

SUBMISSION RE SCREENING ALL 0-3 YEAR OLDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

22 January 2020

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to resubmit my submission to you which I sent on the 14th January. I would like this one to be my final submission to the Productivity Commission and would appreciate note being taken of my concerns.

I wish to object to the recent suggestion to screen all 0-3 year olds for “social and emotional well being” which in my opinion is the same as saying mental health.

There is a checklist used asking questions which are quite normal for most children. I am a parent of 2 and have 5 grand children so I have had a lot of experience in seeing how children act.

Questions such as does the child have irregular feedings or difficulty sleeping, of course this happens due to many normal childhood growth. For instance if a baby is teething they may be off their food and have trouble sleeping due to pain. This is not a mental illness nor is it a “social or emotional well being” problem. Another question is do they have anxiety and cry when their parents leave. I have seen this many times with many children. My son would quite often cry when I left him at a creche for a short time while I went to work. He turned out to be a very stable child and adult and is now a productive member of society as a counsellor.

So if someone ticked yes to some of these questions the child could be put on psychiatric drugs just in case they developed a mental illness. This is totally inhumane, irrational and harmful to the child.

They are just kids so let them be kids, not drug them and create far worse problems for their health in life.

Respectfully,

Eleanor Simpson