

Ali's Story

We found help for our "bouncing baby girl."

Our older daughter, Rosalia, "Ali" has had food issues since she was 10 days old; however, we didn't fully explore an elimination diet until she was 3.

She was always "on the go," running 90 miles an hour full steam ahead. Ali didn't spend too much time crawling because that process was too slow. She walked and then quickly figured out how to run at 9 months old. She was full of life and energy.

Walking was too slow for Ali.
She bounced her way
through the day!

When she entered preschool, sitting down for circle time was a huge challenge, and she practically bounced on her bottom until she arrived in the teacher's lap for the story.

As preschool went on, Ali seemed to be spinning out of control. I had heard of the Feingold Program from a parent at my former job about 5 years prior, and my husband and I decided to give it a try. We read *Why Can't My Child Behave?* and ordered the program materials from the Association. Our entire family went on the program as a way to support Ali.

We ate most of our meals at home during those early days, and on the rare times we ate out, we talked with the chef beforehand to be sure we were making a good choice.

Within 5 short weeks, her
engine seemed to calm down.

Soon she was able to focus long enough to detect hunger pains and tell us she was actually hungry -- something she had not done before! Furthermore, she was actually able to sit on her bottom through an entire meal.

Before Feingold, Ali usually did a back bend over the chair as she ate, bounced her way into a standing position, and walked around as she chewed the food. Now, for the first time, she was sitting in a chair and eating a meal.



Mattie, Sean and Ali

Ali amazed her teacher as she was finally able to sit during story time, fully engaged. Family and friends started noticing that she was bouncing less. In addition, she became nighttime potty trained as a result of more self-regulation and more self-control. She stopped grinding her teeth at night and started sleeping peacefully throughout the night.

For the first time in her life, our 3-year-old was able to sit through a full 25-minute TV show without balancing herself at the tippy top of the couch. She was still full of life and energy, but it was much more manageable.

We taught Ali to smile and say, "No, thank you," when she is offered junk food away from home. When she gets home and tells me she has passed up a treat, I offer her a "swap out." This was the key! The Feingold-approved treat she enjoys at home is always 10 times better than what she has passed up, so she can't wait to get home and enjoy the swap-out!

As a teacher, I embraced the idea of delayed gratification. Ali learned how to cope with being patient, and that is a bonus in my opinion!

Today, all three of our children (ages 6, 5, and 4 years old) are accustomed to eating only the food from our house. When they are offered foods from anyone else, they simply smile and say, "No, thank you." That counts as a pass-up, and they earn a swap-out when they get home. Our whole family follows the Feingold Program, so this is not difficult for them.

A bonus is that our
children have learned about
delayed gratification.

We also brought our faith into the conversation. We told our children that God trusted us with 3 of His precious children, and we promised Him that we would keep them safe and healthy. If they were offered an artificial lollipop, we would remind them, "We promised God that we would take care of you," and offer them a natural lollipop instead. As a result, we have never had any issues, and we never felt we were depriving them of childhood treats because they always got the swap-out they desired.

Finally, we talk about how artificial colors are made from petroleum. To hammer the point home, when we would be at the gas station, I would offer, "Anyone want a drink of this gasoline? This is pretty much what food companies use to make those fake colors." The kids laugh and act grossed out. It's a ridiculous example, but it solidified the fact that they wouldn't want to eat fake food regardless of whether or not Mom and Dad said it was OK.