

Review for “Food Fight” by Linda B. Davis.

From Stacey Lambert, Parent and co-Founder of [ARFID Awareness UK](#)

To date I have not read an account of ARFID that so closely matches the reality and hardship that my 11 year old son deals with on a day to day basis. This story really hit home to me personally, not least because my 11 year old son eats exactly the same 'safe foods' as Ben, but he is about to go on his first ever school trip away for 5 days at the end of primary school in July. As his mum I am absolutely terrified for him, not that he knows this!

I love the way Linda captures the mom and dads differing attempts to deal with ARFID initially with no clear guidance as so many of our ARFID families do; as well as the extended family and how this makes Ben feel. The fact that she makes the point clearly that ARFID is not the fault of the parents and that we have all made mistakes along the way trying to work out how to navigate this eating disorder.

Ben's perspective is so important because as parents we can not always gain a true insight into ARFID unless an adult tells us or they are older enough to communicate this. Now there are more resources out there thankfully but it is great the book covers exactly what Ben feels when he sees a plate of food he can not eat. That he is repulsed by it, and compares this to his dad stepping in dog poop and 'would you lick it off your shoe'. It accurately captures the feelings of smell and sensory issues when eating around other people and how other foods can be triggering not only by sight and smell but also if they touch each other! That no ARFID child is going to suddenly eat a new food 'because they are doing outside activities and developing an appetite or because they are hungry enough!' I know Ben would have gone the whole weekend eating nothing as would my son. I loved the part of the book where Ben ate an apple in a different form - not just cut up and sliced - and how he celebrated this as a huge win! He did this on his own, out of the view of others - it is not something that can ever be forced or encouraged.

It also accurately captures the relationship with friends and how they are so accepting up to a certain age but then new children; and the desire to 'fit in' can really impact on this as children get older. It will inspire other children to stand up for themselves and this element of the story really highlighted the challenges faced in social situations - this is the case not just children but also adults in the workplace and is a constant challenge.

I love the way the book covers the whole experience of a family living with ARFID, both in and out of the home. How we get to see all of the differing perspectives, that Ben does see a therapist despite his concerns and that ultimately by knowing that you have ARFID and being open and honest about that is not so scary after all! We have so many emails from families and those with ARFID just thanking us for raising awareness as it helps to know that their difficulties

with eating have a name! That they are not just 'picky eaters'. The quote at the front of the book does refer to 'picky eaters' which I know many ARIFD families struggle with as ARFID is so much more - but Linda addresses this point throughout the book.

I am so grateful that this book is being published as I know this will help raise awareness and provide a relatable text for pre teens and young adults who are trying to navigate the world with ARFID. I don't know of any other fiction book out there at the moment that covers this so thoroughly and I would not hesitate to recommend this to anyone who wants to learn more about ARFID or their child. I think every school library should have a copy.

I will be passing this to my son to read too. Thank you for the opportunity to review this.