

21 January 2020

Dear Commissioner

Re: Proposed Social and Emotional Wellbeing Checks for children aged 0-3 years

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposal to screen children between the ages of 0-3 years for “social and emotional wellbeing checks”. I envisage that this means that some behavioural elements of our children will be deemed as being unacceptable or indicative of potential future mental illness.

It is quite disturbing to consider that this categorisation will be determined with no medical testing or scientific evidence, but rather will be based on observation of several commonplace childhood traits including difficulty sleeping, shyness, crying for an absent parent, or irregular feeding patterns. Having been employed as a nanny and a private teacher previously, I can honestly say I have witnessed these behavioural traits in almost every child with whom I have had any interaction, and I don't believe those children grew up to exhibit any difficulty with social nor emotional wellbeing. They were simply being children and displaying a healthy and appropriate array of emotions to given situations in their surrounding environments.

I find it incredibly alarming that the medication of children and adults has increased drastically and yet there doesn't seem to be any evidence that psychiatric drugs or treatment reduce the level of social or emotional stress that may be experienced. Quite to the contrary, the number of suicides and mental health issues seems to be increasing despite the staggering sums of money being spent on psychiatry's so-called solutions, and yet these methods seem to be the only programs employed in the attempt to resolve social and emotional issues.

I find the idea of screening children at such a young age, with a view to medicating or treating them to prevent an unproven and perhaps non-existent social or emotional problem, absolutely abhorrent and I implore you to consider the vehement public objections to this proposal and deny the implementation of this program. Rather, let us consider a holistic or dietary approach and resolve social or emotional issues, should they be found to exist, with nutrition or parental education and communication, and only resort to a medical solution if proven disease or illness warrants such treatment.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

Kay Seabrook