



Getting Kids to Eat Up

One mom's mission to educate, entertain, and inspire better eating for kids and parents alike.

By Jenna Helwig

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Wouldn't it be great if vegetables were as fun as candy and chips? While they may never be *quite* that exciting (for kids at least), if New York mom Melissa Kasper Shapiro has her way children and parents will discover that fruits and vegetables can be both good and good-for-you.

Melissa is the force behind the upcoming [Eat Up, Elevating Kids' Nutrition](#) event this Sunday in New York. It will be an afternoon for families that she hopes will educate, entertain, and inspire better eating. She has scheduled a bevy of fun "snacktivities" including a smoothie-making station, a DIY apron activity, veggie yoga, face painting, a photo booth, and advice from Dr. Drew Ramsey, co-author of [The Happiness Diet](#) and [Fifty Shades of Kale](#), on eating for a sharper, happier, healthier brain. The authors of [The Pollan Family Table](#) will also be on-hand to share recipes and healthy eating tips, as well as family farmers from Taqwa Community Farm.

Melissa says, "I love that Eat Up is crowd sourced from those that care most about helping kids eat better, including farmers, chefs, nutritionists, doctors, and parents."

She hopes that parents will leave the event energized to up the ante on healthy snacks at home and that kids will see fruits and veggies in a fun new light. She says, "I want kids to have the best time and find when they go home that they are more open to trying new foods and to wanting to cook. I hope that they will be more curious and have an awareness and understanding that food can be fun. For parents, eating doesn't have to be a tug of war. The takeaway will be different for everyone, but most importantly, we have started the conversation."



Melissa Kasper Shapiro and Her Family

Even if you can't attend the event on November 15, you can still be inspired. I asked Melissa how parents anywhere can improve their children's nutrition. Her response: "Involve your kids! Allow them to see how food is grown, to cook, and to choose what they like. I want this event to transcend zip codes and be of use to all communities so we can better care for all children. There is such strength in a collective effort."

[Click here](#) for more information about Eat Up or to buy tickets. Proceeds from the event go to [Just Food](#), a non-profit Melissa chairs that empowers New York City communities in need to improve food access and connect to fresh local produce.

What are ways your family has put a positive spin on healthy eating?

Jenna Helwig is Parents' food editor and the author of [Real Baby Food](#) and [Smoothie-licious](#).