

# Five "Peas" for Raising a Veggie-Loving Child

## Promotion

Placing vegetables up-front-and-center increases the likelihood that they will be eaten. Always keep plenty of cleaned, ready-to-eat vegetables at eye level in the refrigerator. In the late afternoon (when kids are super hungry), set out a bowl of pea pods, baby carrots, grape tomatoes or broccoli florets on a table or area nearby the children. It won't take long for the veggies to disappear!



## Persistence

Even if you have an ironclad vegetable-resistant child, it's important to continue to serve vegetables at the family table. It sometimes takes over 10 exposures to a new food for a child to muster up the courage to try it. But if the food becomes familiar enough, the odds increase that the child will actually sample the food.

*NOTE: Don't force the issue, though. When you force a "bite" or two, it actually makes a child more resistant to trying new foods. The important thing is that you continue to serve vegetables and set a good example by eating them yourself.*

## Personalize

Try serving vegetables in a variety of ways. Some kids like them fresh and crunchy while others preferred them lightly steamed. Mixed dishes such as vegetable soup, stir fry dishes, spinach lasagna and burritos served with fresh salsa are more appealing to some children.

## Plant

Gardening is perhaps the best way to get kids interested in trying new vegetables. Assign children a small plot in the yard and let them choose which vegetables to plant. Kids take pride in the foods they grow and will enjoy sampling their harvest.

## Produce Story Books

There are a lot of fun children's books with a "eating vegetables" theme. Children have fun hearing/reading these stories while they hear positive messages about eating vegetables. Some examples:

[I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato](#), by Lauren Child (©2000, Candlewick Press)

Lola is a fussy eater until her big brother Charlie makes up inventive names for vegetables and other foods.

[Rabbit Food](#), by Susanna Gretz (©1999, Candlewick Press)

John is a young rabbit who doesn't like vegetables ("rabbit food"). Uncle Bunny comes to the rescue, except he tries to hide the fact that he doesn't like carrots!

[The Ugly Vegetables](#), by Grace Lin (©1999, Charlesbridge Publishing)

A tale about a little girl who thinks her mother's Chinese vegetable garden is ugly, especially compared to the neighbor's flower gardens. She changes her mind after her mother makes a delicious soup from the vegetables. Recipe included.

