

I have previously submitted to this inquiry (number 29). Since then I have traveled to listen to the public hearing in Cairns and have listened to the latest web cast (June 4th) of the public hearing in Sydney. I have some further information to add to my previous submission.

After hearing evidence given by IFMAA on 4th June and reading submissions from formula manufacturers, I would like to draw your attention to some of the methods used to exploit the loopholes of the MAIF agreement I believe to the detriment of breastfeeding. BOTTLE AND TEAT MANUFACTURERS http://www.toysrus.com.au/site/107071_pg85,89.pdf

Now think when viewing this that you are a first time mother. You have purchased a nursery item from a department store and received this free catalogue "Everything for Baby". The above is a page within that catalogue titled "Baby feeding Essentials". What new mother isn't going to think they need these essential items? This is just one example; there are many of these sorts of publications available to new mothers all over Australia. Lists in parenting books for what to buy before your baby is born commonly contain reference to bottles and teats. BABY FOODS AND JUICES Now here is another page from the same catalogue. http://www.toysrus.com.au/site/107071_pg90-91.pdf

It looks pretty innocent, after all many parents are too busy to make their own foods and there are many complete meals available for their babies. What is wrong with these advertisements is products such the Farex Baby rice which states on its packaging that it is suitable from 4mths, despite the NHMRC, WHO and ABA recommending that babies are exclusively breastfed until 6mths of age. Even if a mother is feeding her child formula that child should still receive no other food until 6mths. This helps reduce against the risk of asthma, allergies, intolerances and eczema. Also on this same page are a range of Juices that are suitable from 6mths. In this growing age of obesity it becomes increasingly obvious that children (especially babies) should receive no other fluid than milk or water. I know many mothers who have given their babies solids before 4mths because the packaging says from 4mths and they believe a couple of weeks can't hurt. INFANT FORMULAS, FOLLOW-ON FORMULAS AND TODDLER MILKS http://www.toysrus.com.au/site/107071_pg90-91.pdf

Next, the all important range of infant formulas, follow on formulas and toddler milks. In small print at the bottom of this page is a statement that "Health professionals recommend breastfeeding whenever possible". Where is a statement such as a "Health Professional should be consulted before feeding your baby formula". Very few mothers actually consult anyone before feeding their child formula and if they do the health professionals are grossly under educated about the risks of using formula or the differences between the types and brands on the market. Unbiased independent research needs to be carried out on the differences with types and brands of formula and how they affect babies. This information needs to be given to parents before they decide to stop breastfeeding.

So despite the MAIF agreement preventing manufacturers from advertising their products directly to the mother they are allowed to market them via retails stores. People working in a supermarket are not qualified to give advice about infant feeding and they should not have to. Manufacturers are constantly promoting their products through the retails section because they are allowed to. The WHO code apparently cannot be fully implemented because of the Trade Practices Act. There has to be some way to prevent manufacturers from exploiting this loophole. Is it possible to investigate how formula manufacturers promote their products through retails chains? Companies don't spend millions of dollars on advertising unless they intend to get and keep customers. I myself almost fell for the clever advertising of a toddler milk advertisement in a parenting magazine. My son was going through a picky eating stage and as a first time mother I was worried and when I saw the advertisement thought "Hmm I better get some". Luckily I saw the sense in chatting to my CHN before buying and even more lucky was that she told me that even if I wasn't still breastfeeding (my son was 18mths old and still having 2 breastfeeds per day) my son didn't need this product. How many mothers do as I did and consult a health professional before purchasing this product? If the mothers that I know are anything to go by, the percentage is very small. Toddler milks may be marketed as a substitute to cows milk however if you were to feed your child the recommended 2 cups of this highly sweetened toddler milk per day, and then also try to breastfeed, there will be little room for any actual food. Do you keep breastfeeding or do you stop? In Australia the mother would most likely stop

breastfeeding, because it is not seen as normal to breastfeeding a child over 12mths (or even 6mths in some cases) and the advertising is so convincing that these products are essential for child health and development that many mothers doubt their body's ability to provide for their toddler. Despite there supposedly being no evidence to support claims that toddler milk advertising negatively impacts breastfeeding, the fact is that these products are marketed to mothers of children over 12mths, mothers that should be encouraged, educated and supported to breastfeed until 2yrs and beyond. CONFUSION OVER MAIF AND WHO. Another comment that I picked up from the public hearings (especially the one on the 4th of June) was the confusion between the WHO and MAIF agreement and whether the WHO code applied to toddler milks. I believe that Nina Berry spoke on 4th June (the only part of the public hearing my children didn't let me listen to) and that she would be the perfect person to question on the workings of the Who Code. Since the WHO recommends breastfeeding until 2yrs and beyond it seems unlikely that they would not have some recommendations against advertising a milk substitute that would directly impact breastfeeding of children until that 2 yr age mark. I hope this information is of use to the committee. I continue to be impressed by the submissions appearing and by the speakers at public hearings. I look forward to the recommendations the committee makes to help increase breastfeeding rates.