



Plant-Based Parenting: Upping the Cool Factor for Your Kids

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Lean Green DAD Cory Warren dishes out sage advice for getting your kids on board with a plant-based diet.

Your health, the environment, the animals: No matter what motivated you to transition yourself or your family to a [plant-based diet](#), only good things can come of it. For parents, transitioning one's family to plant-based presents certain challenges: While we have the internal confidence of knowing we are doing the right thing, a plant-based diet might not be perceived as “cool” for our kids in their social interactions at school, birthday parties, or at a friend's house. So what can we do as parents to help their plant-based coolness thrive?

Plant the Seed of Confidence

When you talk to your kids about a plant-based diet, talk about it confidently and proudly. They will emulate you. The feeling you want to try to communicate is that by eating this way they will be superheroes. No, we don't want them trying to fly or lifting heavy objects, but we do want to start this “journey to cool” with them.

Different kids respond to different things. Let's say, for example, we want them to understand that eating healthy foods such as fruits, veggies, beans, nuts, and seeds will help keep their bodies strong. We could communicate that by saying it a few different ways. Here's a sample of some fun things you could say depending on their age range:

Ages 3-4: “Way to go, buddy. You keep eating that broccoli and you are going to turn green, just like Hulk—and you know how strong Hulk is! What does Hulk say?” Every time they eat broccoli, you can celebrate by shouting “HULK SMASH” together at the top of your lungs.

Ages 5-7: “I am so happy to see you eating your broccoli. When you do that it shows that you really care about your body. Is that a bulging muscle I see coming out of your arm there? Do you think it might be because of the awesome food you're eating these days? Way to go, bud!” Follow with a hug.

Ages 8-11: “Whoa, did you just eat all the broccoli on your plate? Nice move! Do your friends at school eat

broccoli?” If the answer is no, ask: “Why do you think that is?” Creating an awareness of their healthy decision and letting them own it is awesome. For this age, strive to facilitate the thought process, allowing them to come up with the idea for themselves.

Teenagers: We all know that teens can sometimes be a bit tough because, at this point in their lives, they feel they know it all. And no matter how much you tell them that they are awesome, your mom and dad powers might not be as potent as they used to be. So enlist the help of someone cooler than yourself: Find a celebrity who's eating a plant-based diet. If your kiddo is into sports, show them some of the top-performing vegan professional athletes out there. If your teen is a musician, you've got a lot of inspiring figures to choose from, as many of music's hottest names are vegan or plant-based. Heck, search the web for “vegan celebrity” and you will find a ton of folks you didn't even know were fueled by plants!

Cool comes from within, so work with your kids to plant the seeds of plant-based confidence.. You are already leading by example, but instilling the “why” sprinkled with a little bit of “parental marketing” on top might just be the perfect recipe for success.

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.