

Comment on the Mental Health Draft Report

I am writing out of concern as a Parent & Grandparent regarding the proposal to incorporate social and emotional wellbeing checks into existing developmental checks for 0 – 3 year olds.

As stated in the DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 17.2 — SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN *'State and Territory governments should use existing guidelines to expand early childhood health checks, such that they assess children's social and emotional development before they enter preschool'*. A child of that age is still developing, both physically and mentally. Any evaluation to label a child as requiring mental health support at that age has no scientific basis.

The symptoms that will be used to identify so-called mental disorders for 0 to 3 year olds include: irregular feeding, difficulty sleeping, whining, crying, temper tantrums, shyness, sleeping with the light on and hyperactivity. These are all normal occurrences for a child of that age, something of which the majority of them will grow out of, and is all part of growing up.

Let young children be just that. Give them the time to develop their understanding of their world and as they grow the above 'symptoms' are left behind as a normal part of childhood. To label them as needing psychiatric 'treatment' is an injustice that does not allow them to grow up normally and sets them on a course of incorrect diagnosis and drugging.

Sincerely

Geoffrey Dawson