

being in an incubator, the relationship between the mother and this infant is already very much disabled."²⁹

57. The relationship between the mother and her premature child can be further endangered if the mother has a job outside the home. The Unemployment Insurance Act provides benefits for 15 weeks during maternity leave. The period cannot be interrupted for any length of time and then resumed. This means that the mother of a premature infant often has to return to work before or soon after it finally comes home from hospital. Your Committee believes, therefore, that the Act should be amended to meet the needs of premature infants and their mothers.

58. In summary, prematurity is one of the complications of birth that places a child at risk. Such a child is vulnerable to damage in many ways. It needs special care and extra attention in order to develop as well as possible. Its potential as a human being will suffer if it is not given adequate care for its physical growth as well as love and stimulation for its mental development. The way in which its personality develops and its eventual behaviour as an adult is influenced for better or for worse by the way it is treated from birth onward.