
PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION: HEARING

1. The issue: Do the potential benefits outweigh the risks of medications for THIS child
 - a. Benefit – Risk Analysis (For example, weigh the risks of behavior vs. risks of medication, i.e. Paxil not approved for children as there is an increased risk of suicide)
2. Have all lesser intrusive/restrictive measures been ruled out?
 - a. Individual therapy, group therapy, other behavior modification plan. Has behavior modification been attempted by someone who is licensed?
3. Questions to ask in Court (*American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*)
 - Is parent available?
 - Is child mature minor? If no, Court acting in loco parentis?
 - Have you reviewed the child's Resource Record and Medical Passport?
 - Are you aware of the medications attempted in the past?
 - What is the name of the medication? Is it known by other names / generic names?
 - What is known about the helpfulness with other children having similar condition to the child?
 - In your opinion, how will medication help the child? How long before there is an improvement?
 - Has the medication been approved by the FDA for this condition for pediatric use or is this an off label use?
 - Is there an FDA Medwatch related to the medication (See www.fda.gov/medwatch/index.html)?
 - If not, on what research are you relying for choosing this medication?
 - What are the side effects that may occur with this medication?
 - What are the extreme, serious or irreversible side effects?
 - Is the medication addictive? Can it be abused?
 - What is the requested dosage and range for the medication? How often?
 - Are there any laboratory tests that need to be done before the child begins taking the medication?
 - Will a child and adolescent psychiatrist be monitoring the child's response to the medication and make dosage changes if necessary? How often will progress be checked? By whom?
 - Are there any foods or other medications the child should avoid while taking this medicine?
 - Are there any activities the child should avoid while taking the medication? Any precautions recommended for other activities?
 - How long does the child need to take this medication? How will the decision be made to stop this medication?
 - What should be done if a problem develops (illness, doses missed, or side effects develop)
 - Does the child's school nurse need to be informed about the medication?

Most of these questions should be answered prior to attending court, if possible, and may be found in the department's motion, particularly the prescribing physicians signed medical report. Not all of the questions may apply to every medication issue. Also, keep in mind that some children may benefit from the administration of psychotropic medications.

Ask the court to direct the agency to submit regular progress reports (at least monthly) on the child's progress with the prescription – to be made available before review hearings. The department must inform the court of the child's medical and behavioral status at Judicial Reviews. If the child's status should be monitored more often, the court may review more frequently on motion or good cause shown. § 39.407(3)(f)(1).