**From the Children’s Researcher’s Desk**

**The new normal**

We are continually confronted with the facts that lead us to understand that the global recession has had a massive impact on many adult consumers, and therefore their children. A big question being posed is, ‘when do things go back to normal’. Rather than asking this, we should be trying to understand ‘the new normal’ and its impact on children, and them as future adults.

Though parents are clearly working to protect their children from bad news, and fear-inducing consequences, the reality is that they cannot shelter them from all the messages that are within their circles of reference. Children are often a lot more intuned and aware than we give them credit such so that the current state of things is likely to impact them. And perhaps this is not a bad thing. We have heard young people speak more than ever about the importance of saving; the value of looking around for good bargains; the concept of not wasting. All of this on top of a bit better understanding of health and nutrition. Does this mean that ‘kids won’t be kids’? No - but they are certainly more aware and seem to be behaving differently than previous generations.

Perhaps ‘the new normal’ for kids is not a ‘normal’ to be feared, but rather embraced. We need to plan our brands and products around that new future, and forge the way to be ‘in it’ for the long term.

**WHO Do They Think They Are?**

The World Health Organization has announced that governments across the world must establish closer ties with food manufactures and work more effectively with the industry. Their announcement ties in with their recent recommendations for tackling the issues surrounding the marketing of foods to children.

The WHO wishes to encourage governments to further restrict the advertising of child-targeted foods that are high in sugar, dairy fats and salt. This move comes as part of the WHO’s plan for dealing with the epidemic of obesity and other related diseases which are sweeping across America and other developed countries.

The WHO has turned its attention to combating non-communicable diseases in recent years. Cancer, diabetes, heart and lung conditions are all amongst the leading causes of death across the globe. Non-communicable diseases will be the focus of global health policy this year, culminating in a debate of Heads of State at the United Nations General Assembly in New York this September.

The WHO executive board has met to discuss how best to make use of the leaders’ attention, producing a new set of guidance recommendations as part of their commitment to tackling the marketing of food to children. The majority of the focus will be on middle and low income countries, with Dr Timothy Armstrong, the leader of the WHO’s efforts towards promoting a healthy diet and physical education. He stated that non-communicable diseases now account for 90% of premature deaths in these countries.

Of the estimated 42 million children worldwide who, under the age of 5 years, are classified as overweight or obese, roughly 35 million are in the poorer countries.

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When you think about it, Americans eat from a very small variety of meats. There is something of an obsession with mild flavors and tenderness in meats that has narrowed the available range into the ‘big five’: chicken, beef, pork, turkey and (possibly) lamb. These are the meats with which children have become most familiar, thus driving their liking of them.

Almost all of these meats come from animals that are slaughtered at a very young age, when their meat is at its least flavorful. The availability of aged meats such as mutton is almost non-existent, with butchers and superstores preferring to stock the more popular, younger meats.

However, not everyone likes to be bound by the conventional. There is a growing momentum gaining traction within the United States for a return to something a little more diverse when it comes to meats. Analysts have attributed this growing desire to the so-called ‘food revolution’ taking place in the U.S. and our growing understanding by consumers of the food that they eat.

This desire for more powerful, distinct and possibly even new flavors and textures is leading many to meats that have been aged for considerably longer, giving the ‘aged X days’ sticker some prevalence in the food industry. For some however, this is not enough to satisfy their taste buds, and they are compelled to look for even more exotic foods.

Such a desire for stronger flavors and less common meats is by no means a new thing, especially in the Americas. Around a hundred years ago, America was the premier place in the world for the consumption of a wide diversity of animals. The country was famed for the quantity, quality and wide variety of the game that was hunted and killed for eating.

Virtually nothing that moved, slithered or flew was out of bounds for eating. Wild animals, farmed beasts, old animals and young animals – all were eaten and pretty familiar to the average American. There was only one real exception to the ‘if it moves, eat it’ rule, and that was the eagle, an animal that was preserved from plates due to its national symbol significance.

One of the best insights into the world of food that America surrounded itself with is from a book published in 1867. The Market Assistant, published and written by Thomas DeVoe is a truly eye opening vision of the 19th century food market. The book is freely available on Google Books (see the link at the end of the article) and is quite fascinating.

The author was a well-known and popular butcher in the Jefferson Market in New York both before and after the American Civil War. His image graces the cover, replete in apron, cravat and stovepipe hat as he goes about his trade. What is so captivating about The Market Assistant is the sheer volume of meats that were available at large markets.

The wildfowl section of the book is 35 pages long, covering in great detail a massive plethora of birds that were popular for eating such as cuckoo and woodpecker. Even part of common animals, such as the palate, gall and udders of cows and calves appears to have been sold as fine eating to those that enjoyed them. Class comes greatly into play throughout the book, giving a glimpse into the everyday life of the working man and the privileged few.

Also interesting is the various means of preparing these strange cuts and parts of animals that few would consider eating today. The book describes in great detail how to tell whether the meat is good for eating, and what indicates a healthy cut, common knowledge back then, now relatively forgotten by the average consumer.

For the last several generations, the American culture has shifted its focus away from these wide ranging flavors, shifting instead towards texture over taste. Lamb is the prime example of this. The average lamb sold in the supermarket is typically slaughtered at less than a year old, leaving it with supple texture, but a very mellow taste. Mutton on the other hand, its richly flavored but tougher counterpart, has virtually disappeared from our plates. What is so strange about this shift is that for hundreds of years it was mutton that was among the staple meats.

However, in recent years the demand for older meats and more pronounced flavors is becoming louder. With this demand is also coming a return of the more inquisitive eater. Getting hold of rare meats is possible, but according to the exotic-gourmands, requires a bit of know-how.

Hunters are the easiest means of getting meats that are classed as regional fauna. However, U.S. regulations prohibit the selling of hunter’s kills for eating. This means that unless you or perhaps a good friend is a hunter, you will need to find other means of procuring wild meat. In order to address this, many farms across the country are starting to rear game animals as though they were domesticated and will slaughter them under the inspection of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Currently, the most common ‘wild’ animal raised in this fashion in the U.S. is the yak. According to those who have tried it, yak has a very rich and gamey flavor that fits somewhere between beef and duck (a strange concept, but reportedly delicious!). However, true aficionados of rare meats are quick to point out that reared animals do not taste the same as their wild counterparts. This is because of the altered diet and daily routine that the animals have.

Another means of getting more interesting meat is to import. Game birds shot and killed in the United Kingdom, then processed under the U.K. hygiene rules are perfectly acceptable to import to the U.S. There are several companies specializing in this area, meaning that you can order...
Another means of getting meat is to go via fur-trappers (yes, they still exist!). Trappers are permitted under U.S. law to trap wild animals for fur, slaughter them at USDA approved facilities and then sell the meat – unlike hunters. Thanks to these laws, beaver possesses a very ‘woody’ flavor.

For the even more adventurous, there are more exotic meats available, albeit rarely and expensively. These come in the form of cast-offs from the exotic animal business. Bears, lions and tigers are often raised by game dealers for circuses, private owners and zoos. When these animals are too old to breed, get discarded by their owners or meet their natural ends they are generally slaughtered for their furs and the meat sold on to specialist dealers. It is worth noting, though, that it is illegal to slaughter an endangered animal without due cause.

Once you have the meat, the second problem arises. How does one actually prepare and eat it? Most of the animals are much older than standard beef, meaning that they are much tougher and require different means of preparation. A well cited book worth reading for the adventurous cook is ‘After the Hunt’ by John Folse, an 854 page opus into the cookery of Louisiana game.

If you really want to seek out these meats, there is something of a warning attached – unless they start consuming them at a young age, kids are highly unlikely to like them. The flavors are strong and powerful, and therefore are likely to respond with standard neophobic reactions. However, if adventurous, following the guide below should result in a well-cooked (and thoroughly unique) meal!

Are any of these offerings likely to become kids’ favorites in the near-term? No, but certainly likely to be a memorable experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game Cooking Tips</th>
<th>In all cases sear the meat first and put into Zip-loc bags with butter. Cook in an immersion circulator for the prescribed times, then sear again for a minute or two per side on high heat.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yak</td>
<td>Cook at 56°C for 24 hours. Rich and gamey, with notes of duck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>57°C for 24 hours. Tastes like pork but richer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Bear</td>
<td>57°C for 3 hours. Tastes a little bloody and metallic. Younger bears are reportedly better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Tail</td>
<td>60°C for 48 hours. Woodsy, delicious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teal &amp; Widgeon</td>
<td>57-58°C for 45 minutes to an hour for the breast. Braise the legs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squab</td>
<td>56°C for 45 minutes for the breast. Braise the leg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoon</td>
<td>Cook raccoon in a traditional braise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kidd Bits of Information**

**WebMD – Feb 2011 – Does chocolate make acne worse?**

Chocolate may make acne worse, a small preliminary study suggests. Young men who ate up to 8 ounces of chocolate saw their average number of pimples skyrocket from fewer than four to as many as 70. The more chocolate they ate, the more they broke out – a finding that further supports the idea that the worsening of acne was due to eating the chocolate, says study researcher Samantha Block, a second-year medical student at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Block and colleagues studied 10 people who had previously been diagnosed with acne. Under the researchers’ supervision, they ate as much pure chocolate as they wanted in one sitting, up to a maximum of three 4-ounce candy bars. Then they were told to follow their normal (chocolate-free) diet for a week.

At the start of the study, the men had an average of three pimples. By the fourth day, the figure had jumped to 13 and by the end of the week, they had an average of 18 pimples.

Also, participants who finished less than one 4-ounce chocolate bar had fewer than 10 pimples a week later, according to the study, presented here at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology. The young man who ate the most chocolate – just about 8 ounces – had 70 pimples by the seventh day.

**UPI.com – Feb 2011 – Low vitamin D kids, higher allergy risk**

Children with low levels of vitamin D have increased risk of developing allergies, New York researchers say. Senior author Dr. Michal Melamed of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University looked at the serum vitamin D levels in blood collected in 2005-2006 from a nationally representative sample of more than 3,100 children and adolescents as well as 3,400 adults.

The researchers used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey that combines interviews, physical examinations and laboratory studies. One of the blood tests assessed was sensitivity to 17 different allergens by measuring levels of Immunoglobulin E, a protein made when the immune system responds to allergens.

The research team found no association between vitamin D levels and allergies in adults, but for children and adolescents, low vitamin D levels correlated with sensitivity to 11 of the 17 allergens tested, including both environmental allergens such as ragweed, oak, dog, cockroach and food allergens such as peanuts.
We all know that divorce is the end of a marriage and this also ends any legal relationship of the couple that marriage encompasses. We know how to define divorce. But why don’t we start off by looking at the history of divorce in America with some statistics of how it affects families with children and how parents are able to deal with it.

Divorce has evolved over time and the reasons for divorce have multiplied.

The first legal divorce was permitted because of adultery. In the 18th and 19th Centuries people’s perceptions of marriage had changed. In America, many people wanted a legally binding contract which looked at moral and human rights’ values. With the values of marriage changing - drunkenness, cruelty and insanity were no longer acceptable to the society-at-large.

Marriage was seen as a two-way obligation and both partners had equal responsibilities when it came to investment, affection and faithfulness. In the 19th Century, divorce rates rose because of the Civil War. This caused stress, marriage break-up, arguments, long-term separation and fractured many forms of communication. The slow increase of women’s rights contributed to this trend, albeit over the longer term.

In the 1950s some of the reasons to end a marriage were loss of sanity, partners not being compatible and long-term separation. Many people married more than once during this time. To make the divorce easier, judges as well as lawyers used the no-fault based divorce, where there are no allegations made and there is no proof of fault required from either party. California was the first state to allow this type of divorce.

Statistics since 2008 show 46% of all marriages include a partner who has previously been married. Also in the same year 40% of all marriages ended in divorce. Interestingly, statistics from 2009 show a decline in the rate of divorce.

Successful marriages have shown that education is one of the attributes of a longer, happier marriage. The statistics show that 81% of college graduates over the age of 26, who got married in the 1980s, still stayed married 20 years later. 65% of college graduates under 26, who got married in the 1980s, still stayed married too.

Also 49% of high school graduates under the age of 26 who married in the 1980s are still together 20 years later. In 2009, 29% of adults between the ages of 35 to 39 without a college degree were divorced, compared to 1.6% with a college education.

Although the impact on adults is important, it is equally important to understand about the impact on children.

At the pre-school level, boys and girls become frightened and confused and may revert back to being immature. Boys can become aggressive, confrontational and may become withdrawn from their friends. At this age, the child is not mature enough to know or how to understand, control or voice their feelings.

For parents discussing with their children about divorce and separation, keeping to the rules and the daily routine can be challenging. On the other hand, as a parent you don’t want to become strict and start making rules because your child may become unhappy.

At the ages of 6 to 9 children can be noticeably sad or even frequently crying. Boys will often act out and show aggression. They may blame them-
selves for the marriage breaking up and at the same time their parents may even get back together.

Not noticing the child’s emotions may make them feel bad and this could result in them distancing themselves from one or both the parents. Parents need to be able reassure their children that it is not their fault and by talking they will eventually come to understand why the marriage has ended.

At the ages of 9 to 11, children become angry because of their parents’ divorce, and they may also not want to live with one or other of the parents. Again, boys are likely to be aggressive while girls may become distant. Also divorce can affect performance in school. They may have behavior problems, and low self-esteem. In addition, they may have problems with their friends or may not be able to get along with one or both of the parents.

As well as talking to the kids, parents need to understand that divorce can affect kids’ emotional state and they may become angrier. Sometimes kids may feel obliged to take on parental responsibilities and even though their feeling may be ignored, they put one or the other of their parent’s needs first. Kids can find growing up during divorce very tough, and may take their anger out on someone else.

Unlike younger kids, older teenagers in particular are able to communicate better with parents and also tell them what they are going through and how it is affecting them. But it is also important for the parent to be able to listen to them and not ignore their feelings.

Many studies have shown to a child, divorce is similar to the pain of losing a parent in death. They are going through so many emotions, and grief is one. Children frequently believe that they are at least part of the cause of the divorce. They can also think that the parent has left because of them or that the parent doesn’t love them anymore.

Understandably, divorce can have parents so wrapped up in their own lives that they fail to see how it affects their children. Being in a family is very important to young children. Ideally both parents give them love, provide emotional support and teach their children skills and knowledge about life as well as being a role model.

Divorce does not only affect young children, it affects teenagers and even adult children. This can result in low self-esteem and behaviour change. This can also lead to older teenagers looking to new (and often inappropriate) role models. In a divorce children of all ages may show signs of depression. Divorce can throw a child’s life upside down. The circumstances surrounding the divorce may cause them to move from one school to another, be forced to make new friends, share their holidays or even birthdays away from their familiar surroundings.

However, provided there is stability, routine and frequent contact for the child with both parents, the harsh effects divorce has on kids can be significantly softened.

As divorce is a fact of current life, it is important to know the potential impact of divorce, and how to address kids’ needs as they adapt to their new style of family life. Importantly, even though there is a concept of ‘no-fault divorce’, children are often inclined to attribute fault. A lot of communication is required to help them - and let them feel loved through the whole process. This is not about sheltering them completely from the truth, but rather to see the truth in as positive a light as possible. They need to know that life beyond divorce can be good, and that they will be fine.

The opportunity for brands and products to help is to offer a view of family that does not only defer to the idealized fantasy of what family means. With half of all households dealing with divorce or remarriage, ‘normal’ is no longer only mom and dad and 2.4 children. The definition of ‘modern family’ is a much more diverse concept.

Sources and Further Information:
http://www.divorce.co.uk/Splittingup/Helpingthechildren.Howdivorceaffectschildren/
http://www.essortment.com/all/divorcehowweffe_rhcq.htm
Exploring the Symptoms of Vitamin B Deficiency

The Vitamin Bs are part of the essential range of nutrients that the human body needs to function correctly. These are particularly essential for children as they grow and develop. However, there does seem to be an increasing number of vitamin B deficiencies being reported in children, especially a deficiency of vitamin B12.

Originally, vitamin B was considered to be a standalone vitamin in its own right. However, since initial classification, vitamin B has been more accurately defined as various nutrients: vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9 and B12 are all required by the human body for its day-to-day efficient running.

All of these variations of vitamin B have their own unique deficiency traits, none of which are particularly pleasant. Vitamin B1 (thiamine) deficiency, for example, is the prime cause of beriberi – a rather nasty disorder that causes severe lethargy, combined with cardiovascular problems, nervous, muscular and gastrointestinal problems.

Beriberi is very rare in the West, thanks in no small part to our varied diets. The disease is however, still very common within Asian countries and emerging markets, thanks to the common diet of polished rice, which is very low in vitamin B1.

Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) deficiency is somewhat more common in the developed world. Vitamin B2 is common in non-processed meat, eggs, milk, cheese yogurt, green vegetables and whole grains. B2 deficiency can cause a medical condition called Aribioflavonosis which results in painfully cracked lips, sunlight sensitivity, sore throats and even pseudo-syphilis.

Vitamin B3 (niacin) deficiency also tends to be rare in most developed countries, but becomes increasingly more apparent among those living in poverty and is fairly common in emerging markets and less developed countries. It is a common feature that goes hand-in-hand with alcohol abuse, but also in areas where maize is eaten in large quantities, as in Africa and in some parts of South America.

B3 deficiency can cause a grim disease called Pellagra which if left untreated will result in dermatitis, dementia, lesions on the lower neck, hyperpigmentation, thickening of the skin, inflammation of the mouth and tongue, digestive disturbances, amnesia, delirium, and eventually death.

B5 (pantothenic acid) deficiency has only been recorded in clinical trials with volunteers, thanks to its presence of in almost every type of food imaginable. The volunteers developed itchy and unpleasant acne, which was instantly cured by the reintroduction of the vitamin.

Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) is one of the micronutrients responsible for keeping microcytic anemia at bay. B6 deficiency is more common than most of the other B vitamin deficiencies and can cause depression, anemia, dermatitis, high blood pressure and water retention.

Vitamin B7 (biotin) rarely affects adults, however children and infants are very much at risk if they do not get enough in their diets. Pregnant women tend to have a high risk of biotin deficiency. Recent research has shown that almost half of all pregnant women have an abnormal increase of 3-hydroxyisovaleric acid, the clinical marker for a greatly reduced biotin status.

Several studies have reported that it is likely that biotin deficiency during pregnancy can cause congenital malformations, such as cleft palates and various other abnormalities. Studies with mice fed on raw powdered egg whites to induce biotin deficiency during gestation resulted in a 100% incidence of the infants’ malnourishment.

Because infants and embryos are much more sensitive to deficiencies of all kinds, even the slightest malnourishment can cause serious issues. As biotin deficiency can be passed very easily from mother to child, even a mild level of deficiency in the parent may cause serious consequence in the infant. As there is no known limit to the amount of vitamin B7 that a person can consume, there really isn’t any excuse for mothers-to-be to keep the biotin levels topped up.

Vitamin B9 (folic acid) also helps to keep anemia at bay. B9 is essential to countless body and mental functions. Deficiency in folates can have extremely serious repercussions, especially in the fetus that can suffer severe brain defects as a result. Other symptoms include glossitis, diarrhoea, depression, confusion and fetal neural tube defects.

B9 supplementation is positively encouraged for expecting mothers for the duration of the pregnancy and has also been linked to preserving brain functionality as we grow older.

The final strain of B vitamins is B12 (cobalamin), which plays a key role in the functioning of the brain and the nervous system. It is vital for young, developing children to receive it in plentiful supply in order to facilitate positive growth and both physical and mental development. It is involved in the metabolism of every cell in the human body, and plays a large role in DNA synthesis and regulation. It also aids energy production and the formation of blood.

Deficiency of B12 can be fatal, as it leads to pernicious anemia, an autoimmune disease that if untreated will kill in around 3 years. Vegan children are notably susceptible to B12 deficiency as they do not consume any animal products which contain it. Deficiency can also result in macrocytic anemia, memory loss and other cognitive deficits. It can also cause symptoms of mania and psychosis. In rare and extreme cases, paralysis can result.
**Anti-Social Toddlers?**

According to a study carried out by the British Government, this could indeed be the case. According to the study, children in full-time pre-school care are more likely to display anti-social tendencies and anxiety than those who stay at home or only attend on a part-time basis.

The study found that toddlers who were spending more than seven hours a day in day-care were more prone to be bossy, to tease other children, to stamp their feet, obstruct their playmates and get anxious when toys or refreshments were being handed around.

The research which was carried out by the University of Oxford and the Institute for Fiscal Studies has raised the idea that over-exposure to formal childcare is bad for young children. It also raises questions over the rapid return of parents to the workplace, leaving their children in full-time childcare.

There is a great fear that this pressure to get back to work is having a very negative effect on kids and the traditional family structure. The pressure on parents to return to work is doubly apparent during this period of economic downturn. Social commentators have noted that this may inadvertently be causing an erosion of family values and social ability.

Some children are spending 50 hours a week in day care, leading to complaints from the teachers and care-givers that the choice is alienating children from their parents, during a period when they are in direct need of parental or familial attention.

However, the increasing availability of 8am – 6pm childcare means that parents are increasingly looking towards pre-school as a means to an end. Most parents understand that time away from their kids is not an ideal situation, but increasingly there is little choice.

In some places it is possible to put children only a few months old into childcare for up to 10 hours a day, cutting out the most vital period of parent-child interaction.

However, there has been some benefit of the longer hours in day care, particularly amongst those with a lower income. Children will generally be fed a good diet and any illness should be swiftly picked up by the staff - all this while parents can ensure that there is money coming into the household. It has also been noted that children spending 30+ hours a week in childcare are generally more confident and outgoing.

However, studies would seem to indicate that the negatives of full time toddler care may outweigh the positives. Several examinations into the effects of full-time preschool indicate that social and behavioral issues are commonplace.

The study looked at the behaviors of 810 children in 100 nurseries. Carers were asked to fill in detailed questionnaires about the children in their care. Children who were in care for more than 30 hours a week were far more likely to exhibit the following behaviors:

**Anti-social Behavior**

- Teasing other children and name calling
- Preventing other children carrying out their normal routines
- Be bossy and need to have their own way

**Worried or upset**

- Frown, shrug shoulders, pout, stamp their feet when given an idea
- Be worried about not getting enough attention
- Be anxious about not getting enough access to toys or food and drink

The 30 hour mark appears to be the tipping point according to the study. Children spending 30 hours or more a week were subject to bouts of anti-social behavior. Those spending 35+ were noted as displaying much more worrying and upsetting behavior.

For children under the age of 3½ it is also believed that mixed age playgroups have a very negative effect upon their development. The report found that in the mixed age groups the emotional adjustment of youngsters could easily become stunted, as they fail to grasp the attitudes and behavior of older children.

All of this reinforces the importance of the connection between parents and children, especially at the period of time when children are most in need of direct contact in order to give them a sense of identity and social understanding.

The increasingly fast-paced nature of the world seems to be taking these opportunities away from parents, but there are few chances to change this. It will be interesting to see how the next generations of children adapt to the changing nature of family life.

www.kidsfoodtrends.com  KidsFoodTrends March 2011
This month sees KFT begin a series of examinations into books that focus upon the world of children’s mental and physical development. We will be exploring various ideas and theories into the way in which the human mind travels from the exploratory and infantile to the fully developed adult conscience.

For our first glimpse into this fascinating world we are reviewing The Child’s Changing Consciousness, a collection of lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in Switzerland in 1923. Steiner is the father of Waldorf Education, an alternative means of teaching children. Today there are over 900 Waldorf schools world-wide, teaching in the manner Steiner suggested at the beginning of the 20th Century.

In this series of lectures, Steiner outlined the basic tenants of Waldorf Education and expressed his own views on child development. It is worth noting that Steiner’s beliefs are well outside what the majority of people would consider to be the ‘accepted’ view of child development. It is also worth pointing out that this collection of lectures is now out of print, but is available free online (you can find the link at the bottom of the article).

In regards to the book itself, it is very obvious that these are transcribed lectures, rather than written prose. Frequently Steiner presents rhetorical questions and references other theorists that are somewhat difficult to comprehend. Many of these theorists have been mostly forgotten by the modern community, which makes their reference something of a conundrum to the average reader.

What is most notable about these lectures is how truly outdated, in terms of modern theories, that the notions seem. There are also many references which are no longer relevant in today’s world, such as explaining the difference between the use of the word ‘bohemian’ so as to appease the Czech lecture attendees.

Steiner talks frequently of how important the soul is for the child, or that children only develop a memory after losing their milk teeth. Steiner also draws a connection between children’s innate desire to be religious (although which religion is never touched upon), and that the emotions such as love which adults feel are merely pale shadows of this spirituality. Only through a life of total devotion to spirituality, Steiner reasons, is it possible to re-achieve the same level of spirituality children innately have.

Admittedly, it is interesting to see a different perspective of children’s education. Steiner’s approach feels much less systematic than say, Jean Piaget’s or Lev Vygotsky’s. However, for the non-religious reader, much of what Steiner conveys verges on the implausible. This is not to say that there is not any useful information to be gained by reading these lectures.

An entire system of learning and education has arisen from Steiner’s teachings, and it is very much worth noting that these schools tend to perform better during SATs than traditional schools. It is hard to judge however, as Waldorf schools are generally private and are rarely subject to standardized testing throughout the school years.

One of the most sensible arguments promoted by Steiner is the order of which the education of children is approached. In most forms of education it is reading which is the first major milestone a child reaches, but Steiner explains that it should be writing which is grasped initially. To do this, Steiner explains his methods, using pictographs which help shape the letters a child will write, and the sounds associated with them.

Steiner also suggests that throughout the entire schooling process the children have only one teacher, who will stay with the class throughout their entire school life. This promotes a very close-knit and supportive environment, but one that may be wholly impractical in larger classes.

The spiritual side of things however makes much of Steiner’s lectures seem almost like religious dogma. Steiner believed, for example, that children will only develop a memory after their milk teeth are replaced. He also describes how the child’s movement as a baby will shape sound more like fantasy than anything that can be accredited to scientific discovery and process. This is the crux of the challenge of Steiner’s work in the modern context: the mix of the rational and the irrational. There are some genuinely fascinating insights into Steiner’s education methods, which could easily be adapted by the mainstream (and should strongly be considered). These however, are undercut by the insistence of Steiner that it is the soul of the child which needs the most focus.

It’s a tricky subject of review, so please feel encouraged to read through the lectures yourself in order to gain a deeper understanding of Steiner’s thought process and methods. Separation of the spirituality aside, it makes for an interesting, insightful read.

Sources and Further Information:
Many children dream of being a professional baseball player, but a company president? Kentaro Lemoto’s dream of becoming a company director became true. At the age of 15, he was a CEO, and author of an autobiography entitled ‘Why I Became A Company President at the Age of 15.’

Seven years ago he wanted to be a professional baseball player but at the age of 11 he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. In hospital, he had a lot of spare time on his hands so he started reading newspapers. He bought a computer and this was how he was introduced to the internet.

In 1996 he had surgery. Unfortunately complications arose during the procedure and left him paralyzed from the waist down. Lying in a hospital bed Kentaro decided he wanted to start his own company by creating a society where disabled people can get information just as easily as able-bodied people. The only way he would be able to achieve this is through the use of the internet.

He wrote in his diary:

“The reason why I’m going to start a company isn’t for honor, ambition, status or fame. Living in a wheelchair, I realized how difficult and inconvenient it is to communicate with others. I want to create a society where disabled people can get information just as easily as able-bodied people. The best way to approach this problem is through the internet.”

He founded Clara Online in 1997. His start up capital was the Japanese Yen equivalent of $9,000.

In March 1999, he found himself having less than 100 yen in the bank, and couldn’t pay his 18 employees. However through determination and grit, he managed to gather investors and narrowly avoided going bankrupt.

Today Kentaro is a well-known figure in Japanese technology circles. The company owns and operates six data centers located in Tokyo, Gifu, Singapore, Shanghai and Taipei, and turns a considerable profit for the young tech guru.

Sources and further information: www.clara.ad.jp

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**Kids in Control: Kentaro Lemoto**

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**Tweet Tweet: Twitter Blasts**

**From: WPLGLocal10:** Kids learn to eat healthy by cooking healthy. Chef starts program to teach kids to cook.


**From: HealthRockstar:** You can lead a child to cauliflower, but can you make him eat it? Getting kids to choose wholesome foods is becoming increasingly important as schools across the country revamp their meal programs to offer more fruits and vegetables and less sugars and fats.


**From: HealthRockstar:** Dr. Mary Jo Kutler of Ahwatukee Pediatrics is concerned with the obesity rate in children across America.


**From: WSBTHealth:** British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver called Sarah Palin a “Froot Loop” for criticizing the Obama administration’s healthy eating initiatives, and said getting healthy foods to kids is a civil rights issue.


**From: CelliloHealth:** An ingenious way to get kids to eat healthy: Give cafeterias a psychology lesson

See: [http://fb.me/Fbsowz2R](http://fb.me/Fbsowz2R)

**From: ehn777:** You are what you eat, kids. This week’s news seems stuffed (pardon the pun) with reasons to pursue a healthy diet. It could help boost a toddler’s IQ and improve the symptoms of a child with ADHD.

Last May the WHO addressed the U.N health agency. Recognition that advertizing of less healthy foods and drinks that are rich in salt, saturated fats, sugars and trans-fats can encourage children to consume them led the U.N. to draw up recommendations. The WHO wanted to push the U.N. towards a focus on the other aspect of advertizing to kids: that ads can also promote a healthy diet.

A document signed by the WHO’s 193 member states told the U.N. that it should work very closely with the private sector in order to tackle the frequency of advertizing and its “power”, most notably the use of cartoons and characters that directly appeal to children.

The WHO directly approached many of the leading food and beverage producers, including Coca-Cola, General Mills, Grupo Bimbo (Mexico), Kraft, McDonald’s, Kellogg, Mars, Nestlé, PepsiCo and Unilever. They also worked together with the World Federation of Advertisers to develop a strategy to address non-communicable diseases.

The companies agreed to create a code of conduct and committed not to market unhealthy products to children under the age of 12. In many markets, companies are indeed living up to this pledge. However, Dr Armstrong has noted that in others, the pledge is being failed:

“There are other markets where perhaps companies are not adopting the same policies in terms of not advertizing their products to children”

Dr Armstrong declined to point fingers or name the markets in which the pledge was being sidelined. However, he did say that the WHO had a sense that companies were simply not fulfilling their commitment in poor countries in the same way that they were doing in developed countries. There is a fear that there are double standards.

The WHO believe that their findings and observations mean that governments need to actively monitor the implementation of any agreements reached within the food and beverage industry. Dr Armstrong stated clearly that the WHO’s proposal from May was for governments themselves to lead the process.

It was down to governments to choose the best approach of implementing the pledge. Some might choose to legislate a ban on advertizing, whereas others felt that the best option would be to have the industry self-regulate, with regular government monitoring also included in the mix. However, this idea rapidly was deemed ineffectual for many of the small, poorer countries in which legislation and enforcement was beyond the capacity of their governments.

Dr Bjorn-Inge Larsen, Norway’s Director General of Health provided another problem facing smaller countries. According to Dr Larsen, much of the advertizing of products reaches kids in these countries through the larger, international TV channels, meaning that domestic legislation would be mostly ineffectual.

Dr Larsen, in tandem with the WHO, feels that governments still have a large range of options open to them, and that their new recommendations are the first step, albeit a small one. The WHO is hoping that pressure upon food and beverage companies will continue to curb advertizing it considers to be harmful to children.

It is also hoped that the production of products deemed ‘bad’ for kids will become much reduced, with the WHO citing the consumption of tobacco and alcohol as an example of changing products and means of advertizing.

The development of the WHO’s recommendations, and what steps will arise from the meeting with the U.N. in September will be interesting to follow and KFT will return to the subject to explore exactly what has been decided.

Source and further information: www.who.int