May 13, 1952 C. S. LA TOUR 2,596,255

INFANT'S FEEDING SET

Filed Dec. 23, 1948

Fig. 1.

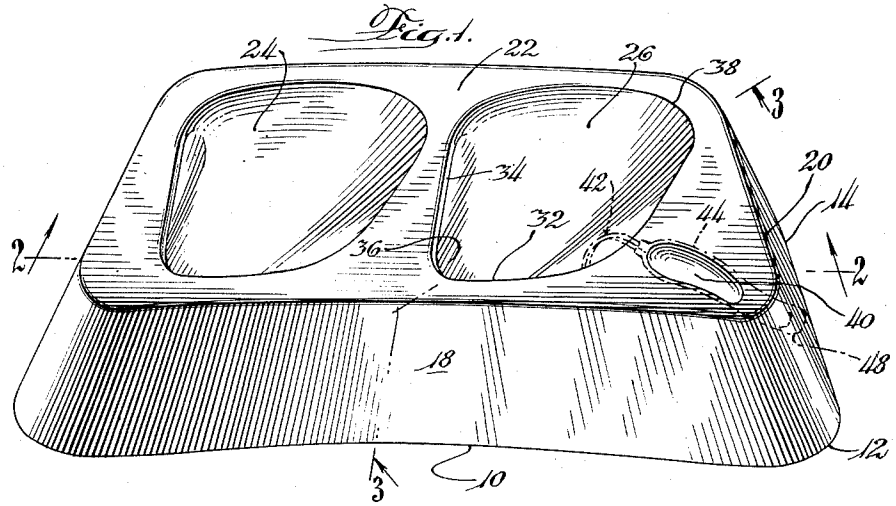


Fig. 2.

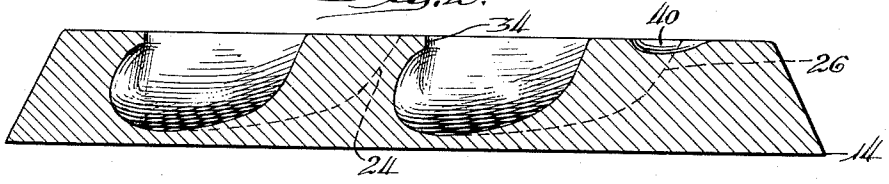


Fig. 3.

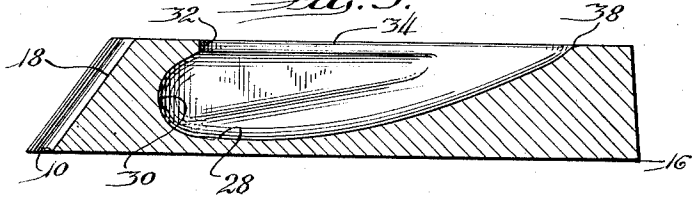
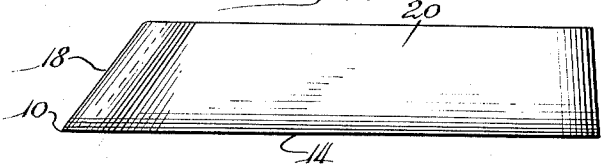


Fig. 4.



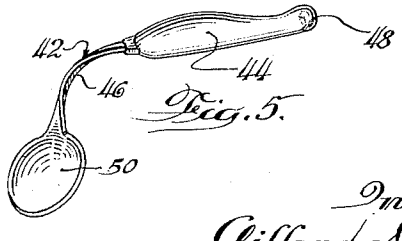


Fig. 5.

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INFANT'S FEEDING SET

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2 Claims. (Cl. 35—29)

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The present invention relates to infants' feeding sets. More particularly, the invention is concerned with the provision of a set comprising a dish and a spoon which primarily is for use by an infant at the age when he is first learning to feed himself.

It has been learned that right or left-handedness in later life can be influenced to a great extent at the time an infant is first beginning to use his hands for grasping objects placed near him. Particularly it has been learned that one of the strongest early influences on handedness is the eating habits developed by a child when he first begins to feed himself. It is known, of course, that left-handedness in an individual is a substantial handicap because of the fact that many operations are designed to be performed most easily in a right-handed manner and much equipment must be specially constructed at higher cost if it is to be operated by a left-handed person.

In view of the above it is one of the objects of my invention to provide a novel eating set comprising a specially constructed dish and spoon for the use of an infant at the time he begins feeding himself which makes right-handed feeding extremely easy and left-handed eating substantially impossible, thereby encouraging the early development of right-handed eating habits.

A further object of my invention is to provide a novel dish and co-operating spoon which operate together in encouraging right-handed eating.

Yet another object of my invention is to provide a novel spoon which is most easily used in a right-handed manner.

Still another object is to provide a novel dish from which food is most easily obtained by right-handed eating.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a novel dish from which food may be transferred to a spoon more easily than is the case with ordinary dishes or even with any specially constructed infants' dishes of which I am aware.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide an infant's food dish which cannot easily be picked up, thereby making food spilling less likely.

Still another object is to provide an infant's dish which encourages the infant to lean forward while eating, thereby making the spilling of food from the spoon less likely.

Other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description of a preferred embodiment of my invention which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

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In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a high, front perspective view of a dish constructed according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a vertical sectional view which may be considered as taken in the direction of the arrows substantially along the line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a vertical sectional view which may be considered as taken in the direction of the arrows substantially along the line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a right-hand end view of the dish; and

Fig. 5 is a high, front perspective view of a spoon which also comprises a part of the present invention.

The dish shown in the drawings may be formed of ceramic material or may be molded of any of a number of suitable plastic materials or may be formed of metal or the like. In general it is formed to provide a concavely curved front edge 10 which is connected by well rounded front corners 12 to side edges 14 which are substantially straight but which are angled toward each other so that the back of the dish at 16 is narrower than the front. The side edges 14 are smoothly rounded into the back edge 16.

Preferably the front and side faces 18 and 20, respectively, converged toward the top so that the top surface 22 of the dish is somewhat smaller than the bottom surface thereof. This configuration has the advantage of making the dish difficult to grasp, thereby preventing its being picked up and the contents spilled.

In the top surface of the dish two depresssions or food pockets 24 and 26 are provided in side by side relation and since these two pockets are substantially identical in conformation only one need be described. The shape of the right-hand pocket 26 is such that as is best shown in Fig. 3, the depressed surface slopes at a gradual angle in a downward and forward direction from the rear right-hand corner of the dish so that, as shown in Fig. 3, the lowermost portion of the food pocket, indicated at 28, is quite close to the front edge of the dish. Rearwardly of this point the surface curves gradually upwardly and backwardly so that it meets the top edge of the dish as has been previously explained at a quite oblique angle. From the lowermost point, that is, the point 28, the surface of the depression curves forwardly and upwardly and thence backwardly and upwardly to form a horizontal semi-circular portion 30 near the front of the

dish with the top edge 32 of the opening overhanging the forwardmost portion 30 of the pocket. This forms an overhanging lip, the purpose of which will be indicated presently.

The line of the section 3—3 follows approximately the line an infant using a spoon will usually take with the bowl of the spoon in obtaining food from the dish. That is, the tendency is to dip the spoon into the depression rearwardly and to the right of the position from which the spoon is lifted if the spoon is used in a right-handed manner.

It will be seen, therefore, that since the deepest portion of the dish at 28 is overhung by the lip at 32, particularly when it is considered that the infant will be at a position somewhat forwardly of the edge of the dish, that the food will be difficult to obtain by any spoon motion excepting one which is directed forwardly, downly and to the left. Obtaining of the food in this manner is greatly facilitated, particularly when the level of the food is low, by the rounded portion 30 which forms the overhanging lip 32. This is because the sweep of the spoon forwardly along the bottom of the dish and thence upwardly around the curved edge 30 will have the effect of causing the food being pushed ahead of the spoon to be crowded into the spoon bowl.

The surface of the pocket in the dish also slopes gradually downwardly from the right toward the left, as shown in Fig. 2, so as to provide an overhanging lip 34 along the left-hand edge of the pocket similiar to the one just described. In other words, the left-hand edge 34 and the front edge 32 both overhang to a considerable extent as does the corner 36 where these two edges join. On the other hand, the rearward and right-hand edges of the opening which curve smoothly into each other at the right rear corner 38 merge into the upper surface of the dish at an oblique angle. Any motion of a spoon into the dish, therefore, for the purpose of obtaining food is more effective if this motion is directed either forwardly or to the left or in any direction in between. On the other hand, obtaining food by the motion of a spoon at an angle of 180 degrees to the directions just given (which is normal for a left-handed person) is substantially impossible or at least extremely difficult.

The provision of the dish having a food pocket therein with the compound curvature just described is one of the principal features of the present invention. In addition, the upper face of the dish has a slight oval shaped depression 40 formed between the food opening and the front right-hand corner which is simply for the purpose of receiving the handle of the co-operating spoon 42 to be described presently. Before concluding with the description of the dish it should be pointed out that the left-hand food opening 24 is substantially identical to the right-hand opening 26 although, if desired, it may be made somewhat larger or smaller. Also, the front face of the dish 18 is made concave because most trays on high chairs have a curved edge on the chair side and the dish therefore nests better against this tray edge if the dish has this concave form.

The spoon illustrated in Fig. 5 has a handle 44 which may be formed of metal, wood or molded plastic material or the like. This handle is well rounded and is somewhat larger at the point near its attachment to the shank 46 of the spoon than it is at a point somewhat farther away from the spoon bowl. The end 48 most

remote from the spoon bowl is somewhat larger than the smallest portion. This conformation has been found to be well suited to its purpose since a study of a large group of infants indicates that they most easily grasp the handle of a spoon crosswise with the palm down and with the bowl of the spoon projecting from the thumb end of the hand. The handle of the spoon therefore has been shaped to fit easily into the hand when held in this position.

The shank 46 of the spoon extends from the end of the handle 44 a short distance and then is bent so as to incline downwardly at a comparatively sharp angle. The bowl 50 formed to the end of the shank is bent outwardly relative to the shank so as to be in a plane substantially parallel to the center line of the handle. In addition, the bowl of the spoon together with the shank 46 is given a twist to the side so that if the spoon is viewed from above with the end 48 of the handle of the spoon toward the observer the center line of the bowl inclines to the left at about 45 degrees to the center line of the handle. The length of the downward offset of the spoon bowl relative to the handle is such that when the handle 44 of the spoon is placed in the depression 40 of the dish the shank 46 extends downwardly into the food pocket sufficiently so that the bowl 50 of the spoon lies upon the bottom surface thereof and lies with its center line substantially parallel to the section line 3—3.

This spoon encourages right-handed eating since if it is held in the way that an infant most easily holds a spoon, the bowl dips easily into the dish and is pointed toward the child's mouth when the spoon is lifted. If, on the other hand, this spoon is held in the left hand, not only will the spoon enter the dish with considerable difficulty but also the bowl of the spoon is pointed away from the child's mouth and the shank 46 lies between the bowl and the mouth. It is therefore substantially impossible for an infant to get the bowl 50 into his mouth so as to obtain the food.

Although it will be seen that the use of either the dish or the spoon alone will have a considerable effect in encouraging right-handed eating it is also apparent that use of the bowl and spoon in conjunction with each other operates much more effectively for this purpose. Because the front edge 32 overhangs the bottom of the dish at 28 and since the natural tendency of a child is to try to see the food in the dish, it has been found that the infant usually will lean well forward in order to look over the overhanging lip 32 with the result that food spilled from the spoon will be more often confined to the tray of the high chair or at least to the infant's bib than is normally the case.

From the above description of a preferred embodiment of my invention it will be seen that the spoon and dish both encourage right-handed eating and discourage left-handed eating and in addition, because of the tapering sides of the dish, it cannot easily be picked up and the contents spilled and that further the dish promotes easy loading of the spoon and in addition encourages the infant to lean forwardly somewhat so as to confine spilled food to a comparatively small area.

Although only one embodiment of my invention has been described and illustrated it will be appreciated that variations may be made therefrom without departing from the scope of the inven-

tion and that therefore the invention should be measured by the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A training device for infants to encourage the use of the right hand, comprising in combination a dish having a food-containing depression formed therein, the deepest part of said depression lying adjacent the front left-hand portion thereof as the dish confronts the infant, the surface of said depression sloping abruptly upward in the frontal left-hand direction from the deepest part and gradually upward in the rearward right-hand direction therefrom, and a spoon having a handle, a shank and a bowl characterized in that the shank is offset downward and turned to the left so that the longitudinal axis of the bowl is at a substantial angle to the vertical plane through the longitudinal axis of the handle whereby the spoon may be operated against the abruptly sloping portion of the depression surface by normal spoon manipulation.

2. An infant's training device for encouraging the use of the right hand, comprising a dish having a food pocket formed therein which slopes gradually downwardly, forwardly, and to the left in the dish as said dish confronts an infant, the bottom surface of the pocket being so shaped that the forward and left-hand portions of the pocket curve sharply upwardly, and a spoon having a handle, shank and bowl with the shank extending forwardly and downwardly from the handle to join the bowl, the bowl being positioned in a plane substantially parallel to the handle with its center line at a substantial angle thereto so as to be inclined to the left with respect to the center line of the handle, the plane of the spoon bowl being below the plane of the handle an amount substantially equal to the depth of the pocket, and said dish having a depression formed in the top surface thereof to encompass a portion of the handle when the spoon bowl rests against the bottom of the depression.

CLIFFORD S. LA TOUR.

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