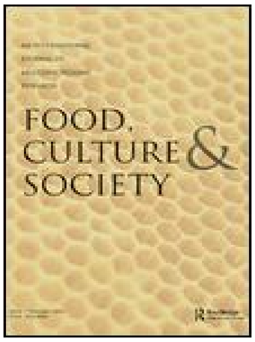

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Food, Culture & Society

An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rffc20

The joy of foodwork: allergies, gendered foodwork and emotion work in parenting advice, 1991–2020

Vanessa L. Muñoz & Linda Quirke

To cite this article: Vanessa L. Muñoz & Linda Quirke (2021): The joy of foodwork: allergies, gendered foodwork and emotion work in parenting advice, 1991–2020, Food, Culture & Society, DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2021.1940688

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2021.1940688

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

Published online: 22 Jul 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 182

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rffc20

FOOD, CULTURE & SOCIETY
https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2021.1940688

OPEN ACCESS

The joy of foodwork: allergies, gendered foodwork and emotion work in parenting advice, 1991–2020

Vanessa L. Muñoz[a] and Linda Quirke[b]

[a]Sociology Department, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO, USA; [b]Department of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada

ABSTRACT

At a time when child health is receiving considerable attention, child feeding practices are under intense scrutiny as the site for developing healthy habits and preventing childhood illness. Previous scholars of foodwork detail the various types of labor involved in feeding children, purchasing foods, researching foods, preparing appealing meals, and managing emotions around these activities. Less scholarly attention has been given to the advice directed at parents - mothers in particular - about feeding children. Our study examines parenting advice on general feeding and feeding children with food allergies published between 1991 and 2020 in a Canadian mainstream parenting magazine. We build on Arlie Hochschild's concepts of emotion work and feeling rules, demonstrating that magazines instruct parents to manage emotions to create pleasurable eating experiences for children. We conclude with implications for studies of foodwork, emotion work and childrearing.

KEYWORDS

Foodwork; parenting; mothering; emotion work; parenting magazines; children

In most western households, women take on the lion’s share of foodwork, including the labor of researching, selecting, purchasing, preparing and serving food (Bowen, Brenton, and Elliott 2019; DeVault 1991; Lupton 1996). In doing foodwork, mothers are called upon not only to provide nourishment, but also to manage risks related to toxins, unhealthy foods and often health concerns such as child obesity and food allergies. As social anxiety about children’s health increases, scholars note that foodwork expectations are “unprecedentedly high, and require considerable time, money and mental energy” (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019, 447). Mothers are inundated with “dominant messages” about how to perform foodwork, from food selection to meal preparation. DeVault (1991) cites the importance of examining how family foodwork “is constructed in public discourse” (p. 230). Foodwork includes the mundane feeding of children to increasing emphasis on healthy eating and managing conditions such as food allergies. To capture this range, we examine magazine advice regarding everyday foodwork and foodwork for children with food allergies. As we discuss below, scholarly literature on family foodwork demonstrates the gendered nature of foodwork, and maternal efforts to provide not only nutrition, but seemingly effortless idealized food experiences (Boero 2009; Bowen, Brenton, and Elliott 2019; Cairns and Johnston 2015; Cairns, Johnston, and

CONTACT Vanessa L. Muñoz ✉ vmunoz@coloradocollege.edu

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

MacKendrick 2013; Cairns, Johnson, and Oleschuk 2018; Cook 2009; DeVault 1991; Harman and Cappellini 2015; Mackendrick 2018; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Patico 2020). Studies of parents of children with severe food allergies also identify tensions between keeping children safe, preserving food-related rituals, and providing nutritious diets for children (Stjerna et al. 2014; Pitchforth et al., 2011). Relying on this body of foodwork literature, we use Arlie Hochschild's (1979) concept of emotion work to examine foodwork advice to parents in a popular Canadian magazine, *Today's Parent*.

It is critical to understand how the popular media frame mothers' feeding responsibilities and children's nutritional needs. We examine the social context of child feeding at a time when intensive mothering ideologies are prevalent (Hays 1996; Lareau 2003/2011). Hays argues that the ideology of intensive mothering, both in expert literature and in mothers' narratives, promotes an approach to child-rearing that is "child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive" (Hays 1996, 81). Our research looks specifically at the ways that parents, particularly mothers, are advised to manage their emotions regarding feeding children and managing food allergies. While previous studies have identified mothers' emotion work through mothers' own accounts, we examine how magazines serve to articulate feeling rules or emotional conventions around foodwork to mothers. By analyzing mainstream parenting advice, we highlight societal expectations informing modern child-rearing. Parenting advice acts as a "useful cultural barometer," reflecting customary mainstream parenting norms (Rutherford 2011, 38; Milkie and Denny 2014). Hays (1996) argues that child-rearing advice constitutes "an approximation of the dominant cultural model of raising children" (1996, 70). Examining foodwork as portrayed in parenting magazines illuminates the ways that popular discourses instruct parents to engage in emotion work around feeding. We analyze articles published in *Today's Parent* between 1991 and 2020 that provide advice to parents about: 1) general foodwork for children and 2) food allergy-related foodwork for children in order to map the landscape of foodwork advice during a period of rising concerns about food risks related to overall health, toxicity, and allergens.

Food allergies have risen in significance in food-related discourses since the late 1990s, with a peak around 2010 when peanut allergies were labeled an "epidemic" among children (Waggoner 2013). Feeding children with food allergies comprises an important deviant case within foodwork studies since these children are especially vulnerable to risk. A potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction stands in stark contrast with foodwork as a routine, everyday activity, that could have medium- or long-term risks, such as children developing unhealthy eating habits, weight gain, or health conditions related to toxic exposures. While only some children, between 4 and 8%, have diagnosed food allergies, young children are potentially at risk for developing food allergies and therefore many parents are the audience for discourses about how to look for signs of food allergies and identify potential signs of food allergens (Gupta et al. 2011; Clarke et al. 2010). In this paper, we analyze themes within articles that contain advice about general feeding of children, which sometimes mention food allergies, and articles that are entirely about feeding children with food allergies. This sampling strategy allows us to analyze mundane foodwork advice alongside advice relating to managing children's food allergies. This range allows for a more nuanced analysis of the ways that mothers are advised to manage their emotions around feeding in different contexts. As such, our work illustrates popular discourses about foodwork, in the context of heightened foodwork expectations and social anxiety about children's health.

This study contributes to existing scholarship in four ways. First, while other studies have demonstrated the various emotion work strategies mothers use to avoid negative stereotypes, we identify that magazines also promote a type of emotion work intended to generate and sustain positive emotions. Second, while other foodwork studies examine the emotion work mothers are encouraged to perform for friends and family, we examine emotion work performed for children. We argue that emotion work for children is an integral part of foodwork. Third, our contribution to the emotion work literature is also methodological. Existing studies of parental emotion work rely on interviews (Clarke 2006; Watt 2017; Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019) or ethnography (Chin 2000). However, rather than drawing out the experiences of individual parents, our data collection demonstrates media depictions of childrearing, with gendered emotion work as a key feature. Finally, feminist analysis of feeding advice has centered on pregnancy and infancy while our study examines foodwork advice for children of all ages (Wolf 2010).

Foodwork and family life

Existing literature provides a rich explanation of maternal experiences with feeding children and navigating food choices (Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Patico 2020). Mothers are feeding children in the context of increasing concerns about children's health needs and rising fears about industrial food production. As Mackendrick (2018) argues, mothers are expected to respond to collective food risks with individual food consumption solutions. Oleschuk (2020) found that popular media identify structural barriers to healthy family eating habits, particularly for low-income families, however, solutions to the problem are more commonly individualistic. Mothers' ability to employ individualistic strategies, such as heavily-researched consumption practices, to protect children from dangers associated with unhealthy eating is so central to contemporary childrearing that parents often weigh it against other strongly held values, such as community and inclusivity (Patico 2020). Concerns about healthy eating and navigating hidden toxins are layered upon existing ideals that foodwork should serve to cultivate family time, provide nourishment, and cater to individual preferences (DeVault 1991). Additionally, concerns about health and food risks compound existing criticism of maternal foodwork performed by mothers who are low-income and/or racial minorities (Boero 2009; Brenton 2017; Carter and Anthony 2015; see Mason 2016; Kuyper, Smith, and Kaiser 2009).

Faced with the many goals of foodwork, mothers feel pressured to scrupulously monitor what their children eat (Boero 2009; Cairns and Johnston 2015; Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013; Cairns, Johnson, and Oleschuk 2018; Cook 2009; Harman and Cappellini 2015; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Patico 2020). This monitoring results in deep tensions, however, as mothers actively work against appearing overly controlling and reifying stereotypes of overbearing mothers (Patico 2020; Cairns, Johnson, and Oleschuk 2018). Maternal foodwork is a delicate balance between avoiding stigmatized extremes and feeding children healthy meals (Cairns, Johnson, and Oleschuk 2018). This delicate balance is also reflected in writing by female food bloggers who navigate tensions between appealing to appetites and maintaining control over these appetites through the preparation of healthy meals (Rodney et al. 2017).

Foodwork and food allergies

Since food is such a pervasive part of daily life, having a food allergy can restrain children's participation in social activities. Quality of life studies show that meal preparation and social activities are the most affected by severe food allergies (Bollinger et al. 2006). A study of experiences with food allergies shows that managing food allergies can result in children missing out on pleasurable food experiences and having some loss of control regarding eating (Stjerna 2015). Having a child with a food allergy, as with other chronic conditions, reduces parents' overall quality of life (Flokstra-de Blok et al. 2010; King et al. 2009). Mothers, as compared to fathers and children, experience the greatest impact on their quality of life (King et al. 2009; Warren et al. 2015), very likely because they bear the greatest responsibility for managing children's food allergies (Gunnarsson and Hyden 2009; Stjerna et al. 2014).

Meal preparation is a salient issue and being able to control the foods in their home provides parents with a sense of safety in managing food allergies (Pitchforth et al. 2011; Stjerna et al. 2014). In this way the home, and home-cooked foods, become a safe haven for managing risk. For parents of children with food allergies "risk management seems to permeate most aspects of everyday life, to an extent that perhaps makes food allergy different from many other chronic conditions" (Stjerna et al. 2014, 142). Arguably, challenges of managing food risks are more pervasive for parents of children with food allergies than for parents engaging in the general management of food risks, such as toxins and unhealthy substances (Mackendrick 2018). For low-income individuals with food allergies, however, obtaining safe foods can be more challenging due to the limited choices available through food banks and hard discount stores, adding additional pressure to the task of feeding (Minaker et al. 2015). As scholars note, using food consumption practices to avoid risks is a resource-intensive endeavor (Patico 2020; Mackendrick 2018).

Parental emotion work

To situate the emotions that parents are called upon to manage in doing foodwork, we draw upon Arlie Hochschild's concept of emotion work, which she defines as "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling" (1979, 561). Emotion work is the effort "to shape, evoke, or suppress a feeling" (Hochschild 1979, 561). Hochschild's analysis focuses on emotion management, aligning what someone feels and what they *want* to feel, such as feeling badly for not enjoying playing with one's children (Björk 2018). Chin (2000) closely follows Hochschild's definition of emotion work, noting parents' efforts to "deliberately" evoke and display an emotion. MacKendrick and Pristavec (2019, 449) define emotion work as "the effort involved in evoking and suppressing feelings." We follow these definitions, rather than broader conceptions of emotion work as soothing or complimenting children (see Minnotte, Pedersen, and Mannon 2010). Overall, emotion work is very gendered, with women more likely to engage in emotion work connected to foodwork, and other aspects of child-rearing, sustaining kin relationships and household management (Björk 2018; Brown and DeRycke 2010).

Suppression and evocation

Hochschild (1979) presents two types of emotion work: suppression and evocation (1979, 561). Suppression focuses on not expressing a feeling that is misaligned with a situation. For example, while ideologies of good mothering hold that mothers should cherish spending time with young children, mothers may suppress feelings of frustration and resentfulness (Lois 2012). Studies of parental emotion work in foodwork have largely focused on suppression. Mothers report feeling tremendous pressure to distance themselves from negative stereotypes of remiss or overbearing mothers (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; see also Bowen, Brenton, and Elliott 2019).

Parental emotion work can take two forms: suppressing emotions, or laborious "evocative" efforts. In contrast to suppression, evocation focuses on producing or attempting to display a desired feeling or demeanor that one does not feel. This may involve expressive efforts, displaying a sentiment that is not genuinely felt (Hochschild 1979). For example: parents may feel they should conjure emotions they do not feel, such as coaxing themselves to feel and display enthusiasm despite not always enjoying spending time with children (Björk 2018; Lois 2012; see also Chin 2000). Suppression and evocation are not mutually exclusive; parents may experience both. For example, mothers feel pressure to display a relaxed or upbeat attitude while suppressing worries or anxiety (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Clarke 2006; Watt 2017). While previous studies have examined emotion work and parenting, feeling rules that advise parents how to perform and feel about their foodwork remain largely unexamined. While scholarly research suggests that parental emotion management involves suppression, evocation, or both, we do not know how expert advice or media texts may prompt parents to manage their emotions.

Emotion work of feeding

Ideals about feeding children create tremendous pressure for mothers. Limited financial resources make idealized foodwork very challenging for low-income mothers (Bowen, Brenton, and Elliott 2019; Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013). Mothers report feeling anxiety, stress and guilt in striving for idealized child feeding (Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013). Mothers report feeling overwhelmed as they manage the emotional weight of foodwork decisions, and how their foodwork is interpreted or judged by others (Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019). Middle-class mothers may suppress negative displays of emotion, as they strive to "minimize any appearance of worry, hovering, or control in their foodwork" (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019, 450).

Children or other adults may be the intended audience for parents' emotion work. MacKendrick and Pristavec (2019) found that mothers managed their emotions in front of children, as they were concerned that appearing overbearing about food could foster children's anxiety or disordered eating. Quirke (2016) found that parenting magazines encouraged parents to simultaneously reduce children's risk of obesity, while shielding children from any discussion of weight loss, so as not to unwittingly harm children's self-esteem, or encourage anti-fat bullying. Parenting magazine articles depicted mothers as agonizing over their own feelings of responsibility for children's weight (Quirke 2016).

Our work takes up a particular element of emotion work: feeling rules. These emotional conventions or "scripts" "guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges" (1983, 56). Feeling rules are frameworks through which people assess the fit between feelings and situations (Hochschild 1979, 566). "Rule reminders" are prompts that call attention to emotions that are misaligned with a conventional "feeling rule." Often rule reminders involve actors calling for an account or explanation of a feeling (Hochschild 1979, 564). For instance, Lois (2012) found that when homeschooling mothers expressed resentment and exhaustion, they were advised by other homeschooling mothers to relax, "savor the moment" and enjoy homeschooling. In this case a feeling rule might be that mothers should enjoy time with their children; advice to "savor" time with children would be a rule reminder.

Our analysis complements existing studies of maternal foodwork by critically analyzing foodwork feeling rules presented to mothers and fathers in parenting magazines. By examining cultural texts that rely on both expert and lay advice, we illuminate media portrayals of family foodwork, and the societal expectations placed on mothers to manage their emotions while aspiring to intensive foodwork ideals. By including food allergy advice, we examine feeling rules for feeding children for whom some foods can be dangerous (Warren, Jiang, and Gupta 2020). We identify two types of gendered parental emotion work that feature prominently in parenting advice: suppressing and evoking emotions. First, we show how magazines encourage parents to engage in elaborate food preparation, which forms the backdrop for both types of emotion work: suppressing and evoking emotions. Parents, particularly mothers, were depicted as engaging in emotion work to suppress negative emotions, such as concern, frustration and fear, and to generate positive emotions around eating, such as enthusiasm, a "relaxed attitude," fulfillment and amazement. These forms of emotion management aimed to curate an elaborate, positive feeding experience for children, aligned with the logic of intensive mothering (Hays 1996). However, aspiring to create positive feeding experiences was particularly difficult for parents of children with food allergies.

Parenting advice is replete with rule reminders: experts, writers and a variety of lay authors present clear advice, or depict a normative, idealized picture of family life. Our study examines two types of emotion work: suppression and evocation, with children as the intended audience. As our data suggest, parenting magazines encourage parents, especially mothers, to suppress their emotions in front of their children. Mothers are prompted to perform foodwork with poise and composure, without appearing overprotective. We examine the ways that evocative emotion work aligns with norms of intensive mothering. We explore parenting advice rule reminders regarding the appropriate display of parental emotion, ranging from sober concern to playful enthusiasm and how parents are told to achieve this balance.

Foodwork advice

We know little about the advice that parents, especially mothers, are offered regarding foodwork. Critiquing mothers' foodwork failings has a long history among child-rearing experts (Hardyment 2007; Mitchinson 2013). Infant feeding advice books have been in print in the U.S. and the U.K. since the 1760s. "Scientific" advice and child care manuals burgeoned in Canada in the early twentieth century, aided by the growth of social concern for child welfare and infant mortality rates and increased literacy rates (Arnup 1994). Historically, mothers were reproached when their babies did not follow expert-endorsed feeding patterns;

racial/ethnic minority, immigrant, and poor mothers particularly scrutinized for their caretaking practices (Arnup 1994). Latina and African-American mothers continue to be portrayed as falling short of dominant discourses of mothering, and specifically feeding of children (Boero 2009; Carter and Anthony 2015; Elliott, Powell, and Brenton 2015; Brenton 2017).

There are few studies of expert or media advice regarding food; none of which examine emotion work. Studies of child-rearing advice have examined infant feeding and maternal diet during pregnancy, with scant attention to older children (Foss 2010; Hardyment 2007; Hays 1996; Potter, Sheeshka, and Valaitis 2000; Wolf 2010; Wrigley 1989). Recent studies of online food discourses show how women navigate a complex femininity in foodwork (Rodney et al. 2017). Allergy risks are portrayed as undermining foodwork creativity (Hamshaw et al. 2017). Modern parenting advice depicts mothers as generally responsible for child feeding, as they contend with complicated directives about avoiding harmful foods (Quirke 2016). Parenting magazine advice casts mothers as food providers who should ensure appropriate eating habits, with advice rarely directed at fathers (Cook and Wilson 2019). In order to explore the messages that parents receive through mainstream media, we examine foodwork advice in *Today's Parent* magazine.

Methods: foodwork advice in *Today's Parent*

Content analysis of parenting advice is a non-reactive scholarly method of studying the social context of child-rearing without affecting it (see Clarke 2010; Foss 2010; Milkie and Denny 2014; Hays 1996; Sunderland 2006; Quirke 2006, 2016; Rutherford 2011; Wall 2013; Wrigley 1989). Advice magazines are chiefly directed at white middle class women (Milkie and Denny 2014) and they overrepresent white, middle-class, cis heterosexual, two-parent families (Cook and Wilson 2019). Despite these limitations, we illustrate how dominant ideals of child-rearing manifest in food and food allergy related advice. As part of a larger study on feeding young children with and without food allergies, we examine articles published in *Today's Parent* between 1991 and 2020. This data set allows us to zero in on articles about feeding and food allergies published during the decade prior to the rise of food allergy diagnoses around 2000 and during a general period of increased attention to child health and healthy eating. Founded in 1984, it is Canada's oldest and most widely-read parenting magazine. With a print circulation of nearly 900,000 and a print and online readership of 1.3 million, *Today's Parent* reaches 1 in 5 English-speaking Canadian women with children under age 18 (Rogers Media 2020). It includes a variety of advice articles, including traditional journalistic features examining family life in detail, such as an in-depth portrayal of how to coax picky children to eat. Articles are written by, or quote experts: dieticians, doctors and authors. Parents themselves act as "expert" narrators, offering tips and personal accounts. The overall tone conveys concern for children's wellbeing, but also includes lighthearted portrayals of family life.

While the magazine has been in print since 1984, the Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database only provides full-text access to *Today's Parent* articles published in 1993 and later. We accessed full-text versions of articles from the database published in 1993 and later. To extend our analysis to the early 1990s, we manually searched through Tables of Content from 1991 and 1992 that mentioned food or food allergies in the title. To capture foodwork advice, we searched for the following search terms in the article titles, abstracts or subject terms in the database: “food allerg*” (includes “allergies,” “allergy,” “allergic.”) and “peanut.” For the two years when we searched Table of Contents manually, we also searched for mention of food allergies or peanuts. For all articles, we excluded any that were not about food or feeding, such as discussions of bee stings or the “Peanuts” comic strip. This created a sample of 157 *Today’s Parent* articles published between 1991 and 2020 (see Figure 1).

We examined articles that discussed general feeding, peanuts, and food allergies. The complete data set includes 55 articles that discuss food allergies (but not peanuts), 24 articles that discuss *both* food allergies and peanuts, and 78 articles that discuss peanuts (but not allergies). 78 of the articles that mention peanuts do not mention food allergies; these articles are about foodwork more generally. Magazine discussions of food that do not mention food allergies may indeed discuss risk (e.g., choking, bacteria on food), but do not take up the issue of food allergies. This baseline attunes us to the specific features of food allergy advice as a deviant case. Articles that discuss food allergies are more common in later years (see Figure 2), indicating increasing societal concern regarding food allergies.

We conducted a qualitative analysis by reading all 157 articles for any mention of food, mealtime, children’s healthy eating, and food allergies. Initially 10 articles across the entire time period were coded inductively by both authors independently, to confirm coding scheme consistency. Preliminary themes were then revised using a modified grounded theory approach (Timmermans and Tavory 2007). Articles were coded a second time by a research assistant to ensure coding accuracy. Using NVIVO software, we coded using several major themes, some of which were specific to food allergies and some which were about feeding more generally, for example: advice, family, children, parenting, gender and food. Each theme was divided into subthemes. One of the subthemes of parenting was emotion work. The themes related to emotion work appeared consistently across articles collected using the food allergy and peanut search terms.

A brief note on language: the term “parents” is a misnomer when it comes to “parenting advice.” At first glance, modern parenting advice appears to be gender-neutral; it does not issue advice specifically to mothers or fathers. Despite using gender-neutral language, parenting magazines’ tone and advice remain very gendered; magazines reproduce traditional notions of parenting, showing mothers as primarily responsible for children, with fathers at the periphery (Rashley 2005; Strathman 1984; Sunderland 2006). *Today’s Parent* mirrors this

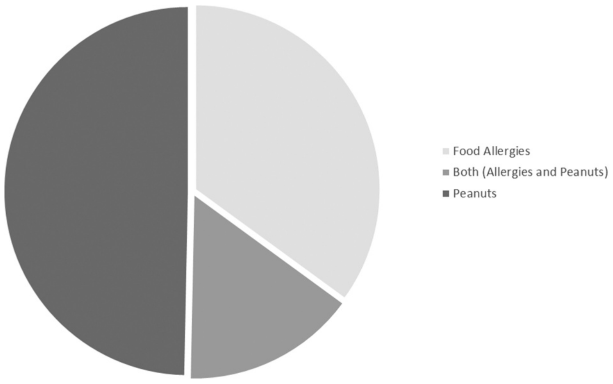

Figure 1. *Today's Parent* articles, 1991–2020 (n=157).

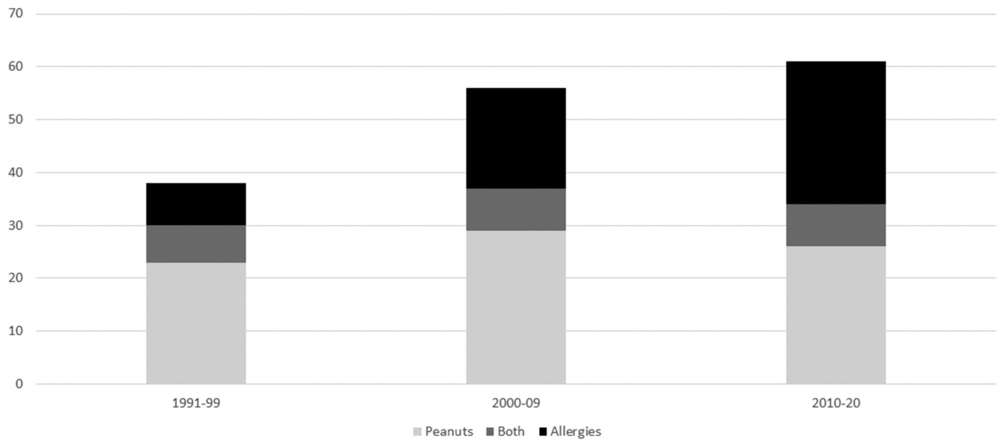

Figure 2. "Everytabday" and allergy foodwork articles, 1991–2020, n=157.

pattern. In the 157 articles we analyzed, mothers and fathers were represented very differently: 84 articles referred specifically to, or quoted mothers directly, while 27 articles referred directly to, or quoted fathers. Of these, 18 mentioned fathers only in passing (i.e., grilling meat in the background), or quoted or included them in tandem with mothers (i.e., "Sarah Luk Hill, says it took her and her husband a fair bit of time to really get a grip on how to eliminate dairy and soy proteins from Maxwell's diet." Was It Something He Ate? 2009). Only 8 of 157 articles featured a father as the primary parent displaying knowledge about, or doing something with or for their child: 4 articles featured fathers speaking knowledgeably about food or food allergies, with the other 4 depicted fathers as gardening, cooking, or putting snacks into children's lunch bags. While *Today's Parent* exclusively uses the term "parents," it does not depict gender-neutral child-rearing. While we use the term "parents" to remain true to the data, we posit that advice in *Today's Parent* appears primarily directed at mothers.

Findings: maternal foodwork with the right attitude

Below, we outline the extensive foodwork and emotion work that magazines promote to create idealized food experiences for children. First, mothers were depicted as pursuing elaborate food preparation, intended to entice children to eat healthy meals. Feeding was primarily shown as maternal work. While foodwork was generally shown as elaborate, allergy foodwork was depicted as particularly painstaking, detailed, expensive and exhausting. Second, magazines encouraged mothers to engage in emotion work: avoiding appearing overbearing, and suppressing emotions such as fear, a task portrayed as more challenging for mothers than fathers. This emotion work was particularly fraught regarding food allergies. Foodwork is shown as intensive and emotionally taxing, but particularly so regarding allergies. Finally, magazine articles idealized elaborate and gendered foodwork as a way to cultivate children's creativity and create positive associations with food. However, rendering food in a positive light is complicated by allergies. While food allergy families are excluded from idealized depictions of indulgence and culinary creativity, themes of autonomy and empowerment take on particular meaning. We discuss these findings in turn below (see Table 1).

Intensive foodwork: "impossible is our speciality"

Today's Parent presents intensive foodwork performed by mothers as the norm. Beyond simply preparing and serving food, it involved extensive planning, food research, and orchestrating activities and errands designed to engage even very small children with food: i.e., shopping, planning meals, even visiting a farm, or growing a garden. Magazines encouraged parents not simply to serve healthy foods, but to engage children meaningfully and directly in foodwork to create positive food experiences.

Magazines advised all parents to amass a variety of planning, research and labor-intensive techniques to entice children to develop a taste for healthy foods. Magazines present research as a component of foodwork, advising parents to research and actively read ingredient labels to track and manage foods: "sleuth out the hidden sugars found in everyday foods like ketchup, granola bars, cereal, ready-made soups and peanut butter" (Sweet Enough, 2016). In recent years, meal-planning smartphone apps are presented as helpful tools to keep track of recipes or ingredients. Conducting research and being well-organized were presented as crucial components of foodwork; mothers were shown as planning wisely to serve children healthy snacks and meals at all costs.

Notably, *Today's Parent* overwhelmingly depicts families that are middle-class, white, and heterosexual. Families are shown to have numerous resources at hand. One article advises mothers to aim for simple, healthy meals during the week and more elaborate meals on weekends: "Remember that Monday's tag team figure skating and hockey means simple omelettes, not risotto or barbequed steak – save the gourmet cooking for Friday nights when you can have a glass of wine in hand" (Room to Grow, 2013). While some articles extol the virtues of being a thrifty shopper, parents are most often depicted as having the means to prepare nutritious, elaborate daily meals that require time and resources. Additionally, as the above quote demonstrates, the context is that children are involved in multiple structured extracurricular activities, characteristic of middle and upper middle-class families (Lareau 2003/2011).

Advice to cajole children into eating healthy foods is not surprising, but magazines also advised parents to curate positive emotional food experiences. Foodwork advice heralds elaborate efforts to involve and engage children, to cultivate an appreciation for creating healthy meals from scratch. One expert recommends a time-consuming process:

> Involving your child in food selection and preparation is one way to interest her in good food. Plan an outing to an open-air market and let her pick out a new kind of leafy green. Go to the library for an international cookbook and select a new recipe together (When Kids Don't Eat Meat, 1994).

Another author suggested creating a photo album of "vegetable conquests," advising that parents should painstakingly "do whatever it takes" to encourage children to eat vegetables:

Table 1. General and allergy foodwork advice, 1991–2020.

	General Foodwork Advice	Allergy Foodwork Advice
Intensive foodwork	Foodwork: intensive. elaborate	Foodwork: extremely intensive
Feeling rules	Emotion work: gendered Suppress negative, evoke positive; difficult for mothers	Emotion work: fraught, gendered Fear, concern especially salient; gendered emotion work more pronounced
Cultivating wonder	Parents' role: foster creativity/wonder, autonomy	Creativity less pronounced; Autonomy related to safety from harm, empowerment

> So how do you get kids to eat their veggies? One step at a time and with perseverance. Getting them involved every step of the way helps. Let them pick a favourite at the grocery store. Get them to help cook - washing, peeling, chopping, stirring. Serve the vegetables first while hunger is still on your side. Make a game out of trying new things, complete with a photo album of vegetable conquests. Do whatever it takes because food is a great way to teach kids to try new things, to see the world with an open mind. (Love your Roots, 2007).

As this article suggests, parents are not only encouraged to serve healthy foods, but to involve even very young children in elaborate foodwork. In this instance, the parent is not simply teaching children to cook, but is fostering and cultivating their development. If food helps to "see the world with an open mind," elaborate foodwork is framed as helping to advance children's development. Articles portrayed preparing nutritious meals as laborious and challenging, but worth the effort.

Elaborate foodwork was gendered. Mothers are often depicted as readily preparing healthy food, offering nutritious snacks on the go, or on demand for children who previously refused supper. Mothers were shown as primarily responsible and concerned for children's care, while fathers were often absent. It was very rare for fathers to be shown as equally involved as mothers, and it was even less common for fathers to be featured without mothers. Planning, organizing activities, cajoling and coaxing children to eat well are tasks overwhelmingly carried out by mothers. Articles occasionally portrayed fathers as grilling on the BBQ, but mothers were shown grocery shopping, meal planning, preparing meals and striving to make school lunches palatable. The only exception to this was a father who worked as a chef. He exemplifies the fulfilling nature of intensive foodwork, while also framing foodwork in terms of his profession:

> 'Hey, Dad, how come we're having vegetables for dinner again?' Ah, life with a five-year-old food critic. Not like the good old days: 80-hour weeks in a sauna-hot kitchen with guests booking months in advance to savour my vegetables. I used to think that orchestrating a seven-course meal for 300 guests was the greatest challenge of my career. Not anymore. Let's just say getting Gabe to eat vegetables is a lot more interesting - and vastly more rewarding. (Love your Roots, 2007)

Magazines provided examples of parents expressing foodwork joy, implicitly emphasizing the importance of tapping into the enjoyable aspects of foodwork.

Intensive foodwork: food allergies

These intensive foodwork efforts described above were much more pronounced in articles discussing food allergies. In other words, if everyday foodwork is elaborate, allergy foodwork involves constant vigilance (Stjerna et al. 2014). Given the dire health implications, allergy foodwork is far more complicated, intensive, and requires maximal parental research and oversight. Elaborate foodwork includes a number of essential and overlapping components: feeding healthy meals, catering to children's preferences, and managing food allergies are entangled with one another (Patico 2020). While general feeding advice held that feeding children should be an elaborate, yet fun-filled activity, this was nearly impossible for parents of children with allergies. Making feeding fun posed specific challenges due to the parental work of monitoring foods for potential allergens. Cooking allergy-free meals was framed as challenging, but manageable, as long as parents were willing to invest a tremendous amount of effort, as depicted in this lighthearted excerpt about the challenges of preparing dairy-free foods:

> As if things weren't complicated enough. You're trying to cook without what, up until now, you've always considered to be a Staple Ingredient. At the same time, you are determined, as usual, to provide meals that are low in fat, high in fibre, and reasonably tasty. Did I forget anything? Oh yes - it has to be fast. Impossible? Naturally. Can we cope? Of course we can. After all, we're not just ordinary mortals. We're parents. The Impossible Is Our Speciality. (Cooking with Kids: Creamless Ice Cream and More, 1992).

This author underscores the difficult task that parents were expected to meet with grace: balancing nutrition and taste with time constraints, preferences, and health requirements. The above quote, couched in humor, evinces the complexity of allergy foodwork. While foodwork in general is depicted in *Today's Parent* as requiring tremendous effort, food allergies act as a more extreme example as mistakes could have serious health consequences. Magazines depict the labor-intensive nature of feeding children with food allergies through emphasizing creative strategies that permit children to enjoy food with peers, and be fully included in culinary experiences. In one example, a mother started an allergy-safe hot lunch program at her 9-year-old daughter's school, to enable her daughter to participate in ways that she had not been able to previously.

In addition to the laborious work of creatively promoting positive allergy-safe culinary experiences, allergy foodwork demonstrated the crucial need to control foods in the child's environment. One mother of a 5-year-old who has multiple food allergies explained: "every meal that's not prepared from scratch at home feels like a gamble . . . Eating is terrifying when we are not the ones in control" (The Good News on Food Allergies, 2015). Cooking and preparing food for children with food allergies was shown as requiring a herculean effort; parents were advised to be especially vigilant, alert and knowledgeable about harmful food ingredients and potential allergens. This vigilance extended to restaurants, schools, party snacks and any food an allergic child might consume.

In summary, magazine advice presents foodwork as elaborate and intensive. Magazine articles idealized carefree, positive food experiences, a feat that was nearly impossible for families of children with allergies to accomplish. Foodwork advice juxtaposes an extremely laborious approach to foodwork, with an idealized sense that culinary experiences should be delightful. The expectation that foodwork should be pleasurable sets the stage for the feeling rules that magazines detail for parents. Interestingly, in recent years, discussions of food allergies are not solely directed at parents of children with allergies. Food allergies are taken up in magazine articles as something that could befall any child, and that could occur at any time. Similarly, discussions of child obesity in parenting advice were once directed at individual families, but in more recent years, obesity is framed in parenting advice as a health condition that could strike any child, at any time (Quirke 2016).

"Have fun!": Feeling rules for gendered foodwork

Magazine foodwork advice was replete with messages that parents should strive to mask disruptive emotions, such as frustration, fear, and panic. Moreover, parents were prompted to generate emotions such as enjoyment and lightheartedness. Mothers were especially called upon to evoke positive emotions. Magazines advised parents to be upbeat, to relax and enjoy foodwork. For example, a family doctor cautions against "taking the fun out" of eating, and emphasizes that feeding small children should be pleasurable: "It's not a science. I'd prefer to see parents and babies enjoying this process rather than putting their energy into introducing solids in exactly the right way" (Tunnel Vision, 2000). In one instance, a worried mother who is concerned that her picky children are not eating well enough, is told by a pediatric nutritionist to "relax": "Meal-times should be fun, both for parents and children" (That's Yucky, 1995). In this instance, an expert instructs parents directly to suppress their emotions and relax, seeing mealtimes as "fun." Parents are frequently advised by experts to hide their own anxieties, lest their children become unsettled or upset. In order to create idealized experiences with food, parents are repeatedly asked to suppress negative emotions, such as anxiety.

Magazine advice reminds readers that cooking is fun for children and advises parents to genuinely enjoy it: "Grownups have made so many things that pop and bubble and change colours that for us cooking may have lost its mystique; but to our children, the kitchen is a vast and mysterious laboratory, filled with unlimited potential" (Giggling Gourmet, 1995). As such, parents are advised to push through boredom and rediscover the joys of cooking with their children. Similarly, in another article, after emphasizing the importance of feeding children a healthy diet, the author unveils parental attitude as an equally important ingredient.

> Good eating habits set the foundation for your child's good health. As with any challenge, a relaxed approach brings about the best results. When introducing your child to an experience as varied and enjoyable as eating, your attitude is almost as important as the food on the table (Nourish and Nurture 1994).

Parents who might feel frustrated or anxious about creating healthy meals are shown as converting these emotions to display relaxation and carefree enjoyment. In short, magazines instructed parents to suppress negative emotions, to evoke positive feelings and have "fun" while feeding. Others have shown how laborious it is for parents to avoid dangers in foods, such as toxins and food allergens (Mackendrick 2018; Patico 2020; Stjerna et al. 2014). In addition to winnowing out harmful foods, magazine articles detail the emotion work that mothers should undertake to create positive food experiences. Lengthy descriptions of intentional meal preparation were accompanied by instructions for fostering a positive mealtime atmosphere. Feeding children was portrayed as stressful. Nonetheless, parents were encouraged to manage their own exasperation and maintain a calm appearance, to convey to children that eating is a joyful activity.

Parents were advised to closely manage their emotions, particularly at the dinner table, when they may feel irritated or demoralized. Parents are advised to hide their feelings of frustration if a child rejects an elaborately crafted meal. Experts describe elaborate foodwork as going to "heroic lengths" to make vegetables appealing to children. According to one nutritionist, parents must manage their emotions and not display frustration if these efforts are rejected: "don't get upset if your child turns it down, or you'll just perpetuate the kind of food battles you seek to avoid" (That's Yucky, 1995). Magazines advise parents to set their feelings of distress aside: "It's not always easy. The mama bear in me struggles to see my slim little guy eat just bread and raw carrots on the nights we're enjoying our roasted salmon. But it's worth it, because dinner isn't a power struggle" (Do you make separate meals? 2016). Experts advise parents to override feelings of concern, and to relax, to place their emotions as secondary to fostering children's autonomy, which will not only result in future healthy eating habits, but also a positive eating experience in the present. The "mama bear" described above trades the joy of seeing her son eat a hearty meal, in order to savor the pleasures of pleasant mealtimes and prioritize her son's autonomy, and thus, a future healthy relationship with food. Emotional distress regarding everyday meals or foodwork was limited to mothers. Fathers were not depicted as struggling with their emotions. Fathers were shown as bemused when children or adolescents want to prepare meals; they are not shown as struggling to overcome negative emotions.

Feeling rules: food allergies

Emotion work regarding allergy foodwork is particularly fraught. Foodwork is associated with suppressing negative emotions like worry, while evoking positive emotional displays. However, this feat is complicated when children have severe food allergies. A relaxed approach to foodwork can be difficult for families of children with allergies. A carefree stance is incompatible with the emotional strain of remaining vigilant to potential allergens. Allergy foodwork can be lighthearted in limited situations, only after investing a great deal of planning and research to ensure all food is free from allergens. Experts commonly advise parents to be indulgent and relaxed with babies, who are portrayed as naturally interested and wanting to explore food. However, the allergic child is discussed differently; parents are urged to take special care. If there are food allergies in the family, parents are advised to consult with their pediatrician. Overall, children with food allergies are discussed in grave terms. While parents are advised to manage picky eaters with bemusement, children with food allergies are shown as requiring special care and expertise.

Yet, even when magazines showed parents of children with food allergies as gravely concerned for their children's safety, they are nevertheless encouraged to appear relaxed and confident. Emotion management carried particular significance for parents of children with food allergies, who are frequently portrayed in magazine advice as terrified that their child might suffer an allergic reaction. Mothers were shown as responsible for managing allergic reactions and medical care around these reactions. Parents are coaxed to hide their fears and instead project a calm and relaxed attitude, lest they inflict further harm on their children. Experts advise parents to manage their emotions to avoid causing harm: "you've got to be worried enough that you're really getting the dangers and thinking ahead, anticipating what could go wrong [but] if you're too anxious, you can create some real problems in the family, and potentially in the child's development," including nightmares, fear of food and disordered eating (Life on the Knife Edge, 2006). One mother is advised to hide her own anxiety in order to calm her children:

> While it is essential to teach all of your children about food safety so they will be appropriately wary, as you say, you don't want their anxiety to skyrocket. It's difficult to walk this fine line, but in order for your youngest to calm down, she needs to sense a greater calmness in the family unit. (Expert Q&A: Peanut Panic, 2009)

Many articles detailed the process of managing emotions regarding food allergies, namely parents working to suppress their own fears of allergic reactions. Parents of children with allergies are tasked with the difficult work of reassuring their children that everything will be fine, while also informing children about the physiological risk of allergens. Experts warned that showing too much fear in front of children with food allergies could create anxiety in children and have other harmful effects on their developing relationship with food (Herbert, Shemesh, and Bender 2016).

Parental emotion work is more extensive regarding food allergies; mothers of children with allergies are shown going to additional lengths to help manage not only their own emotions, but the emotions of children and other adults. Articles convey that children with food allergies should not feel socially excluded, fearful of food, or as though their allergies pose difficulties for the family. One mother demonstrates the emotion work she undertakes in responding to a party invitation for her daughter:

> "Look, Mom, an invitation to Mary's birthday party!" says Katie with great glee as she hops off the school bus. In this bubbly eight-year-old's hand is the catalyst for a stream of events that occur every time she is invited to another child's house. I catch my breath and summon the courage to go through, once again, the routine required for our daughter to attend an event that will include food I have not prepared . . . First it leads to a phone call to a bewildered parent who is fearful that the celebration will become a big problem. I always offer to provide food that is safe. Then come the inevitable questions about anaphylactic attacks, and I assure the parent that this is not a problem for Katie. We administer an antihistamine before the party, and remind her not to touch any pets and to eat only a very small piece of cake, and no ice cream. (Inviting Worry: Birthday Parties, 1999).

This mother must not only navigate her own "courage," but also manage her daughter's expectations about the party, and the fear and "bewilderment" of the other mother as she reassures them about her daughter's health risks. One 2019 article suggests that parents should expect to feel self-conscious when ordering food from a restaurant, and to "be prepared for ignorant comments from those delightful relatives who think food allergies are 'all in your head' or not as serious as they really are" (Your No Freak-Out Guide to a Food Allergy Diagnosis, 2019). Parents of children with allergies are consistently portrayed as having to overcome their strong emotions to display a facade of calm and composure.

While many themes of intensive foodwork and gendered emotion work remained fairly constant across the 30 years under study, one change over time stood out. In the 1990s and early 2000s, only parents of children with allergies were shown as concerned for children with allergies. Difficulties related to allergic reactions are initially portrayed as a family or private concern relevant to parents of children with allergies. However, in December 2011, we see the first instance of a more general concern from a parent who expresses empathy for families of children with allergies:

> I get a knot in my stomach just thinking about how stressful the holidays must be for parents of kids with allergies. There are so many home-baked treats at holiday get-togethers and each one of them could pose a risk. With allergies on the rise, I don't want to be the cause of someone else's angst. Of course, every kid with allergies is different and talking the menu over with the parents ahead of time is the best way to play it safe. But I'm definitely adding some allergy-sensitive recipes to my holiday roster this year. (Sweet Potato says . . . Be sensitive to families with allergies, 2011).

The message was also that managing negative or intense emotions around feeding children was more difficult for mothers than fathers. While parents of children with allergies are presented as fearful and concerned about their children's health, these emotions were mostly attributed to and depicted as more pronounced for mothers. When one parent in a couple was portrayed as more concerned than their partner, it was always mothers. This heightened concern around feeding was common in examples of mothers of children with food allergies, where ingesting an allergen could result in a life-threatening reaction. In one example a mother describes her multiple concerns:

> Even at home, Susan is ever vigilant. “I have to remember to think about the smallest of things, like asking our dog walker not to give our dog a peanut-butter-flavoured biscuit at the end of her walk because the dog immediately goes to Noa and licks her face.” (Life on the Knife Edge, 2006).

Here the mother and father are described as opposite poles in their approach to managing the child’s food allergies:

> Her husband was, at least outwardly, less rattled by the diagnosis. He tried to comfort her, told her that their lives wouldn’t change, but Susan - who describes herself as a “worrier by nature” - was not reassured . . . He wonders if she’s overly protective; she’s concerned that his attitude is too casual (Life on the Knife Edge, 2006).

Fathers are not depicted as remiss, while perhaps “too casual.” They are primarily shown as appropriately relaxed, while mothers are portrayed as having the wrong attitude.

In another example, one mother is depicted as struggling after learning during a doctor’s visit that her child outgrew their peanut allergy. The mother is shown as straining, unlike her husband, to adjust to their son’s ability to eat peanuts without fear of an allergic reaction: “‘We went back to the car and Andrew had bought a Mr. Big chocolate bar with peanuts. He had it in his pocket and gave it to Jesse. That was too much for me,’ recalls Katharine. It was hard for her to stop thinking about peanuts as the enemy.” (Tough Nut, 2006). More so than fathers, mothers were portrayed as overly emotional and therefore needing to constrain their feelings in front of children. In this case, this mother criticizes herself for not following a feeling rule of being relaxed while feeding her son. Magazines convey that mothers in particular should carefully control their own negative emotions; mothers are shown as struggling with this, while fathers are depicted as more successful in displaying appropriate emotions. Overall, emotion work is very gendered, and shown as especially fraught in families with children with allergies.

Cultivating wonder: when food is inspiring and dangerous

Advice to parents extends beyond practical suggestions to coax children to eat healthy foods. Instead, the picture that emerges is that children’s relationship to food should be carefully curated into a pleasurable experience that cultivates their creativity. Learning about food is often cast as a crucial way to encourage children to engage deeply in feeding practices. Gardening is idealized as a way to engage children in learning about food in order to deepen excitement about eating. One author writes in a lengthy how-to guide for gardening with children, that parents should excite the child, fostering a sense of wonder and an intrinsic motivation to learn about food:

> Perhaps most importantly of all, listen to your child . . . The garden plot is his. If he wants to put in a little pond, let him – or if he decides he wants to try growing nothing but one, giant pumpkin, let him do that too. The object of the exercise is to get him outside and learning something about nature. Your job is to be a gentle guide, and share in his wonder and amazement (Gardening with the Junior Set, 1994).

In this article, the parent is a "guide," handling the work of gardening, creating the space and procuring the necessary components, while the child makes the creative decisions about what to plant and how to structure the garden. In this way, children's autonomy is privileged; parents are tasked with the job of cultivating children's interest in food, while encouraging children to learn about food. The authors propose that a child's "wonderment" or natural inclination toward fun should drive some of the feeding choices. Parents are tasked with not only setting up the garden for children to explore, but also deep acting to feel wonder and amazement.

Magazines posit that a positive attitude develops children's creativity and cultivates their interest in food. Mothers are shown as closely monitoring children's food while simultaneously encouraging creativity. For instance, one mother explains that her role is to "guide their creativity in the kitchen" (Nourish and Nurture, 1994). Parents, generally mothers, are tasked with going to substantial efforts to foster particular traits: creativity, autonomy, wonder and learning. Patience and flexibility are presented as the appropriate responses to children's resistance. Parents are instructed to refrain from escalating food conflict, or turning the supper table into a "battleground." Often the advice is that parents should step back to let children make their own decisions about what they want to eat; fostering children's autonomy is a common ideal. For example, a dietician advises parents that their child is "the best judge of his own appetite" (1–2 Years: Struggles Over Food, 2011). Parents are advised that failing to foster their children's autonomy can create future health problems: "Letting kids learn their own satiety signals means they're less likely to grow up with appetite control issues or disordered eating" (10 Surprising Ways to Get Kids to Eat Healthy, 2011). As such, cultivating not only a sense of fun regarding food, but preserving children's autonomy, are shown as essential tasks of modern parenting.

Autonomy and compensatory empowerment: food allergies

Autonomy takes on a particular meaning when food allergies are at issue: for children with allergies, autonomy, information and empowerment are closely aligned. Parents of children with allergies are shown as thoughtfully considering how best to inform and empower their children, to foster independence and autonomy regarding food. Children with allergies are depicted as much more at risk than other children. Having an allergy is often shown as something that will hold children back, it not only places them at risk for an anaphylactic reaction, but it curtails their ability to enjoy normal childhood activities. For instance, one mother was distressed and struggled to come to terms with her daughter's food allergy. She "spent days crying" because she worried that her daughter would miss out on "classic childhood moments, such as going out for ice cream" (Your No Freak-Out Guide to a Food Allergy Diagnosis, 2019). While children are typically shown as joyfully voracious eaters, children with allergies are portrayed as especially vulnerable, "suffering" from allergies, and excluded from parties, sleepovers and school lunches. Children with allergies are discussed in parenting advice as prone to feeling as though their families have to go to a great deal of trouble on their behalf; they feel stigmatized, and socially excluded.

To mitigate these negative elements associated with having food allergies, parents are depicted as needing to vigilantly monitor their children's physical and emotional wellbeing. As such, many articles show mothers as rightfully teaching their children with allergies not to be fearful of food, but instead to celebrate how unique they are, to ultimately empower children with biological knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. One article advises a mother to work to empower her 8-year-old:

> Have him work with you to choose safe foods, show him how to self-administer his epinephrine injector, and teach his friends what to do in an emergency. This will help your child to feel empowered and you to feel more trusting of his ability to cope… (Expert Q&A: Peanut Panic, 2009)

However, this is a very delicate task, to simultaneously sensitize children to the dangers inherent in their allergies, while also fostering a sense of empowerment and autonomy. Discussions of general foodwork encourage parents to let children make their own decisions about food they enjoy; autonomy is championed as a vital trait that parents should instill. Yet, allergies complicate this aim. Families with children with allergies are shown undergoing a stressful, delicate process where mothers take up the complicated task of simultaneously informing children about allergies and how they work, while also encouraging children to be fearless and independent as they move around the world. Articles portray school-aged children's sense of empowerment when they are informed about their allergy, and learn how to administer an epi-pen. As such, allergy foodwork is practical, to keep children fed and safe, but also advises parents to counteract the negative stigma associated with allergies, or negative feelings regarding food (e.g., feeling left out, or like a burden). While general foodwork advice focuses on creativity and cultivating children's development through food, food allergy parents are coaxed to engage in compensatory "empowerment" work; they not only need to ensure their kids are informed but empowered.

Food allergy families were portrayed as living in a world where food was dangerous. In this world, it was challenging to provide creative, positive food experiences. Instead, parents were depicted as grappling with the dangers of food and fostering children's autonomy. Particularly after the increased coverage of food allergies in the 2000s, articles focused on building children's autonomy and teaching them to manage their own food allergies:

> Calon didn't want Trinity's school to ban peanut butter or anything else containing nuts. She simply wanted the teachers to know who her daughter was, where her epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) was located and how to use it if Trinity was in trouble … "The best thing I can do is prepare her for later in life, to make her accountable for her allergy," Calon says. "I'm not always there with her. I want her to be responsible and question everything." (Peanuts are not the enemy, 2008)

While teaching children to manage their own food allergies is distinct from the creative process of starting a garden, the issue of autonomy remains central. In one example, a mother explains that her three children with allergies "need to take ownership of the food allergy … I don't want them to be afraid of food. I want them to be aware and proactive" (Food Fight, 2013). This mother's approach exemplifies the themes of fostering autonomy and empowerment in allergy foodwork advice. Like other child-led experiences, learning to ask questions about foods and telling people about your food allergy are skills that magazine authors encouraged parents of children with food allergies to teach their children. Overall, for children with food allergies, articles suggest that the positive experience of eating must be carefully earned. For parents of children with severe food allergies, food pleasures are hard-won, and are ultimately the result of mothers' vigilance, as in the case of the mother who created an allergy-safe school lunch program at her daughter's school. Moreover, while general foodwork advice emphasizes creativity and wonder, allergy advice urges parents to work to foster autonomy and feelings of empowerment.

Conclusion

While other studies have documented the tension that mothers experience around foodwork at a time when feeding is very high stakes (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Cairns, Johnson, and Oleschuk 2018), the advice that mothers receive from popular media and the emotion work that they are instructed to perform have received limited attention. Our content analysis of *Today's Parent* found that feeding was portrayed as requiring a high level of preparation and emotion work to generate enjoyment in parents and children. This expectation of enjoyment acted as a type of feeling rule, or "moral stance toward" parents' emotions during mealtimes (Hochschild 1983/2012). Magazine articles instructed parents to manage emotions during foodwork, namely suppressing frustration or worry, and evoking a sense of joy and calm. Magazines saw food experiences as cultivating children's creativity and positive associations with food. This joyful calm was out of reach for food allergy families; these families were advised to emphasize empowerment for children with food allergies.

Magazine articles detail how parents can create an elaborate and fulfilling feeding experience, a finding that is significant for studies of child-rearing. While DeVault (1991) observed that foodwork involves individualization and personalization for family members, even adults, magazines did not simply advise parents to cater to children's individual food preferences to keep mealtimes harmonious, or to encourage children to eat well. Magazines recommended individualization as part of a larger strategy for parents to curate and craft a specific orientation to food. While mothers in DeVault's (1991) study customized meals for individual family members, mothers are being advised to go well beyond this, according to *Today's Parent*. Magazine advice framed child feeding as part of a larger child-rearing project, where children should be encouraged to learn, be creative, autonomous, and see wonder in the world, while also becoming empowered and informed. This focus on individual attention is closely aligned with tenets of intensive mothering (Hays 1996), and is part of a logic of mothering that normalizes elaborate, highly attentive personalization for children. Personalizing meals takes on new, negative meaning in light of food allergies; carefully monitoring and creating meals for children. Children with food allergies are portrayed as physically safe if they eat personalized meals, but emotionally at-risk, as being singled out through meals that are different from others'. Mothers are depicted as having to manage emotions when children with food allergies feel left out, or singled out, if they must bring their own cupcakes to birthday parties, or homemade pizza for school "pizza" days. In this respect, customization for food allergies is physically safe, but emotionally risky.

These findings also contribute to scholarship on maternal foodwork by critically analyzing mainstream media feeding advice. In particular, we identify the ways that foodwork feeling rules are articulated. Feminist scholars of foodwork have demonstrated foodwork challenges and tensions that mothers feel (MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019; Cairns and Johnston 2015). We demonstrate how magazine advice encouraged both the suppression and evocation of emotions. Importantly, the management of emotions, particularly suppression, was directed toward mothers, who were often portrayed as having a more difficult time concealing emotions such as stress and fear. This is not surprising since mothers were also overwhelmingly portrayed as responsible for the bulk of foodwork and learning nutritional guidelines around food allergies, for example. There was, however, a tension in that alongside advice to mothers to create calm and joyful feeding experiences, there was a vast amount of detailed information about child development and healthy eating practices and the risks of inadequately feeding children. Magazine article authors articulated the expectation that parents follow expert knowledge about nutrition while also managing those emotions to maintain a pleasant attitude. Extant interview studies provide rich detail about the ways that mothers suppress fear and anxiety, seeking to achieve the perfect "balance" while in front of others (Cairns and Johnston 2015; Cairns, Johnston, and MacKendrick 2013). Examining magazine advice about food allergies allows us to examine the connections between increasing societal expectations for family foodwork, and social anxieties regarding children's health. Our study adds nuance to this portrait by demonstrating that mothers are also instructed, through feeling rules, to perform the emotion work of evoking joy and positive experiences for children. When we apply intensive parenting styles to feeding and examine the feeling rules that magazines outlined for parents, we have a more complex portrait of the emotional and physical labor involved in foodwork. Parenting advice aligns with broader notions of intensive child-rearing, as magazines advise parents to curate specific food experiences: exposing children to new foods, fostering a sense of wonder and appreciation for food, and deliberately informing them about food, to build a sense of educated autonomy regarding food, particularly when it comes to food allergies.

Our findings also contribute to emotion work research. We found mothers are implored to consume advice from experts while simultaneously creating a carefree experience. We demonstrate how Hochschild's feeling rules are displayed in parenting magazine advice. We find that mothers are depicted in mainstream parenting advice as more worried and concerned than fathers about children's food allergies. Mothers are shown as needing more emotion management regarding how they express their efforts to feed children safe and healthy foods. The implication of this portrayal of emotion work is that mothers must engage in higher levels of emotion work and work harder to achieve "balance" (Cairns and Johnston 2015). In contrast, fathers are depicted as more relaxed and casual and therefore needing to manage their emotions less. Thus, the emotion work that we observed was largely targeted toward mothers, who were portrayed as needing to manage their emotions.

An implication of the findings that magazines encouraged parents to manage their emotions is that magazine writers imply that parents are responsible for repairing destructive elements of food culture. While food culture is deeply embedded in systemic cultural practices and food production systems rather than individual behaviors, often this work is left to mothers (Page-Reeves 2015). As other studies show, mothers are increasingly concerned that their feeding practices can negatively influence children's future relationships with food, even resulting in pathological eating disorders (Nicolosi 2006; MacKendrick and Pristavec 2019). We show how magazines encourage parents to manage their emotions to reduce the risk of creating pathologies in their children. The magazine portrayed children as generally inclined to enjoy eating, and adults as likely to be disconnected from the joys of eating. By asking parents to create positive food experiences, without acknowledging outside influences, the articles take an individualistic view regarding the various social factors that shape the attitudes and experiences that young people develop with food. The underlying assumption is that mothers can alleviate social problems related to food culture through their individual feeding practices.

Child-rearing advice that urges parents to be vigilant about children's health has only grown in prominence in recent years, as parents – particularly mothers – are instructed to ensure that children are eating healthy foods and developing positive relationships with food. Feeding children healthy foods is in large part emotional management for mothers, who were asked to sift through nutritional recommendations and create joyful carefree experiences for children. Given the centrality of food to family life, understanding the messages given to parents about food, and advice about foodwork and idealized child-rearing becomes more salient than ever.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Annette Lareau, Roger Pizarro Milian and Joy A.J. Howard for their helpful comments on an earlier draft. Many thanks to Randa Ali, Abby Williams, Julia Shepherd and Amanda Deeley for research assistance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [430-2019-00843].

Notes on contributors

Vanessa Lopes Muñoz is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Colorado College. She is interested in how families navigate medical and educational institutions to secure their well-being. Her current study is about how parents and schools manage children's severe food allergies and related risks.

Linda Quirke is an associate professor and Chair of Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Sociology. She is interested in childrearing and depictions of family life. She enjoys studying expert advice directed to parents, and changes in advice over time.

ORCID

Vanessa L. Muñoz http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4634-5763
Linda Quirke http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5923-8222

References

Arnup, K. 1994. *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Björk, S. 2018. “Emotions and Empathic Imagination: Parents Relating to Norms of Work, Parenthood and Gender Equality.” *Families, Relationships and Societies* 7 (2): 171–186. doi:10.1332/204674317X14861127314323.

Boero, N. 2009. “Fat Kids, Working Moms, and the Epidemic of Obesity: Race, Class, and Mother-blame.” In *The Fat Studies Reader*, edited by E. Rothblum and S. Solovay, 113–119, New York, NY: NYU Press.

Bollinger, M. E., L. M. Dahlquist, K. Mudd, C. Sonntag L. Dillinger, & K. McKenna. 2006. “The Impact of Food Allergy on the Daily Activities of Children and their Families.” *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* 96 (3): 415–421.

Bowen, S., J. Brenton, and S. Elliott. 2019. *Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won’t Solve Our Problems and What We Can Do about It*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Brenton, J. 2017. “The Limits of Intensive Feeding: Maternal Foodwork at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender.” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 39 (6): 863–877. doi:10.1111/1467-9566.12547.

Brown, L. H., and S. B. DeRycke. 2010. “The Kinkeeping Connection: Continuity, Crisis and Consensus.” *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 8 (4): 338–353. doi:10.1080/15350770.2010.520616.

Cairns, K., J. Johnson, and M. Oleschuk. 2018. “Calibrating Motherhood.” In *Feeding Children inside and outside the Home: Critical Perspectives*, edited by V. Harman, B. Cappellini, and C. Faircloth, 174–190, London, UK: Routledge.

Cairns, K., and J. Johnston. 2015. “Choosing Health: Embodied Neoliberalism, Postfeminism, and the Do-diet.” *Theory and Society* 44 (2): 153–175. doi:10.1007/s11186-015-9242-y.

Cairns, K., J. Johnston, and N. MacKendrick. 2013. “Feeding the ‘Organic Child’: Mothering through Ethical Consumption.” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 13 (2): 97–118. doi:10.1177/1469540513480162.

Carter, S. K., and A. K. Anthony. 2015. “Good, Bad, and Extraordinary Mothers Infant Feeding and Mothering in African American Mothers’ Breastfeeding Narratives.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1 (4): 517–531. doi:10.1177/2332649215581664.

Chin, T. 2000. “‘Sixth Grade Madness:’ Parental Emotion Work in the Private High School Application Process.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 29 (2): 124–163. doi:10.1177/089124100129023855.

Clarke, A. E., S. J. Elliot, Y. St. Pierre, S. Le Vielle, and M. Ben-Shoshan. 2010. “Temporal Trends in Prevalence of Food Allergy in Canada.” *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* 8 (4): 1428–1430. doi:10.1016/j.jaip.2019.10.021.

Clarke, J. N. 2006. “Mother’s Home Healthcare: Emotion Work When a Child Has Cancer.” *Cancer Nursing* 29 (1): 58–65. doi:10.1097/00002820-200601000-00010.

Clarke, J. N. 2010. “The Domestication of Health Care: Health Advice to Canadian Mothers 1993–2008 In.” *Today’s Parent, Family Relations* 59 (April): 170–179. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2010.00593.x.

Cook, D. T. 2009. “Semantic Provisioning of Children’s Food: Commerce, Care and Maternal Practice.” *Childhood* 16 (3): 317–334. doi:10.1177/0907568209335313.

Cook, K., and C. L. Wilson. 2019. “Representations of Fatness in *Parents* Magazine: A Critical Discourse Analysis.” *Fat Studies* 8 (3): 320–333. doi:10.1080/21604851.2019.1574509.

DeVault, M. 1991. *Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Elliott, S., R. Powell, and J. Brenton. 2015. “Being a Good Mom: Low-income, Black Single Mothers Negotiate Intensive Mothering.” *Journal of Family Issues* 36 (3): 351–370. doi:10.1177/0192513X13490279.

Flokstra-de Blok, B.M.J., A. E. J. Dubois, B. J. Vlieg-Boerstra, J. N. G. Oude Elberink, H. Raat, A. Dunn Galvin, J. O. B.Hourihane, & E. J. Duiverman. 2010. “Health-Related Quality of Life of Food Allergic Patients: Comparison with the General Population and Other Diseases.” *Allergy*, 65 (2): 238–244.

Foss, K. A. 2010. “Perpetuating “Scientific Motherhood”: Infant Feeding Discourse in *Parents* Magazine, 1930–2007.” *Women & Health* 50 (3): 297–311. doi:10.1080/03630242.2010.480905.

Gunnarsson, N., and L. C. Hyden. 2009. “Organizing Allergy and Being a ‘Good’ Parent: Parents’ Narratives about Their Children’s Emerging Problems.” *Health* 13 (2): 157–174. doi:10.1177/1363459308099682.

Gupta, R. S., E. E. Springston, M. R. Warrier, B. Smith, R. Kumar, J. A. Pongracic, and J. L. Holl. 2011. “The Prevalence, Severity, and Distribution of Childhood Food Allergy in the United States.” *Pediatrics* 128 (1): e9–e17. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-0204.

Hamshaw, R. J., J. Barnett, & J. S. Lucas. (2017). “Framing the Debate and Taking Positions on Food Allergen Legislation: the 100 Chefs Incident on Social Media.” *Health, Risk & Society*, 19 (3-4): 145–167.

Hardyment, C. 2007. *Dream Babies: Childcare Advice from John Locke to Gina Ford*. London, UK: Frances Lincoln.

Harman, V., and B. Cappellini. 2015. “Mothers on Display: Lunchboxes, Social Class and Moral Accountability.” *Sociology* 49 (4): 764–781. doi:10.1177/0038038514559322.

Hays, S. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University.

Herbert, L., E. Shemesh, and B. Bender. 2016. “Clinical Management of Psychosocial Concerns Related to Food Allergy.” *Journal Allergy Clinical Immun Practice* 4 (2): 205–213. doi:10.1016/j.jaip.2015.10.016.

Hochschild, A. 1979. “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure.” *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (3): 551–575. doi:10.1086/227049.

Hochschild, A. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

King, R. M., R. C. Knibb, & J. O. B. Hourihane. 2009. “Impact of Peanut Allergy on Quality of Life, Stress and Anxiety in the Family.” *Allergy* 64 (3): 461–468.

Kuyper, E. M., D. Smith, and L. L. Kaiser. 2009. “Does Food Insecurity Influence Child Feeding Practices?” *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition* 4 (2): 147–157. doi:10.1080/19320240902915250.

Lareau, A. 2003/2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lois, J. 2012. *Home Is Where the School Is: The Logic of Home Schooling and the Emotional Labor of Mothering*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Lupton, D. 1996. *Food, the Body and the Self*. London, UK: Sage.

Mackendrick, N. 2018. *Better Safe than Sorry: How Consumers Navigate Exposure to Everyday Toxics*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

MacKendrick, N., and T. Pristavec. 2019. “Between Careful and Crazy: The Emotion Work of Feeding the Family in an Industrialized Food System.” *Food, Culture & Society* 22 (4): 446–463. doi:10.1080/15528014.2019.1620588.

Mason, K. 2016. “Responsible Bodies: Self-Care and State Power in the US Women, Infants, and Children Program.” *Social Politics* 23 (1): 70–93.

Milkie, M., and K. Denny. 2014. “Changes in the Cultural Model of Father Involvement: Descriptions of Benefits to Fathers, Children and Mothers in *Parents’ Magazine*, 1926–2006.” *Journal of Family Issues* 35 (2): 223–253. doi:10.1177/0192513X12462566.

Minaker, L. M., S. J. Elliott, & A. Clarke. 2015. “Low Income, High Risk: the Overlapping Stigmas of Food Allergy and Poverty.” *Critical Public Health* 25 (5): 599–614.

Minnotte, K. L., D. Pedersen, and S. E. Mannon. 2010. “The Emotional Terrain of Parenting and Marriage: Emotion Work and Marital Satisfaction.” *The Social Science Journal* 47 (4): 747–761. doi:10.1016/j.soscij.2010.07.011.

Mitchinson, W. 2013. “Obesity in Children: A Medical Perception, 1920–1980.” In *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canadian History*, edited by P. Gentile and J. Nicholas, 269–285. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Nicolosi, G. 2006. “Biotechnologies, Alimentary Fears and the Orthorexic Society.” *Tailoring Biotechnologies* 2 (3): 37–56.

Oleschuk, M. 2020. “In Today’s Market Your Food Chooses You: News Media Constructions of Responsibility for Health.” *Social Problems* 67 (1): 1–19. doi:10.1093/socpro/spz006.

Page-Reeves, J. 2015. "Conceptualizing Intersecting Dynamics, Disjunctures and Disparities in the Experience of Food Allergy." *Food, Culture, and Society* 18 (1): 5–29. doi:10.2752/175174414X14006746101790.

Patico, J. 2020. *The Trouble with Snack Time: Children's Food and the Politics of Parenting*. New York: NYU Press.

Pitchforth, E., S. Weaver, J. Willars, E. Wawrzkowicz, D. Luyt and M. Dixon-Woods. 2011. "A qualitative study of Families of a Child with a Nut Allergy." *Chronic illness* 7 (4): 255–266.

Potter, B., J. Sheeshka, and R. Valaitis. 2000. "Content Analysis of Infant Feeding Messages in a Canadian Women's Magazine, 1945 to 1995." *Journal of Nutrition Education* 32 (4): 196–203. doi:10.1016/S0022-3182(00)70557-7.

Quirke, L. 2006. "'Keeping Young Minds Sharp': Children's Cognitive Stimulation and the Rise of Parenting Magazines, 1959–2003." *Canadian Review of Sociology* 43 (4): 387–406. doi:10.1111/j.1755-618X.2006.tb01140.x.

Quirke, L. 2016. "'Fat-proof Your Child': Parenting Advice and Child Obesity." *Fat Studies* 5 (2): 137–155. doi:10.1080/21604851.2016.1145483.

Rashley, L. H. 2005. "'Work It Out with Your Wife': Gendered Expectations and Parenting Rhetoric Online." *NWSA Journal* 17 (1): 58–92.

Rodney, A., S. Cappeliez, M. Oleschuk, and J. Johnston. 2017. "The Online Domestic Goddess: An Analysis of Food Blog Femininities." *Food, Culture & Society* 20 (4): 685–707. doi:10.1080/15528014.2017.1357954.

"Rogers Media Today's Parent." Accessed 24 January 2020. https://www.rogersmedia.com/brands/todays-parent/

Rutherford, M. 2011. *Adult Supervision Required: Private Freedom and Public Constraints for Parents and Children*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Stjerna, M. L. 2015. "Food, Risk and Place: Agency and Negotiations of Young People with Food Allergy." *Sociology of health & illness* 37 (2): 284–297.

Stjerna, M. L., M. Vetander, M. Wickman, & S. Olin Lauritzen. 2014. "The Management of Situated Risk: A Parental Perspective on Child Food Allergy." *Health* 18 (2): 130–145.

Strathman, T. 1984. "From the Quotidian to the Utopian: Child Rearing Literature in America, 1926–1946." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 29: 1–34.

Sunderland, J. 2006. "'Parenting' or 'Mothering'? The Case of Modern Childcare Magazines." *Discourse and Society* 17 (4): 503–527. doi:10.1177/0957926506063126.

Timmermans, S., and I. Tavory. 2007. "Advancing Ethnographic Research through Grounded Theory Practice." In *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, edited by A. Bryant and K. Charmaz, 493–512. London, UK: Sage.

Waggoner, M. R. 2013. "Parsing the Peanut Panic: The Social Life of a Contested Food Allergy Epidemic." *Social Science & Medicine* 90: 49–55. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.04.031.

Wall, G. 2013. "'Putting Family First': Shifting Discourses of Motherhood and Childhood in Representations of Mothers' Employment and Child Care." *Women's Studies International Forum* 40 (Sept–Oct): 162–171. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2013.07.006.

Warren, C. M., R. S. Gupta, M. W. Sohn,E. H. Oh, N. Lal, C. F. Garfield, D. Caruso, X. Wang & J. A. Pongracic. 2015. "Differences in Empowerment and Quality of Life Among Parents of Children with Food Allergy." *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, 114 (2): 117–125.

Warren, C. M., J. Jiang, and R. S. Gupta. 2020. "Epidemiology and Burden of Food Allergy." *Current Asthma and Allergy Reports* 20 (6): 5–9. doi:10.1007/s11882-020-0898-7.

Watt, L. 2017. "'Her Life Rests on Your Shoulders': Doing Worry as Emotion Work in the Care of Children with Diabetes." *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 4: 1–11. doi:10.1177/2333393617743638.

Wolf, J. B. 2010. *Is Breast Best? Taking on the Breastfeeding Experts and the New High Stakes of Motherhood*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Wrigley, J. 1989. "Do Young Children Need Intellectual Stimulation? Experts' Advice to Parents, 1900–1985." *History of Education Quarterly* 29 (1): 41–75. doi:10.2307/368605.