

My Granddaughter Arabella

No more angry rages, no more oppositional defiance, no more ADHD; our silly, joyful 8-year-old is now enjoying life as the child she was always meant to be!



I have been raising my 8-year-old granddaughter Arabella since she was 5 years old. Having raised four children of my own, I was no stranger to the joys and challenges of parenting, but raising a child with emotional and behavioral issues was new territory for me.

As an infant Arabella made us “work” to get her to smile, she wasn’t content with one person or setting for very long, and although she slept well at night, she rarely napped for more than a few minutes during the day.

During her preschool years, she was a high-energy, strong-willed child who challenged any situation where she was not allowed to be in charge, and leaving her to play independently always resulted in mischief. She would wake up throughout the night and sneak around the house, getting into things.

**She repeatedly screamed, “Why can’t I stop this?”
and “Please help me!”**

I gained custody of Arabella right before she started kindergarten which, understandably, resulted in challenges from adjusting to a new home life and the structure of a classroom setting at the same time.

During that school year, her behavior escalated to open defiance toward all authority figures, and constant conflict, both verbal and physical, with other children and with adults.

She began to have rage episodes and emotional meltdowns that would last anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours and our fear of them often prevented us from leaving the house.

During one of her most violent episodes, I was attempting to restrain her to prevent her from injuring herself and I saw true fear in her eyes as she repeatedly screamed, “Why can’t I stop this?” and “Please help me!” I knew she needed to see a child psychologist -- and quickly.

The psychologist diagnosed her with (RAD) Reactive Attachment Disorder, so I learned as much as I could about raising a child with RAD and implemented new parenting techniques and alternative discipline strategies.

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Over the course of the next year I saw some improvements in her behavior, but she continued to have so many challenging days. I spent most evenings in tears, feeling like I still couldn't truly reach her. After going to countless parent/teacher conferences and exhausting all the resources the school system had to offer, I was open to the idea of medication, if that's what she needed, but I wanted to know I had exhausted all other possibilities first.

One evening, after a particularly challenging day with her, my frustration and exhaustion came pouring out in the form of my own emotional breakdown and a very heartfelt prayer.

I asked to be shown what I was missing so I could help her be the best version of herself I was convinced was in there. That same night, I stumbled across a Feingold page on social media, and spent the rest of the night researching the program. (www.feingold.org) By the next morning, I was convinced this was the missing piece to our puzzle and purchased my membership that same day. I sat Arabella down to explain we would both be changing what we ate to see if it would help her feel better. Without hesitation, she hugged me, and with tears in her eyes she said, "Thank you for helping me".

We got rid of the harmful additives that were triggering her out-of-control behavior and replaced them with better versions of her favorite foods.

We have been following the program for 8 months and found that not only do the additives bring on the old behaviors, but she also can't handle apples.

I used to believe that part of childhood was to eat "junk" once in a while. And I also had absolutely NO idea some of the wholesome foods (salicylates) I was regularly feeding her were actually big contributors to her issues.

In addition to the improvements in her behavior at home and school, her new-found ability to engage in age-appropriate activities and make friends recently led to her being invited on a play date — for the first time EVER!