

Transitioning Older Children to Raw Foods

“Let food be your medicine, and medicine be your food”

HIPPOCRATES

“A good basic rule is—Everything you eat and drink should come from a garden, tree, bush or the grocery produce section. Make sure it’s organic. If you sprayed a can of Raid on an apple, would you eat it?”

JINGEE TALIFERO, THE DAILY RAW INSPIRATION FROM JINGEE AT WWW.THEGARDENDIET.COM

Transitioning older children to the raw food lifestyle can be daunting. I only learned over time with the unfortunate mistakes I made with my own children that this transition must be done gently and with love. You as the parent need to start off as the example. If you set a good example yourself, your actions will speak louder than words. You will be teaching your children it is all right to be different and to live what you believe to be the truth. Only through educating yourself will you become confident raw plant foods are scientifically and nutritionally optimal. You are then a very powerful example. If one of the parents is still eating unnatural and unhealthy foods, the children will be influenced by that parent. It would be most beneficial for both parents to read and understand the importance of healthful raw vegan foods and to support each other toward a healthy lifestyle, as the nutrition given to developing children’s bodies will either enhance or have a negative effect on their health and future wellbeing.

You might begin by talking to your child about young people who have triumphed over illness and disease. For example, both children of the Boutenko family (see their books referenced in the bibliography) overcame illnesses after

switching to raw vegan foods. My son Marco overcame asthmatic symptoms, ear infections and chronic allergic rhinitis after changing to raw vegan foods. Prior to making this dietary change, pediatric allergists' tests revealed he was allergic to many foods, pollens and animal hair. His wheezing and gasping during the day became even worse at night. Some improvement was noted after giving up processed foods. But following the change to live foods, the allergies and asthmatic symptoms were relieved within a year, and he no longer had allergies to any healthful foods, or pollens or animal fur. It was so obvious that ease of digestion had a lot to do with healing. A number of children eating mainly raw foods have made remarkable improvement in their abilities to focus and learn. Fresh fruits and vegetables with their high water content exit the body quickly. Live foods are easily digested, taking from 20 minutes to 5 or 6 hours to digest, whereas cooked foods can take several days to digest. These cooked, denatured, slow transiting foods with their low water content cause constipation. The body wants chlorophyll, glucose and enzymes, found in fruits and vegetables, and when those needs are met, the system operates the way it was intended. Dr. Douglas Graham states: "Health is the natural state of everything on this planet, and your body, if given the proper chance, will always go toward health. When the kidneys and liver are overloaded, toxemia levels rise. At a certain point, the toxemia level reaches toleration, and then you get symptoms." We need to nurture and care for ourselves and our children to avoid this toxemia toleration level and to have the health we desire for our families.

In the book *Disease-Proof Your Child—Feeding Kids Right*, Dr. Joel Fuhrman writes about healing children from A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) through high nutrient plant foods.

A.D.H.D. may also disappear or diminish when a child is removed from a pressurized, competitive institutional environment and has the chance to learn through following his or her interests. See the Homeschooling chapter. A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder) and A.D.H.D. are often unrealistic labels, which can be unfair interpretations of different ways of behaving. Each child might be taken care of in a way that makes that particular child shine. The established method of trying to make all children fit through a certain production system and drugging all of those who don't will have future consequences for us all.

As a certified speech pathologist working with learning disabled and autistic children for over 30 years, and as a teacher of "Creating Healthy Children" classes, I've observed children suffering from A.D.D., learning disability or

autism spectrum disorder improve their overall health and ability to focus and learn.

Improvements can be expected when animal foods including dairy, processed foods, and gluten are excluded, and when fresh fruits and vegetables predominate. Additionally, permanently stopping the administration of all vaccines containing many dangerous chemicals that affect the nervous system is strongly recommended. Parents attending my classes have been able to witness their children heal from A.D.D., learning disability and autism by adopting these measures. Some parents have also had success with detoxifying their children from heavy metals through use of the hyperbaric chamber. Dr. Tim O'Shea, author of *The Sanctity of Human Blood*, observes successful results with his autism detoxification protocol.

Animal-based foods are loaded with growth hormones, often leading to abnormal growth and obesity. Many North Americans are wary of raising children on raw plant foods because, upon examination, some vegan children may weigh less or be smaller than those raised on the standard American diet. However, it's really the overweight and obese children who need to be scrutinized more carefully. It's not the parents who are taking care to feed their children Nature's food who are risking their children's health but those who unwittingly feed their children fast foods. The latter are victimized by ignorant peer pressure and advertising. Studies show the high sugar content in processed foods contributes to the elongation of the bones—children become taller but their bones are weaker. From the article, "Secular Changes in Size and Maturity: Causes and Effects" by Robert M. Malina in the Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development: "Overweight and/or obese children are generally taller than their age and sex due to the addition of refined sugar from processed foods and beverages." Additionally, a Harvard University researcher found girls who drink soda more than triple their chances of breaking a bone, especially among more active girls. High amounts of phosphorous in soda are also linked to bone loss.

Jingee Talifero emailed this letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in May 2007:

"You cannot create and nourish a robust baby merely on foods from plants" writes Nina Planck in "Death by Veganism," an article in Monday's paper. That is not a fact. I have four robust children who have eaten only foods from plants since conception. See photos at www.TheGardenDiet.com where I sell my eBooks "The Garden Diet," "Raising Raw Vegan Children," and "Raw Pregnancy, Ecstatic Birth."

Science says humans do better without animal products. Why are children different? Because we like fat babies! Not long ago if babies didn't have extra fat they would be less likely to survive famine or hard winters. These problems don't exist in our overfed society, yet the aesthetic endures. A more relevant question is why did these parents receive such strong punishment when obese children die daily and their parents go free?

JINJEE TALIFERO

Even increasing the diet to 60 to 70% raw plant foods can make an amazing improvement when processed and refined foods are eliminated.

Rick Philip, who writes for www.vegetarianteen.com, became a self-taught raw foodist as a teen in Florida. While living in a family who formerly followed the standard American diet, he got interested in animal rights through Internet sites, and quickly became vegan, bypassing ovo-lacto vegetarianism. He soon embraced raw vegan foods and explains how they changed his life, helping him to conquer food addictions and depression (see his articles later in the book). His motivation and passion for learning health, nutrition and animal rights eventually influenced his family as well.

My son Marco noticed over the years that he could eat a lot more food than some of his friends, but they often gained excess weight while he didn't. He remarked to me that he realized this was related to the difference between what he regularly ate and what they ate.

When eating largely cooked and processed foods, the taste buds become altered and unable to appreciate the taste of natural fruits and vegetables. The altered taste sensations of cooked foods, and the sauces needed to disguise them, cause us to ignore the true reason for eating—to provide nourishment to the body. A short time after I had begun eating exclusively raw foods, my sense of taste became heightened. For many years, I've been reveling in the glorious choices I have of delicious fruits and vegetables with some nuts and seeds. When children begin to eat increased amounts of fruits and vegetables, they too will begin to desire these natural foods.

In transitioning children to raw vegan foods, you will encounter a number of issues that may cause some difficulty in the process. Some of these issues involve dealing with relatives, social pressures, school lunches, holidays, and your own insecurities if you are not completely confident in the raw foods lifestyle. In order to deal with these issues, you need first to be knowledgeable in the science of raw vegan foods. When you feel confident in your choice, then you will be able to deal with any difficult situation that should arise.

Obtaining support from others who are following a healthful raw foods lifestyle will provide additional security.

Most processed and packaged foods contain highly toxic, and consequently addictive, substances which may be initially difficult to remove from your child's diet. Many processed foods contain Monosodium Glutamate (MSG), which gives extra flavor to the food but will inevitably cause health problems. MSG is often hidden in the ingredients in items which can sound healthful such as *natural flavoring*, *hydrolyzed vegetable protein (hvp)*, or *natural spices*. The manufacturers of MSG are aware of the addictive nature of this substance. Food from restaurants, fast-food chains, and store-bought packaged and processed foods usually contain enormous amounts of MSG, negatively affecting the developing brain and nervous system, killing off brain cells that will not regenerate. Artificial flavorings, designed to stimulate the salivary glands in such a way that healthful foods would no longer have taste in comparison, often create brain fog and numbing. MSG, which has been called an excitotoxin, is contained in some baby foods. It causes an addictive reaction, so the baby will want more. Recommended reading includes the books *Excitotoxins* by Dr. Russell Blaylock (a neurosurgeon who researched the detrimental effects of toxins such as MSG and aspartame on brain cells), *Chemical-Free Kids* by Allan Magaziner, D.O., Linda Bonvie, and Anthony Zolezzi, and *The Slow Poisoning of America* by John Erb. Upon giving up foods containing the extremely toxic MSG or aspartame, improvements have repeatedly been noted in the ability to concentrate and learn. Positive emotional and behavioral changes have also been observed. When children give up foods containing potentially harmful chemicals and excitotoxins, they will experience more poise and ability to concentrate. Drugs often administered to A.D.D. and A.D.H.D. victims will become unnecessary when children eat unadulterated natural foods.

If your child is receptive, examining and discussing ingredients are important. Pointing out that sodium is salt content, and explaining the chemicals, colorings and fat sources will educate your child. One day some years ago, I took my children into the supermarket and we played a game, calling ourselves "Supermarket Sleuths." We examined packaged foods that had hidden dairy products as well as MSG. The children were surprised to find so many of the processed, packaged foods had all sorts of hidden labeling.

Life in all species is universally intelligent and programmed for survival. Many parents have asked me why their children develop acne, severe rashes, constipation, diarrhea, or vomiting. All these health problems are almost always related to ingesting low quality foods. After eating harmful substances, the body seems to adjust while working very hard to eliminate the toxic

ingredients. But Nature never really adjusts to harmful substances. It only learns how to store them in order to preserve life for as long as it can.

The best way to transition toward eating healthful raw vegan foods is by replacing snack foods with fruits and vegetables. Some parents are successful with introducing delicious fruit smoothies. Children will eat if they are hungry, so there is no need to worry about them not getting enough to eat. Remember a 100% raw vegan diet is excellent, but any steps toward that objective will be beneficial. Make special treats such as delicious raw ice cream, cakes, cookies and pies to bring and share at birthday parties and other celebrations. While others used to think our children should share in the sugary cakes and treats offered at parties, I continued to make them my own special treats, explaining once they begin eating refined sugar and flour at so many gatherings, they will inevitably crave it all the time. Now 21, my daughter expresses gratitude that I didn't give her the junk food offered at so many parties in her childhood. After the switch from snack foods to fruits and vegetables, begin transitioning your children to the least harmful of the cooked foods while at the same time adding more fruits and vegetables. The introduction of more fruits and vegetables while eliminating animal products and processed foods will create a vast improvement over the standard diet of most children.

Don't badger children to follow food combining principles unless they are interested. At first, I tried to teach my children to properly combine their foods when at home, but they showed no interest in it, and it wasn't fair for me to impose food combining principles. However, by setting a positive example by the food you serve, they will learn the idea that a harder-to-digest nut paté will not be followed by fruit. If your children show interest in eating all or mostly raw foods, they will be so far ahead in the future. They may food combine naturally after a time of listening to their own bodies while eating foods adapted to our physiology, but if they choose not to, just be thrilled they are eating more healthfully. Their younger, hopefully less damaged digestive systems work better than ours. At some future date, they may grow more interested in proper food combining.

Hygeia Halfmoon, author of *Primal Mothering in a Modern World*, wrote: "Like a house built with a substandard foundation, a child who grows his body without the optimal foundation will find his house weak and unable to serve him for a lifetime as intended."

As children become teenagers, some may perceive pressures to conform, especially from peers. If you, as parents, continue to show a firm conviction that this way of life is the most natural and healthiest, your children may

very well embrace it. In the families I've observed in which both parents had incorporated raw vegan foods and lived a healthful lifestyle, the children were more likely to stay on the same path. When it is made into fun, and the family creates delicious food together, the children will enjoy it. Perhaps your spouse may be interested if you ask him or her to eat raw foods for just two weeks, or even to start with just one day. It's important to help your child understand which foods are health-giving and not to be afraid of the diseases publicized in the media. By setting an example, your child can help teach others to optimally nourish their bodies.

Your child may suffer consequences after eating candy, cookies, other refined and processed foods, hotdogs, etc. These foods cause unnatural cravings which throw the body off balance. If the child has eaten any unhealthful foods, these will be circulating in the bloodstream, and the body will encounter difficulty in cleansing properly.

Even more alarming is the Swedish nutritional study, completed at the University of Stockholm, revealing when starches form a golden-brown crust, after being heated at high temperatures, they undergo a chemical reaction forming a carcinogenic plastic known as acrylamide. Foods in this group include French fries, chips, breads, biscuits, cereals, crackers, pizza, and pasta dishes baked at temperatures over 256° Fahrenheit. Many articles regarding acrylamide have been published by the World Health Organization, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and other agencies concerned with health and may be found on the Internet.

Fresh vegetables most children on the standard diet shun will eventually be loved by children who are eating them, and they will crave salads. The clean taste buds prefer the tastes of natural foods as they were meant to be eaten—unadulterated, unprocessed and unheated.

Some suggestions for the less harmful cooked foods would be steamed sweet potatoes, steamed vegetables, whole grains such as millet and quinoa, steamed squash, vegetable soup, and split pea or lentil soup. If the child is not willing to give up bread and pasta, then the switch from white flour products to whole grain breads and pastas would be an improvement. One example of an upgrade over the allergen “wheat” is the whole grain gluten-free brown rice pasta, Tinkyada. Orgran organic rice and corn pasta is another wheat and gluten-free food and would also be a good choice during transition. Wheat-free sandwiches and wraps filled with salad are good transition foods—stuff bread or wraps with tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, sprouts, shredded carrots, and homemade dressings or spreads. Although cooked foods are acid-form-

ing, if your child eats at least 70% to 80% alkaline-forming green vegetables and fresh ripe fruits and 20% to 30% acid-forming foods (the less harmful cooked foods), this will insure a healthful blood pH, moving toward greater alkalinity. Although raw foods are optimal, all steps in that direction will be extremely beneficial. When eating predominantly cooked foods, the body becomes malnourished because it is deprived of nutrients. When changing to predominantly raw foods, there may be an initial healing crisis if the person is healthy. Mouth sores, rashes, diarrhea, headaches, bad breath, body odor and bladder infections are some ways through which the body detoxifies. Diarrhea also acts to dispel toxic debris. The longer cooked and processed foods have been eaten, the greater the percentage of body fat, and the more that drugs were taken over the years, the more prolonged the transition period will be.

Because many children habitually eat white flour and white rice products, other more healthful and nutritious foods are diminished or completely eliminated. Studies report these white foods cause significant damage to the body and may be the cause of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The most difficult addictions to give up are to bread and pasta. The chemical reaction to cooked starch in the body acts similarly to a drug and causes a sedating effect. Eating a lot of cooked starches during the holidays used to make me feel weak and lethargic afterward, even to the point of experiencing difficulty getting up off the chair. As a long-time raw foodist, I now have energy following my meals, even on holidays! Cooked foods wear out the adrenal glands. The adrenals will get a good rest on raw food. When eating simple raw foods, emphasizing fruits, leafy greens and vegetables, you will notice many health benefits including improved digestion, increased energy, decreased heart rate, reduced body odor, less thirst, increased mental clarity, reduced or no mucus in the throat or head, ideal weight, and the best quality nourishment.

Dr. Douglas Graham explains in *Grain Damage*:

Every indicator points to grain consumption as a major health threat. In spite of advertising's insinuations to the contrary, the popular trend of eating whole foods cannot apply to...breads..., as grains require a great deal of processing just to become edible. Bread simply does not exist in nature.

There are, however, small grains that become more alkaline-forming and digestible when soaked and sprouted—quinoa, amaranth, and millet to name a few, but some have found preparations using these grains hard to digest.

The processed and cooked starches in pastas and breads can only provide empty calories since their enzymes and vitamins have been destroyed by heat,

and their minerals have been removed in the refining process. Pastas and breads are acid-forming, devoid of electrical charge or life force and require cooking and processing in order to be eaten. A diet consisting for the most part of cooked starches can cause Candida, chronic fatigue, diabetes and an array of other physical problems. Many Candida sufferers have been advised they must give up all fresh fruits in the effort to alleviate Candida. Often, it's not the fresh fruits by themselves that cause this problem, but combining them with refined sugars and starches at the same meals—eating fruits with grains (such as fruits and cereals, fruits and pancakes, fruits and bread, even fruits with whole grains). Once the refined and processed sugars and starches are eliminated and fruits are eaten on an empty stomach and alone, rather than combined with grains, the fruits can easily be digested and their healthful nutrients can be assimilated. Pastas, breads and chips are so de-mineralized, regular consumption of these processed foods does not permit enough minerals such as calcium to be absorbed.

Temporarily giving up fruits and gradually adding them back has been offered as a solution for Candida problems. Not combining fruits with nuts or grains has also brought good results.

Many people, including children, get tired and stressed in the winter from cooked food. When I first started eating 100% raw foods in 1995, I did feel very cold for the first two winters, but afterwards I had no problems with the cold. Moreover, I felt I could tolerate the cold better than when I was eating cooked food. Although my body temperature is normally lower than that of people who eat primarily cooked food, I've been able to get through the winters easily for many years while enjoying the simple raw foods lifestyle. I also notice the intense heat and cold don't bother me the way they did years ago, although I do prefer hot summer days when I can dress very lightly. Once, my family went far below ground to visit a crystal cave, but we hadn't brought along enough warm sweatshirts. I gave mine up and was the only one with a sleeveless shirt in this icy environment. I noticed it getting colder and colder as we walked deeper into the cave, but it didn't affect me as much as I thought it would. My tolerance for cold had significantly improved. I also notice a huge difference as far as being comfortable in cold weather when I exercise adequately throughout the winter. Years ago, I would clam up and stay inside all winter, feeling chilled, having no desire to get outside to exercise until it got warmer. Now, I go hiking whenever I can throughout the winter. Exercising in combination with raw vegan foods have made the winter months much easier for me. For many years, I used to suffer from cracks or sores on the corners of my mouth during winter, but once I began to eat significant amounts of leafy

greens along with other raw foods, it never happened again.

The following article on the effects of cooked food on the body is titled “Can We Eat Raw Food in the Cold Climate?” by Victoria Boutenko from the December 2004 Raw Family Newsletter:

Many ask about being able to stay raw in a cold winter climate. When any impure substances get into our blood through the walls of the intestines, they irritate our adrenals, the endocrine glands located above the kidneys. The adrenals immediately begin to produce epinephrine, norepinephrine and a variety of steroid hormones. These hormones stimulate our sympathetic nervous system, which is why we feel awake at first. They also force the heart to beat faster and to pump greater amounts of blood through the body, which makes us feel warm. This feeling doesn't last long and we pay a high price for it. After 10 to 15 minutes our body gets exhausted from performing extra work, the heart requires rest, the nervous system becomes inhibited, and we feel tired, sleepy and even colder than before.

However, we remember only the feeling of getting warmer after eating cooked food and repeat such stimulation again and again. This harmful practice wears the body out, and by the end of the winter many people feel exhausted and depleted.

Winter after winter of eating quantities of cooked food doesn't help the human body to withstand cold weather better. On the contrary, weakened adrenals eventually won't be able to work properly even at warm temperatures. If you truly want to feel warm during the cold season, a raw food lifestyle is an inevitable choice for you. During your first “raw” winter, you may experience some cold due to the weakened adrenals, so put on an extra sweater, take a hot bath, or do some pushups. If you will continue staying raw, your adrenals will rest and recover, your capillary circulation will improve, and your nervous system and your heart will naturally strengthen without any artificial stimulation.

In a year, you will tolerate cold better than ever before. My family is now enjoying our eleventh “raw” winter without feeling any discomfort from the cold. We jump into icy-cold mountain rivers year round for enjoyment. In fact, that is how we celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve. We always sleep outside under the rain or snow. Sergei, my son, goes snowboarding sometimes wearing only shorts. My daughter Valya rarely wears socks. Igor, my husband, loves to take

snow baths. We strongly believe staying on a raw food diet has helped us to feel comfortable in any weather and not to feel the cold.



Even though winters become easier to bear when eating raw foods for a few years, I still feel human beings are meant to live in a tropical climate, especially in winter. Our family has traveled to a warm climate for a few weeks every winter—to a place where we can get good sunshine and be out in the fresh air for many hours of the day, and we’re hoping to buy land there to eventually spend the entire winter. We could live all year round in the tropics without heating or air conditioning, while also having fertile land for gardens and fruit trees. This would be our best chance to become self-sustainable. Many say they love the cold weather, but if they’re spending their time indoors with the heat set high, in reality, they’re trying to recreate a place of warmth. By spending the majority of our time indoors, we’re depriving ourselves of oxygen. Spending time outdoors for just a few months of the year is not nearly enough.

In his book, *Raw Foods Bible*, Dr. Craig B. Sommers has a chart titled “Thermal Properties of Foods.” This chart includes warming, neutral and cooling foods. Some of the warming foods listed include: basil, burdock root, cabbage, collard greens, cauliflower, coconut meat, dill, fennel, papaya with seeds, nuts (pine nuts, walnuts, pecans), parsley, sprouted quinoa, rosemary, rutabaga, and seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, sesame). He mentions pecans are “very warming.”

During the initial switch to raw vegan foods, your child may always be hungry. It will take some time to get used to feeling lighter. Animal products and cooked starches provide a full feeling. After they’re eliminated, there may be a period when your child wants to eat constantly. In a few months, this will change. During growth spurts, your child will naturally desire to eat more. During the transitional phase, there are many raw food recipe books that can recreate the feeling of the more filling cooked foods. However, these recipes are not meant to be daily fare, as reliance on them will not maintain optimal health.

It would be better not to name our meals “breakfast, lunch, dinner” as this will make the child feel it’s necessary to eat even when not hungry. The body will derive the most benefit from natural whole foods only when truly hungry. Most people think true hunger is felt in the stomach, but, essentially, it is felt in the throat. Were we to eat only when truly hungry, our digestion would work

better, and we'd be healthier. We would also learn to trust our own bodily intuitions. Natural whole food would taste superbly delicious if eaten when truly hungry. Many eat for other reasons, including fatigue, emotions, and adaptation to overeating. Because sitting down to dinner is important to my husband as a means of bonding, I've explained to our children, "You're invited to sit with us, but you don't have to eat if you're not hungry."

Not every meal needs to contain different foods. Salads can be eaten as a meal or for two meals every day. Salads can be made with different ingredients each day, and dressings can be varied or not used at all. Creating new salad recipes is so much fun!

Adding vinegar to salads can be problematic. The consumption of vinegar (acetic acid) can cause thyroid problems. Vinegar is extremely acidic. The adrenals depend on phosphorous which is depleted by vinegar, and this will affect every gland in the body. Additionally, vinegar stops digestion.

The more we got used to eating raw foods, the simpler were our meals. As you can see from the recipes we liked, they were not very complicated. Marco, as an older teenager, still loves banana splits as a special treat (simply bananas sliced lengthwise topped with pureed strawberries).

For transitioning children, vegetables can be made more appealing when accompanied by a delicious dip. My kids liked a tahini dip. Made from ground sesame seeds, tahini is rich in protein and calcium. I would also add water, lemon juice, chopped tomatoes and fresh herbs (dill is my favorite). They also liked to dip veggies into a homemade guacamole or freshly made salsa. We made up some of our own simple recipes and searched for other simple recipes from books such as *The High Energy Diet Recipe Guide* by Dr. Douglas Graham, *Hooked on Raw* by Rhio, *The Raw Gourmet* by Nomi Shannon, *Eating without Heating* by Sergei and Valya Boutenko and others.

Some of the many advantages your children will experience after three months of living on predominantly or exclusively raw foods: absence of eye, ear, nose, throat or sinus infections, increased energy and attention spans, enhanced ability to process information, a heightened sense of ease, comfort, harmony, and perception, no hyperactivity, strengthened immune systems—fewer colds and no diseases, enhanced athletic capability, increased brainpower and intellectual curiosity, emotional poise and a greater range of expressivity.

General Tips to Remember

1. Try different textures. For example, a child may not like green leafy vegetables but may enjoy them in smoothies, soups or dips.

2. Keep fruits and vegetables around the kitchen in pretty baskets and brightly colored bowls. Children will find the varied colors of the foods in their everyday environment attractive.
3. Name the foods you make with lively or catchy titles! My kids created their own recipes, even from the time they were very little, and then gave names to the recipes:

BAT (Banana, Apple and Tahini)—by Gabriela and Marco Ranzi

4. Kids love using equipment—A saladacco for making veggie pasta; a snow cone maker by the Pampered Chef for making ices from fresh fruit juice; a small juicer (such as Krups or The Healthy Juicer); a mini food processor; the Champion Juicer for making all sorts of recipes (especially banana ice cream); a dehydrator (not for everyday use, but nice to have for making transitional food—I recommend the Excalibur 12-tray dehydrator). The fresh orange, strawberry or watermelon ices made with the snow cone maker made for great birthday breakfasts for years when lots of kids slept over at our house. They looked forward to cranking out their own fresh fruit juice ices. The cold fruit ice is not the best for the stomach, but for the birthday parties, it sure beat bagels.
5. Play restaurant—Let your kids be the Raw Food Chefs!—Our children loved setting up counters, and preparing smoothies, veggie pasta, fruit and veggie platters, and beautiful salads. They often used a doorway as their ideal place to set up their restaurant. The ironing board or a small table was the counter. Even when we traveled, we bought food for them to prepare meals for us in our hotel room, and my husband and I would be the customers, paying them for our meals.
6. The raw foods movement is growing. Inspire your children by bringing them to raw food potlucks organized in many cities, or to other raw foods events growing all across North America and in other areas around the world. Or start a raw foods support group or potluck in your own vicinity.

There are wonderful festivals such as The Raw Spirit Festival (www.rawspiritfest.com) organized by Happy Oasis, and The Vibrant Living Expo in Fort Bragg, California, organized by Cherie Soria, or raw food retreats, some listed on page 430. I am willing to travel to present my classes titled “Raw Food Fun for Kids,” and “Creating Healthy Children.”—Contact me at www.SuperHealthyChildren.com. Sonja Watt offers a raw food family camp in Germany, and can be reached at www.rawfunfamily.com.

7. Make sure your child eats whenever he or she desires during the day. Some fat is an important ingredient for a growing child, particularly during growth spurts. Nuts and seeds and fatty fruits such as avocados can be mixed in with other foods such as green leafy vegetables. Children should have easy access to fruits and veggies during the day.
8. Move your child gradually toward raw foods. Each week add more fruits and vegetables. Learn some recipes your child will love!
9. Don't be surprised if your child wants to eat the same food for periods of time. Marco ate bananas for periods of time from ages 3 to 4, and called himself "Monkey." However, it could easily be observed: the longer he ate the natural diet, the more he moved toward eating a variety of different food, including lots of green leafy vegetables.
10. Be extremely cautious of dried fruit. It can wreak havoc on the teeth. Dried fruit is less harmful on the teeth if it is mixed into a food, such as a smoothie or sauce. Teeth should be brushed immediately after eating dried fruit alone. This should be an occasional treat and not eaten frequently as part of a daily meal.
11. Organize nature trips for your children, especially if they're growing up in a fast food, materialistic suburban or urban environment. Take trips to forage for wild edible plants, to organic farms, and animal sanctuaries. Let your kids and their friends touch the animals, pick wild edibles and get their hands dirty in the Earth's sacred soil! They will feel a sense of connection to the earth and animals. Make hiking in nature a part of your daily life. Let your children see you are connected to nature and the creatures who live in the wild. Get a copy of Peter Ragnar's book *Alive and Well with Wild Foods*. The book comes with a deck of colorful photos of edible wild plants, making it accessible for children to use for collecting wild foods. Although wild foods are loaded with nutrients, we must take caution to identify them correctly before eating. Do the annual "Walk for Farm Animals" to support the Farm Sanctuary, a rescue and rehabilitation farm with sites in New York and California. There are walks for the Farm Sanctuary in many major cities across the country. My daughter Gabriela and I walked for the farm animals in New York City with about 200 people. She saw we are not alone in our concern for farm animals. We also volunteered for the Farm Sanctuary, helping with the feeding of the animals and cleaning the barns. In July 2008, Gabriela and I visited Oregon to hike

the mountain trails of the breathtaking Sky Lakes region with Sergei Boutenko (www.HarmonyHikes.com). Sergei served only delicious raw foods during the four days the thirteen hikers explored this beautiful environment. I was so thrilled my daughter and I were eating healthfully with other healthseekers while enjoying sunshine, excellent exercise, pure air and water, and scenery that relaxes and calms the mind. We swam in pristine lakes, surrounded by the comradery of others desiring a healthy lifestyle for physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. I highly recommend hiking with Sergei Boutenko for families with older children, teenagers or young adults. In June–July 2009, Gabriela interned with Katrina Blair, founder of Turtle Lake Refuge, a non-profit organization in Durango, Colorado. Its mission is to celebrate the connection between personal health and wild lands. Turtle Lake Refuge offers a “Local Wild Life” lunch made with locally grown, wild harvested and living foods (www.turtlelakerefuge.org).

12. Try as often as possible to serve food in special ways. I use a heart-shaped cake pan to prepare special treats on Valentine’s Day. I purchased a ridge-shaped cutter from The Pampered Chef to make decorative trims on cucumbers, peppers, cantaloupes and carrots. The attractive design makes the dish more artistic and fun. Kids like attractive and fun designs in food, so why not use these tools for making fun shapes with raw foods? I also have many different cookie cutter shapes and holiday designs for making live cookies, cakes and other treats.
13. In her book *Rawsome*, Brigitte Mars recommends taking kids to the produce section of the grocery store and each week asking them to pick out a food of each color of the rainbow that they would be willing to eat. Remind them that just because they did not like a particular food, at say, age four, as they get older, they will like more foods. They will love to tell you, “I’m bigger now. I like spinach.”
14. Brigitte offers the following tips for keeping raw foods fun: “Almost all children like sweets and to deny them will only cause arguments. Be sure to provide homemade raw sweet treats. Make fresh frozen treats from blended watermelon, or the juice of oranges or apples. Freeze some carob almond milk for ‘fudgeysicles.’ It is fun to create theme meals: a jungle meal, for example, or a meal from a particular country. Then watch an educational video or read a story about that region.”

15. Traveling with your children provides an excellent learning experience and creates family bonding time. We were always able to find fruits and vegetables during our travels to Central and South America and Europe.

In each place we visited, we encountered people who understood the benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables. On our visit to Colombia, South America, on a main street in Bogota, we were handed a book titled *Frutoterapia* by Albert Ronald Morales, explaining the therapeutic value of 104 fruits that give a wonderful life potential. Costa Rica is the place where many raw foodists are setting up retreats and communities. It's an ecologically progressive country and the people are very friendly. In Tulum, Mexico, my husband went to a small shop to buy freshly squeezed orange juice for us. The owner of the shop told him of an experience he had while working in the markets of Veracruz, Mexico. He had observed an old, weak horse with patches of missing hair. He noticed the horse started to eat the scraps of peels and pulp leftover from the juice stands and partially eaten green vegetables people had been throwing away at the market. He observed the patches of missing hair had filled in and the horse had grown beautiful, thick shiny hair, and developed a strong, muscular physique. The man decided to open his own fruit and vegetable store featuring fresh juices where he could explain to others the amazing benefits of fruits and vegetables.

It was easy to find non-toxic eco-hotels in Costa Rica and Mexico due to the peoples' heightened ecological awareness. In certain parts of Europe, it was sometimes easier to find salads than fruits, but it was not difficult to find raw foods. The difficulty in traveling occurs when you're presented with foods your family doesn't eat at home. Because I didn't want to isolate my children from other peoples and cultures, this was impossible to avoid. However, I know parents who have raised their families on raw foods, and are simply accustomed to these offerings but know how to respond in a way that not only doesn't insult the person making the offer but, at the same time, doesn't put children in a position to eat unnatural foods. Gabriela tells me in order to live healthfully in the future, it will be necessary to move to a more tropical place where fresh produce grows nearby, as the predicted fuel problems, distances from the source, and high cost may make it difficult to buy it in areas where it is trucked or flown in. Additional local greenhouses during winter months may help to solve these problems.

16. Make family fun with food—My kids are always laughing about my love of food, saying I usually have some sign of it left on my face, like

greens left over from my raw green soup or blended salad on my mouth or a piece of mango on my chin. One time, a prize for best costume was awarded at a raw food potluck and dressup party in Manhattan. My kids jokingly said, “I bet the prize was a durian.” Funny enough, it was. Use of puppetry with young children is an excellent way to introduce them to the concepts of a raw food lifestyle and to encourage discussion of healthful living topics in a non-threatening play situation.

17. Read some excellent children’s books to your kids about health, nutrition and vegetarianism (See *Healthy Lifestyle and Respect for Animals—Books for Children* on page 421).
18. I feel the most important thing we as parents can do is to talk about Nature and how animals live in the wild. They don’t own stoves to cook with, they don’t drink the milk of other species, and they don’t get the diseases domesticated pets can get. When your child eats something unnatural and doesn’t feel well afterwards, this is your opportunity to ask if the food came from Nature or if it was made in a factory. If the child is open to discussing this, you can further elaborate on the resulting digestive problems from the unnatural food and how it caused the ill feeling.
19. Hanging beautiful fruit and vegetable pictures, especially in the kitchen, will show your children the food you cherish. Bowls of glass or ceramic fruits and vegetables also create a colorful display in any room. I have a lovely memory of visiting the Corning Glass Museum in Corning, New York with my children many years ago. It was just before Mother’s Day, and Gabriela and Marco very sweetly purchased a whole bowl of glass vegetables to give me as a gift.
20. It may help to feed your children a meal just before attending a birthday party. If they have eaten enough, they may not be as tempted to eat the party food. Make sure to bring plenty of delicious raw food treats to share.
21. Gabriela, Marco, and their friends loved the treasure hunts I created for them with written messages that sent them all over the house and yard. For example, I would start them on the hunt with a note that read: “Go to the place where plants are grown.” They would go to the garden to find another note sending them to the next location. After the tenth message, they would find their treasure, usually a favorite fruit or something usable for a special project, such as colored pencils.

When an infant is born, it has no food addictions. Nursing, and later raw vegan foods, support the baby in living a natural, free life in which the child will develop appropriately in each stage—able to listen attentively to his or her body, knowing what to eat, when, and just how much. If a child is raised on processed and refined foods, these bodily intuitions often vanish and are suppressed by food addictions.

Several years ago, when I spoke on raising healthy children at “The Living Now Festival” near Buffalo, New York, I met a very intuitive family. The father described how his child led him to some empowering life changes: first to homeschooling, then to vegetarianism, veganism and finally to raw foods. This teenaged son, initially raised on conventional processed foods, now brings a bag of raw foods with him wherever he goes. He set the example for his family, and they soon followed him. It was amazing to me that this boy had such a strong intuition about which paths to follow in order to lead a life of truth for himself, and then for his family. (Read about Sean Kimmel and the Kimmel family on page 260 in the raw family section).

Obesity has developed into an overwhelming epidemic in the United States. Children are overweight, or even obese, following in their parents’ footsteps. “Worldwide, over one billion adults are overweight,” according to the World Health Organization (WHO): “An estimated 66 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “In addition, about 17 percent of children and teens are overweight. Overweight children and teenagers are more likely to become overweight or obese adults compared to their normal weight counterparts. Obesity is a major risk factor for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.” The CDC reports the following results on their website:

Results from the 2003–2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), using measured heights and weights, indicate an estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2–19 years are overweight. Overweight increased from 11 to 19% among 6–11 year olds between 1988–94 and 2003–2004. Among adolescents aged 12–19, overweight increased from 11 to 17% during the same period.

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/obese03_04/overwght_child_03.htm

The CDC website presents “The Healthy Aging Project” that includes recommendations involving key measures: regular physical exercise, healthy eating, and discontinuing tobacco use.

In a study conducted by Dr. Gabriel Cousens of The Tree of Life Foundation, a non-profit religious organization, a research survey focused on babies and children raised on vegan diets of 75–100% raw food, with a research database encompassing birth to age eighteen:

Preliminary findings are clear that a live-food diet is completely safe. Live food kids are average or above in height and weight as compared to the “normal” standards.

The preliminary summary of this study shows about two thirds of the children on a live food diet are average to above average, and all children are above the lowest 10th percentile in height and weight as measured by The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

It's important to note the height and weight of these children are in these ranges without being influenced by the stimulating effects of growth hormones to which the majority of non-vegan children are exposed. It is interesting to observe that the National Center for Health and Statistics 2001 shows the average weight for children “has doubled” while heights have remained the same. This suggests we have a serious obesity problem in U.S. children.

The preliminary conclusion of our data is a live food diet has no major positive or negative effect on height and weight. None of the children in the study have a score above the top 90th percentile or below the lowest 10th percentile. Therefore, the children fall into the middle 80% of normal height and weight.

These findings are documented on www.treeoflife.nu.

Our meals were quite simple as Marco and Gabriela were growing up, although we did create special new recipes a few times a week. In our first two years on raw foods, I found many recipes for dehydrated raw dishes that deliberately mimicked cooked foods in that much of the water content was removed. Although I spent hours preparing these recipes, Gabriela and Marco didn't like most of them. Perhaps they intuitively knew raw foods should be allowed to keep their water content, varying in whole raw foods from 70% for avocados to 96% for watermelons. Eventually, raw dehydrated dishes became a far less frequent event, limited to parties and special holiday occasions. Although enzymatic activity that would have been destroyed by heat is preserved in dehydrated dishes, they are largely a complex effort to satisfy emotional attachment to the cooked foods of the past rather than a move toward more healthful eating. With their dense textures and “filling” feeling reminiscent of the heavier

cooked foods, dehydrated dishes provide a transition for those new to raw foods, but, in my experience, raw foods enthusiasts eventually will prefer fruits and vegetables with their water content intact.

Most days, we ate fruits high in water content in the morning. Marco enjoyed melon smoothies, especially blended Galia melon juice, which was very cleansing for him when he was recovering from chronic allergies, mucus and wheezing. Gabriela especially loved mango mush in the morning (2 apples blended with 1 mango) or honeydew melon cubed. Sometimes they would both want only freshly squeezed orange juice (make sure your child rinses the mouth after orange juice to avoid tooth decay and discoloration), or Marco occasionally liked fresh orange juice blended with fresh organic strawberries in season. Other times, Gabriela would ask for a sliced orange and Marco would want a bowl of pineapple, mango and blueberries. Or Marco would ask for two large pink grapefruits cut in half with the individual sections sliced so he could eat them with a spoon. Both children have always loved a good smoothie, either in the morning or later in the day. Marco loves 2 bananas, strawberries (7 to 10) and one cup freshly squeezed orange juice; or one banana, one chopped mango, strawberries or raspberries, and orange juice. Gabriela made up a smoothie of bananas (2), frozen strawberries (7 or more), a teaspoon of almond butter and water. Since 2004, leafy greens have been added to smoothies to enhance the mineral content. Sometimes a green juice would be the first nourishment of the day, usually consisting of half a cucumber, 2 to 3 stalks of celery, 3–4 leaves of kale, 3–4 leaves of Romaine lettuce and half an apple. Gabriela especially loved to use the small Krup's juicer when she was a young child. Harvey, Gabriela and I have enjoyed green smoothie recipes, especially after reading Victoria Boutenko's book, *Green for Life*. Sometimes we were able to get tasty exotic fruits. Marco has loved mameys, *monstera deliciosa* (a long, bizarre looking fruit that tastes like a pineapple-banana combination) and cherimoyas. Gabriela enjoyed a bowl of papaya—especially delicious when we visited Colombia and Costa Rica. In the summertime, when fruits are absolutely at their most delicious, the children loved cherries, nectarines, peaches, apricots, grapes, plums, berries, and melons. We would often bring fruit with us as a treat when visiting friends. Some children unacquainted with our food choices would ask questions about the fruit. One child in particular would eat as much of our fruit as he could because he rarely was given fruit at home. Another child did not know the difference between strawberries and cherries and had no idea about the color of the inside of a pineapple. His diet consisted entirely of processed, refined foods and animal products, but he

showed interest in more healthful foods when we introduced them to him. This child told his parents he no longer desired meat but his decision was met with resistance.

Frequently Gabriela and Marco would ask for “BAT” a little later in the day (noon or early afternoon), made of two mashed bananas mixed with a scoop of tahini and topped with the bitesized chopped pieces from one whole apple (BAT = Banana, Apple and Tahini). On cold winter days, they would like



Spencer Corwin and Marco Ranzi enjoying raw berry pie and the effect it has all over their mouths at a raw family potluck at our home in 1997.

to have BAT in place of cereal in the morning. Fresh apple sauce was also enjoyed (two fresh apples blended with some soaked raisins or a few dates with a sprinkle of cinnamon). Gabriela would eat a Gala apple every day in season. We wouldn't buy cherries in winter or apples in summer because food tastes so much better in season. Dr. Douglas Graham (in his book *The 80/10/10 Diet*) and Brigitte Mars (in her book *Rawsome*) have excellent charts listing when fruits and vegetables are in season in the United States. However, if our children would ask for a certain food to bring to a party or a friend's house, I would almost always buy it for them, even if out of season, because they were already eating so differently from the other children at the party. I also knew it was better for them to eat an out-of-season live food than for them to want the toxic, junk party food. Bananas, tropical in origin, are always in season and were enjoyed by the children year-round. I'm not sure if they would have stayed with the raw food lifestyle if not for the versatile banana—great in smoothies, ice creams, banana splits, puddings, cakes and pies, eventually to be enjoyed just as is.

From my experience of having eaten sun ripened bananas directly from the plant in Costa Rica, I learned the force-ripened variety, available in the Northeastern United States where I live, bears no comparison to plant-ripened bananas. Bananas ripened on the plant had a richer color, a smoother texture, a heavenly fragrance and a sweeter taste.

After eating raw foods for nearly a year, we all began to crave more veggies. We often had salads or veggies with dips midday, and always had big, varied salads later, incorporating different vegetables and tasty homemade dressings.

Salads can be greatly varied with changes in the vegetables that are added to the green lettuces. We made salads of Romaine, green leaf, red leaf, Boston or butter lettuces, sometimes shredded kale, adding 3 to 4 toppings that changed daily—cucumbers, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, celery, red, orange or yellow peppers, various kinds of sprouts, shredded carrots, string beans, snow peas, sugar snap peas, shredded cabbage, zucchini, yellow squash, jicama, etc. There are so many excellent varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables that salads can be completely different every day. After going on wild weed walks with “Wildman” Steve Brill and Closter Nature Center director Mark Gussen, wild edibles became part of the numerous salads we prepared. Purslane, lambsquarter, plantain, wild dandelion, stinging nettles or miner’s lettuce make for tasty, vitamin and mineral packed wild green additions to any salad or smoothie. We have also enjoyed sunflower greens, broccoli sprouts, microgreens, pea shoots, and clover sprouts in our salads.

Salads are rendered unhealthful when doused with processed, bottled dressings containing vinegar and other chemicals. We sometimes used fruit dressings, such as orange and raspberries or a tomato sauce of tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, two dates, fresh oregano and/or basil. A good dressing could be made of acid fruits such as tomatoes, oranges, tangerines, kiwis, lemons or strawberries combined with a small amount of blended nuts or seeds, or one small avocado (e.g. one acid fruit and one type of nut, such as tomatoes with pine nuts, pecans with tomatoes). We would occasionally enjoy a tahini dressing made with raw tahini, lemon, water and ginger. On my own salads, I often sprinkle a few tablespoons of hempseeds with the juice of half a lemon. Later in the day, we almost always prepared creative salads together. As described in the general tips, Gabriela and Marco also prepared and sold many salads to us as part of their “Raw Food Restaurant.” They enjoyed making stuffed avocados or stuffed tomatoes by simply scooping them out and mixing them with each other and then placing them back in the avocado or tomato shell, and serving them over a bed of greens. They loved a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables prepared very simply. Chopped fruits (cucumbers, zucchini and red peppers are considered fruits because they have seeds) and veggies such as string beans and carrots would often be enjoyed with a simple homemade nut butter (we used many from the raw food recipe books listed) or just plain. The children also loved to hang out in the kitchen with me, noshing on fresh green English peas from the pod. We made green juices sweetened with an apple or carrot for the children. I love mine just made with the greens without adding anything sweet. I make the juices in the Champion juicer or the small Krups juicer. When the children prepared their

own juice, it was fun and simple for them to use the Krups juicer, a small juice machine very suited to children. This juicer may no longer be available, but The Healthy Juicer is another lightweight, easy-to-use juicer young children will enjoy using (www.healthyjuicer.com).

When the children needed a lunch to bring to outside activities, I would pack some of the following: whole fruits, fruit salads, nori rolls, dehydrated nut and seed crackers or cookies, raw dips with chopped veggies (carrots, string beans, red peppers, celery, etc), blended tomato-basil soup (from *The Raw Gourmet* by Nomi Shannon), gazpacho (from *12 Steps to Raw Food* by Victoria Boutenko or *The High Energy Diet Recipe Guide* by Dr. Douglas Graham or *Rawsome* by Brigitte Mars), salads with homemade dressings on the side, live ice cream (made with frozen bananas, mangos, carob powder and some dates processed in the food processor with the “S” blade and then placed into an ice cream container to bring to a party—needs to be kept in the freezer), dehydrated veggie chips (from thinly sliced zucchini and sweet potatoes), dehydrated at 95° in the Excaliber dehydrator until slightly crunchy, coleslaw (made from shredded green and red cabbage, shredded carrots, finely chopped red peppers and one or two tomatoes with a dressing consisting of a mashed avocado and a lemon), Ants-on-a-Log (celery stalks filled with almond butter, and raisins dotted on the top), guacamole and chopped veggies, and occasionally, homemade trail mix.

In summer, the children enjoyed preparing banana ice cream from frozen bananas (kept in glass dishes in the freezer). We also sometimes added frozen strawberries or frozen mango chunks, all put through the blank plate of the Champion Juicer. I often poured any leftover smoothie into popsicle molds which were also welcomed by my children and their friends on hot days. I always felt content knowing their snacks were made of fresh fruits or vegetables.

As you can see, this lifestyle is never boring. Limitless varieties of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds can be eaten in different combinations every day, if you so choose.

When she was ten, Gabriela expressed happily, “I love to eat apples, bananas, tomatoes, red peppers and all types of vegetables. I also love mangos, oranges, pineapples, dates, raisins, strawberries, honeydews, almonds, sunflower seeds, and many other fruits. I do face challenges though. One day, when we went to the bank, the lady there asked us if we wanted a lollipop. My brother and I said ‘No, thank you.’ It’s hard for me to understand why people are always offering candy and junk food to us kids wherever we go.”

For birthday parties, the children would help me make raw cakes and

candies. I would use recipe books to create raw cakes and pies. These were acceptable for special occasions, but not as a daily food because they were usually filled with excessive amounts of nuts, seeds and dried fruits. We also had a great time with lots of fun party activities. Marco and Gabriela had lively birthday parties for fifteen years. Each year at Marco's parties, all his friends delighted in and still remember the indoor piñata-banging competition and the outdoor sports. The piñata didn't contain candy but was filled with toys and coins. Even at Marco's eighteenth birthday party, the piñata was filled with masks and miniature basketballs. I would also squeeze fresh oranges or blend a small watermelon the night before the party and freeze the juice in round containers. The next morning the children who had slept over would love to crank snow cones from a little machine I bought from *The Pampered Chef*, and watch the colored ice fall onto their plates. At most of their friends' parties, bagels were served for breakfast. Although frozen fruit is not ideal for digestion, it's definitely a winner when compared to the processed starches and animal fats usually served for birthday breakfasts.

In addition to eliminating health and overweight problems, the joy of the live food lifestyle is that it frees you to do things that interest you. Many mothers I know spend hours in the kitchen chopping and cooking. Eliminating the cooking process and simplifying food preparation frees moms to spend more time with their families. During my first few years on raw foods, I thought I had to make a big complicated raw food meal for dinner each evening in order to get the needed variety of nutrients, but later, I came to understand eating simply and varying the food over the days and weeks is the best way to feed a family. Healthful raw foodism is not about recipes. If anything, the ideal would be to get away from complicated recipes. Perhaps they're wonderful for the first few weeks or months after switching to raw, but if the passion for recipes continues, the simplicity of the lifestyle becomes labor intensive—enslaving rather than liberating. Is the dehydrator going to replace slaving over a hot stove? The enzymes might still be intact, but the digestion will never be simple, and our ability to heal will be continually compromised by complicated, time consuming digestion. Let's get used to the deliciousness of the foods by themselves or in simply combined recipes. It reduces so much stress involved with the time and effort it takes to prepare a big meal. Instead, parents and children can plan and prepare lovely, simple raw food meals together.