

**Subject:** Breast Feeding

To Whom It May Concern,

I had every intention of breast feeding my first born. Looking back I can see how naive and unprepared I was for what I perceived as being something that would come naturally.

I knew the advantages of breast feeding - hard not too these days with all the 'breast is best' information clearly displayed and discussed by all the midwives.

When my son was born he had difficulty in regulating his body temperature and was taken away from me for 5 long hours. He was 9 hours old before he had any interest in feeding.

I had trouble getting him attached and frequently asked for help from the midwives. The only 'help' I received was having a midwife walk in and position my baby onto my breast then walk out again.

Once I was home and still having trouble I arranged to attend a day stay breast feeding clinic where I did get the help I needed but it came too late. My supply was low and no amount of extra expressing between feeds was helping. I was offered a drug to help increase my supply but after struggling for 9 weeks I decided that enough was enough.

I do not regret my decision to put my son on formula. I was a much happier mummy for it and he thrived on formula.

What I do regret is having to defend my decision at every turn - to have to explain to strangers why I was feeding my son formula. You would think that I was feeding him rat poison the way other mothers and health care professionals treated me.

I am currently 24 weeks pregnant with our second child and once again I have every intention of breast feeding. I feel that I am better prepared this time around. I have read more, I have seen more and I have more strategy plans in place just in case things don't work out.

However I have come to realise that breast feeding or bottle feeding your child really isn't the be all or end all of being a good parent. My children will have loving, supporting parents which is all that any child can hope for.

Successfully breast feeding your child isn't a symbol that you love your child more than someone who bottle feeds. Hats off to those who can but don't look down on those who can't - they are doing the best they can!

Sharon Gwyn