

From:
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Subject:

Hi

My name is Jo Clinton and I am emailing in regards to submissions for the Parlimentary inquiry into Breastfeeding. I realize the submission date has passed however I believe my experience would be worth noting.

I am a 37 year old women who has a beautiful and healthy 11 month old baby girl. Breastfeeding has been a very important aspect of bonding with my baby girl and I am still enjoying all its benefits. She is 100% breastfed, wont take a bottle and I find it almost impossible to be able to express any milk at all. I have tried her on formula, however she rejects it almost agressivly! I have had advice from experts and all believe that I should continue to breastfeed for both her benefit and mine. I am enjoying the experience so I do not want to give it up. She also wont settle into childcare and stresses to the point of holding her breath. I have tried to leave her in care for several months and it hasnt gotten any better.

My maternity leave was coming to an end and as Im in Federal Government employment I decided that I would ask if I could apply for another 12 months leave without pay. I am now going to resign from my current place of employent so I dont mind telling you that I work for Medicare Australia in their state office. I was utterly disgusted at the response I got from my team leader when asked to be considered for 12 months leave without pay so I could continue to breastfeed my baby. I explained my circumstances and was told (rather rudely) that under no circumstances would I be able to do this. I tried to explain my situation to her but she was adamant that this just would not happen even if I asked Management higher than herself regardless of the situation with my baby girl.

I subsequently spoke to HR and applied through them but not before I went to the Anti Discrimination board who sent me some valuable information regarding this matter. I wrote a letter (which I have a copy of) and sent it to HR. I got a call about a week or so later from one of the Management team saying that my case went to the State Manager and she had granted me 6 months leave without pay to be reviewed after that. I was relieved to say the least that I could now stay at home and continue to breastfeed my little girl.

However, the whole experience has caused significant stress on both myself and my husband and should have never ocured. Something needs to be done regarding the education of people in the work place, and it should be easier and a lot less stressful to apply for leave for these reasons. Why should I have to feel forced to resign from my place of employment because I choose to breastfeed my child? If I hadnt made a call to the Antidiscrimination Council and written a letter explaining my situation then I wouldnt have been granted leave. How many other women has this happened too? And how many women in the workplace have had to give up such a wonderful and beneficial experience so as not to loose their jobs? The whole experience is disgusting and I have now decided that I wont be going back to work for an organisation who treats its employees in such a way. I am lucky to be in a financial position where I can resign however many women are not as lucky.

I hope that this may be considered as a submission. As I have stated I am resigning from my job in disgust at the way I have been treated as I see it to be unfair. I should not have had to go through all the stress of speaking to the Anti Discrimination Council, from being spoken to by a rude Team Leader regarding my choices. An organisation like Medicare Australia should be a lot more understanding and support womens rights to choose to breastfeed (especially considering it is one of the hardest things to do but one of the most beneficial to our babies).

One for Mum, One for Dad and One for the Country - Not likely when you get

this sort of treatment!

Thank you for considering this submission.

Kind Regards

Jo Clinton
