



1 Parents Are Warned Not to Keep Children Quiet by Offering Them Junk Food

Children's Minister, Frances Fitzgerald, has warned parents not to feed junk food to their children to keep them quiet.

Her advice came after new figures showed one in four primary school children – around 30,000 – is overweight or obese from excessive calorie intake and lack of exercise.

Ms. Fitzgerald said it was understandable that parents were tempted to give their children junk food so they would “sit down and watch the TV and keep quiet”.

However, she added: “A lot of the parents who are giving children the incorrect food do so because they don't understand the consequences. The children who are obese are likely to become obese adults. You're condemning children by doing that to a lifetime of ill-health, and that's the truth.”

Ms. Fitzgerald cited the case of a child of 18 months who had to be weaned off crisps. “I have heard lots of stories of babies and young children getting completely inappropriate food,” she said. Any parent giving an 18-month-old child crisps “has a huge educational issue,” she added.

However, she was reluctant to blame only parents for the fact that 25% of three-year-olds are overweight or obese.

She said there was a role for schools with their safe walking routes and for the State to provide more leisure facilities.

Michael Brennan, *The Irish Independent*, April 22nd, 2013.

2 The Model Child

At dinner that night Barbie picked carefully around the slab* of veal on her plate.

“I can't,” Barbie said.

“What do you mean you can't? You just take your fork...”

“I don't eat slaughtered* baby animals.”

“You can't live on potatoes,” said Mrs. Marks. “You'll get fat.”

Barbie was surprised when her father looked up at this.

“I don't think she has to worry about getting fat,” he said.

Mrs. Marks sat up straighter trying to hold in her stomach.

“It's never too early to start watching your weight. I wish someone had helped me with that before it was too late.”

“Just let her eat what she wants,” said Mr. Marks. “It's better that she eats her potatoes than nothing. She's getting too thin.”

Barbie was glad he'd noticed. She thought it was the right time to let him know about her mother's plan.

“Mom wants me to look good for the pageant*,” she said.

“What pageant?”

“The Model Child Pageant,” said Mrs. Marks, glaring at Barbie. “All the little girls in it are on diets.”

Barbie was hoping that her father would protest, that he would insist that there would be no pageant, no diets, no baby animals, that he would take Barbie's hand and bring her to his office with him where he would read myths to her. But instead, without looking at his daughter, he asked, “What does she think about it?”

“She's a little nervous. But it'll be so much fun, won't it, Barbie.”

Barbie just stared at her mother.

“Well, it isn't healthy,” her father said, wearily. He got up and left the table.

“Just ignore him, honey,” said Mrs. Marks. “You are going to have a lot of fun. It'll be just like when we played ‘Supermodel’ with your dolls, remember?”

She reached over and patted Barbie's head.

Francesca Lia Block, *I was a Teenage Fairy*. HarperCollins, 1998.

*slab: *tranche* *slaughtered: *abattus* *pageant: *concours*

Questions Doc. 1

- This document is:
 - an extract from a blog?
 - a newspaper article?
 - an extract from a novel?
 - an ad?
- What is the text about? Explain in one sentence.
- Who is Frances Fitzgerald?
- What kind of “advice” did she give? To whom?
- Why did she decide to issue a warning?
- What do these numbers correspond to? 30,000 - 25%
- Does Ms. Fitzgerald think the problem is only the parents' fault? Justify by quoting from the text.

Oral

Questions Doc. 2

- Who are the main characters? How are they related?
- At what moment of the day and where does the scene take place?
- What is on the menu? Does Barbie like the food or not? Why?
- Right or wrong? Justify by quoting from the text.
 - Mrs. Marks wants Barbie to eat potatoes.
 - Barbie is overweight.
 - Mrs. Marks feels good about her own appearance.
- Fill in the blanks with the appropriate characters' names.

... wants ... to participate in a beauty pageant.
... doesn't seem to know about the pageant.
- Circle the adjectives that best describe Barbie's feelings about the pageant.
enthusiastic – indifferent – passionate – hesitant – excited – opposed
- What is Mr. Marks's opinion about the pageant? Justify your answer by quoting the text.
- Choose the right statement and justify by quoting the text.

Barbie would like Mr. Marks to ...

 - come and support her at the Model Child Pageant.
 - ask her what she thinks about the pageant.
 - tell Mrs. Marks that Barbie will not go to the pageant.

Questions Docs 1 and 2

- In your opinion, what is the common theme to both documents?
- Compare and contrast the parents' view on the way their children eat. Explain in a few sentences.
 - Parents in doc. 1 and Mrs. Marks in doc. 2.
 - Frances Fitzgerald in doc.1 and Mrs. Marks in doc. 2.
- Do you think Mr. Marks agrees with parents in doc. 1? Explain.

EXPRESSION



Choose one of the following subjects.

- Write a dialogue**
After the scene in doc. 2, Barbie leaves the room. Mr. and Mrs. Marks have a discussion.
- Tell a story**
Remember the time when you were child. Talk about the food (including sweets and drinks) you liked and disliked. Mention what your parents said and did. Say what has changed or not changed in your eating habits.

COMPREHENSION



The First Lady Introduces Let's Move



www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/first-lady-introduces-lets-move

- Watch the video three times and take down notes.
- Then write a report on it, in French.

EXPRESSION



"The idea of progress"

*Does change always mean progress?
The example of eating habits*

- Prepare your presentation in note form

Step 1 Introduce the notion: "The idea of progress".
Example: Fast-food has revolutionized the food industry and how people all over the world eat and live. It's now an established part of our way of life.

Step 2 Explain what fast-food is.
Give examples of fast-food restaurants. Say how eating habits have changed in the last fifty years.
Talk about the fast-food industry.
 Cultural Background / Sound File
 Talk about the consequences of fast-food consumption.
 Text File 1
 What are the pros and cons of fast food?

Step 3 Talk about the influence of food company advertising and say what can be done to limit its impact.
 Text File 2

Step 4 Give examples of people who are trying to change people's eating habits. Say why and how they decided to act. Video File / Sound File / Text File 1

Step 5 Conclude.

Say if your feelings towards fast food have changed. Give your opinion about the various initiatives you have studied in this unit and answer the question that started your presentation: "Does change always mean progress?"

- Train yourself**

Follow the steps above and speak for five minutes. If possible, add personal comments. Record yourself and listen to your presentation to improve it.

- Get ready for a conversation**

Listen to the recording of your presentation and prepare yourself to justify, develop, and exemplify what you have said.