US 20210085107A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**

SUTTON et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2021/0085107 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Mar. 25, 2021**

(54) EARLY CHILDHOOD EATING UTENSILS

(71) Applicant: **GRACO CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS, INC.**, Atlanta, GA (US)

(72) Inventors: **Collin Jacob SUTTON**, Sturgis, MI (US); **Anastasia Nicole DIAMOND**, Yardley, PA (US); **Kelly Elizabeth SEAGREN**, Kalamazoo, MI (US); **Melissa Sue JACOBSON**, Kalamazoo, MI (US); **Austin Peter LANIOSZ**, Willowbrook, IL (US); **Jason Wade CARDANI**, Kalamazoo, MI (US); **Lea Marie STEWART**, Kalamazoo, MI (US); **Alfredo David CARRENO**, Portage, MI (US); **Kevin Thomas BAYONNET**, Uniontown, OH (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **17/030,159**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 23, 2020**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 62/904,118, filed on Sep. 23, 2019, now abandoned.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A47G 21/02 (2006.01)

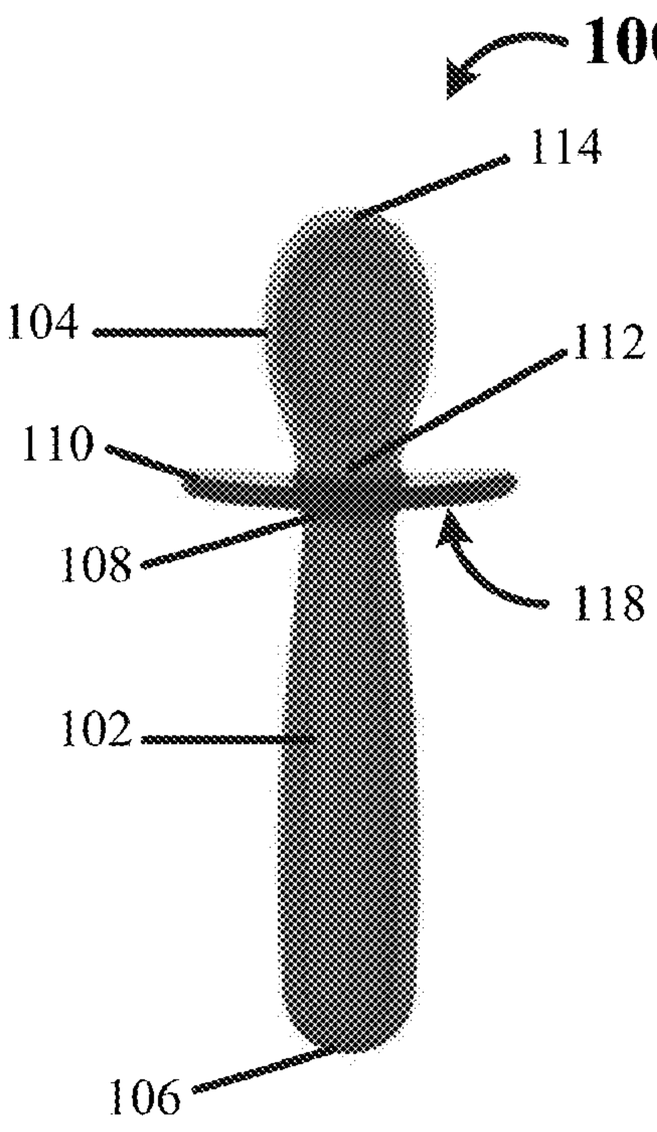
A47G 21/04 (2006.01)

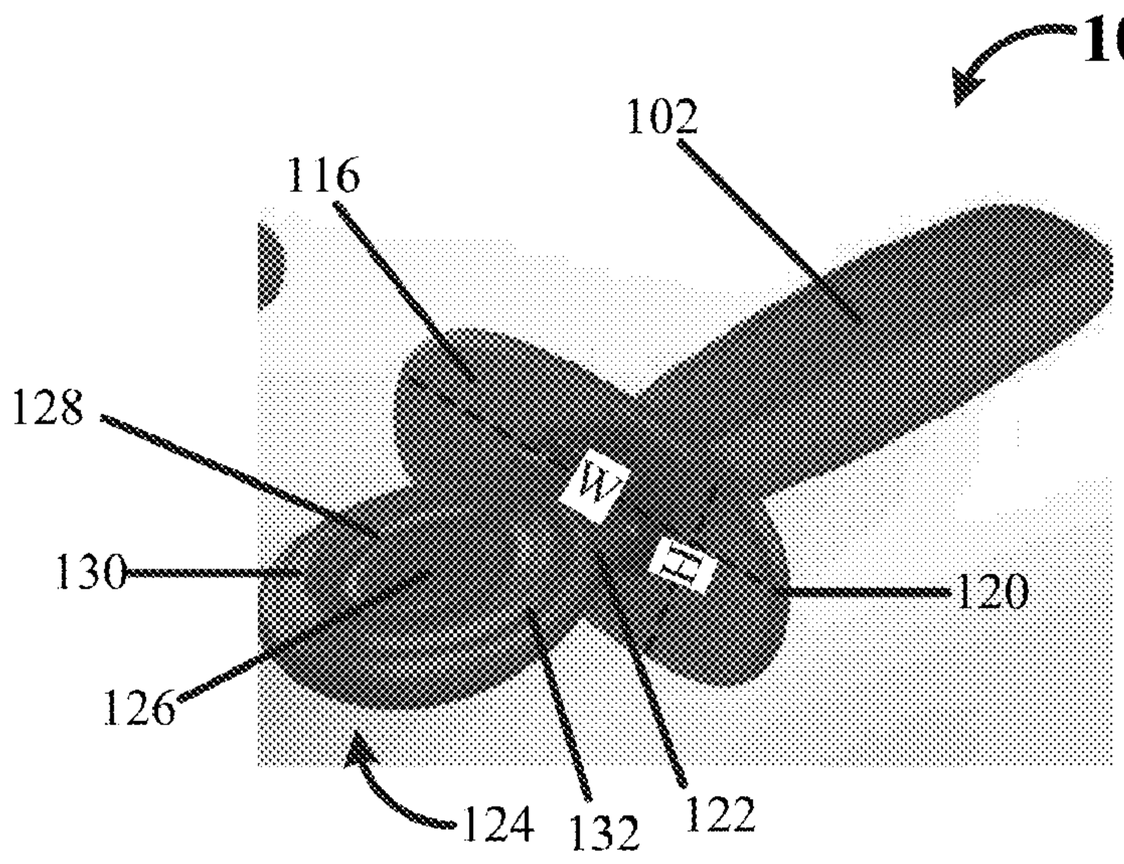
(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***A47G 21/02*** (2013.01); ***A47G 21/04*** (2013.01)

(57) ABSTRACT

Embodiments of the disclosure relate to eating utensils, such as eating utensils for use by infants, toddlers, and others in early childhood development. In one embodiment, an eating utensil is provided. The eating utensil can include a handle; a utensil head comprising a top side, a bottom side, and a plurality of apertures extending through the utensil head from the top side to the bottom side; and a choke guard disposed between the handle and the utensil head. In another embodiment, an eating utensil can include a handle; a utensil head comprising: a top side comprising a first set of fork tines; and a bottom side comprising a second set of fork tines.





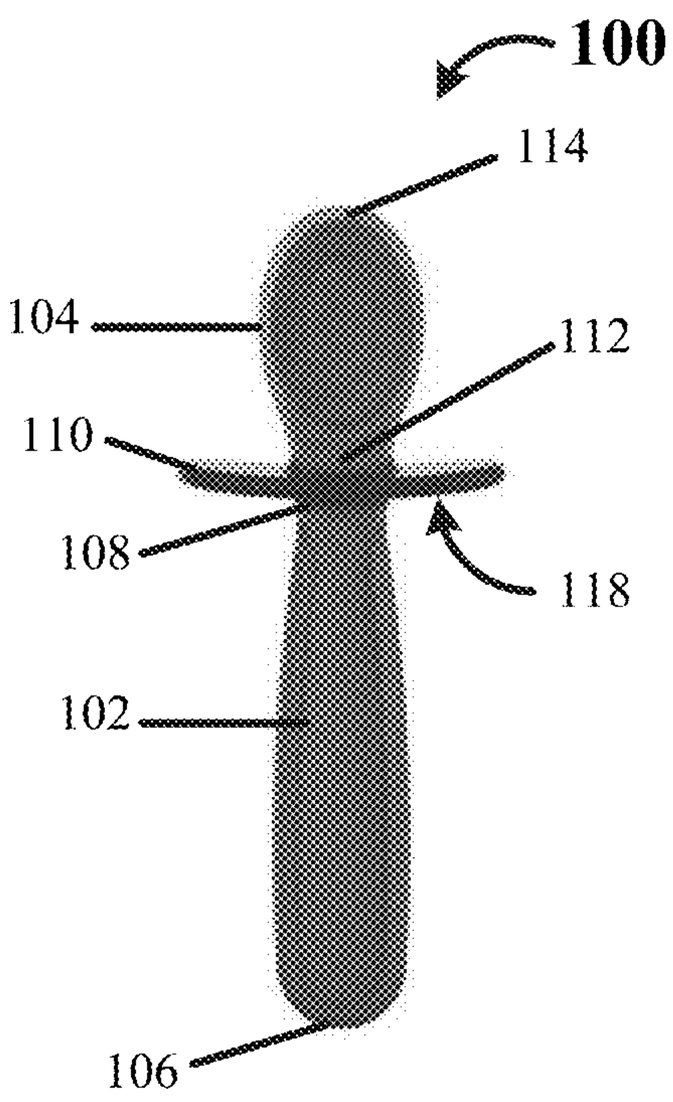


Fig. 1A

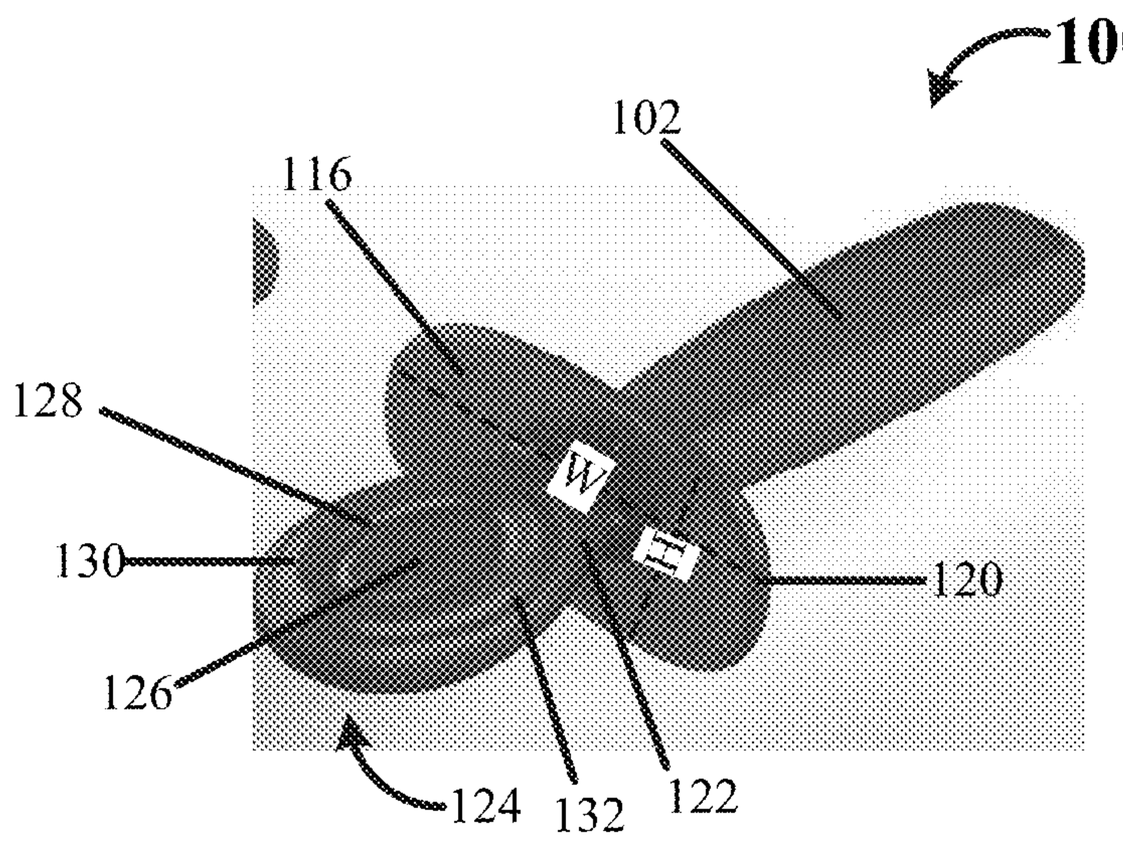


Fig. 1B

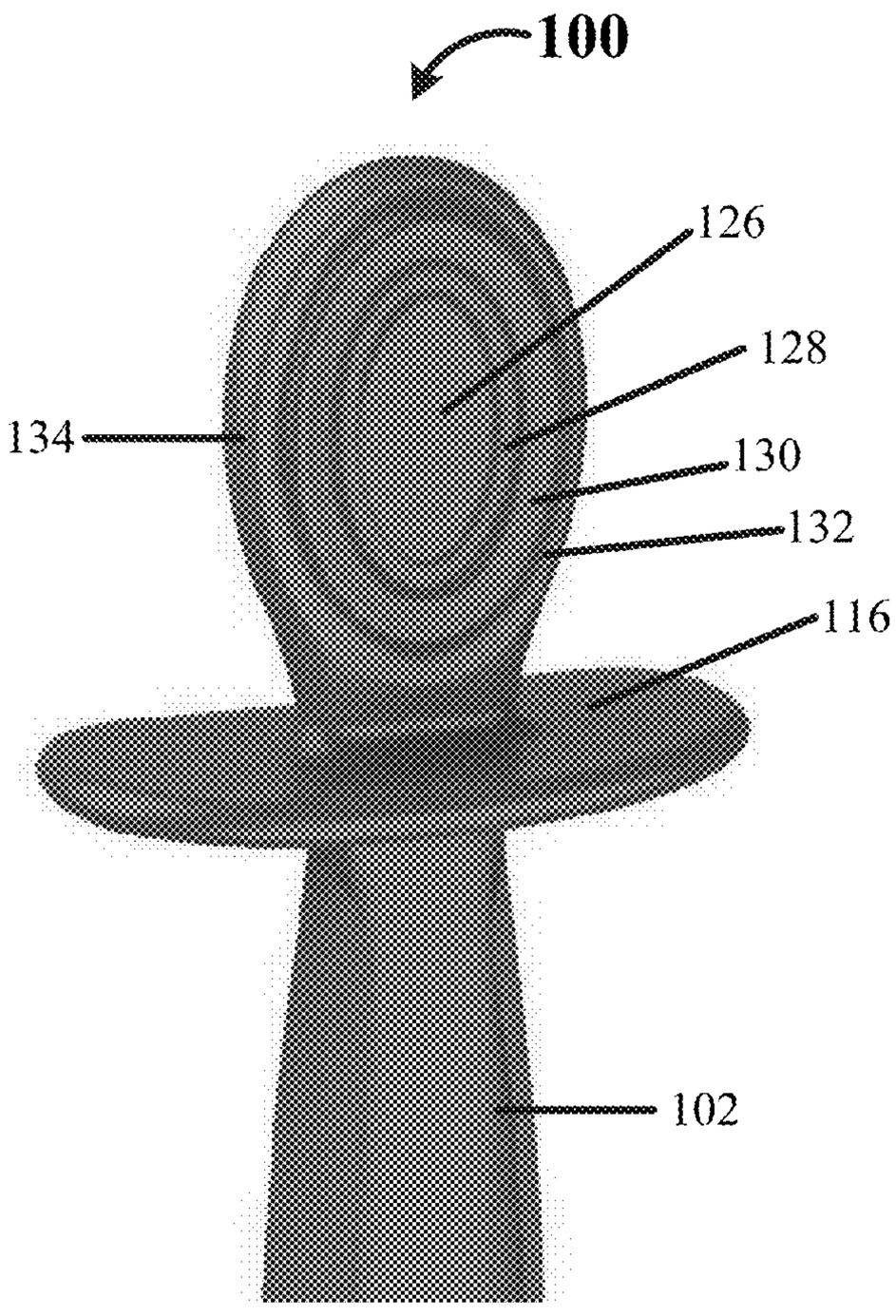


Fig. 1C

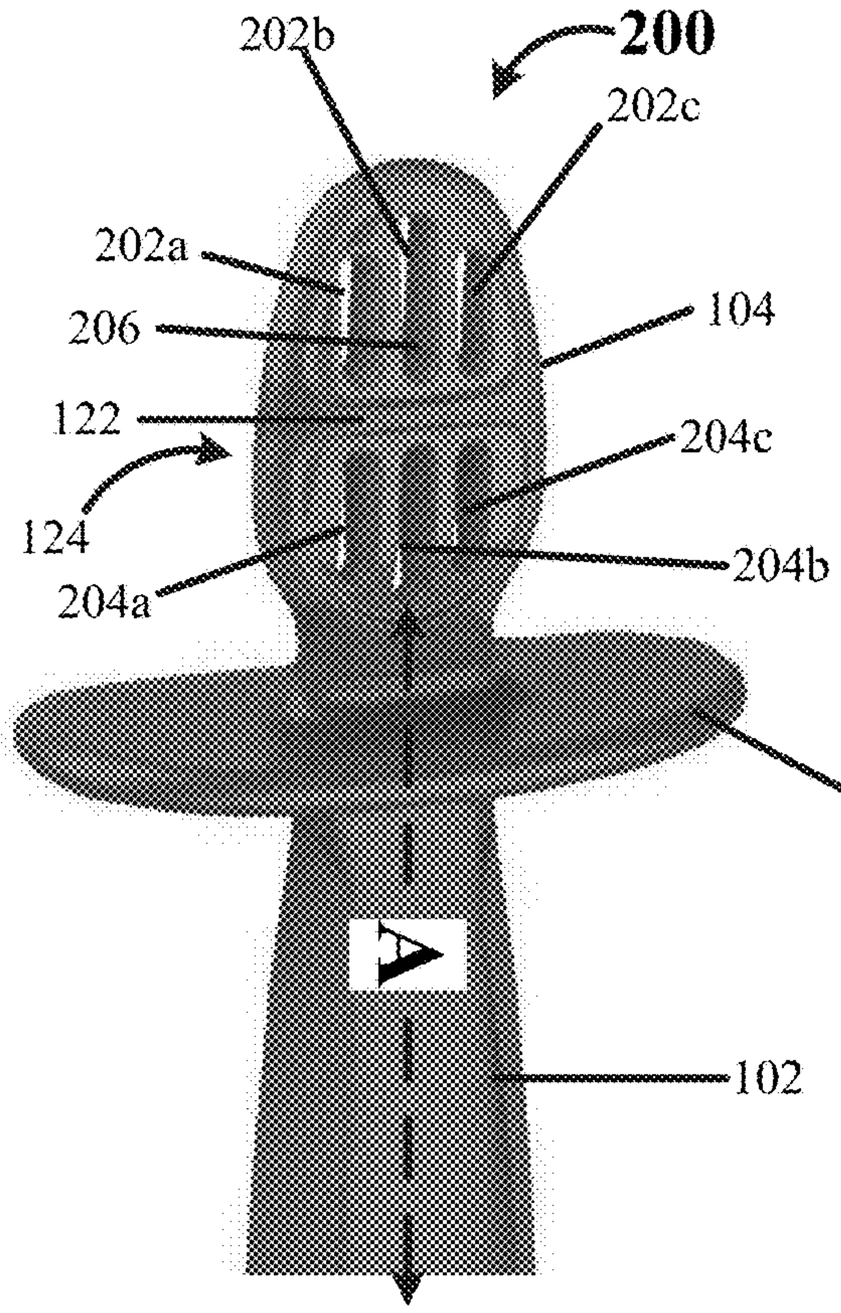


Fig. 2

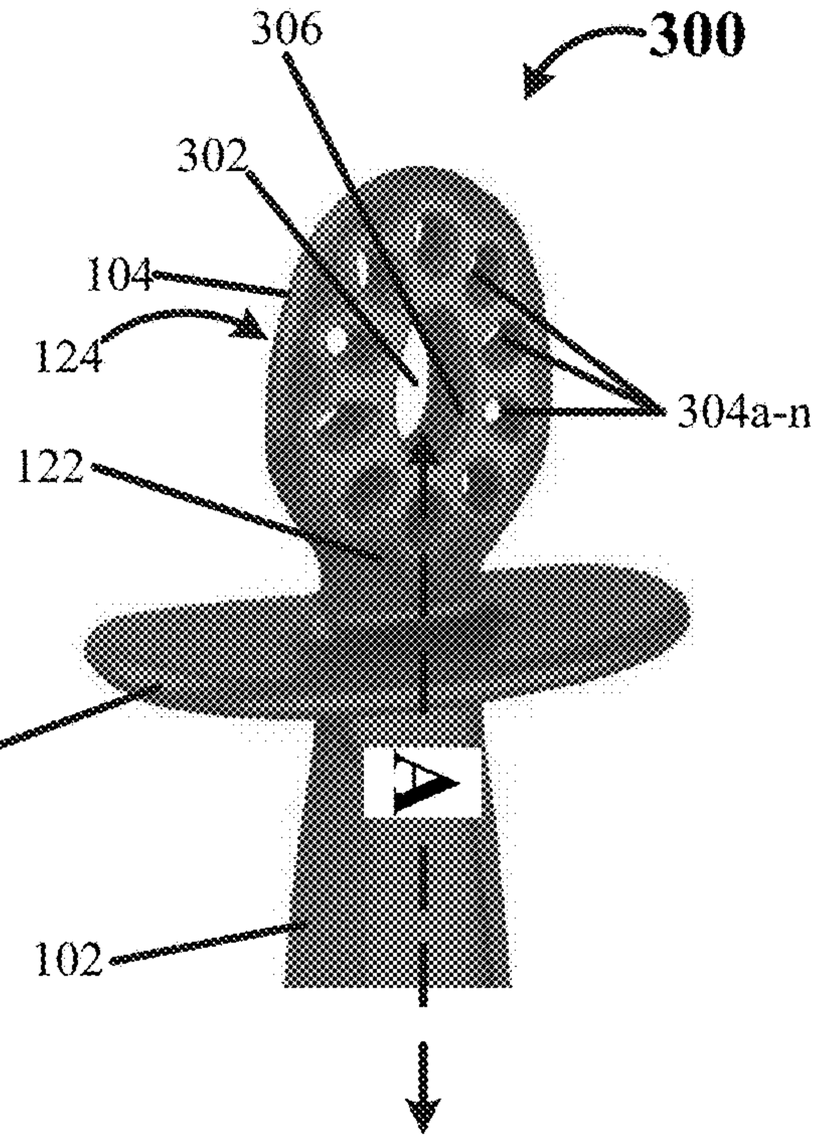


Fig. 3

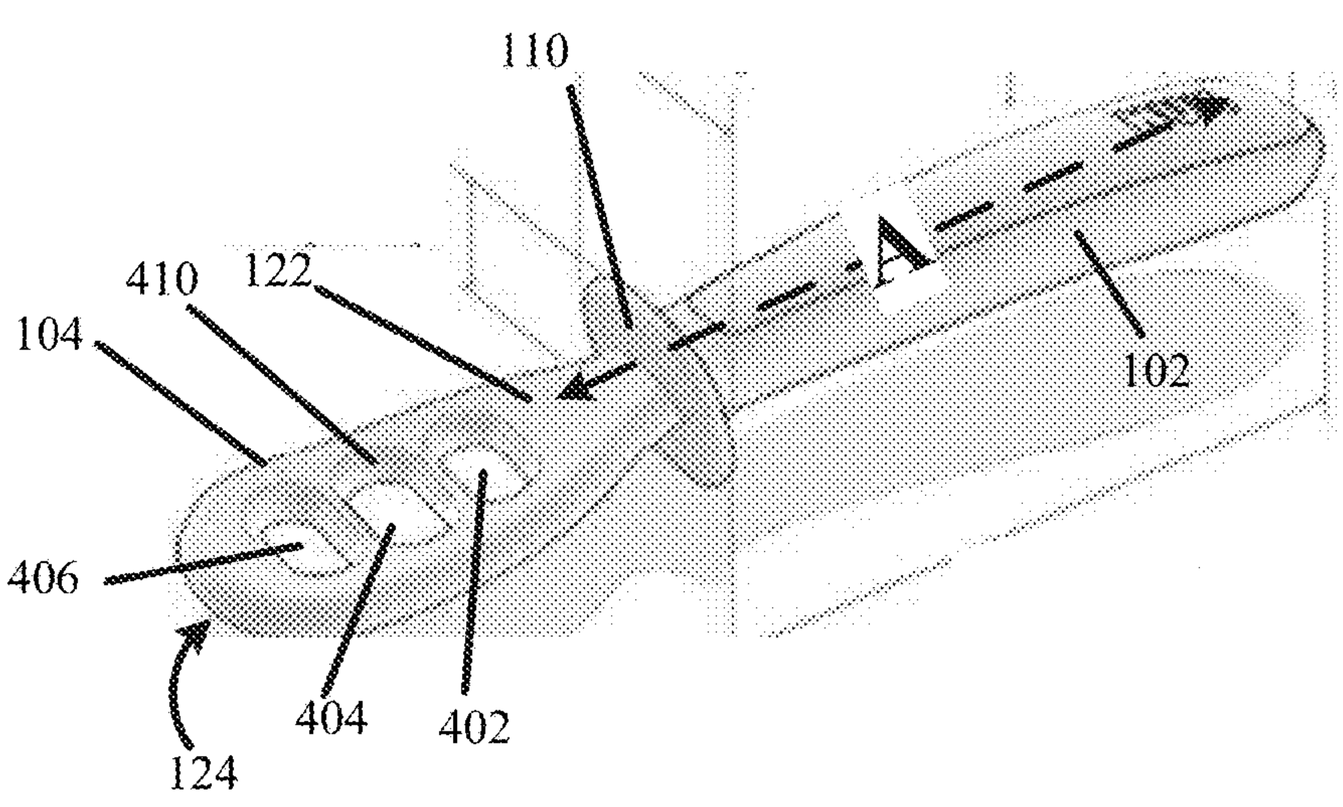


Fig. 4

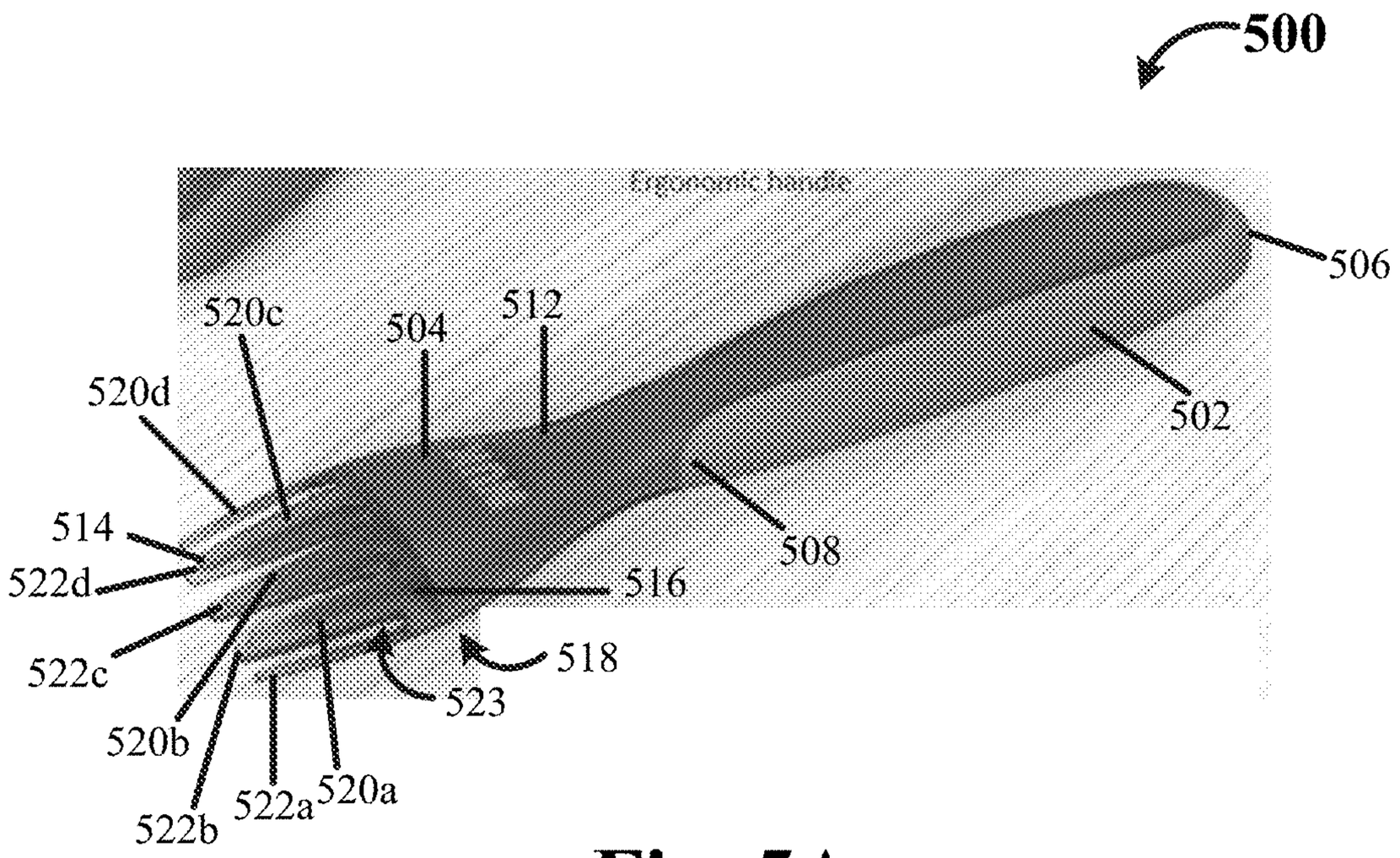


Fig. 5A

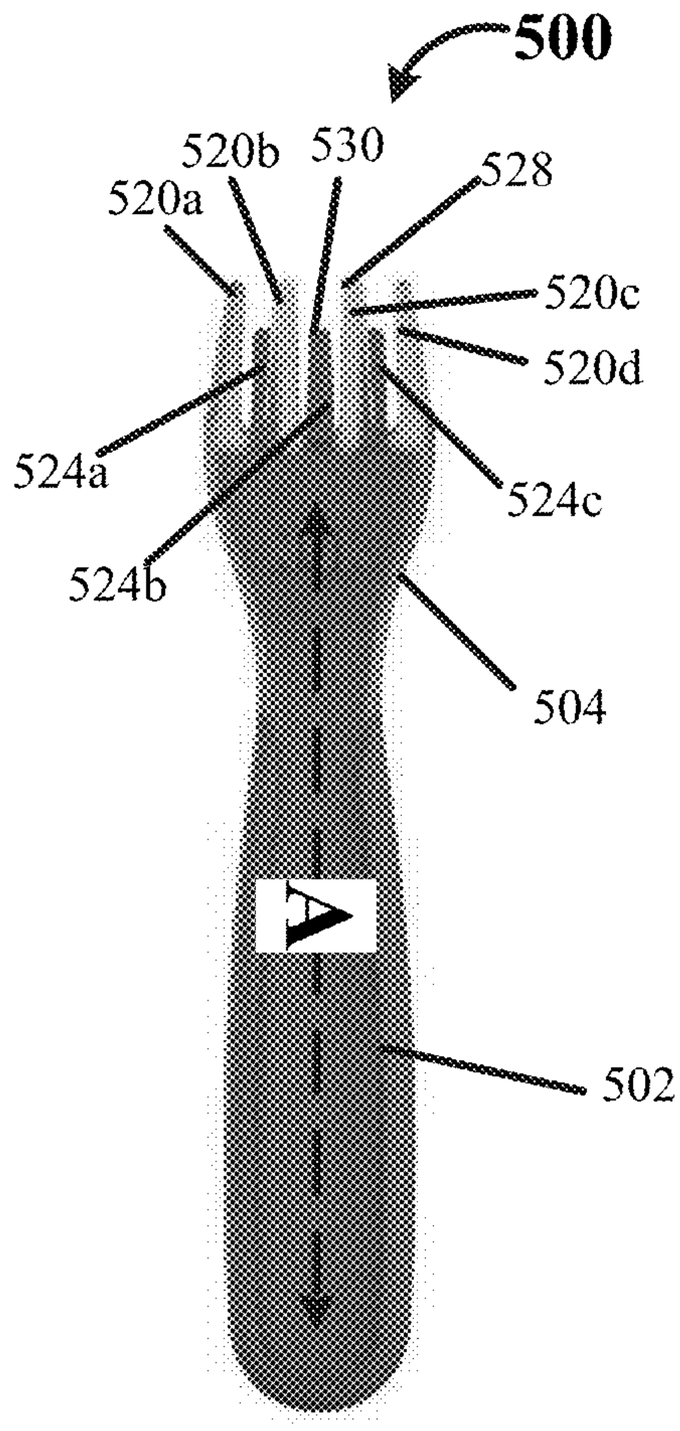


Fig. 5B

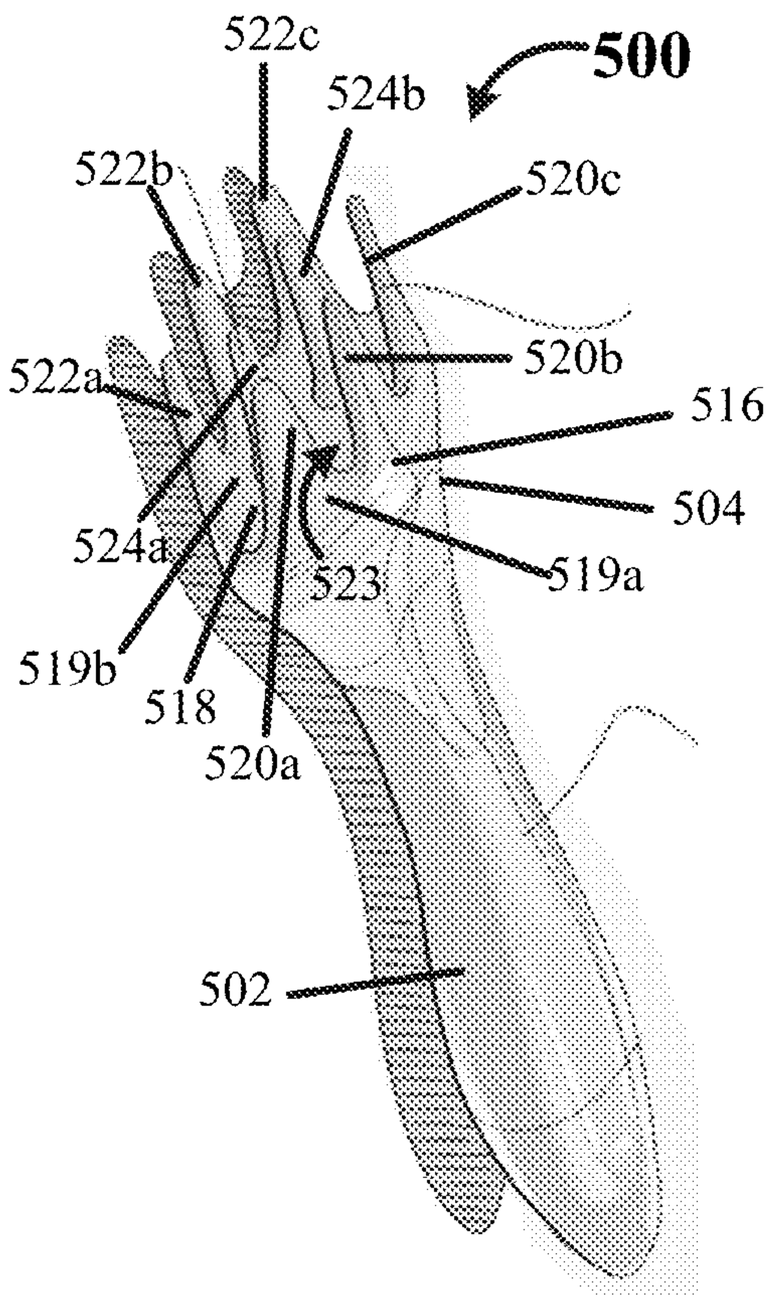


Fig. 5C

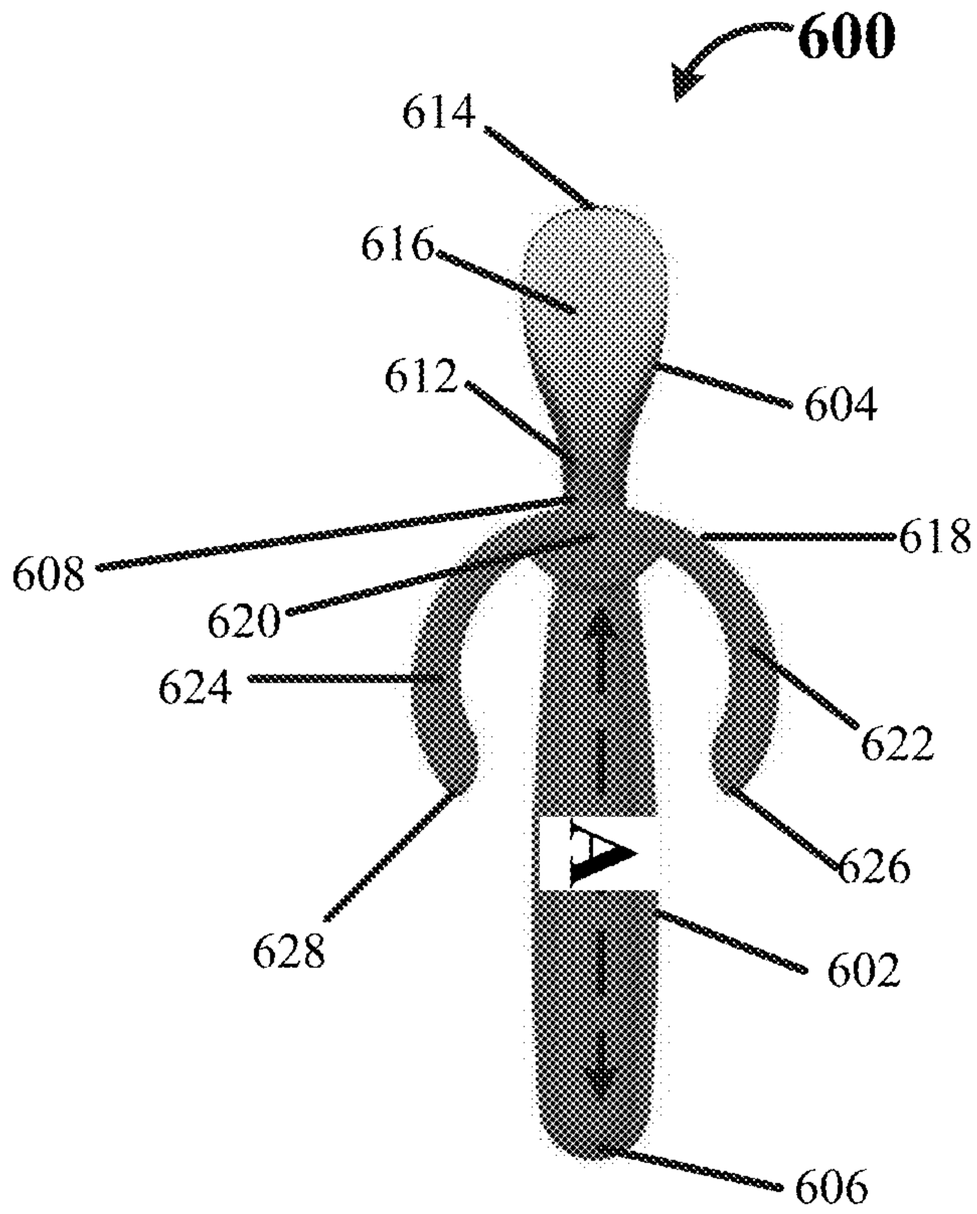

600
614
616
612
604
608
618
620
624
622
A
626
628
602
606

Fig. 6A

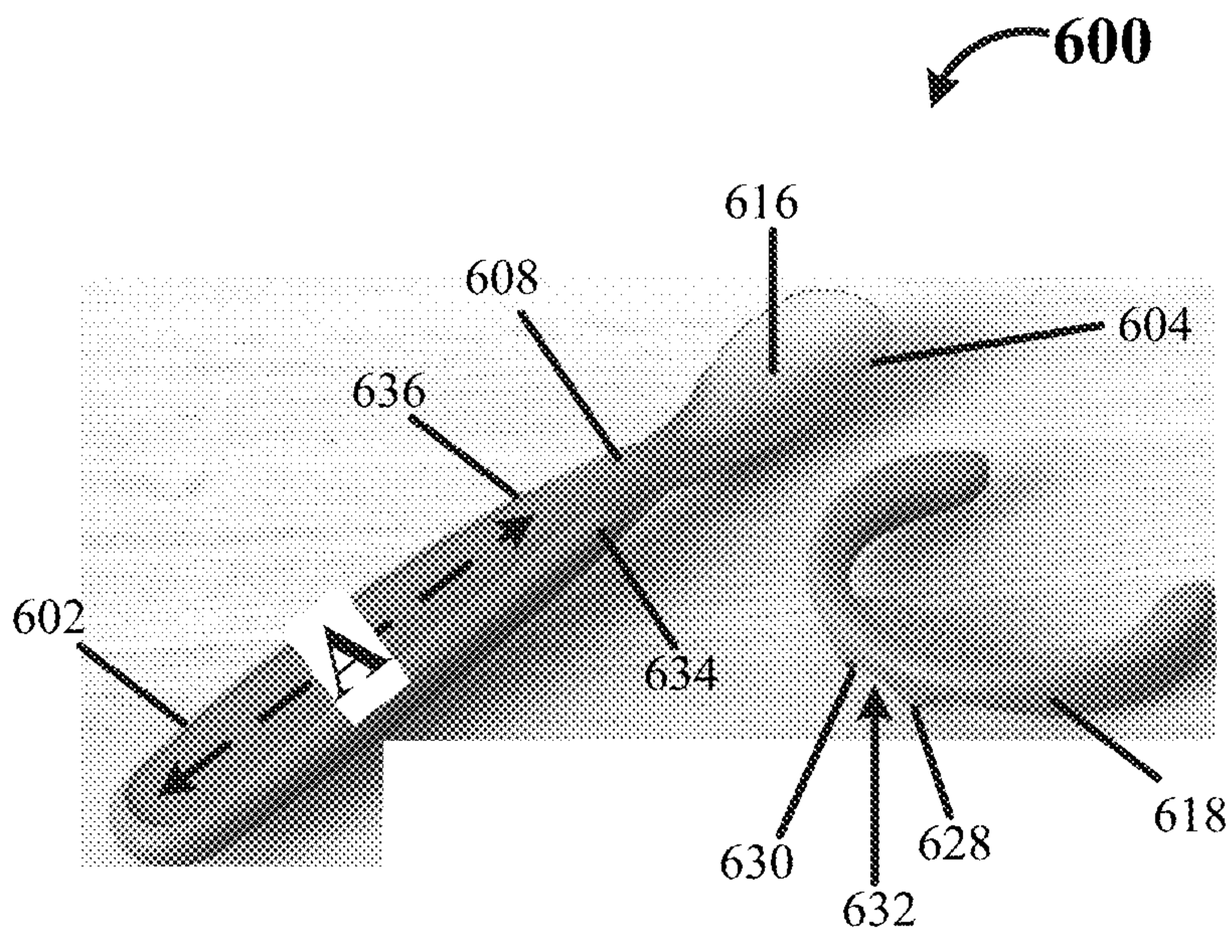

600
616
608
604
636
602
A'
634
630
632
628
618

Fig. 6B

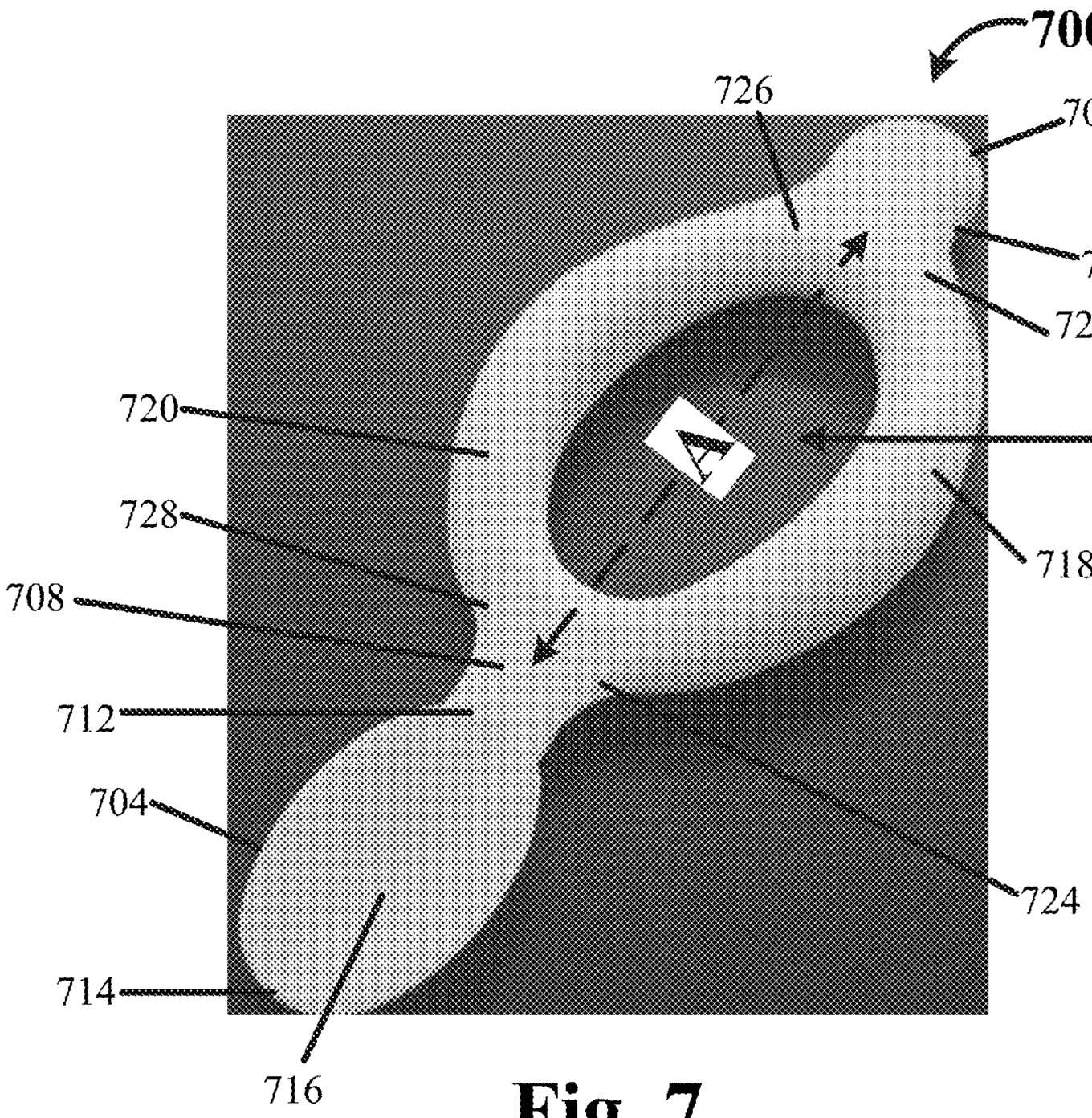

700
726
706
702
722
720
719
A
728
718
708
712
704
724
714
716

Fig. 7

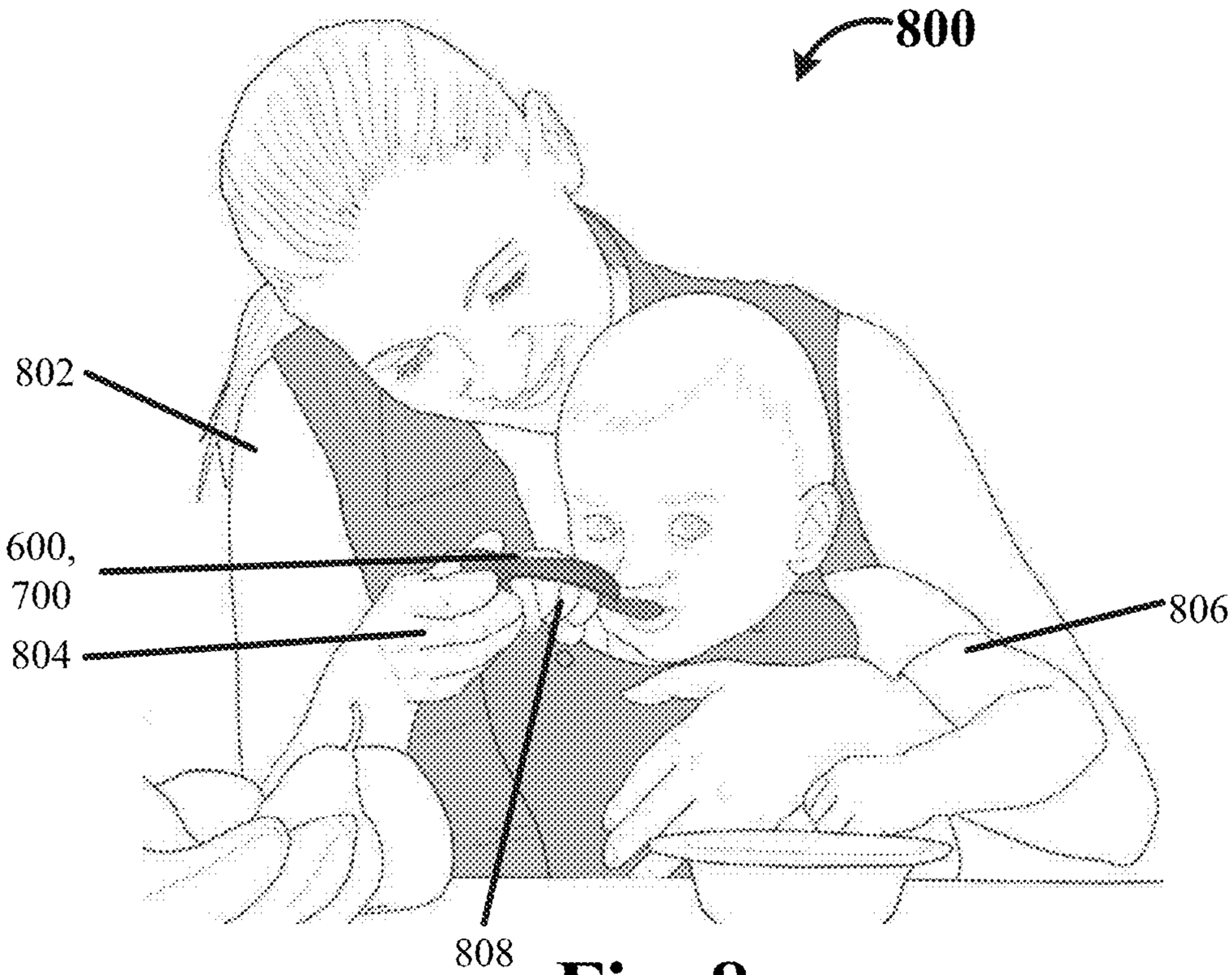

800
802
600,
700
804
806
808

Fig. 8

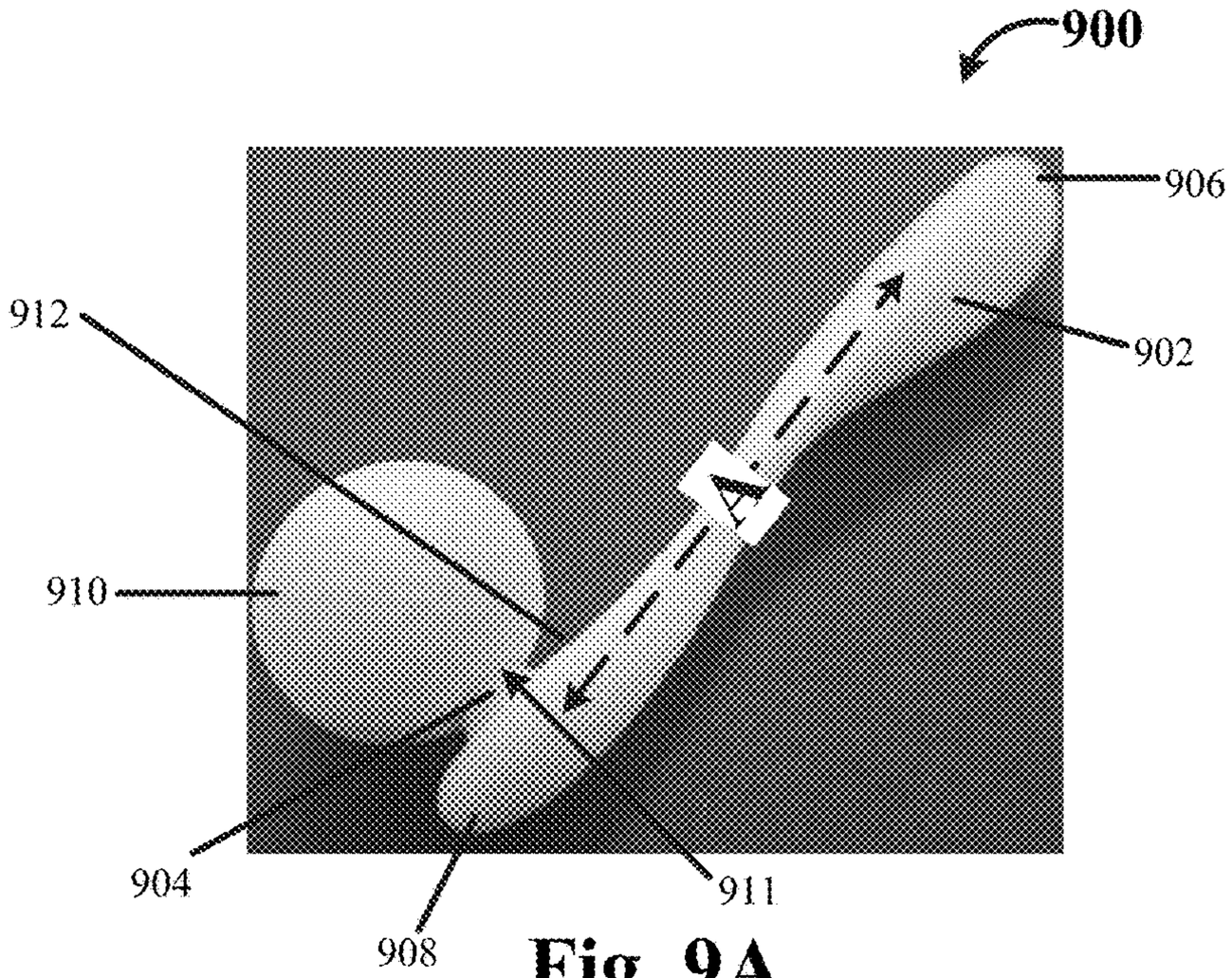


Fig. 9A

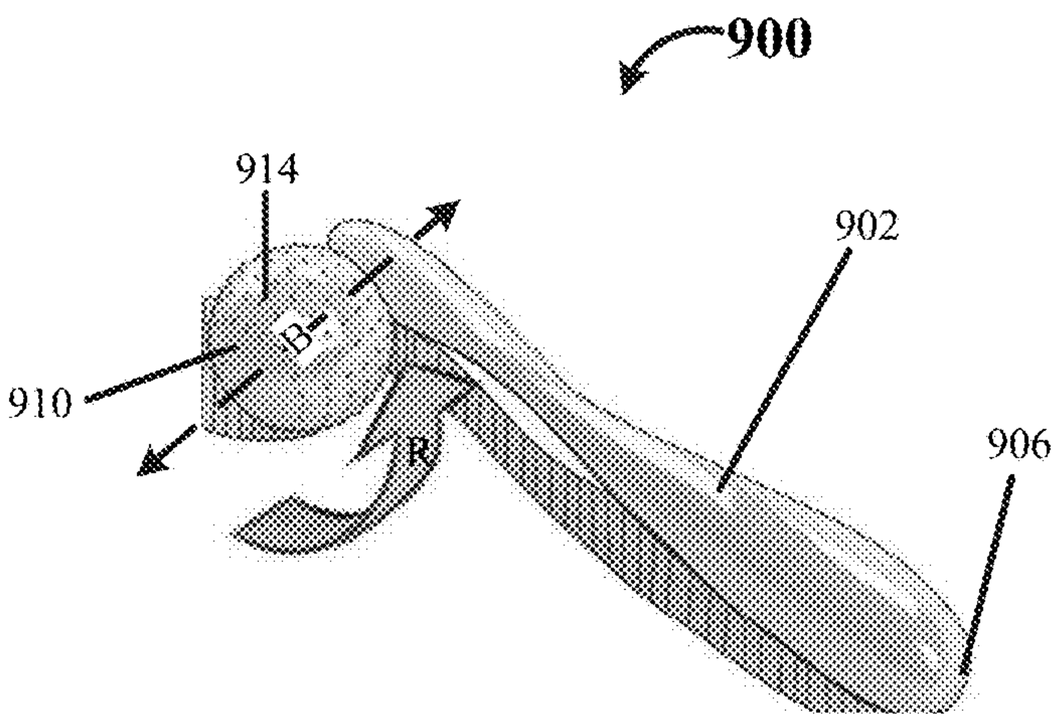


Fig. 9B

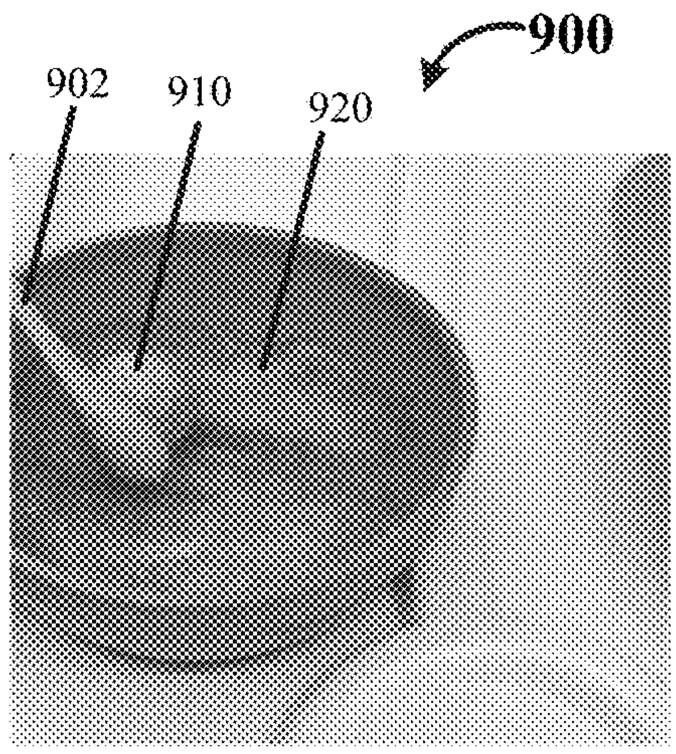


Fig. 9C

EARLY CHILDHOOD EATING UTENSILS

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims priority to U.S. Ser. No. 62/904,118, titled "Early Childhood Eating Utensils", filed Sep. 23, 2019, with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Embodiments disclosed herein are generally related to eating utensils, and more particularly to eating utensils for use by infants, toddlers, and others in early childhood development.

BACKGROUND

[0003] As children (e.g., infants and toddlers) age and progress, they transition from eating baby food to eating solid and semi-solid foods. During this time of transition, these children will also begin to learn how to feed themselves. The progression of learning to feed one's self can be different for each child as the speed and progress of this development is often dependent on the particular child's fine motor skills and the corresponding development of those skills.

[0004] Development of eating skills begins with parent-led feeding of pureed, soft foods, while the child learns to grasp and direct objects toward their mouth. One observation of note in early childhood eating is the desire for the child to "help" hold the utensil at the same time as the parent. Conventional early childhood eating utensils do not allow for this because of their handle design being too short, too long, or without an additional handle for the child to hold on to. In addition, while standard adult eating utensils have a longer handle length, the dimensions of the head of the utensil are typically too large for use by the child due to the size of the child's mouth.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] For a more complete understanding of the present disclosure and certain features thereof, reference is now made to the following description, in conjunction with the accompanying figures briefly described as follows:

[0006] FIG. **1**A presents a front elevation view of a dipper utensil, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0007] FIG. **1**B is a perspective view of the dipper utensil of FIG. **1**A, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0008] FIG. **1**C is a partial perspective view of the dipper utensil of FIG. **1**A highlighting the head of the dipper utensil, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0009] FIG. **2** is a partial-perspective view of another dipper utensil having a different head design, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0010] FIG. **3** is a partial-perspective view of another dipper utensil having another different head design, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0011] FIG. **4** is a perspective view of yet another dipper utensil having still another different head design, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0012] FIG. **5**A is a perspective view of a fork utensil, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0013] FIG. **5**B is a front elevation view of the fork utensil of FIG. **5**A, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0014] FIG. **5**C is a perspective view of the fork utensil of FIG. **1**A with a modified fork tine design and layout, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0015] FIG. **6**A is a front elevation view of a multi-handle utensil, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0016] FIG. **6**B is a perspective view of the multi-handle utensil of FIG. **6**A presenting a removable secondary handle system, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0017] FIG. **7** is a front elevation view of another multi-handle utensil, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0018] FIG. **8** is a representation of the use of the multi-handle utensil of FIGS. **6**A-**7**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0019] FIG. **9**A is a side elevation view of a utensil with rotating element, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0020] FIG. **9**B is a perspective view of the utensil with rotating element of FIG. **9**A, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

[0021] FIG. **9**C is a representation of the use of the utensil with rotating element, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

[0022] Example embodiments of the early childhood eating utensils now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which example embodiments are shown. The concepts claimed and described herein may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the example embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the claimed invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like, but not necessarily the same, elements throughout.

[0023] Certain dimensions and features of the example early childhood eating utensils are described herein using the term "approximately." As used herein, the term "approximately" indicates that each of the described dimensions is not a strict boundary or parameter and does not exclude functionally similar variations therefrom. Unless context or the description indicates otherwise, the use of the term "approximately" in connection with a numerical parameter indicates that the numerical parameter includes variations that, using mathematical and industrial principles accepted in the art (e.g., rounding, measurement or other systematic errors, manufacturing tolerances, etc.), would not vary the least significant digit.

[0024] In addition, certain relationships of the early childhood eating utensils are described herein using the term "substantially." As used herein, the terms "substantially" and "substantially equal" indicates that the relationship or equal

relationship is not a strict relationship and does not exclude functionally similar variations therefrom. Unless context or the description indicates otherwise, the use of the term "substantially" or "substantially equal" in connection with two or more described dimensions or elements indicates that the equal relationship between the dimensions or elements includes variations that, using mathematical and industrial principles accepted in the art (e.g., rounding, measurement or other systematic errors, manufacturing tolerances, etc.), would not vary the least significant digit of the dimensions or elements. As used herein, the term "substantially constant" indicates that the constant relationship is not a strict relationship and does not exclude functionally similar variations therefrom. As used herein, the term "substantially parallel" indicates that the parallel relationship is not a strict relationship and does not exclude functionally similar variations therefrom. As used herein, the terms "substantially perpendicular" and "substantially orthogonal" indicate that the perpendicular relationship is not a strict relationship and does not exclude functionally similar variations therefrom. Further, the term "top" can be used interchangeably with "upper", and the term "bottom" can be used interchangeably with "lower".

[0025] FIGS. **1**A-**1**C present front elevation and perspective views of an early childhood dipper eating utensil **100**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure. Referring to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C, the dipper utensil **100** can include a handle **102** and a dipper head **104** coupled to the handle. In certain example embodiments, the handle **102** and the dipper head **104** are a unitary design constructed from a single piece of material. In other example embodiments, the handle **102** and dipper head **104** are separately constructed and then coupled to one another. In certain example embodiments, the dipper utensil **100** can be constructed of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a soft or pliable material (e.g., soft or pliable plastic), metal, or any combination thereof. In certain example embodiments, the dipper utensil can include a softer or more pliable plastic material that is overmolded onto a rigid plastic material. In other examples, the overmolding may only occur for the dipper head **104** to make the dipper head softer when in contact with the child's mouth.

[0026] The handle **102** can be an elongated member that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **100** and can include a first free end **106** and a distal second end **108**. In one example, the first free end **106** of the handle **102** has a width transverse to the longitudinal axis A that is greater than the width of the second end **108** transverse to the longitudinal axis A. In certain example embodiments, the handle **102** can taper from a greater width at the first end **106** to a lesser width at the second end **108**.

[0027] The dipper head **104** can include a first end **112** and a second free end **114** that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **100**. The second end **108** of the handle **102** can be positioned adjacent to and/or directly coupled to the first end **112** of the dipper head **104**. In one example, the dipper head **104** can have an oval or generally oval shape.

[0028] The dipper utensil **100** can also include a choke guard **110**. The choke guard **110** can include a front surface **116** facing the dipper head **104**, a rear surface **118** facing the handle **102**, and an outer perimeter wall **120**. The front surface **116** can be configured to make contact with a child's mouth and prevent the child from further inserting the dipper utensil **100** into their mouth, in order to prevent a choking hazard to the child. The choke guard **110** can be positioned at or near the junction of the handle **102** and the dipper head **104**. In one example the choke guard **110** can be positioned between the handle **102** and the dipper head **104**. In this embodiment, the first end **112** of the dipper head **104** can be coupled to the front surface **116** of the choke guard **110** and the second end **108** of the handle **102** can be coupled to the rear surface **118** of the choke guard **110**. In certain example embodiments, the handle **102**, choke guard **110**, and dipper head **104** can be integrally formed from a single piece of material. In other embodiments, the handle **102**, choke guard **110**, and dipper head **104** can be individually formed and then coupled together as described above.

[0029] The choke guard **110** can extend generally radially outward from the handle **102** along a plane substantially orthogonal to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **100**. The outer perimeter wall **120** of the choke guard **110** can define a generally oval or rectangular oval shape for the choke guard **110**. The choke guard **110** can have a width W that is greater than the width of the of the handle **102** adjacent to the choke guard **110**. In one example embodiment, the width W of the choke guard **110** at its widest is greater than 30 millimeters (mm), and preferably greater than 40 mm, and more preferably, greater than 50 mm. The choke guard **110** can also have a height H that is greater than the height of the handle **102** adjacent to the choke guard **110**. In one example, the height H of the choke guard **110** at its greatest height is greater than 20 mm, and preferably greater than 30 mm. The choke guard **110** can be curved such that the front surface **116** is curved in a concave manner with respect to the dipper head **104** and the rear surface **118** is curved in a convex manner with respect to the handle **102**. The curvature of the choke guard **110** can be configured to be complementary to the curvature of a child's mouth area.

[0030] The dipper head **104** includes a top side **122** and an opposing bottom side **124**. The outer perimeter of the dipper head **104** can have an oval or substantially oval shape with an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **100** being greater than the axis transverse to the longitudinal axis A. The top **122** and/or bottom side **124** can also include a multitude of raised and recessed surfaces. The combination of raised and recessed surfaces is configured to receive and hold viscous or semi-viscous foods until they reach the child's mouth. In one example embodiment, the top **122** and/or bottom **124** sides can include a first raised surface **126**, a first recessed surface **128**, a second raised surface **130**, a second recessed surface **132**, and a third raised surface **134**. In one example, the first recessed surface **128** surrounds the outer perimeter of the first raised surface **126**, the second raised surface **130** surrounds the outer perimeter of the first recessed surface **128**, the second recessed surface **132** surrounds the outer perimeter of the second raised surface **130**, and the third raised surface **134** surrounds the outer perimeter of the second recessed surface **132**. The maximum height of each of the first raised surface **126**, second raised surface **130**, and third raised surface **132** is above the maximum depth of the first recessed surface **128** and second recessed surface **132**. Further, the maximum height of the second raised surface **130** can be greater than the maximum height of the first raised surface **126** and the third raised surface **134**. The transition from each of the raised surfaces **126**, **130**, **134** to each of the recessed surfaces **128**, **132** can be a curved, beveled, or otherwise angled wall.

[0031] In one example, the first recessed surface **128**, second raised surface **130**, second recessed surface **132**, and third raised surface **134** are concentric with the first raised surface **126**. In other examples, they are not concentric. In certain examples, each of the first raised surface **126**, first recessed surface **128**, second raised surface **130**, second recessed surface **132**, and third raised surface **134** have an oval shape. In other examples, the raised surfaces and recessed surfaces can have any other shape. Further, while the embodiment of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C presents three raised surfaces **126**, **130**, **134** and two recessed surfaces, this is for example purposes only as any number of raised and recessed surfaces may be provided on other example embodiments.

[0032] FIG. **2** is a partial-perspective view of another dipper utensil **200** with a different dipper head design, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure. Now referring to FIGS. **1**A-**2**, the dipper utensil **200** includes a handle **102**, dipper head **104**, and a choke guard **110**. The handle **102** and choke guard **110** and the general description of the dipper head **104** (except as set forth below) is the same as that set forth in the description of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C above and is incorporated herein by reference for the sake of brevity.

[0033] Instead of raised portions and recessed portions, as described with reference to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C, the dipper head **104** of the dipper utensil **200** can include a multitude of elongated apertures or cavities **202**, **204**. In one example, the each of the elongated apertures or cavities **202**, **204** can have a longitudinal axis that is parallel or substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **200**. In one example, two sets of apertures or cavities **202**, **204** can be provided on the dipper head **104**. In other example embodiments, one or more than two sets of apertures or cavities can be provided on the dipper head **104**.

[0034] In one example, the dipper head **104** can include a forward set of apertures or cavities **202** and a rear set of apertures **204**, wherein the rear set of apertures or cavities **204** are closer to the choke guard **110** than the forward set of apertures or cavities **202**. The forward set of apertures or cavities **202** can include a first forward aperture **202***a*, a second forward aperture **202***b*, and a third forward aperture **202***c*. In one example, each of the forward apertures **202***a*-**202***c* extends from the front side **122** to the rear side **124** of the dipper head **104** to provide a passageway therethrough. Each of the forward apertures **202***a*-**202***c* includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** to the rear side **124**. Each of the side walls for each of the forward apertures **202***a*-**202***c* can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the front side **122** and rear side **124**.

[0035] In other example embodiments, each of the forward apertures **202***a*-**202***c* can be replaced with forward cavities (not shown) that do not extend all the way through the dipper head **104** but that each include a cavity floor (not shown) such that each forward cavity extends from the front side **122** toward the rear side **124** to the cavity floor and/or from the rear side **124** towards the front side **122** to the cavity floor. In embodiments where the forward apertures **202***a*-**202***c* are replaced with forward cavities, each of the forward cavities includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** or rear side **124** to the cavity floor. Each of the side walls for each of the forward cavities can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the respective front side **122** or rear side **124**.

[0036] The rear set of apertures or cavities **204** can include a first rear aperture **204***a*, a second rear aperture **204***b*, and a third rear aperture **204***c*. In one example, each of the rear apertures **204***a*-**204***c* extends from the front side **122** to the rear side **124** of the dipper head **104** to provide a passageway therethrough. Each of the rear apertures **204***a*-**204***c* includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** to the rear side **124**. Each of the side walls for each of the rear apertures **204***a*-**204***c* can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the front side **122** and rear side **124**.

[0037] In other example embodiments, each of the rear apertures **204***a*-**204***c* can be replaced with rear cavities (not shown) that do not extend all the way through the dipper head **104** but that each include a cavity floor (not shown) such that each rear cavity extends from the front side **122** toward the rear side **124** to the cavity floor and/or from the rear side **124** towards the front side **122** to the cavity floor. In embodiments where the rear apertures **204***a*-**204***c* are replaced with rear cavities, each of the rear cavities includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** or rear side **124** to the cavity floor. Each of the side walls for each of the rear cavities can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the respective front side **122** or rear side **124**.

[0038] In one example, at least a portion of the front apertures or cavities **202** can be axially aligned with a portion of the rear apertures or cavities **204** along an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **200**. In one example, the first forward aperture **202***a* (or cavity) is axially aligned with the first rear aperture **204***a* (or cavity), the second forward aperture **202***b* (or cavity) is axially aligned with the second rear aperture **204***b* (or cavity), and the third forward aperture **202***c* (or cavity) is axially aligned with the third rear aperture (or cavity).

[0039] FIG. **3** is a partial-perspective view of another dipper utensil **300** with a different dipper head design than that of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C and **2**, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure. Now referring to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C and **3**, the dipper utensil **300** includes a handle **102**, dipper head **104**, and a choke guard **110**. The handle **102** and choke guard **110** and the general description of the dipper head **104** (except as set forth below) is the same as that set forth in the description of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C above and is incorporated herein by reference for the sake of brevity.

[0040] Instead of raised portions and recessed portions, as described with reference to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C, the dipper head **104** of the dipper utensil **300** can include a multitude of apertures or cavities **302**, **304**. In one example, two sets of apertures or cavities **302**, **304** can be provided on the dipper head **104**. The first set can be large apertures or cavities **302** and the second set can be small apertures or cavities that have a smaller surface area and volume than the large apertures or cavities **302**. In other example embodiments, one or more than two sets of apertures or cavities can be provided on the dipper head **104**.

[0041] In one example, as shown in FIG. **3**, the dipper head **104** can include a single large aperture or cavity **302**. However, in other embodiments, more than one large aperture or cavity can be provided. The large aperture or cavity **302** can be generally positioned at the center of the dipper head **104** and can have an oval or substantially oval shape defined by one or more side walls **306**. The dipper head **104** can also include multiple small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n*. The example of FIG. **3** presents ten small apertures or

cavities **304***a*-**304***n* but that is for example purposes only as the number of small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n* can be fewer or greater than ten and can be dependent on the desired size of small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n*. In one example, the small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n* can be positioned around the perimeter of the large aperture or cavity **302** with a portion of the dipper head **104** provided between the large aperture or cavity **302** and each of the small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n*. For example, the small apertures or cavities **304***a*-**304***n* can be positioned in an oval or substantially oval pattern along the surface of the dipper head **104**.

[0042] In one example, the large aperture **302** extends from the front side **122** to the rear side **124** of the dipper head **104** to provide a passageway therethrough. The at least one side wall **306** can extend from the front side **122** to the rear side **124**. Each of the side walls **306** can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the front side **122** and rear side **124**.

[0043] In other example embodiments, the large aperture **302** can be replaced with a large cavity (not shown) that does not extend all the way through the dipper head **104** but that includes a cavity floor (not shown) such that the large cavity extends from the front side **122** toward the rear side **124** to the cavity floor and/or from the rear side **124** towards the front side **122** to the cavity floor. In embodiments where the large aperture **302** is replaced with a large cavity, the large cavity includes at least one side wall **306** extending from the front side **122** or rear side **124** to the cavity floor. Each of the side walls **306** for the large cavity can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the respective front side **122** or rear side **124**.

[0044] The small set of apertures **304***a*-**304***n* can each extend from the front side **122** to the rear side **124** of the dipper head **104** to provide a passageway therethrough. Each of the small apertures **304***a*-**304***n* includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** to the rear side **124**. Each of the side walls for each of the small apertures **304***a*-**304***n* can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the front side **122** and rear side **124**.

[0045] In other example embodiments, each of the small apertures **304***a*-**304***n* can be replaced with small cavities (not shown) that do not extend all the way through the dipper head **104** but that each include a cavity floor (not shown) such that each small cavity extends from the front side **122** toward the rear side **124** to the cavity floor and/or from the rear side **124** towards the front side **122** to the cavity floor. In embodiments where the small apertures **304***a*-**304***n* are replaced with small cavities, each of the small cavities includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** or rear side **124** to the cavity floor. Each of the side walls for each of the small cavities can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the respective front side **122** or rear side **124**.

[0046] FIG. **4** is a partial-perspective view of another dipper utensil **400** with a different dipper head design than that of FIGS. **1**A-**3**, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure. Now referring to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C and **4**, the dipper utensil **400** includes a handle **102**, dipper head **104**, and a choke guard **110**. The handle **102** and choke guard **110** and the general description of the dipper head **104** (except as set forth below) is the same as that set forth in the description of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C above and is incorporated herein by reference for the sake of brevity.

[0047] Instead of raised portions and recessed portions, as described with reference to FIGS. **1**A-**1**C, the dipper head **104** of the dipper utensil **400** can include a multitude of elongated apertures or cavities **402-406**. In one example, the each of the elongated apertures or cavities **402-406** can have a longitudinal axis that is orthogonal or substantially orthogonal to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **400**. The apertures or cavities **402-406** can be aligned along the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **400** in certain embodiments. The apertures or cavities **402-406** can have an oval or substantially oval shape defined by at least one side wall **410** for each of the aperture **402-406**.

[0048] In one example, the dipper head **104** can include a first aperture or cavity **402**, a second aperture or cavity **404**, and a third aperture or cavity **406**, wherein the first aperture or cavity **402** is positioned closer to the choke guard **110** than the second aperture or cavity **404** and the third aperture or cavity **406** and wherein the second aperture or cavity **404** is positioned closer to the choke guard **110** than the third aperture or cavity **406**. In one example, each of the apertures **402-406** extends from the front side **122** to the rear side **124** of the dipper head **104** to provide a passageway therethrough. Each of the apertures **402-406** includes at least one side wall **410** extending from the front side **122** to the rear side **124**. Each of the side walls **410** for each of the apertures **402-406** can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the front side **122** and rear side **124**.

[0049] In other example embodiments, each of the apertures **402-406** can be replaced with cavities (not shown) that do not extend all the way through the dipper head **104** but that each include a cavity floor (not shown) such that each cavity extends from the front side **122** toward the rear side **124** to the cavity floor and/or from the rear side **124** towards the front side **122** to the cavity floor. In embodiments where the apertures **402-406** are replaced with cavities, each of the cavities includes at least one side wall extending from the front side **122** or rear side **124** to the cavity floor. Each of the side walls for each of the cavities can be vertical, beveled, curved, or angled with respect to the respective front side **122** or rear side **124**.

[0050] FIGS. **5**A-**5**C present front elevation and perspective views of an early childhood fork eating utensil **500**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure. Now referring to FIGS. **5**A-**5**C, the fork utensil **500** can include a handle **502** and a fork head **504** coupled to the handle **502**. In certain example embodiments, the handle **502** and the fork head **504** are integrally formed from a single piece of material. In other example embodiments, the handle **502** and fork head **504** are separately constructed and then coupled to one another. In certain example embodiments, the fork utensil **500** can be constructed of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a soft or pliable material (e.g., soft or pliable plastic), metal, or any combination thereof. In certain example embodiments, the fork utensil **500** can include a softer or more pliable plastic material that is overmolded onto a rigid plastic material. In other examples, the overmolding may only occur for the fork head **504** to make the fork head softer when in contact with the child's mouth. In another example, the handle **502** may be made from a different material than all or a portion of the fork head **504**.

[0051] The handle **502** can be an elongated member that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the fork utensil **500** and can include a first free end **506** and a distal second end

508. In one example, the first free end **506** of the handle **502** has a width transverse to the longitudinal axis A that is greater than the width of the second end **508** transverse to the longitudinal axis A. In certain example embodiments, the handle **502** can taper from a greater width at the first end **506** to a lesser width at the second end **508**.

[0052] The fork head **504** can include a first end **512** and a second free end or ends **514** that extends along a line or lines parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the dipper utensil **500**. The second end **508** of the handle **502** can be positioned adjacent to and/or directly coupled to the first end **512** of the fork head **504**. The fork head **504** can include a top side **516** and a bottom side **518**. In certain examples, each of the top side **516** and the bottom side **518** include a tine wall **519***a*-**519***b*. In one example, the tine walls **519***a*-**519***b* are a single tine wall for both the top side **516** and the bottom side **518**. The tine wall(s) **519***a*-**519***b* can be separated by a distance to provide a cavity **523** between the tines extending up along the top side **516** and the tines extending up along the bottom side **518**.

[0053] The top side **516** of the fork head **504** can include multiple fork tines **520***a*-**520***d*. In one example, four fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* are provided, as shown in FIGS. **5**A-**5**B. However, the number of tines is just for example purposes as more or less than four tines can be provided along top side **516**. For example, FIG. **5**C presents three tines **520***a*-**520***c* along the top side **516**. Each of the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* can extend from the wall **519***a* towards the second end **514** of the fork head **504**. In certain examples, each of the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* extends along a line parallel or substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the fork utensil **500**. The fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* can be made of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal or any combination thereof. In one example, the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* are made of pliable plastic.

[0054] The bottom side **518** of the fork head **504** can include multiple fork tines **522***a*-**522***d*. In one example, four fork tines **522***a*-**522***d* are provided, as shown in FIGS. **5**A-**5**B. However, the number of tines is just for example purposes as more or less than four tines can be provided along bottom side **518**. For example, FIG. **5**C presents three tines **522***a*-**522***c* along the bottom side **518**. Each of the fork tines **522***a*-**522***d* can extend from the wall **519***b* towards the second end **514** of the fork head **504**. In certain examples, each of the fork tines **522***a*-**522***d* extends along a line parallel or substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the fork utensil **500**. The fork tines **522***a*-**522***d* can be made of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal or any combination thereof. In one example, the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* are made of pliable plastic.

[0055] The fork head **504** can also include a cavity **523** disposed between the top side **516** and the bottom side **518**. The cavity **523** can be recessed within the fork head **504** such that the floor (not shown) of the cavity **523** is positioned below the top end of each of the walls **519***a*-**519***b*. One or more fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* can extend from the floor of the cavity out of the cavity **523** and generally between the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* and the fork tines **522***a*-**522***d*. In one example, as shown in FIGS. **5**A-**5**B, three fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* can be provided in the cavity **523**. However, this is for example purposes only, as greater or lesser than three fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* may extend out from the cavity **523**. For example, two fork tines **524***a*-**524***b* extend out from the cavity **523** between fork tines **520***a*-**520***c* and fork tines **522***a*-**522***c* in FIG. **5**C.

[0056] The fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* can extend out from the cavity to a first tine height **530** and one or more of the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* and **522***a*-**522***d* can extend out a second tine height **528** along a line parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the fork utensil **500**. In certain examples, the first tine height **530** is less than the second tine height **528**. In other example embodiments, the first tine height **530** is equal to the second tine height **528**. The fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* can be made of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal or any combination thereof. In one example, the fork tines **524***a*-**524***c* are made of a material that is more rigid than the material used for the fork tines **520***a*-**520***d* and **522***a*-**522***d* and are less flexible, such as a rigid plastic. In other examples, the tines **524***a*-**524***c* can be made from the same material as the tines **520***a*-**520***d* and **522***a*-**522***d* and can have the same flexibility as the tines **520***a*-**520***d* and **522***a*-**522***d*.

[0057] FIGS. **6**A-**6**B present front elevation and disassembled views of an early childhood multi-handle eating utensil **600**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure. Referring now to FIGS. **6**A-**6**B, the multi-handle utensil **600** can include a primary handle **602** and a utensil head **604** coupled to the primary handle **602**. In certain example embodiments, the primary handle **602** and the utensil head **604** are integrally formed from a single piece of material. In other example embodiments, the primary handle **602** and utensil head **604** are separately constructed and then coupled to one another. In certain example embodiments, the multi-handle utensil **600** can be constructed of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal, or any combination thereof. In certain example embodiments, the multi-handle utensil **600** can include a softer or more pliable plastic material that is overmolded onto a rigid plastic material. In other examples, the overmolding may only occur for the utensil head **604** or the primary handle **602**.

[0058] The primary handle **602** can be an elongated member that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **600** and can include a first free end **606** and a distal second end **608**. In one example, the first free end **606** of the primary handle **602** has a width transverse to the longitudinal axis A that is greater than the width of the second end **608** transverse to the longitudinal axis A. In certain example embodiments, the primary handle **602** can taper along a portion of the primary handle **602** from a greater width to a lesser width at the second end **608**.

[0059] The utensil head **604** can include a first end **612** and a second free end **614** that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **600**. The second end **608** of the primary handle **602** can be positioned adjacent to and/or directly coupled to the first end **612** of the utensil head **604**. In one example, the utensil head **604** can be a spoon. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **604** can be a fork having multiple fork tines. In such an example, the utensil head **604** can be substantially the same as that shown and described above with reference to the fork head **504** in FIGS. **5**A-**5**C. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **604** can be a dipper head, such as any one of the

dipper heads shown and described above with reference to FIGS. **1A-4**. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **604** can include a knife blade.

[0060] The utensil head **604** includes a top side and an opposing bottom side. The outer perimeter of the utensil head **604** can have an oval or substantially oval shape, when the utensil **600** is a spoon or dipper, with an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **600** being greater than the axis transverse to the longitudinal axis A. When the utensil **600** is a spoon, the top side of the utensil head **604** can include a concave surface **616** and the bottom side can include a convex surface to hold food within the top side of the utensil head **604**. When the utensil **600** is a fork, the utensil head **604** can include multiple tines that extend along a line parallel or substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **600**.

[0061] The multi-handle utensil **600** can also include a secondary handle **618**. In one example, the secondary handle **618** is removably coupled to, and capable of being manually removed by a user without tools from the primary handle **602**. In other example embodiments, the secondary handle **618** can be fixedly coupled to the primary handle **602**.

[0062] The secondary handle **618** can include a center section **620** that abuts the primary handle **602**. The secondary handle can also include a first handle arm **622** extending from a first lateral side of the central section **620** and a second handle arm **624** extending from a second lateral side of the central section **620** opposite the first lateral side. The first handle arm **622** can have a first end coupled to the first lateral side of the central section **620** and a distal, second free end **626**. The second handle arm **624** can have a first end coupled to the second lateral side of the central section **620** and a distal, second free end **628**. In one example, the central section **620**, first handle arm **622**, and second handle arm **624** can be integrally formed from a single piece of material. In other examples, the central section **620**, first handle arm **622**, and second handle arm **624** can be separately constructed and coupled together. In certain embodiments, the secondary handle **618** can be C-shaped or U-shaped.

[0063] The first handle arm **622** can extend generally out from a first lateral side of the primary handle **602** and can extend from the central section **620** in a direction generally towards the first end **606** of the primary handle **606**. The second handle arm **624** can extend generally out from a second lateral side of the primary handle **602** opposite the first lateral side and can extend from the central section **620** in a direction generally towards the first end **606** of the primary handle **606**. Each of the first handle arm **622** and the second handle arm **624** can be sized and shaped to be gripped by an adult human hand.

[0064] As shown in FIG. **6**B, in certain embodiments, the secondary handle **618** can be configured to be removable and re-attachable to the primary handle **602**. In one example, the secondary handle **618** can include a first protrusion **628** and a second protrusion **630** extending down from a bottom side of the central section **620**. A gap **632** can be provided between the first protrusion **628** and the second protrusion **630**. The width of the gap **632** can correspond to a width of the primary handle **602** where the secondary handle **618** is supposed to be attached. The first protrusion **628** and second protrusion **630** can be made of a flexible material in order that the secondary handle **618** can "snap-fit" onto the primary handle **602** by the protrusions **628**, **630** flexing away from the longitudinal axis A when the central section **620** is pressed onto the primary handle. The flexibility of the first protrusion **628** and the second protrusion can then maintain pressure along the opposing lateral sides of the primary handle **602** to hold the secondary handle **618** in place along a top side of the primary handle **602**. In certain example embodiments, the secondary handle **618** can be made from the same material as the primary handle **602**. In other embodiments, the secondary handle **618** is made from a harder or stiffer material than the primary handle **602**.

[0065] In certain embodiments, the primary handle **602** can also include a handle cover with a first stop end **634** and a second stop end **636**. The first stop end **634** and second stop end **636** can be positioned along the axis A of the primary handle **602** to abut the second protrusion **630** and first protrusion **628** respectively to prevent the secondary handle **620** from sliding towards the first end **606** of the primary handle **602**.

[0066] FIG. **7** is a front elevation view of an early childhood multi-handle eating utensil **700**, in accordance with another example embodiment of the disclosure. Referring now to FIGS. **6**A-**7**, the multi-handle utensil **700** can include a primary handle **702** and a utensil head **704** coupled to the primary handle **702**. In certain example embodiments, the primary handle **702** and the utensil head **704** are integrally formed from a single piece of material. In other example embodiments, the primary handle **702** and utensil head **704** are separately constructed and then coupled to one another. In certain example embodiments, the multi-handle utensil **700** can be constructed of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal, or any combination thereof. In certain example embodiments, the multi-handle utensil **700** can include a softer or more pliable plastic material that is overmolded onto a rigid plastic material. In other examples, the overmolding may only occur for the utensil head **704** or the primary handle **702**.

[0067] The primary handle **702** can include a first free end **606**, a distal second end **608**, a first handle arm **718**, and a second handle arm **720**. In one example, the first free end **606** of the primary handle **602** has a width transverse to a longitudinal axis A that is greater than the width of the second end **608** transverse to the longitudinal axis A. The first handle arm **718** can extend generally from or adjacent the first end **706** to or adjacent the second end **708**. The second handle arm **720** can extend generally from or adjacent the first end **706** to or adjacent the second end **708**. A gap **719** can be provided between the first handle arm **718** and the second handle arm **720**. The gap **719** can be defined by the first handle arm **718** and the second handle arm **720**. In certain example embodiments, the gap **719** can have an oval shape. Each of the first handle arm **718** and second handle arm **720** can have a curved shape in one example embodiment. In other examples, the first handle arm **718** and second handle arm **720** can be made up of multiple linear sections or a combination of linear and curved sections.

[0068] The utensil head **704** can include a first end **712** and a second free end **714** that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **700**. The second end **708** of the primary handle **702** can be positioned adjacent to and/or directly coupled to the first end **712** of the utensil head **704**. In one example, the utensil head **704** can be a spoon. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **704** can be a fork having multiple fork tines. In such an example,

the utensil head **704** can be substantially the same as that shown and described above with reference to the fork head **504** in FIGS. **5**A-**5**C. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **704** can be a dipper head, such as any one of the dipper heads shown and described above with reference to FIGS. **1**A-**4**. In other example embodiments, the utensil head **704** can include a knife blade.

[0069] The utensil head **704** includes a top side and an opposing bottom side. The outer perimeter of the utensil head **704** can have an oval or substantially oval shape, when the utensil **700** is a spoon or dipper, with an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **700** being greater than the axis transverse to the longitudinal axis A. When the utensil **700** is a spoon, the top side of the utensil head **704** can include a concave surface **716** and the bottom side can include a convex surface to hold food within the top side of the utensil head **704**. When the utensil **700** is a fork, the utensil head **704** can include multiple fork tines that extend along a line parallel or substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis A of the multi-handle utensil **700**. Each of the first handle arm **718** and the second handle arm **720** can be sized and shaped to be gripped by a human hand.

[0070] FIG. **8** is a representation **800** of the use of the multi-handle utensil **600**, **700** of FIGS. **6**A-**7**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure. Now referring to FIGS. **6**A-**8**, a child **806** can grip the multi-handle utensil **600**, **700** with the child's hand **808** and a parent/caregiver **802** can also grip the multi-handle utensil **600**, **700** with the parent/caregiver's hand **804** to assist the child with learning how to use eating utensils.

[0071] FIGS. **9**A-**9**C present side elevation and perspective views of an early childhood utensil with rotating element **900**, in accordance with one example embodiment of the disclosure. Referring to FIGS. **9**A-**9**C, the utensil **900** can include a handle **902** and a rotating element **910** movably coupled to the handle **902**. In certain example embodiments, the handle **902** and rotating element **910** are separately constructed and then coupled to one another. In certain example embodiments, the utensil **900** can be constructed of any material including, but not limited to, a rigid material (e.g., rigid plastic), a pliable or flexible material (e.g., a pliable or flexible plastic), metal, or any combination thereof. In certain example embodiments, the utensil **900** can include a softer or more pliable plastic material that is overmolded onto a rigid plastic material. In other examples, the overmolding may only occur for the rotating element **910** to make the rotating element **910** softer when in contact with the child's mouth. In one example embodiment, the handle **902** is made of a first material and the rotating element **910** is made of a second material that is softer than the first material. In certain example embodiments, the second material is a thermoplastic elastomer (TPE).

[0072] The handle **902** can be an elongated member that extends along the longitudinal axis A of the utensil **900** and can include a first end **906** and a distal second end **908**. In one example, the first end **906** of the handle **902** has a width transverse to the longitudinal axis A that is greater than the width of the second end **908** transverse to the longitudinal axis A. The handle **902** can also include a mounting member **904**. The mounting member **904** can extend out from a top surface **912** of the handle **902**. The mounting member **904** can be position at or adjacent to the second end **908** of the handle **902**. In one example, the mounting member **904** extends out from the handle in a direction orthogonal or substantially orthogonal to the longitudinal axis A of the utensil **900**. In certain examples, the mounting member **904** is a mounting post. The mounting member **904** can define a rotational axis B about which the rotating element **910** can rotate.

[0073] The rotating element **910** can be movably coupled to the mounting member **904**, such that the rotating element **910** can rotate in the direction R and/or opposite the direction R about the rotational axis B. In one example embodiment, the rotating element **910** has an outer surface with a spherical or substantially spherical shape. In other example embodiments, the rotating element **910** can have an outer surface having another shape, such as cylindrical, tubular, or capsule shaped. In one example, the size of the rotating element **910** should be large enough such that, should it become detached from the mounting member **904**, the rotating element **910** would not choke a child.

[0074] The rotating element **910** can include a cavity **911**. The cavity **911** can be positioned along the bottom side of the rotating element **910**. The cavity **911** can be sized and shaped to receive at least a portion of the mounting member **904** therein. In one example, the rotating element **910** can be made for two pieces that are coupled together. Each of the two pieces can include a portion of the cavity **911**, such that the two pieces can be coupled together about a portion of the mounting member **904** to trap a portion of the mounting member **904** within an internal portion of the rotating element **910**.

[0075] The rotating element **910** can also include multiple dimples **914** or protrusions disposed along the outer surface of the rotating element **910**. The dimples **914** or protrusions can be disposed along all or just a portion of the surface area of the outer surface of the rotating element **914**. In one example, the dimples **914** or protrusions can be provided in multiple rows that each extend around the circumference of the outer surface of the rotating element. The dimples **914** or protrusions can be configured to help pick up an hold food items onto the outer surface of the rotating element **910**.

[0076] As shown in FIG. **9**C, a child can place the utensil **900** into a dish containing food. The child can then make a back and forth motion with the utensil **900** that causes the rotating element **910** to roll in the food along the dish surface to pick up a portion of the food along the outer surface of the rotating element **910**. The child can then raise the utensil **900** to their mouth and place the rotating element **910** within their mouth to obtain the food.

[0077] In one embodiment of the disclosure, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a handle; a utensil head comprising a top side and a bottom side; and a choke guard disposed between the handle and the utensil head; wherein the top side of the utensil head comprises: a first raised surface; and a first recessed surface.

[0078] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first recessed surface is disposed about an outer perimeter of the first raised surface.

[0079] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include further comprising: a second raised surface; a second recessed surface; and a third raised surface.

[0080] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first recessed surface, the second raised surface, the second recessed surface, and the third raised surface are concentric with the first raised surface.

[0081] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first raised surface has an oval shape.

[0082] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first recessed surface, the second raised surface, the second recessed surface, and the third raised surface are each oval shaped.

[0083] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first raised surface has a first height and the second raised surface has a second height, wherein the second height is greater than the first height.

[0084] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head is coupled to a front surface of the choke guard and the handle is coupled to a rear surface of the choke guard.

[0085] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the handle, utensil head, and choke guard are integrally formed from a single piece of material.

[0086] In one embodiment of the disclosure, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a handle; a utensil head comprising a top side, a bottom side, and a plurality of cavities, each cavity comprising a cavity floor, wherein each of a first portion of the plurality of cavities extends from a top side towards the bottom side to the cavity floor; and a choke guard disposed between the handle and the utensil head.

[0087] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein each of a second portion of the plurality of cavities extends from a bottom side towards the top side to the cavity floor.

[0088] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the plurality of cavities comprises: a forward set of cavities; and a rear set of cavities, wherein the rear set of cavities are disposed closer to the choke guard than the forward set of cavities.

[0089] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the forward set of cavities comprises a first elongated cavity having a first longitudinal axis, wherein the rear set of cavities comprises a second elongated cavity having a second longitudinal axis, wherein the first longitudinal axis is axially aligned with the second longitudinal axis.

[0090] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the handle has a third longitudinal axis and wherein the first longitudinal axis and the second longitudinal axis are parallel to the third longitudinal axis

[0091] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the plurality of cavities comprises: a large cavity; and a plurality of small cavities, wherein a volume of the large cavity is greater than a volume of each of the small cavities.

[0092] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the plurality of small cavities are disposed about the large cavities.

[0093] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the large cavity has a substantially oval shape.

[0094] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the plurality of cavities comprises: a first cavity; a second cavity; and a third cavity.

[0095] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first cavity, the second cavity, and the third cavity are aligned along a longitudinal axis of the handle.

[0096] In another embodiment, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a handle; a utensil head comprising: a top side comprising a first set of fork tines; and a bottom side comprising a second set of fork tines.

[0097] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head further comprises a cavity disposed between the top side and the bottom side.

[0098] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head further comprises a cavity floor, wherein a third set of fork tines extends from the cavity floor.

[0099] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines are flexible and wherein the third set of fork tines are rigid.

[0100] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines are more flexible than the third set of fork tines.

[0101] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines extend a first length, wherein the third set of fork tines extend a second length, and wherein the first length is greater than the second length.

[0102] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first set of fork tines has a first number of fork tines, wherein the second set of fork tines has a second number of fork tines, wherein the third set of fork tines has a third number of fork tines, and wherein the third number is less than the first number and the second number.

[0103] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first number and the second number are equal.

[0104] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first number and the second number are four and wherein the third number is three.

[0105] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first number and the second number are three and wherein the third number is two.

[0106] In another embodiment, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a primary handle; a utensil head coupled to the primary handle; and a secondary handle coupled to the primary handle.

[0107] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the secondary handle is removably coupled to the primary handle.

[0108] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the secondary handle comprises: a central section; and a first handle arm extending from the central section.

[0109] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the primary handle comprises a first lateral side and a second lateral side and wherein the first handle arm extends along the first lateral side of the primary handle.

[0110] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the secondary handle further comprises a second handle arm extending from the central section.

[0111] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the primary handle comprises a first lateral side and a second lateral side, wherein the first handle arm extends along the first lateral side of the primary handle, and wherein the second handle arm extends along the second lateral side of the primary handle.

[0112] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a spoon.

[0113] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a fork.

[0114] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a knife.

[0115] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the secondary handle is substantially C-shaped.

[0116] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the secondary handle further comprises: a top side; an opposing bottom side; a first protrusion extending from the bottom side; and a second protrusion extending from the bottom side.

[0117] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include further comprising a gap disposed between the first protrusion and the second protrusion.

[0118] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first protrusion and the second protrusion are flexible.

[0119] In another embodiment, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a handle comprising: a first end; a distal second end; a first handle arm extending between the first end and the second end; and a second handle arm extending between the first end and the second end; a utensil head coupled to the second end of the handle.

[0120] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the handle and utensil head are integrally formed.

[0121] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the wherein the first handle arm has a first curved shape and the second handle arm has a second curved shape.

[0122] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the first handle arm and the second handle arm define an oval shape.

[0123] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a spoon.

[0124] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a fork.

[0125] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the utensil head comprises a knife.

[0126] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include further comprising a gap disposed between the first handle arm and the second handle arm.

[0127] In another embodiment, the disclosure can provide an eating utensil comprising: a handle; a mounting member; and a rotating element movably coupled to the mounting member.

[0128] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the handle comprises a first end and a distal second end, wherein the mounting member is disposed adjacent to the second end.

[0129] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the rotating element rotates about an axis defined by the mounting member.

[0130] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the rotating element is substantially spherical-shaped.

[0131] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the rotating element comprises: an outer surface; and a plurality of dimples disposed in the outer surface.

[0132] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the rotating element comprises: an outer surface; and a plurality of protrusions extending out from the outer surface.

[0133] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the handle extends along a first longitudinal axis and wherein the rotating element rotates about a second axis.

[0134] In one aspect of the embodiment, the eating utensil can include wherein the second axis is substantially orthogonal to the first axis.

[0135] Though the disclosed examples include a particular arrangements of a number of parts, components, features, and aspects, the disclosure is not limited to only those examples or arrangements. Any one or more of the parts, components, features, and aspects of the disclosure can be employed alone or in other arrangements of any two or more of the same.

[0136] Although certain utensil features, functions, components, and parts have been described herein in accordance with the teachings of the present disclosure, the scope of coverage of this patent is not limited thereto. On the contrary, this patent covers all embodiments of the teachings of the disclosure that fairly fall within the scope of permissible equivalents.

[0137] Conditional language, such as, among others, "can," "could," "might," or "may," unless specifically stated otherwise, or otherwise understood within the context as used, is generally intended to convey that certain implementations could include, while other implementations do not include, certain features, elements, and/or operations. Thus, such conditional language generally is not intended to imply that features, elements, and/or operations are in any way required for one or more implementations or that one or more implementations necessarily include logic for deciding, with or without user input or prompting, whether these features, elements, and/or operations are included or are to be performed in any particular implementation.

[0138] Many modifications and other implementations of the disclosure set forth herein will be apparent having the benefit of the teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the disclosure is not to be limited to the specific implementations disclosed and that modifications and other implementations are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.

What is claimed is:

1. An eating utensil comprising:

a handle;

a utensil head comprising a top side, a bottom side, and a plurality of apertures extending through the utensil head from the top side to the bottom side; and

a choke guard disposed between the handle and the utensil head.

2. The eating utensil of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of apertures comprises:

a forward set of apertures; and

a rear set of apertures, wherein the rear set of apertures are disposed closer to the choke guard than the forward set of apertures.

3. The eating utensil of claim **2**, wherein the forward set of apertures comprises a first elongated aperture having a first longitudinal axis,

wherein the rear set of apertures comprises a second elongated aperture having a second longitudinal axis,

wherein the first longitudinal axis is axially aligned with the second longitudinal axis.

4. The eating utensil of claim **3**, wherein the handle has a third longitudinal axis and wherein the first longitudinal axis and the second longitudinal axis are parallel to the third longitudinal axis.

5. The eating utensil of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of apertures comprises:

a large aperture; and

a plurality of small apertures,

wherein the volume of the large aperture is greater than the volume of each of the small apertures.

6. The eating utensil of claim **5**, wherein the plurality of small apertures are disposed about the large aperture.

7. The eating utensil of claim **5**, wherein the large aperture has a substantially oval shape.

8. The eating utensil of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of apertures comprises:

a first aperture;

a second aperture; and

a third aperture.

9. The eating utensil of claim **8**, wherein the first aperture, the second aperture, and the third aperture are aligned along a longitudinal axis of the handle.

10. An eating utensil comprising:

a handle;

a utensil head comprising:

a top side comprising

a first set of fork tines; and

a bottom side comprising a second set of fork tines.

11. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the utensil head further comprises a cavity disposed between the top side and the bottom side.

12. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the utensil head further comprises a cavity floor, wherein a third set of fork tines extends from the cavity floor.

13. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines are flexible and wherein the third set of fork tines are rigid.

14. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines are more flexible than the third set of fork tines.

15. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the first set of fork tines and the second set of fork tines extend a first length, wherein the third set of fork tines extend a second length, and wherein the first length is greater than the second length.

16. The eating utensil of claim **10**, wherein the first set of fork tines has a first number of fork tines, wherein the second set of fork tines has a second number of fork tines, wherein the third set of fork tines has a third number of fork tines, and wherein the third number is less than the first number and the second number.

17. The eating utensil of claim **16**, wherein the first number and the second number are equal.

18. The eating utensil of claim **16**, wherein the first number and the second number are four and wherein the third number is three.

19. The eating utensil of claim **16**, wherein the first number and the second number are three and wherein the third number is two.

20. An eating utensil comprising:

a handle;

a utensil head comprising a top side, a bottom side, and a plurality of apertures extending through the utensil head from the top side to the bottom side, the plurality of apertures comprising

a forward set of apertures; and

a rear set of apertures, wherein the rear set of apertures are disposed closer to the choke guard than the forward set of apertures; and

a choke guard disposed between the handle and the utensil head.

* * * * *