

What's wrong? Is it my child or is it me?

This is the question I asked myself, as do thousands of other parents who are trying to figure out why their child simply cannot behave appropriately.

Even when we parents did all the “right” things, they did not respond. For many of us, it wasn't until we had a second child and saw that our parenting was okay that we realized the problem was not that we were bad parents. We saw that sometimes good parents have difficult kids...VERY difficult kids.

It never occurred to me that my daughter's unpredictable behavior was directly linked to the additives in her baby vitamin drops, cherry flavored Tylenol, the bargain ice cream, her colorful cereal, fake “fruit” drinks, candies and even her toothpaste, to name a few.

Then I learned about the absurd things being added to our food; most of the additives are made from petroleum (as in gasoline) and little bodies are not designed to eat that! So, unless your child has an internal combustion engine, he needs to be nourished with food. Such a simple concept, but many parents don't know this, and many doctors, teachers, and counselors are not aware.

The food giants rely on fake ingredients to maintain optimum profits, and Big Pharma is raking in billions creating drugs to try to fix the many problems being created by a steady diet of foodless food. Maybe this is why the advertisement-supported media seldom mentions the issue. (The fat cats who run these companies don't eat the stuff they sell. They eat real food.)

In the 1970s when my daughter was 5, I learned about the work of Ben Feingold, Chief of Allergy at the Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center in San Francisco. Dr. Feingold found that certain foods and additives can cause many problems for sensitive children and adults. He created what he called the “K-P Diet” to show people how to determine if the problems they are seeing are linked to what they are eating. I “dabbled” with it for a while and didn't notice any change, but once I did it the right way, the change in my daughter was fast and dramatic.

Our family ate the same type of foods we had eaten before, but the new versions were made with better ingredients. For example, the “fruit punch” was now made with real fruit juice, not a blend of fake dyes and fake flavorings. Our chocolate cookies had real chocolate and pure vanilla, and the cereals didn't look like a rainbow threw up. It was pretty much the way people used to eat up until about 1950.

We soon appreciated how much better the real food tasted, and as we gained experience we expanded our food choices. We learned how to identify the best options at restaurants. Today, there is even a *Fast Food Guide* to help us find real food at chain restaurants. We eat the foods we enjoy, but just select the brands without the petrol.

As I continued on Dr. Feingold's program back in the 1970s I met other parents who were doing the same things I was doing, and we began pooling our knowledge. Now, many years later, we have a ton of practical information to share. In fact, we have SO MUCH information, we work hard to simplify it. But I'll give you a hint: it's about “more of the good stuff and less of the bad stuff.”



Dr. Jekyll and Miss Hyde — sometimes adorable and other times terrible.

The problem was neither me nor my child. The culprit was what I was feeding her!

For information, visit the Feingold Association's web site:
www.feingold.org

Is it hard?

Getting started on the Feingold Program is similar to learning to drive a car. The new driver can feel overwhelmed with all the things to do. Look in all of the mirrors, pay attention to the pedals on the floor, see what gear you are in, don't forget to take off the emergency brake, which control is for the windshield wiper and which is the turn signal? All that, and you haven't even backed out of the driveway yet! But when you get in the car today, how much thought do you give to all those things?

The program is a lot like that. After about 2-3 weeks, most people begin to slide into a comfortable routine. If not, you should ask for help since there's a good chance you're misinterpreting something and it's likely that the volunteers have been there and can help.

I believe the best way to learn about the Feingold Diet is to first check out a number of things:

Take a look at our brief introductory slide show.

You can find it at: <http://www.feingold.org/DOCS/ShortWorkshopMar2013.pdf>

Read the first 50 pages of *Why Can't My Child Behave?* which can be read (free) online at: <http://www.feingold.org/why1.html>

Take a look at the ingredients on packages in your kitchen (and the toothpaste, vitamins and medicines) and look for any color, followed by a number. It doesn't matter if it's yellow 6 or blue 1 or green 3 or red 40, etc. They're all petroleum!

Look for the words "artificial" and "imitation" and "vanillin." They're mostly made from petroleum. Are we beginning to see a theme here?

Next, poke around the Feingold web site: www.feingold.org.

As you will read in *Why Can't My Child Behave?* don't try to do more than one diet at a time (unless you are already on a gluten-free or casein-free diet and you know for sure that your child needs this!)

Do the best you can to stick with the "safe" food, but don't beat up on yourself if you goof. In a perfect world it would be 100% pure, but none of us were as we learned the diet. Once we were well established on the diet, an occasional slip usually was not a big issue.

Lots of help available

If you order the member package, read the first pages of your *Feingold Handbook*. They're designed to help you take baby steps into the program.

Write down some of your family's favorite foods; then browse through the *Foodlist* to find natural alternatives for those favorites. (Later, once you have more experience, you will be able to evaluate new products on your own and test out ones that are not in your *Foodlist* book.) Don't forget to refer to the "Any" list – products where any brand is acceptable.

Get acquainted with the *Foodlist* while you're at home, not while you are in the middle of aisle 12!

Finally, hang in there, and realize that if this program was not effective for most of the people who try it, there would not be a nonprofit Feingold Association. Would you donate over 40 years of your life to promote a program that was not extremely effective?

Neither would I.