

Opposition, defiance and diet

As a special education teacher, Kelli understood the characteristics of ADHD, but her son didn't fit the diagnosis.

My 6-year-old son has been in therapy for several years, mainly for some anxiety issues. After a year of therapy, his behavior was getting worse and I did not know what to do.

Garrett was very defiant at home and would really throw some tantrums. I actually videoed some of the tantrums because most people just didn't believe us when we told them how he acted.

He is socially aware of what is acceptable and was very good at keeping his emotions in until he got home.

I had been noticing that Garrett was having more trouble not acting out in front of others, so we talked with his therapist, showed her the video, and decided to have him evaluated.

My son was still not improving despite all we were doing to help.

We tried a few of the things the psychologist suggested, bought all the books she recommended, and just didn't really see any results.

Then a friend on Facebook was posting about how much the Feingold diet helped her son with his ADHD. I looked it up (because I was interested for my students, not necessarily for my son, since he doesn't have ADHD) and saw that it isn't just for ADHD, but many behaviors can improve.

In August, I talked to our family doctor about options for my son, and asked him about the diet. He had never heard of it, but said it wouldn't hurt. I was added to a Feingold Facebook group, and it took me several more months before I decided I was ready.



Garrett, center, and his brothers

I kept reading all these stories, and my friend's, about how much better their kids were.

Garrett was diagnosed with both Oppositional Defiant Disorder and General Anxiety Disorder.

At the end of October, I decided we would start after Halloween. I told my husband we were going to give it until Christmas and see if it worked.

Within three days, his defiant/oppositional behavior had improved. I remember my husband and me looking at each other after we told him something that would usually cause a meltdown, and Garrett just said "okay" and went about his business. We were dumbfounded. That had never happened before!

He has not had a tantrum or a meltdown since we started on Feingold.

We can now send him to time-out if he needs it, without having a battle. He goes to time-out, spends his time quietly in his room, and then comes out and goes back to playing when it's done. We used to have to drag him in there, and then he would not stay there, would scream at us and tell us how much he hated us. It sometimes turned into an hour-long ordeal.

Is he completely better? No. We still have some issues with anxiety and are working through them, but without the craziness we had with the oppositional behavior, we've actually been able to see his insecurities and worries better, and we can address those.

I videotaped some of his tantrums!

My husband and I had a session with his therapist in December and she said even our demeanor was more relaxed. We weren't as uptight and bracing ourselves for the next outburst. We still have our ups and downs, but family life is soooooo much better!

Now that I've witnessed what our food can do to us, I've become a bit passionate!

EVERY SINGLE ONE of my students would benefit from this diet. I have so many students who would not even be on an IEP if they could focus at school. They are moving all over the place and can't pay a lick of attention. I work at an early childhood center with just kindergarten and first grades. We are usually the first ones to bring up a child's difficulties in paying attention in school, and parents do not want to medicate their 5- or 6- year-old (understandably, of course!). I am just so thrilled to have found an alternative for them that works. And I have a personal story to go along with it.

I'm spreading the word as much as I can because sometimes it's hard to believe that something as simple as a diet change can have such a big impact on a child.

Kelli Killman