

Healthful Eating

5 Smart Ways To

Raise Children Who Eat Their Vegetables

Going Green:
Simple Steps for
N.C. Families

Believe it or not, it is possible to raise kids who like eating a wide variety of vegetables. The secret is to never bribe or threaten them about eating green or orange things. Just follow as many of these simple steps as you can.

Enjoy a variety of vegetables yourself

- ▶ The most important thing that adults can do for children's eating is to model healthy habits. If you enjoy eating a wide variety of foods, including vegetables, children will see that as the normal thing to do. There's no need to make a big deal about your enjoyment, just make vegetables a tasty part of every meal. If you eat vegetables, so will your children.

Grow a vegetable garden

- ▶ Most adults know that the taste of freshly-picked vegetables cannot be beat. Kids love to pick and eat almost anything that they have grown themselves. There is more than one way to grow your own fresh vegetables. You could use a container on the porch. If you have space, dig up a backyard plot. Or, join a local community garden.

Cut up vegetables for meals and snacks

- ▶ Children usually like the taste and texture of raw vegetables better than cooked ones. Serve a small plate of bite-sized vegetables at every meal. Try broccoli trees, baby carrots, celery sticks, cucumber slices, sweet pepper pieces or sugar snap pea pods. Add some low-fat Ranch dip. Kids will naturally get into a crunchy, healthy habit.

Serve bright, colorful vegetables

- ▶ Everyone eats with their eyes first. Children (and adults) will find bright and colorful vegetables more appealing. Overcooked, mushy vegetables are likely to turn everyone off. When cooking vegetables, keep them brightly colored and crunchy in texture. The best way to do this is to steam or microwave them for just a few minutes.

Be adventurous with vegetables

- ▶ When children see vegetables as tasty and fun, they are much more likely to enjoy eating them. Buy new items and try new recipes. These are some easy ways to make nutrition fun for children. Need ideas for making vegetables more adventurous in your kitchen? Visit www.foodchamps.org for recipes, games, coloring sheets and more!