

A child heading in the wrong direction



A pre-Feingold celebration for Grayson's fifth birthday.

Ritalin was the first medication my son was placed on at 4 years old. It had VERY little effect other than making him not hungry. Over the next 8 years, he was on so many different ADHD medications I can't remember them all.

By age 12, he had received a diagnosis of PDD (pervasive development disorder), and we were given a referral to a neurologist who worked with kids on the autism spectrum. He said clearly medication was not the answer to Grayson's difficulties and that we should try an all-natural diet. After researching and finding Feingold.org online, I signed up, and our lives have been forever changed for the good.

Grayson was the sweetest most precious little toddler. Extremely hyper, we called him the Tasmanian Devil because he was a whirling dervish of chaos, very BUSY. But when he started school and needed to focus and sit still, he began to develop behavior issues. Not one of the medications he was given for ADHD and behaviors helped, and he had so many horrible side effects such as sleep issues, lack of appetite and sometimes hallucinations. I can't tell you how much I wish I would have known how artificial ingredients affect people.

My son was well on his way to juvenile detention; by 4th grade, he was placed in a school that had the worst-behaved kids in 5 surrounding counties. It was pitiful, and we had no recourse. He had no diagnosis other than ADHD, sensory processing disorder and ODD (oppositional defiant disorder) at this time, so he was simply labeled a bad egg who needed very strict rules.

By the time he was in 5th grade, this child, who didn't start out with severe sensory and autistic symptoms, was head banging, was having screaming raging fits and had many repetitive coping activities. He was often so uncontrollable he had to be restrained. He was regressing year by year, until we started the Feingold Diet.

The first year we started the diet, I didn't follow it properly and didn't know at the time that he had issues with sodium benzoate, nitrates and such, but he still improved so much that the teachers in his class said they had never had a student make so much progress in one year. I tried to explain Feingold and that it was the reason for the change, but it was beyond their grasp. This was his 8th grade year.

After we got him "clean," he ate something artificial and felt the effects for the first time. He couldn't stand the way it made him feel, and since that time, we have never had an issue of him purposely eating something off diet.

Lost childhood

He often told me how much he wished he could have it to do all over again. He is still dealing with guilt and loads of humiliation, and he rarely talks of the past. Our family has been slowly healing over the past 5 years. Many emotional scars were created during those crazy "reactive" years. It has taken time for both him and his sister to stop mourning all that happened during those years. She is in her second year of college and just now starting to talk with her brother again. She plans to write a book of our experiences as part of her senior project.

Our family is no longer on hold, no longer in survival mode.

Today is Grayson's 18th birthday. He just graduated from high school and is starting a job next week. He drives a car and just left to pick up a friend.

It is so exciting for me to see these things -- things we didn't know would ever happen when our son was younger. I can't express enough just how invaluable this organization, information and people have been to us!