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From: Danny Kingsley [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, 24 February 2005 8:44 AM  
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)

**Subject: Submission to the Balancing Work and Family committee**

I am a mother of a young son. My husband works as a teacher and I am in my second part time year of a PhD. We have our son in care three days a week this year. Because our income last financial year was too high we did not qualify for any subsidy for childcare. My stipend for studying this year is about \$9,000 which works out to approximately \$350 a fortnight. Our bill for childcare is \$277 per fortnight.

We do not qualify for any government assistance, or any tax relief for childcare, despite it being an obvious expense for us to both 'work' (in my case, study). I also work about 6 hours a week as an aerobics instructor and doing gentle exercise for old and infirm people. This is piecemeal work and I would be unable to do it were it not for my mother in law who lives locally and can look after my son for short periods of time. There is occasional care on offer in the lower Blue Mountains, but it is only for a very limited time ( four hours one day a week), so really is respite care.

My suggestions are:

- \* We should not have to feel 'grateful' for being 'extremely lucky' to obtain childcare for our son - there is an obvious need for more childcare places all over Sydney.
- \* I do not expect childcare subsidies from the government, but think that making childcare a tax deduction (even twenty cents in the dollar would help) is an obvious way to address the issue of childcare cost. I am bemused by the tax benefit I receive (about which I must declare complete confusion) for staying at home. The priorities of the government are skewed in a very regressive direction.
- \* In my opinion, the \$3000 baby bonus (for which our son was born too early) should be scrapped. The real ongoing issue is childcare, not setup costs for a new baby.
- \* Occasional care really needs to be available for longer periods every day. Four hours one day a week is very restrictive, and of no help to me at all if my mother in law was unable to take care of my son. I would have to cancel my class if that eventuated. The current system might provide parents with some time out every now and then, but I'm not sure that is the sole mission of occasional care.

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