


**Submission no. 240**  
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am a mother of two children, aged eight and three, I am a Registered Nurse and a Trainee Breastfeeding Counsellor with the Australian Breastfeeding Association. I am also a passionate advocate for increasing the amount and accessibility of information about the importance of human milk for human babies in addition to instruction and support to mothers on how to successfully breastfeed.

My first experiencing of breastfeeding was with my first child. Following a traumatic birth we were discharged home by the time that he was three days old and before my milk supply had been established, during the perinatal period I received minimal information about and/or instruction in breastfeeding, leaving me inadequately prepared for the new skill I needed to acquire to ensure adequate nutrition for my newborn baby. My first child was breastfed exclusively for six weeks and was being fully artificially fed by the age of ten weeks. From the knowledge I have since gained I feel a number of factors contributed to this failure to breastfeed successfully; the lack of prenatal education about breastfeeding; lack of support whilst in hospital and once discharged to allow me to learn this new skill; and information provided by health professionals regarding 'spacing feeds to four hours' to ensure a better milk supply.

I was deeply regretful about not being able to breastfeed my first child for a longer period. Whenever I would see other mums breastfeeding their children, I would always be terribly envious and a little upset, especially my sister in law who had a baby five months older than my first and breastfed her until she was about 18 months old. Because of my experiences with my first child, I was very determined to breastfeed my next child for as long as possible and very passionate about breastfeeding in general. During my next pregnancy I did everything that I could to ensure that I would be able to breastfeed successfully.

I read everything that I could about breastfeeding, including the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) website and bulletin boards. I became aware of an "Introduction to Breastfeeding" class run by ABA, which I booked into, during the process of booking into the course I was fortunate enough to speak to the local ABA group leader who was running the course. We spoke for a while and she gave me some good insights into why breastfeeding Kendall may not have been as successful as I would have hoped, which really helped in my feelings towards my unsuccessful breastfeeding attempt.

My second child was born two weeks early by caesarean section and I did not get a chance to feed her until she was about 12 hours old. After she and I sorted out what position suited us best, feeding went really well and I was delighted to be on such a great start. For the first couple of days I fed her whenever she looked like she wanted it (demand feeding), but she developed jaundice, so I increased the frequency of her feeds to whenever she was awake and never more than two hours in between feeds to help with the jaundice. Because of her jaundice we were in hospital for seven days, but the transition back home went well, despite the fact we were living out of cardboard boxes as we were moving in three weeks to Albury.

My second child and I attended our first ABA meeting at Marrickville when she was about 10 days old and when we moved to Albury we attended their group meetings regularly, until I started at

TAFE and was unable to attend weekday meetings. I found the potential social isolation of moving to an area where I didn't know anyone was relieved by this regular contact with other mothers, and that my resolve to continue breastfeeding was also strengthened.

When my second child was about nine months old, I started a TAFE course in Nursing, which was full time, I was fortunate that there was on site childcare and I continued to breastfeed her. Breastfeeding at the childcare centre was not always very successful as she was easily distracted by everything else going on, and the childcare centre lacked the space and resources for a separate area for mothers who wished to breastfeed their child.

I am very thankful for the experience of breastfeeding that I was able to have with my second child. I loved breastfeeding, and felt so proud of myself for being able to achieve that, ideally I would have liked to feed her for longer, but am still happy that we got 15 months of feeding. My experience of the support that I received through ABA in breastfeeding my second child has greatly contributed to the success that we experienced with breastfeeding second time round. As a mum who has been able to breastfeed (and a nurse), I am very passionate about providing information and support to other mums wishing to breastfeed their children.

In the course of my study, I was required to prepare a presentation on the subject of health education, and chose breastfeeding. I was surprised (and mildly shocked) about the lack of knowledge that my classmates had about breastfeeding, I was glad to be able to provide information that may help them with their breastfeeding experience in years to come and it really motivated me to become learn more about breastfeeding and be able to share that information with others.

Clare Kendall