

Food For Thought

Nutrition – Michael Ferraro

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Talking Points

- ❖ Do your children know where food comes from? I'm talking about plants, not about the grocery store.
- ❖ Most kids don't get the experience to watch their food grow but it can be an awesome learning experience for them.
- ❖ Kids can be fascinated that healthy food comes from a seed and they have the power to help it grow.
- ❖ Author Michael Ferraro says, "Studies have shown that children tend to eat more vegetables and herbs when they're the ones who help plant, pick and prepare the harvest." (58) (Of course, kids will be kids and won't embrace everything.)
- ❖ Even if all you know is that plants need water, sunlight, soil and fertilizer you can begin to teach your children about the benefits of gardening.
- ❖ "Your backyard is an amazing classroom to teach kids that growing plants is very important to keeping our planet green and healthy, and that growing food is even better, because vegetables, fruits and herbs help keep our bodies healthy, too." (59)
- ❖ Michael shares a few simple ideas to help get the lessons growing:
 - "Give your child his own special gardening spot." (59)
 - "Pick plants that grow well (and easily) in your area, keeping in mind what kind of sun conditions your child's growing space has." (59) (Most vegetable plants need at least 6 hours of full sun a day)
 - "Encourage your young sprouts to keep a garden journal as their plants start to grow." (59)
 - If you're not ready to start gardening just yet, look for local botanical gardens or arboretums to visit together. Often times they have entire sections dedicated to kids.
- ❖ Teaching kids where healthy food comes from gives them gardening knowledge and skills, the opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle, a way to help fight childhood obesity, opportunity to help the environment and a way to have fun outdoors with family. Children will feel proud of themselves and their accomplishments.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

Michael Ferraro is founder and president of Growums, a family-owned company dedicated to teaching children how fun, easy and important it is to grow and eat healthy food: <http://www.growums.com/>

“Gardening with Kids: Turn digging in the dirt into a lifetime of love and respect for nature with your children” by Marti Ross Bjornson <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/gardening-kids>

“Whats in Your Basket? An exclusive interview with Jeffrey M. Smith”
<http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Nutrition/whats-in-your-basket-an-exclusive-interview-with-jeffrey-m-smith.html>