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## NSW Child Care Safety Under Parliamentary Review

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A 2019 case involving the death of seven-month-old Jack Loh has renewed attention on safety standards in New South Wales family day care facilities. The infant died on 4 March 2019 after being placed in unsafe sleeping conditions at a Sydney-based home care service. His parents have continued to advocate for stronger regulations to prevent similar incidents.

According to findings from the NSW Coroner's Court, Jack was placed to sleep in a prone position in an undersized bassinet. He was loosely wrapped, wearing a bib, and the room where he was sleeping had inadequate ventilation. The coroner concluded that unsafe sleep practices contributed to his death in the setting of an undiagnosed medical condition. The educator in charge of his care had left him unsupervised for a period before returning to check on him.

Following the inquest, the coroner issued recommendations, including banning the use of bassinets in all childcare services, mandating safe sleep training for educators, and reviewing regulatory oversight for family day care providers. These recommendations were made with the aim of reducing the risk of future incidents.

A NSW parliamentary inquiry into childcare commenced in August 2025, with a focus on the family day care sector. This form of childcare is home-based and regulated differently from centre-based services. Evidence presented to the inquiry has highlighted that family day care often receives less direct oversight, which can lead to inconsistent compliance with safety regulations.

Child safety experts and sector advocates appearing before the inquiry have called for mandatory safe-sleep training for all educators, more frequent inspections of facilities, and the possible introduction of monitoring systems in high-risk settings. They argue that these measures could improve compliance with national safety standards and better protect children.

Some providers have raised concerns about the financial impact of increased compliance requirements, noting that additional equipment,

training, and monitoring would increase operational costs. Policymakers are considering how to balance these concerns with the need to ensure that all childcare environments meet established safety benchmarks.

Jack's parents have participated in the inquiry, giving evidence about their son's death and the changes they believe are necessary. While they acknowledged that some reforms have been introduced since 2019, they expressed concern that critical recommendations from the coroner have not been fully implemented.

The parliamentary review will continue to hear from stakeholders, including government regulators, industry representatives, and affected families. Findings from the inquiry are expected to inform future legislative changes aimed at strengthening child safety in family day care services across New South Wales.

