



HAMILTON PARENTS CENTRE HISTORY

SUMMARY

Prior to 1957 no antenatal classes were held in Hamilton. In 1957 Hamilton Parents Centre was formed and the first antenatal classes were held in a private home with four mothers in the class. The next year classes transferred to a central hall, qualified speakers were brought into the course, records were purchased and a library established. Much of the class time was spent doing breathing and stretching exercises, and listening to a one-hour record of a woman in labour.

By 1964 five antenatal courses were held per year and husbands attended two of the eight-week sessions for films and records. It was not until two years later that husbands attended the full eight weeks along with their wives.

In 1968 Hamilton Parents Centre patron – Mrs Elsa Wood was elected to the Waikato Hospital Board, and a year later Elsa succeeded in having visiting hours extended for parents of children in hospital. The same year Hamilton Parents Centre began working on the Mothercraft Unit at the hospital which opened two years later and is still in use today. (in 1983 Hamilton Parents Centre successfully lobbied against the closure of the Mothercraft Unit).

In 1985 successful lobbying was done at the Hamilton City Council to impose a bylaw making fencing or private swimming pools compulsory.

In 1990 Hamilton and Christchurch Parents Centre combined to produce the publication “Becoming a Parent” which is used by Parents Centres nationwide in antenatal classes.

At present Hamilton Parents Centre continues to run antenatal classes, organizes and runs the Hamilton Teddy Bears Picnic, music classes for babies and toddlers, sales of lambskins and other products, runs a variety of courses and social events for members, and has a comprehensive toy library open to Parents Centre members.