

California OEHHA's request for information on dyes

Synthetic food dyes have many damaging effects. They can trigger developmental and neurological problems, among others, in sensitive people. The Feingold Diet eliminates food dyes and several other additives.

This is a small sample of some of the children whose lives have been turned around after removing dyes and other petrochemicals from their diet.



Happy, healthy and successful — dye free!



Nathan, a little boy who couldn't cope

My older son, Alexander, was a happy, healthy baby, and when he was three years old, we were blessed with twins — Nathan and his sister, Avery. But as he got older, Nathan's behavior deteriorated, and I found myself becoming all-consumed with his needs, and my other children were getting whatever I had left over.



By the time he was 2 years old, Nathan was taking up most of my time and energy.

The doors all had locks up high so he couldn't escape. (He tried!) Nathan was a "runner," so at the first opportunity he would pull away and dart into traffic or do other dangerous things. Our family visited a pumpkin patch when Nathan was 2, and while I was helping Avery with her jacket, I turned around to see he had climbed a 7-foot-high haystack and immediately jumped down, with no fear of what would happen to him. He was scaring me every day!

He was an emotional mess; it didn't take much to set him off. The meltdowns didn't last long, but they were so frequent it seemed like we were on a never-ending meltdown. Nathan was super-hyper, literally bouncing off the walls. He would make an awful cry/screech/whine sound all day long! I couldn't wait for nap time and bedtime! I couldn't take him to stores or even parks, and never attempted a trip to the library with him. I would sometimes leave the house with my other two kids, but I was scared to take Nathan anywhere, including friends' homes. He was so destructive, and his attention was so short I was afraid of what he would do in someone else's house.

Then, Nathan's behaviors got worse, and while I was venting to a friend, she mentioned the Feingold Diet, which she had used for her son. I glanced at it online and put it in my memory bank; this wasn't the first time I had heard about Feingold.

When Nathan was 3 years old, I started Feingold (removing dyes and other additives). Within just a few days I could see him starting to calm down. He stopped waking up in the middle of the night and crying for no apparent reason. He no longer cries or has a meltdown when he wakes up in the morning or after a nap. His communication ability has exploded, and he has become empathetic to his siblings and others.

Nathan no longer hyper-focuses on something and demands it endlessly. He is listening so much better and is following rules and understanding boundaries.

When I took Nathan for a medical check-up, one of the doctors who had been seeing him asked me where he was.



No more fake dyes for Nathan!

He wasn't making a sound, he was just very calmly playing with the train set they had in the waiting room



Recently, I was able to have Nathan help me in the kitchen as I cooked dinner. He was so calm and listened to ALL my requests. He helped stir, add salt and pepper, add veggies to the pan, and press the buttons on the timer. While we waited for the food to cook, he sat off to the side. It was amazing!

His patience has improved so much, and he understands that sometimes he needs to wait. This would never have happened before Feingold. Nathan would have been overwhelmed and in full destruction mode, opening drawers and cabinets and destroying everything in his path. Instead, he was calm and focused, following every direction I gave him. It was a wonderful, happy experience, and I look forward to many more!

Now, I'm able to take all three kids to the park by myself. Nathan has attended events at the library and done well. Thank you, Feingold Association!



My granddaughter Arabella

This little girl's explosive behavior was frightening to everyone, but especially to her!

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 to 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.



Our silly, joyful 8-year-old is now enjoying life as the child she was always meant to be!

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 medications, 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. 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 have been on the diet for 8 months. I used to believe that part of childhood was to eat “junk” once in a while.

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!

Noah's story

It wasn't ADHD and it wasn't bi-polar disorder. This little boy suffered from multiple physical problems, and his behavior was a reflection of how miserable he felt.

We started Feingold almost two years ago, when my target was 3. Life then was a roller coaster. He was struggling with hyperactivity, impulse control, rages — where we described him as “Hulk-like” — and on top of the behavior, Noah always had a rash, stomach issues and dark black circles under his eyes.

Noah was sad and hurting, but not one of the doctors we saw was able to help.



He complained of pain in his joints every day, and most nights he just lay in bed, screaming and knocking his head on the wall. I took him to various doctors, including allergists, and nobody could tell me what was causing the bi-polar-like swings or rashes, and I'd walk out with steroid creams, an inhaler, and allergy meds, and was told it was IBS and eczema.

I called my mom, sobbing, that I couldn't parent him. It was my breaking point.

At his 3-year appointment, I was offered Ritalin and told to get him re-assessed at 5 for an official diagnosis of ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder. I knew I didn't want to medicate but I was stuck. I was isolated because I was embarrassed by Noah's poor behavior and often I was not welcomed at various places. I called my mom, sobbing, that I couldn't parent him. I wasn't strong enough and did not even like being a mom anymore. It was my breaking point.

Feingold sounded too good to be true.

That night I spent hours online searching doctors, natural remedies, and scrolled to a Feingold link. I spent three days reading about the effects that dyes have on kids. (We had already taken out red dye because we believed he was allergic to it, but his doctor never mentioned that other colors can cause issues, and I had NO idea.) It was so much to take in and I wasn't sure if it was real or not...most things that sound too good to be true, are! I kept reading success stories and talking to moms on Facebook who followed the diet, and eventually ordered the program.

I went all in, food journaling every meal, snack and drink. I raided my cupboard of things unacceptable, changed my laundry detergent and put my scented candles away. I needed this to work; I was desperate! Two weeks later I sent my mom a picture of Noah sitting at the table playing Legos. He had been there for three hours, happy and content. There was no smashing, screaming or throwing — just peace. Quiet. I was so worried that I would jinx it, I just stood there, watching and crying.

We had amazing days after that, both good days and bad days, and thankfully, by using my food journal I was able to pinpoint secondary offenders like corn syrup, cinnamon, molasses and gluten as serious triggers for his body discomfort.

Noah was feeling better, and looking brighter every day. He started telling everyone about the special diet that made his head stop screaming inside, and the itchy ants in his tummy leave. He was happy and we all were happy!

He went off his steroid creams for the eczema, and the asthma went away!



His skin was clear and he was running around...no wheezing...no pain!

Today there are no more rages, no head-banging, eczema, hyperactivity, pain in his joints, no asthma, stomach issues, rashes or black circles under his eyes.

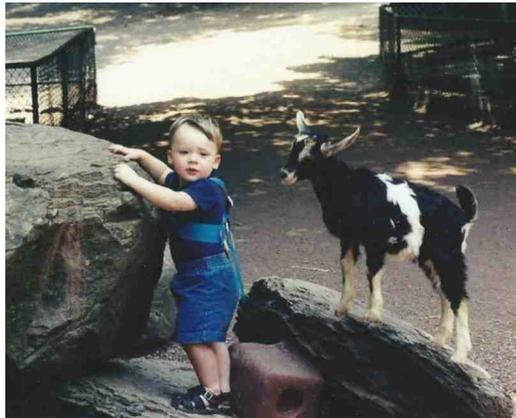


I am preparing for his ceremony tomorrow because he was chosen Leader of the Month for showing respect at school. Noah's behavior log is full of smiles and great notes. His teachers have nothing but good to say, and most of all he is a happy, bright 5-year-old who is able to be who he is without disruption and chaos in his body. It's a far cry from the boy who was asked to leave day cares and most play dates!

A little boy with no words

Jake was three years old, pushing four that summer, his mom recalls. He was perfect in every way...except that he had almost no vocabulary.

And he didn't listen. And he ran after cars...any car. And he seemed to not have any pain receptors. He never had a tantrum that I can remember (that was his siblings' department, and they were epic), but he was determined. He could be told and told not to run into the road to no avail. He would climb something, fall off and have to do it again and again and again—bloody and bruised.



Jake at almost four, shortly before Feingold.

When I picked up the kids, no one stopped me to tell me how badly Jake had behaved. No one shot me a look. No one made a snide comment about his behavior. I grabbed the four kids, threw them into car seats and took the corner of the parking lot on two wheels before anyone told me not to bring him back the next day. SCORE!

When I arrived the following morning, I got caught.

There was no way I could ever leave him with a sitter.

Friends started to ignore playdates requests. I couldn't leave him in the church nursery. He had almost no words. A phone was a "Hop," and peanut butter was "Dedal-ledal-ledal," for reasons I cannot explain even now. He pointed or grunted for whatever he wanted. He had speech therapy to no avail. There were just no words. He was happy; he sang and gibbered all day long, but no real words at all.

My Feingold journey began much like many other mom's, out of pure desperation.

I knew where every Vacation Bible School was during the summer months, and my kids went to all of them. My oldest kids would get dropped off for three or four hours and leave me with just Jake and the baby to look after. Bliss! There was a VBS that allowed three-year-olds, but it was risky.

I spoke with the teacher of the three-year-old class about Jake. "Please just don't be annoyed if he doesn't listen. He isn't mean or bad. He just likes to run and wants you to run after him. If he is any trouble, just tell me and I won't let him stay the rest of the week. OH, and he doesn't have very many words so please don't be annoyed if he doesn't answer..." I am pretty sure I was begging the teacher with each word. "No problem. He will be fine," she said in complete confidence. I sped out of the parking lot before anyone could catch on to my victory! I had four hours of only one baby, and I was thrilled...guilty, but thrilled!

His teacher took me aside, and as I started to say I would take Jake home with me, she interrupted me. "No. Listen. Jake is adorable. He reminds me of my own daughter at the same age. Have you ever heard of the Feingold diet?" And like many others, I had not.

I began my research online, ordered the program and started as soon as the materials arrived. I wasn't particularly overwhelmed except for bread—how was I going to do the bread thing? A nearby store carried an approved brand, and I was on my way to the store to pick some up. Of course, I had to make sure that someone held onto Jake so I could go...he would run after my car if I didn't get him held onto!

We were 24 hours into the program on this day.

"Jake, Mommy is going to the store. Do you want to stay with Daddy or come with me?" I asked, knowing he would point to me or down the stairs to his dad.

"No thanks, Mommy. I stay with Daddy and play trucks!" He said. HE SAID. HE SAID! The bread forgotten, I sat down and wept. Jake said! That was Jake's first ever full sentence. He has not, as of yet (thirteen years later) stopped talking.

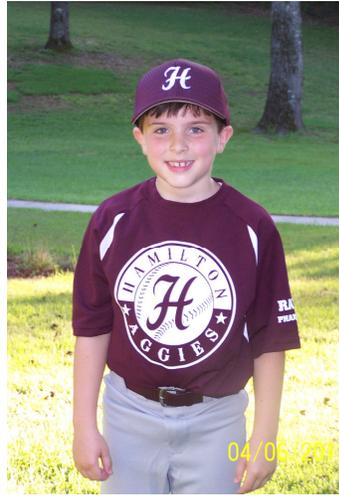
Jake, the child with no words, struggled with reading, but once we were over that hump, he became a straight-A student in social studies and ELA. Math and science remain very hard for him, BUT he is just an average kid with some dyscalculia. He is on the crew team at his high school and is being courted by several colleges for their rowing teams. Jake/college? Not something we ever dreamed of. The Feingold Diet changed my son's life. It changed our family.

Eli's Miracle—His mom describes their journey

I had been a teacher for over 15 years but had never heard of Feingold until February of last year when my 7-year-old son was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome.

He would have as many as 72 facial/eye tics while reading his first grade story and could not say a sentence without 5 to 6 tics so I knew something was very wrong with my once bright, perfectly normal little boy -- I set out on my search to help him.

The tics were not Eli's only problem. I received notes almost daily from his first grade teacher. His behaviors included talking excessively, repeating phrases or words over and over, exhibiting inappropriate behaviors, mocking, touching other children, jumping or bouncing instead of walking on the sidewalk, etc. What made it especially tough is that his teacher was a co-worker.



Since he has been on the Feingold diet he does great. He excels in sports and academics, and has many friends. We receive positive notes from his teacher and the only times we notice any type of tics are when he is nervous, such as in a church or school play.

As a first grade teacher, I see children daily who would benefit greatly from the program. In fact, as a science lesson, I teach my students about food dyes and harmful additives, share with parents willing to listen, and see changes in students whose parents are willing to make some changes in their diet. Our school serves slushies as a snack but this year I felt so guilty about giving them to the children that I have now banned them from my classroom. My excuse is that they are spilled on the carpet, but honestly, I can't do it knowing what the food dyes are doing to kids!

An update—two years later:

While he was in third grade Eli didn't have a single symptom of Tourette's. At the end of the year, he won awards for all A's and highest average in his class for Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Eli has been successful in sports as well as academics. He was the quarterback for his Toy Bowl football team and pitcher for his little league baseball team.

Last week he earned all A's, the highest average award for the year in Science, and President's Education Award for high scores on state-wide testing.

He is the starting pitcher for his Little League baseball team and we just learned that he made All-Stars. Today, Eli is a true leader and carries himself with complete confidence. Back when he was in first grade, unable to behave appropriately, unable to read a complete sentence without multiple tics, I could not have imagined what he would be like today!

Cameron—a little boy with no speech and endless tears

From birth, Cameron was "different." He was very moody, angry, hated being touched and would not sit still —EVER.

He hated car rides, being in a stroller, being carried, sung to; you name it. Other than video games, he hated everything. He never slept for more than a few hours at a time and averaged about five hours. He woke up at night for no obvious reason 5-15 times a night until the age of 5. He spit up every time he ate until he was 3 years old, and he would break out in hives all over his body.

At 1 1/2 we took him to an allergist, who said it was food sensitivities and he would outgrow it. He didn't.

Cameron's behavior was horrible. In stores, he would run away and hide. In the car, he would scream until he vomited and he gave me two black eyes before he was three years old. He couldn't speak; he would make sounds but no distinguishable words. We took him for a hearing test, which was fine, and they recommended occupational therapy. He was very uncooperative, but we continued with it two times a week for a year.

His behavior was horrible! When Cameron was four he started speech therapy, but he hated it. He would scream until he began vomiting.



Here is a sequence of pictures Cameron's mom took. It was only later, after taking dyes away that she realized how he became progressively more miserable as he ate a blue lollipop. If you look closely you will see tears running down his cheeks.

Things continued to go downhill

He didn't know the alphabet or colors but was very good at math. We started thinking he was mildly autistic. He still was not sleeping and was getting hives daily. He craved food with dyes like a junky craves heroin.

Cameron started 4-year-old kindergarten, and it was horrible. He hated it as much as his teacher hated him. He was the worst-behaved kid in a classroom of thirty-five 4-year-olds. His teacher also suggested looking into medicine, as she didn't think he would be able to function in mainstream school. But I was firmly against medicating him and started considering home-schooling.

The day after the blue lollipop I took Cameron to see an allergist. The allergist said he had sensitivities. "Nothing to worry about. It won't kill him. He should outgrow it by age 4." He didn't.

My "Ah-ha moment"

In the spring of 2013, I saw an online petition calling for Kraft to remove dyes from its mac & cheese because the additives could cause ADHD, mood swings and hives. This was my "ah-ha" moment!

The previous night, Cameron had eaten Kraft Mac & Cheese and he didn't sleep and was covered in hives. I decided to try taking out food dye for a week to see if his hives went away. They did! We were amazed that after only a few days, he didn't severely itch. After a few weeks, when he had had very limited exposure to food dyes, I noticed his behavior was calmer. I thought maybe he was getting sick.

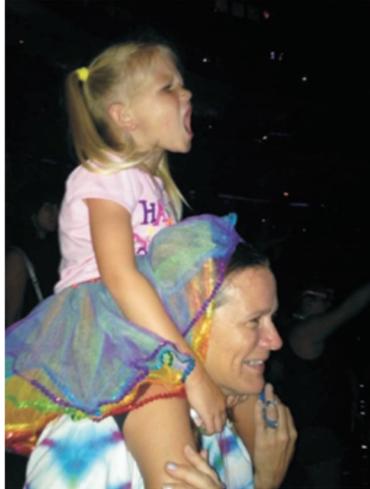
Then, Cameron gave me a hug all on his own! This had never happened before. What's more, he was waking up only a few times a night instead of ten. He wasn't angry, and he wasn't as itchy. And, after thirty days of being dye-free, he could SPEAK! Nearly perfect, clear words that everyone could understand. For the first time ever, he said, "I love you."

I spent most of that month in tears because of the life-changing miracles that came from removing dyes. He literally learned his colors overnight. I spoke with him about these changes, and he said his body didn't hurt as much as it used to and his head didn't buzz as much. I then realized my son spent the first five years of his life in constant pain and didn't know he was supposed to feel any different. We were dye-free for three months and doing great; then, we went to a 4th of July parade. He was perfectly behaved until I let him have some cotton candy, and all hell broke out! He was yelling, crying, screaming, curled up in the fetal position having a complete breakdown. This reaction to dye took five days to wear off.

Sensitive to the world

Most children are comfortable with the everyday things in their life -- the people and sounds around them, the clothes they wear and the food they ingest are all a part of their daily experience. But for a child with extreme sensory dysfunction, they are constant sources of pain.

As an infant, Haidyn suffered so badly from reflux her parents worried she would not get enough nourishment to develop normally. And in her toddler years, the extreme sensory issues made life very difficult for everyone. Nourishment continued to be a worry as she rejected the texture of most foods. Crowds and noises other children barely notice overwhelmed her senses. The feel of her clothes was painful, and motor skills were slow to develop, adding more to the little girl's frustration.



No more problems with sensory issues.

Haidyn's mom, Cory, felt that the family had a good diet and didn't believe that it would help, but she was eager to find some way to reclaim the sweet little girl she knew was there. On the Diet, there was a major reduction in all of her sensory issues, and the real Haidyn emerged. She was able to go to preschool and to catch up with her classmates.

Today, at just six years old, she is a good reader and is doing well in all of the academic subjects.

It didn't take much to set her off. The smallest stimulus could result in a major temper tantrum. Our nickname for her was "Hurricane Haidyn."

At age 3, Haidyn's progress was so slow, way behind other children who knew basics like colors, numbers and letters, that it looked like she would not be ready to enter preschool.

The intensive (and expensive) therapies weren't helping very much, so their doctor suggested they try the Feingold Diet.

An outgoing little girl, she gets along well with other children. The most dramatic evidence of Haidyn's progress came last year, just before her 5th birthday. Cory posted this photo on the Member's Facebook and wrote: A little over a year ago our sensory kiddo couldn't handle any loud noises, crowds, music, etc. Tonight she went to her first concert and had an absolute blast without even wearing the ear plugs we brought. For six months she had been begging to see Katy Perry, who happened to be coming to our area the week of her birthday. We decided to go for it and she loved every minute. Thank you Feingold! Here she is belting out "Firework."

Real ingredients are delicious!

