar and comfortable with the data that Children’s Ground collect and our evaluation.
- Working with First Nations staff and families to build R&E knowledge skills in western evaluation and research.
- Engaging in and support peer learning – learning from other First Nations and Western trained staff and sharing your knowledge and experience with them too.

2. Evaluation and Research

- Supporting First Nations staff to lead the evaluation design, delivery, analysis and reporting, including planning and support for First Nations staff to talk with families and communities about the evaluation to ensure they feel informed, empowered and engaged in our data collection and evaluation approaches.
- Supporting staff to collect their data every day to a high quality using the Children’s Ground data entry app or web-based system or using paper-based forms.
- Contributing to regular reviews and data feedback with evaluation/research team, staff and communities – both of quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (stories) data.
- Contributing to the development of culturally reflective and ethical approaches to evaluation and research – and supporting First Nations leaders, staff and families to lead and contribute.
- Working with First Nations leaders and communities to develop community research priorities.

- Working with staff and families to do local research projects – sometimes with external research and evaluation partners.
- Contribute to data analysis for evaluation reporting and research, with First Nations staff and communities.
- Participating in conference and other presentations about our research and evaluation.
- Other evaluation and research tasks as needed by the Coordinator.

3. Local community agency and respect for local cultural knowledge and life

- Regularly talk with local First Nations people and elders to discuss local aspirations and gather stories and data to inform monitoring, evaluation and research.
- Liaising with local First Nations people to ensure that our monitoring, evaluation and research operations do not undermine but actively promote local cultural knowledge and practice.
- Encouraging and support all First Nations families, valuing their ideas, strategies and aspirations.

4. Relationships

- Developing professional, trusting and respectful relationships with people in the region.
- Maintaining strong working relationship with Children’s Ground internal partners.
- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with relevant external partners.
- Representing Children’s Ground at meetings when requested.

5. Contribute to Children’s Ground

- Be a positive, innovative and active member of the Children’s Ground team.
- Support a strong, connected, respectful and supportive organisation.
- Participate in professional development programs offered by Children’s Ground.

Work Health and Safety

This role will require working regularly in outdoor conditions, sitting, standing and moving around in outdoor settings, including getting in and out of motor vehicles and remote location work.

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Demonstrated experience working with First Nations people and communities in a culturally appropriate and respectful way.
2. Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build trust and rapport with community members.
3. Ability to handle sensitive information with care, respecting privacy and confidentiality protocols.
4. Strong analytical skills, with the ability to identify themes and insights from data.
5. Good written and verbal communication skills.
6. Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
7. Commitment to the principles of self-determination and cultural safety.
8. Ability to plan, organise and prioritise workload around importance and timelines.
9. Ability to work in a flexible team environment.
10. Willingness to undergo a National Police Check and obtain an OCHRE Working with Children Check.

Desirable

1. Formal qualifications in research, social sciences, community development, public health, or a related field, or equivalent work experience.
2. Experience working within an evaluation or research setting - collecting qualitative and/or quantitative data (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups).
3. Knowledge and skills in computer use.
4. An interest in working with children of all ages and their families.
5. Current driver's licence.
6. Experience working in a start-up environment and implementation of processes and systems from scratch.

Personal attributes

- Self-starter who thrives in an environment that is fast paced, innovative, complex and thinks systemically
- Proactive and can work autonomously, as well as part of a team
- Creative and embracing of a culturally diverse workforce
- Passionate about social justice and empowerment
- Highly collaborative
- Innovative and thinks creatively about problem resolution
- Focused on achieving excellence