

Eat. Teach. Love.



We love and care for our children unconditionally. After all, they are the future and deserve the very best we can give them. We routinely share our wisdom with them so they can be best prepared for what life throws their way.

Why is it then that we tend to be short-sighted in how we choose to educate them on one of life's core requirements, i.e. how to eat? What can we do to improve this?

Unfortunately, the understanding of basic nutrition has become far more complicated in this country. A steady stream of advertising bombards us with countless ads glamorizing unhealthy products endorsed by idolized athletes and celebrities. Many of these messages sadly target the younger, more impressionable minds and the potential for disaster is already rearing its ugly head. I believe there are ways to better equip them (and ourselves, leading by example) to make healthier choices. I invite you to consider the following:

Drink water. There's nothing more pure and simple out there that will sustain a budding athlete, big thinker or artist better. We only had soft drinks around the holidays and if my mom made Kool-Aid it was from those small packets and with half the sugar.

Take your kids grocery shopping with you and read labels. Avoid the center of the supermarket. Everything they may want is likely in the middle. Beyond a few exceptions, everything they need is always on the perimeter. You've heard this before and it's quite true. Spend the most time in the produce and meat section. Play guessing games with fruits and vegetables. Better yet, take them to the farmers market and strike up conversations with the growers. Farmers are proud to talk about what they do, and what they provide is locally grown. Hearing it directly from the source will resonate with them.

Plant a garden. Children are far more likely to eat something out of the garden when they've been a part of it since inception. Witnessing tomatoes going from seed to garden to table has taken my younger daughter from a tomato hater to a lover. I decided to mix it up this year with small tasty orange and tiny yellow pear tomato varieties. Why not dedicate a small section of the garden to them and let them grow whatever they want? This will help teach them the ongoing responsibility of caring for something and engage them in the process.

Encourage them to cook with you. Start new traditions if they don't already exist. My girls and I love to make homemade pasta when we go to my mom's house. It's simple and there are hundreds of

variations. A tabletop pasta machine and the ingredients involved are inexpensive. Beyond the quality time, there's knowledge and fun!! Buy them cookbooks and cooking gadgets of their own. I recently came across my very first cookbook and my mind was immediately flooded with memories of standing in our kitchen covered in flour, laughing and singing. What about setting aside one night per week when your children can prepare dinner?

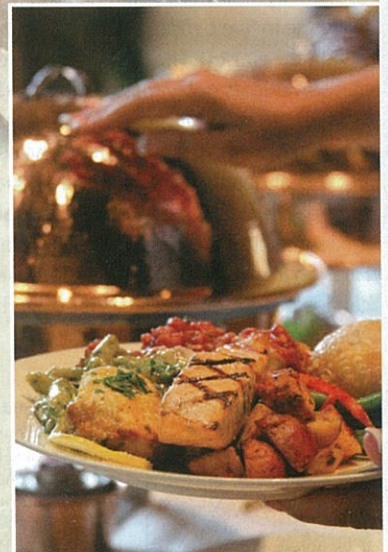
Cooking shows. I don't know about your children, but mine love Master Chef Junior and other food-focused shows. They seem to know much more about ingredients than I ever did at that age. I deter them, however, from the shows that glorify gluttonous eating of excessively unhealthy foods.

Skipping ahead, think about what happens if our kids don't have a basic understanding of what it takes to prepare a few basic variations of meals for themselves once they are off on their own? I'd love to hear from you on ways you've integrated food into your children's lifestyle!

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"Bella Sera was built upon the things I love most in the world... family, food, Italy and the celebration of life." - Jason Capps, Owner



This **Industry Insight** was written by Jason Capps, Chef, Owner & Travel Enthusiast.

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