

Dear Commissioners

In all my 40 years in business and dealing with hundreds of thousands of people, many with young families, I have seen them experience ups and downs in their lives – some medically related, some vocation related, some familial, some environmental. Life is a patchwork of challenges, isn't it?

In all my personal research into the area of health and well-being, I have never seen any evidence to support "social and emotional well being " screening of children from 0-3 years old (aka mental illness tests) as having any benefit whatsoever.

The "tests" which I have seen seem to be pure-and-simple, a list of normal childhood behaviours. Nothing that calm parenting by a mindful, attentive, and easygoing parent can't fix - from the design of the baby's bedroom to the child-sized kitchen table, from diet and food preparation to clothing and movement.

I am concerned that when this screening has been implemented in other countries (including NZ) there has been an dramatic increase in the number of children being put on psychiatric drugs!! There has been a huge increase in New Zealand, for example – up 140% .

This is a dangerous path you are considering

I would ask that you please step back and look at ensuring all children's nutritional and care factors are considered above all else. There is rock solid evidence that vitamin deficiencies lead to behaviour problems, and this will not and cannot be fixed with drugs.

It's only common sense, isn't it? If these drugs in widespread use for decades now were in any way effective, then the incidence of "mental illness" would be on the decrease!

Just my two-bob's worth.

Thank you.

Richard Salisbury