

A Natural Foods Diet Cures Teenagers' Behavior Problems

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Clinicians have been screaming about the effect of food on behavior and attention for the past 30 years. Long ago Feingold and Conners (of the Conners' Attention Rating Scales) encouraged parents to delete the sugar, refined flour, and artificial chemicals from kids' diets. The value of this program was dramatically demonstrated at a small school for problem teens in Appleton, Wisconsin. The Appleton Central Alternative High School was established in 1996 for troubled kids who could not attend traditional high school because of discipline problems. Things were so bad at Appleton that a police officer was stationed full time at the school to prevent violence and weapons violations.

Then the owners of Healthy Ovens Bakery donated \$100,000 over five years to build a kitchen and hire a staff to provide a natural foods breakfast and lunch at the school, and everything changed. After the food program was initiated the principal observed that students were calm, well-behaved, more receptive to learning, and happier. The school had no dropouts, no expulsions, no drug or weapons incidence, and no suicides in the three years since the program started.

What was the plan that achieved these drastic results? Soda, candy, chips, and chemically-processed food items are absolutely prohibited in the school building. Meals provide an array of fresh produce, whole grains, and oven-baked entrees. Breakfast consists of an energy drink (made daily with fresh whole fruit, juices and a flax-based powder), whole grain bread, bagels, and muffins (with no chemical preservatives); granola; fresh peanut butter; whole fresh fruit, and milk. For lunch students have access to a fresh salad bar with dark green lettuce and hot entrees that may include an oven-baked chicken patty with broccoli almandine rice; turkey in gravy with oven-mashed potatoes and corn; or BBQ meatballs made from ground turkey with baked potato wedges.

Appleton, Wisconsin Healthy Foods Program: "Impact of Fresh, Healthy Foods on Learning and Behavior," 2002, A video of the program is available from Natural Ovens at www.naturalovens.com, (800-558-3535) for \$10.

Reference website: <http://hpakids.org/HTML/index.html>