

From: Hayley Quach <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, 28 September 2015 9:42 PM
To: SARC
Subject: Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to express sincere concern and personal angst about the proposed changes, known as the No Jab, No Play Bill.

It is every child's right to be able to access an education, irrespective of the health choices their parents make for them. I personally, along with many others that I know, would place our health choices far above what may be dictated from the government about our children's education.

It is a basic right that parents have to be able to make health choices for their own children. It is a basic right for children to be able to attend a kindergarten, irrespective of their parents' choices regarding vaccinations.

To punish the children of families who have chosen not to vaccinate according to the schedule, is denying a basic human right to these young people. Their families may partly vaccinate, vaccinate but at a later date, or not vaccinate at all.

My own angst is based on three serious concerns. Firstly, although we have given our children most of the vaccines, we choose to do so at a later age. This means that our youngest child would miss out on kindergarten. Secondly, I am concerned about all the other children who may miss out on childcare or kinder now and in the future, and for their parents who face antagonising decisions. Thirdly, I have angst because of a feeling of the government dictating to families what their decisions for their children have to be and taking away individual choice.

From my point of view, there are two generalised cohorts of people who do not vaccinate their children according to the schedule.

The group of which I would be considered a part of, is those who conscientiously make a decision to delay, partially vaccinate, or not vaccinate their children. These people are mostly intellectuals, the families I know who make these decisions are almost entirely made up of working professionals – teachers, healthcare practitioners, psychologists, welfare workers, business owners etc. They are very aware of illnesses, transmission of illness, their own children's health and the health of the community around them. These families have made the decision not to vaccinate according to the schedule as a deliberate, educated and informed choice. The children of these families do not deserve to be disadvantaged because of their parents' choices. They have the right to a quality early childhood education and access to first class childcare.

The other cohort who do not vaccinate according to the schedule are families who may do so out of ignorance, or by a default position regarding healthcare, from lack of access to services, or from a lack of care. They may be families who struggle to get their children to kindergarten, or find it difficult to access childcare. For these families, the loss of childcare and kindergarten will, for the most part, not affect whether their children are vaccinated or not. A punishment based system never provides incentive. This means that already disadvantaged children, for whom access to childcare and kindergarten is so incredibly important for their early childhood development, will miss out. These are vulnerable children who desperately need early childhood services.

The letter sent out to schools in Victoria stated that the current number of children who were fully vaccinated was at 92% and that the aim was to increase fully vaccinated children to 95%. For a government to increase vaccination rates by a mere 3%, there are far more positive and effective ways of doing this. Positive information in the community, rather than fear-based, would be a great beginning. Apparently communities in Northern NSW (who have the lowest vaccination rates) are taking creative and positive steps to encourage higher vaccination rates – and it is working.

For a government to restrict and deny children a place in childcare or kindergarten is extremely unfair. For a government to expect its population to all do the same things at the same time, is totalitarian. The core of this issue is not about vaccination, the core of this issue is about government control over its population and restriction of personal choice.

Every child has the right to access early childhood services. Every family has the right to make informed health decisions for their children without their children being punished.

Yours Sincerely,

Hayley Quach

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