

**Submission
No 2**

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT
CHECKS**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 8 January 2024

Partially
Confidential

I have been working at a Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN) in the last 4-5 years for NSW Health.

From my observation, I believe the biggest barriers are parents lack of understanding of how important our development checks are for their children. Our service is completely voluntary thus they often think they can just have the "checks " done with their GP where it is a "one stop shop" for them because their child will get their immunisation at the same time with GPs. What parents don't understand is that Child and Family Health Nurse are highly specialised area and we focus on child development and supporting parenting compacity for the first 2000 days. GPs don't have the time and to be honest they are lacking of the specialist knowledge to support the family. There is not enough promotion about our role and our service to the public. Our role should be better promoted and recognised by the public as well as by the system we work in.

We see children that they are having all their checks done with GPs after the initial new born home visit we do for their baby and 3 years later they get referred in by their care educators stating child needs a review due to some developmental delay. This would have being picked up earlier if the parents brings the child to see CFHN for their blue book checks. Due to wait list for therapy (public or private) the child would be around 4 years of age by the time they are able to receive any therapy and that is at the end of 2000 days! Early detection and early intervention is crucial.

Secondly, this day and age, we have the pressure of cost of living and for many families, parents have return to work when babies are 12 month of age or less. We have parents ringing for an appointment on the weekend or in the evening but our service is during working hours only and we are unable to provide those appointment that is at a time that suits them better. I heard from our community Pediatrics medical director, this is a well known factor and our service have tried to offer a half day Saturday clinic in the past however this was complicated by CFHN pay restriction (we are not entitled to weekend loading pay). The nurse who worked on the weekends are told to take " time in leu " instead of getting proper weekend pay and the nursing union got involved and all fell apart. To be fair, we should be able to get weekend loading and paid properly just like every other registered nurse that is doing shift work.

Thanks for your time!