

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 day 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.