

Pure Facts

Newsletter of the Feingold® Association of the United States



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Helping the child on the ADD/autistic spectrum

Feingold members and guests heard outstanding presentations from leaders in these fields at the Association's annual seminar held on Staten Island this past October.

Our keynote speaker was Patricia Lemer, M.Ed., co-founder and Executive Director of the non-profit Developmental Delay Resources. She opened the seminar by describing a healthy sensory "diet" that can enable a child to be ready for school, learning, and life.

Sensory integration dysfunction can interfere with a child's ability to focus and learn, but there are things parents can do to help such youngsters.

Unfortunately, the tools and strategies often provided for these children -- learning and organizational aids designed to help accommodate their disabilities -- can actually prevent them from going through important stages of sensory development.

"You have to have mastery over your own body before you can make sense of those little squiggles on paper that we call letters and numbers," Pa-



tricia explained. "Telling kids to sit still so they can pay attention is a total waste of time."

In her presentation, she covered some of the treatments and strategies that have been found to be helpful for children whose development has been hindered. Her practical, down-to-earth advice, coupled with her deep concern for our children earned Patricia rave reviews from the audience.

Arnold Brenner, M.D., is a pediatrician with a big curiosity and a determination to find whatever it takes to help his patients.

Some of the children he was treating in his Randallstown, Maryland practice back in the 1970s had serious problems and nothing he had tried helped them.

Dr. Brenner was aware of Dr. Feingold's work with what were then called "hyperkinetic" children, but he didn't believe that a diet would help. In fact, he set out to prove Feingold was wrong. He persuaded the parents of 32 of these children in his practice to use the Feingold diet, although Dr. Brenner did not expect to see any improvement. When eleven of the children responded dramatically, he changed his mind, and has been recommending it since.

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Do children hate being on the Feingold diet?

Recently the Feingold Program has been mentioned favorably in various newspapers across the country, but the idea still persists that, although many children clearly benefit from the program, they rebel at the changes in their food. How true is this?

First, let's take a look at what it means to be on the Feingold program. For the child who is accustomed to eating candy, cookies, soft drinks, etc., he can continue to eat these things. The only difference is that he will be eating candy and cookies without synthetic flavoring and BHT, soft drinks without dyes and aspartame. The very young child might not even notice a change at first.

The materials provided for parents are designed to help them locate the foods their family enjoys, with as little change or disruption as is absolutely necessary.

Of course every family is different, but among mothers who contact us, we hear very little about resistance on the part of their children. We know this does happen, but it does not appear to be as big a problem as an outside observer is likely to think.

We learn a great deal from the experiences of member families, and have found that they can best answer the question of how children respond to being on a special diet. On page 2 one of our adult members describes how she felt growing up on the Feingold diet.

The Feingold® Association of the United States, Inc., founded in 1976, is a non-profit organization whose purposes are to support its members in the implementation of the Feingold Program and to generate public awareness of the potential role of foods and synthetic additives in behavior, learning and health problems. The program is based on a diet eliminating synthetic colors, synthetic flavors, and the preservatives BHA, BHT, TBHQ.