

Dear Commissioner,

My name is Teal and I am the mother of 3 children. I am against mandatory screening of 3 year olds for several reasons:

1. In my experience as a mother, my daily outlook on life has much effect on my children. If I am in a bad mood, they too aren't as happy. If I am really busy and not paying attention to them, then they all (despite being very different people) tend to act up and cause trouble to get my attention. If I am spending the day playing with them and having a good day then they are much happier as a result.

Whether they are medicated or not does not change that my parenting style and my happiness has a large degree of effect on my children's attitude. Maybe helping with parenting classes instead??

2. The quality of food and sleep they have has an ENORMOUS effect on their reactions to the challenges of life, outlook on life etc. As do we all, when we are overtired or sick how do we handle conflict as opposed to when we are well rested and fed? Medication isn't going to replace a good night sleep or a good meal.

3. (and most importantly) I'm concerned with the negative effects of the medication being prescribed. I personally have seen warning signs of homicidal and suicidal tendencies on the packaging. I have a good friend whose cousin stabbed her sister to death with a kitchen knife after some trivial disagreement while being medicated.

I have another friend who no longer takes antidepressants as they made her not care about anyone or anything and she would rather have empathy and manage her depression other ways than to have no emotion or care for others. Kids are already quite selfish as they are learning about the world, suicidal and homicidal side effects are not needed on top.

I believe that the warnings on the medications are too severe to give anyone let alone a 3 year old and I believe there are better ways to help nurture a child who is just trying to learn their place in the world.

I have questions on the efficacy of the diagnosis method and am yet to see scientific evidence that these "imbalances" are actually that as opposed to results of our food, sleep, environment, tools to handle conflict etc. But this is another subject all together.

Thank you for listening.

Teal Els - Mother of 3