

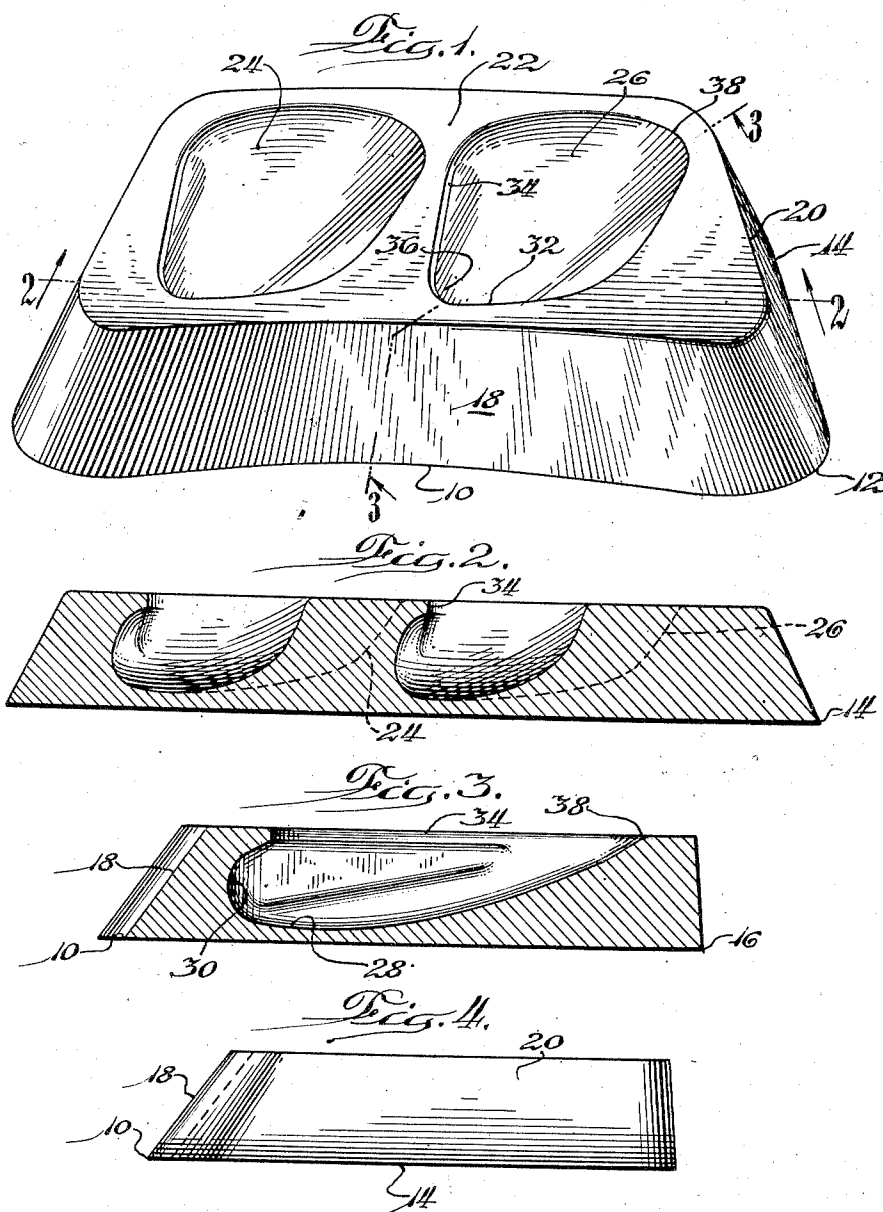
March 23, 1954

C. S. LA TOUR

2,672,697

INFANT'S SELF-FEEDING DISH

Filed Sept. 13, 1951



Inventor:
Clifford S. La Tour
By *Ahlberg, Mupper & Gradolph*
Attorneys.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,672,697

INFANT'S SELF-FEEDING DISH

Clifford S. La Tour, Milwaukee, Wis., assignor to
Lyn-Chicago Corporation, Chicago, Ill., a cor-
poration of Illinois

Application September 13, 1951, Serial No. 246,397

2 Claims. (Cl. 35—29)

1

The present invention relates to infants' self-feeding dishes, and is a division of my copending application Serial No. 66,906, which was filed December 23, 1948, now Patent No. 2,596,255, for an Infant's Feeding Set. More particularly, the invention is concerned with the provision of a specially shaped dish 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. Also, left-handed eating is a social handicap, since it tends to interfere with the person seated to the left.

In view of the above, it is the principal object of my invention to provide a novel, specially constructed dish 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-handedness.

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.

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; and

2

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

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, converge 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 depressions 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 at 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, downwardly, 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 similar 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. This is because the food lies toward the left of the cavity, so that the spoon must be put down abruptly after passing over the edge of the pocket, and any food pushed ahead of the spoon tends to slide away to one side or the other because of the gradual slope of the bottom.

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 highchairs 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.

In addition, since 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 highchair, 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 dish encourages right-handed eating and discourages left-handed eating, and, because of the tapering sides of the dish, it cannot easily be picked up and the contents spilled, and further, the dish promotes easy loading of the spoon and also 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 invention, 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 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, whereby a 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, the bottom surface of the pocket being so shaped that the forward and left-hand portions of the pocket curve sharply upwardly.

CLIFFORD S. LA TOUR.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
668,004	Bergwitz	Feb. 12, 1901
1,272,996	Poschadel	July 16, 1918
2,596,255	La Tour	May 13, 1952