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MEDIA RELEASE

Support for new parents

Effective support services can help new parents give their baby the best start in life. Many new parents need some support, whether it's help with feeding and settling their baby, or more intensive support.

Improving services for new parents and babies was the focus of a report tabled today by the NSW Parliament's Committee on Community Services. The inquiry found issues with service coordination and accessibility, and gaps in support for parents who need extra help.

"Services for new parents can be disjointed and inconsistent. Our recommendations aim to ensure all parents can access universal services and vulnerable parents get more intensive support," said Committee Chair Kevin Conolly MP.

"We heard that Aboriginal children have poorer outcomes because of trauma, violence and disadvantage. Supporting Aboriginal families to provide nurturing homes for their babies has to be a priority."

According to Mr Conolly the inquiry also found that there are gaps in parenting services — for example, dads are often left out.

"The role of fathers in babies' development isn't fully appreciated and they're seen as helpers rather than equal partners. We think parenting programs for new fathers should be expanded and their role better recognised."

Improving access to parenting services was another focus of the inquiry. The report found that technology could be used to provide services to parents that are harder to reach, like those in rural areas.

"We heard about services being provided via web chat, telephone helplines and text messaging. We've recommended further development of technology-based parenting services."

"We also looked at improving support for parents and babies with disability. We've recommended that parenting information be produced in accessible formats, and agency staff be trained in disability awareness. Services gaps caused by the NDIS also need to be addressed."

"The first thousand days of a child's life are an important foundation for their future wellbeing. Our report aims to ensure that all new parents can create a loving and nurturing home for their babies."

The report is on the [Committee's webpage](#).

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