

Kid Food: The Challenge of Feeding Children in a Highly Processed World

Bettina Elias Siegel

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Bettina Elias Siegel's *Kid Food* is an informative culinary guide for parents.

It's easy to feed kids in a way that's quick and thoughtless, especially to fit their whims and preferences, but Siegel's book encourages parents to put the thought back into mealtime, drawing on the example of how she got her own picky eater to eat healthier.

Though there's so much working against parents and their choices, including marketers, the food industry, and schools, the book equips parents to resist. Its focus on school breakfasts and lunches, food as classroom incentives, and classmates' birthday parties draws attention to the constant stream of sugary, processed foods that children face.

A graceful tone and realistic expectations make the book's changes seem possible. It moves beyond childhood obesity rates and the harmful effects of sugar in its search for answers, and affirms that parents do their best. It includes a history of kids' menus, which were once a means of helping children to enjoy healthy foods that they didn't want to eat at home, and a clear-eyed detangling of the confusion that food packaging creates that unmasks the processed foods sold at "healthy" stores in less flashy packages. It also narrates Siegel's research processes in a helpful, inspiring way.

An eye to the socioeconomic factors that influence diet is powerful, encouraging advocacy for "your child and all the children whose parents are too marginalized or disempowered to advocate on their behalf." The book's end addresses overwhelm and helplessness, suggesting books, blogs for recipes, strategies for feeding picky eaters, cookbooks, and educational food books for kids.

Kid Food equips parents with the wisdom and strategies they'll need to raise—and feed—healthier kids.

MELISSA WUSKE (September / October 2019)

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