

**Submission
No 34**

SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS AND BABIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Nhuan Lien Vong
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I currently live in the Parramatta area (Eastwood) and find the services provided through the Early Childhood Centre through Parramatta Council very lacking. With my first child who was born in 2013, the SAN hospital where I gave birth actually warned me that I may not get any service from Parramatta Council. There is an early childhood centre on Bridge St Epping which is currently sitting empty and is only open 1 day per week and by appointment only.

There is no drop in lactation consultant clinics in the area. I managed to find a mother's group through the Ryde Council Early Childhood Centre and I discovered the wealth of information provided to new mothers there. I attended an information session on moving to solids and even used their lactation consultant. All this which should have been provided by Parramatta Council. In particular, one in the area.

The Early Childhood centre in Carlingford has also been closed by Parramatta council. With my second child born this year, I had one visit from a nurse from the Parramatta district Early Childhood Centre. All my children have had their vaccinations and checkups required in the blue book through our family doctor who fortunately bulk bills children.

My concern is that there is no consistency in the level of care or services provided by different council jurisdictions. Parramatta is now a large council area which encompasses people from high and lower socio-economic backgrounds. New mothers shouldn't have to be the ones chasing the service and have to travel to get their children immunised or find someone to talk to if they have concerns. Especially in the early days of bringing home a newborn.

Ryde Council seems to have gotten this service right. Providing proactive nurses who make contact with new mothers and providing drop in services. There should be consistency across all councils in the service provided.