

Crazy busy and crazy loud

I'm strict. Even my mother says I'm strict, but I struggled to find a way to help my kids, especially my youngest son.

I had heard about Feingold several years ago, first from a friend who put her two girls on it. She said that Feingold made them less grumpy. Grumpiness was not my problem. My problem was my 7-year-old who would fly into a rage over nothing. I knew my friend was really into organic, whole foods, and I could only imagine that she was doing all sorts of nearly impossible things to implement Feingold. (She found she needed to remove some of the salicylates.)

Two of our kids were crazy busy and crazy loud. They are also very outgoing and very funny. So they have great personalities, but sometimes they just go too far. Okay, a lot of times they go too far in their boisterousness, especially my youngest, my red-headed Geoffrey. All four of my kids were adopted and one was cocaine positive at birth, but while Geoffrey's mom did not use drugs she was jobless and homeless during her pregnancy so you know her eating habits were not the best.

The thing I like about Feingold is that it tells you what you can have, not just what is prohibited.

I didn't think that my parenting was the reason for my youngest's behavior. We homeschool and I'm strict. (If your mother says you're strict, then you've got to believe it!) I'm just saying that I'm sort of known for it. I do try to get their hearts and I'm not just striving for outward obedience, but I wanted to have kids with hearts that produce outward obedience once in a while!

I now know that I need to limit grapes and buy certain types of apples.

All of my kids have issues and for my oldest son it was his inability to focus. He is smart and would study and study but despite this he did poorly academically. (After we had been on Feingold for two weeks he got the highest test results for a chapter quiz!)

I began to read about the connection between diet and behavior and became convinced that it was what we needed to do.

As I pondered actually doing Feingold, I took my kids to their one-day-a-week enrichment program. Geoffrey was going to be 8 in a few days so I ran by a grocery store and bought cupcakes with brightly colored icing for the entire class to have at lunch. After I dropped them off, a voice in my head said, "Maybe that wasn't such a good idea."



The Gleasons

The voice was right. I got a call about an hour after lunch telling me that my son had a complete meltdown. He tore his camouflage jeans with his bare hands and was banging his head on the wall. I thought of my friend Missy, who had been posting on Facebook and on her blog about her Feingold journey and how it helped her son's rage. Rage -- that describes my youngest. It was pure rage that would just spill out!

When I went to pick him up he got in the car and said, "I had a pretty good day." I told him that when you are tearing your clothes and banging your head, that is not a good day.

He went from not being able to hear the phonetics for reading to being able to sound out 4 or 5 syllable words in less than a year.

I immediately emailed Missy and she gave me enough ideas for meals and snacks to get me through the days until my membership materials arrived, so I started implementing Feingold the best I could. I also ordered natural food coloring for his birthday cake; I knew I just couldn't do the fake stuff on his real birthday. I made a Buzz Lightyear cake for the family birthday party. It didn't look quite as vibrant as in years past, but it did seem to taste better.

When my oldest son, now 17, gets headaches it's because of something he ate when he was away from home.

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Geoffrey is a new child! Within two weeks of going on Feingold we were getting many comments about his changed behavior. At the enrichment program people were commenting on how the circles under his eyes were gone. It's not that we were problem-free after that, but I could look at his eyes and know if he was having a reaction. He also gets bright red ears after he has eaten something off diet. A food diary became my best friend as I worked to continue to solve the puzzle.

It eventually became evident that there were more issues and I was glad to find a doctor who treats kids with autism and ADHD and who ran blood, saliva and urine tests. In addition to changing his behavior, Feingold helped to clear up some of his auditory processing issues, and eliminating gluten and dairy fixed the rest and now he is reading at grade level!

Pure rage would just spill out of him!

My first grocery shopping trip took about 3 hours. The next week took less time and then I hit my rhythm and grocery shopping took no longer than it had before. I cook about as much as I did before, which is not every meal. We eat convenience foods and snacks, but they are the ones without artificial coloring, flavoring or preservatives added. My kids still eat candy, but not the ones with lots of fake stuff added. Geoffrey routinely turns down food he knows is bad for him

He told me, "I don't like this diet because of all the things I can't eat, but I like the way I feel." If an 8-year-old can understand, why can't the Food and Drug Administration get it?

One day we were in a store where they had some leftover cookies from Christmastime with a brightly colored red center. Geoffrey was over in that section of the store with his siblings while I picked up something else. I walked over and heard him telling the woman, "Yes, they are poison. If I were to eat them, they would make me a crazy boy. They poison me." I had never used that word with him. I just told him there were things that made him not feel his best. Apparently, he had wondered out loud why the store was selling poisoned food and while the lady had nicely explained to him that it wasn't poison, he was telling her why he disagreed. He gladly takes his own cupcake to birthday parties and turns in candy prizes from Sunday School (which I always replace with acceptable treats).

Everyone sees that my son is a new child, and I'm not just "out there." I don't say this program is for everyone (although I sort of do) but I tell them how wonderful it's been for our family.

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