The appropriate use of psychotropic drugs in children and adolescents

**The Challenge**

- **17 – 22%** Prevalence of children with mental health disorders
- **1 in 5** Number of children receiving services from appropriately trained practitioners
- **31%** FDA-approved psychotropic medications for children
- **>75%** Prevalence of “off-label” (unapproved) use of prescriptions for children’s mental health treatment

**What can you do?**

Asking questions is a good way to stay involved in your child’s treatment plan.

**Goal:** to get the RIGHT treatment for each child’s needs.

**What role do you play?**

- Child’s physical and mental health practitioners
- Parent/caregiver
- Child
- The child’s treatment team

**What can you do?**

1. **The treatment options**
   - Are these medications needed?
   - Will my child benefit from therapy?
   - Did my child get a full evaluation from a behavioral health practitioner?

2. **The medication**
   - Has the medication been tested and approved for children? What are the:
     - Risks?
     - Benefits?
     - Side effects?

3. **The treatment plan**
   - How will I know my child is making progress?
   - How often will my child be checked after starting the medications? What happens if we don’t see progress?
   - What warning signs should I look for and when should I call the doctor?
   - Will the treatment be noted in my child’s health care records?
   - Will you talk to my child’s other health care providers?
   - Do you know of other medications my child is taking and are there risks in combining them?


**Note:** Always consult with a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice.