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How to Make Your Kids Eat Responsibly

WE CARE A lot about food in our family, and though we have a small backyard, we started gardening with our daughter when she was a year old. She's now 4, and she loves sticking seeds into dirt, watering plants, and especially eating vegetables straight from the garden. It's an extension of letting her "help" us cook, which always gets her excited about what she's made. Both activities can teach an important lesson about food—it comes from somewhere, and it takes some work—it doesn't just appear magically.

Karen Leibowitz is a [cookbook author](#); cofounder of [The Perennial](#), an environmentally sustainable restaurant in San Francisco; and a partner in [Mission Chinese Food](#).



RAMI NIEMI



Aquaponic Entrees

At a 3,400-square-foot facility in Oakland, The Perennial's leftovers will be turned back into food with help from some fish. A mix of Pacific sturgeon and channel catfish convert all that biomass into ammonia-rich waste, which bacteria eventually convert into nitrates. The nitrates make the water less toxic and are a potent fertilizer for veggies that will show up on The Perennial's dinner plates alongside those fish.

TABLE TO FARM

SUSTAINABLE DINING

FOR THE FOUNDERS of San Francisco restaurant The Perennial, farm-to-table isn't enough. They're hoping for farm-to-table-to-farm-to-table, repeating. "When we got started, we focused on energy and transportation efficiency," says Karen Leibowitz, one of the restaurateurs. "But we discovered that food systems and agricultural practices are a huge part of the climate-change equation." So her team shifted to figuring out how to make an agricultural impact. The results are responsible and tasty. —**ABBECCA FLINT MARX**

Perennial Bread

Perennial crops stay alive from one year to the next and can be harvested numerous times. That reduces topsoil erosion, agricultural runoff, and carbon released into the atmosphere. The restaurant hopes to create a test plot for a perennial wheatgrass called Kenza and work with Chad Robertson, of San Francisco's Tartine Bakery, to develop bread made from Kenza flour. They expect to have a crusty prototype by year's end.

Low Carbon Beef

The Perennial's beef supplier, Sample Creek Ranch, captures and sequesters atmospheric carbon by growing plants. The ranch spreads a ½-inch layer of compost over farmland, which increases growth, helping the plants pull more carbon from the atmosphere. Good grass is given enough time to grow deep, while cattle graze on innovative species—sequestering even more carbon.