

Boy, 12, Tells Congress of Years on ‘Stupid’ Meds

By Ellen Tumposky December 2, 2011



ABC News

A 12-year-old boy told Congress today that he was medicated into a near-stupor with mind-altering drugs during the four years he bounced among foster care homes.

“I think putting me on all these stupid meds was the stupidest thing I’ve ever experienced in foster care and was the worst thing anyone could do to foster kids,” the boy, identified only as Ke’onte, told the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security.

The seventh-grader, who was adopted by a Texas family in 2009 and who ABC News has been following for a year, said he had tantrums as a foster child and was inaccurately diagnosed as bipolar and having ADHD.

“I’ve been in the mental hospital three times during foster care, and every time I had to get on more meds or new meds to add to the ones I was already taking,” he said. Ke’onte said his meds made him feel irritable, gave him stomachaches and affected his appetite.

“I remember having a bowl of spaghetti and had three bites and then I was done,” he said.

He said he would get so tired “it felt like I would collapse wherever I was in the house.”

Ke’onte’s testimony came as a Government Accountability Office report was released that found that the federal government had not done enough to oversee the treatment of foster children with powerful drugs.

The report, whose contents were revealed by ABC News on Wednesday, coincided with a nationwide ABC investigation on the overuse of the most potent mind-altering drugs on many of the country’s nearly 425,000 foster children.

Ke’onte, who was on up to four medications at a time during his years in six foster homes, said that therapy has helped him in a way that meds never did. “In therapy, you talk about the deepest thing and it hurts, but you can deal with it better the next time,” he said.

Now, he said, he is first chair in clarinet in his school band, participates in cross-country and has three small roles in the school play.

“I’m not only more focused in school... I’m not going to the office anymore for bad behavior and I’m happy.”