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February
1988
Ladies'
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RESULTS OF AN AMAZING SURVEY**

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PARENTS JOURNAL

By Mary Mohler and Margery D. Rosen

How to cope with (better yet, avoid)

Food tantrums

You thought you'd be home free once he learned to use a fork... and then he decided not to eat anything but noodles. Not to worry. We asked Stephen W. Garber, Ph.D.; Marianne Daniels Garber, Ph.D.; and Robyn Freedman Spizman, the authors of *Good Behavior* (Villard Books, 1987), for some ideas on how to handle food tantrums. Here's what they came up with.

■ Limit a child's chances to say no. Never ask a child if he'd like to eat his broccoli now—you know what the answer will be. Instead say, "Would you prefer broccoli or green beans?"

■ Involve the child in the selection and preparation of food. She's much more likely to eat vegetables and greens if she shelled the peas or tossed the salad.

■ Adopt the no-thank-you rule: He has to eat

one bite, after which he's permitted to say no thank you to more. Very civilized, and everybody wins with this one.

■ Don't use dessert as a reward or a punishment. You're inviting trouble down the road. Serve something healthful for dessert so it doesn't matter as much if he goes for the finale without the middle.

■ If she has a full-blown screaming tantrum, ride it out. Put her in a chair away from the table and tell her she can come back when she calms down. If the tantrum doesn't produce results, she'll soon abandon it.

■ Never force-feed, and never send a child to bed without dinner as a form of punishment. Even if these methods work, they'll cause problems later.

■ Try varying the menu: A child who refuses to eat a traditional break-

fast might go for frozen yogurt, peanut butter on apple slices or some other unorthodox but perfectly nutritious meal.

■ If your child is a food thrower, state clearly that this is unacceptable behavior and have the child help you clean it up. And don't fall for the distraction: Serve another portion.

■ Be sure to distinguish between real food tantrums and the normal vegetable-hating phase most kids go through at around two or three years. Within limits, they need the chance to make choices about foods, refusing some and having favorites.

Mothers' MOMENTS

The Tooth Fairy cometh

BY DAVA SOBEL

Tonight, Zoë, sometime between your bedtime and mine, I have a special mission to fly. Tonight I will be the Tooth Fairy.

The problem is, you have already guessed the Tooth Fairy's true identity. "Mommy," you said as you got undressed to take a bath, "Sarah says there is no Tooth Fairy and that it's really you putting the dollar under my pillow. Is that true?"

I felt my throat fill with rage at the worldly eight-year-old up the block who made you question the power of magic. I will deal with her later. Now all I want is to freeze this moment—and you—in my heart before you grow any farther away from me.

"Is there really a Tooth Fairy, Mommy?" This is not the first existential question you have asked. We have dealt successfully with God and death and even where babies come from. So why am I clutching over the Tooth Fairy?

Because I didn't think it would happen so soon. You have only just turned six, the tooth in your hand but the third to come out, and already it seems my little game is up. I feel sorry for myself, because I don't want it to be over. I love the danger of tiptoeing into your room and groping (*continued*)

