

17188 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

Main Issues with current system have been summarised in 3 categories below as issues with and suggested improvements to current status quo:

Hospital System around antenatal, postnatal and pediatric care improvements

- Antenatal care has been proven to be better for patient and midwife in 'Midwife Group Practice' setups and yet this is still only available like a lottery to a tiny fraction of mums. Please watch documentary 'Birthtime' which should be compulsory viewing for anyone in policy making positions.
- We can't treat a parent (aka dad) like a visitor to a maternity ward making them adhere to visitation hours after birthing parent has either just been through labour or a Caesarian (70% chance Caesar at Wollongong hospital shockingly). That is literally the time they are needed most in mum and bubs lives and they are sent home setting the tone for the inequality in parenting that often follows.
- We need a hospital facility that enables a parent or caregiver to eat/sleep/shower with their child. Separation when a child is so vulnerable and young is unnecessarily cruel and traumatic for both child and caregiver. Eg. Sleeping in a chair for a week post Caesarian next to a cot for a sick baby (who had previously been discharged from maternity ward) is not acceptable but common practice. Build purpose made new facilities! Run design competitions with architectural practices to see what this could look like!!! They will do it for free if needs be!!!! (But pay them)!

Pre- day care stage improvements

- The metaphorical village is all but dead (from "it takes a village" adage). Help bring it back, modernise local health centres to include play areas and tea and coffee stations as a free place to meet outside of initial check ups. Provide at home doula care as part of health system. Have depot/storage of all baby stuff to kit out families that want to recycle or don't have money for new.
- Engage new dads to help them create a community too (on weekends if needed) so that again baby health centres aren't just for mums.
- Don't use 'primary care giver' terminology. Both parents should be equal care givers is what we're aiming for. All too often it's just politically correct code for mums but mums are also expected to work full time, clean house, do laundry, cook etc, etc

Post day care stage improvements

- We should be encouraging men to reduce working hours to enable mums to work if they want to.
- It's always depicted by government and media that working part time means being under-utilised or not ideal. Exponentially growing GDP is no longer sustainable or desirable. Europe leading the way with a 4-day work week, with massive trials showing no loss of productivity. Working part time

actually enables parents to be active in their kids upbringing and stay connected with society - it should be championed and celebrated.

- Day care should be readily available and free but not so that mums can go back to work full time which seems to be the governments current incentive and narrative. It is a terrible life balance for both parents to work full time and have kids in daycare 5 days a week, it's a recipe for stress, burnout and depression.

- Work hours for parents should be 9-3:30. It's not fair to put kids in after school care 5 days a week when they are so young.