

**Submission
No 17**

SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS AND BABIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mrs Jessica Giles
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Dear Committee,

I offer my contact details should you wish to seek opinions from new parents or current users of the Early Childhood Health Centres of NSW.

As a parent of two children, one born in Melbourne and the other in Sydney I have seen the difference in services offered in both states.

I would like to express my gratitude towards the current model of care in that I am able to establish a long-term relationship with an experienced, highly trained Child and Family Health Nurse.

The relationship with your local Early Childhood Health Centre nurse is incredibly valuable as a source of information, support, knowledge and reference to other agencies. Access to new parent groups are important as it offers local connections and with other mothers going through the significant challenges of becoming a parent. The role of the Child and Family Health nurse is not filled by other sectors of the community.

If NSW is serious about preventing childhood obesity, domestic violence, suicide, drug and alcohol addiction then the support of the Child and Family Health nurse working with mothers and families is critical in preventing the issues from escalating. Whilst the current model of care may seem expensive to some, the cost of preventing if not addressing these issues earlier is far more cost effective than treating long term issues in the acute health care sector.

Visiting an Early Childhood Health Centre is not just about nutrition, developmental checks and breastfeeding. It is about access to a trusted specialist on a range of topics that GP's, Chemists, and Practice nurses don't have the time or are set up to deliver to often distraught, sleep deprived mothers.

Mothers with young children are very time poor and generally do not advocate well for themselves in seeking support/advice/and knowledge. Having a trusted source is pivotal in building healthy happy functioning families that are set up to thrive.

I encourage the committee to seek out users of the current service to answer any questions or provide feedback on any proposed changes to the current model of care.

Kind Regards,

Jessica Giles