

From Frustration to Innovation: How Samantha Lawi Created Sqween, a Kid-Friendly Sunscreen

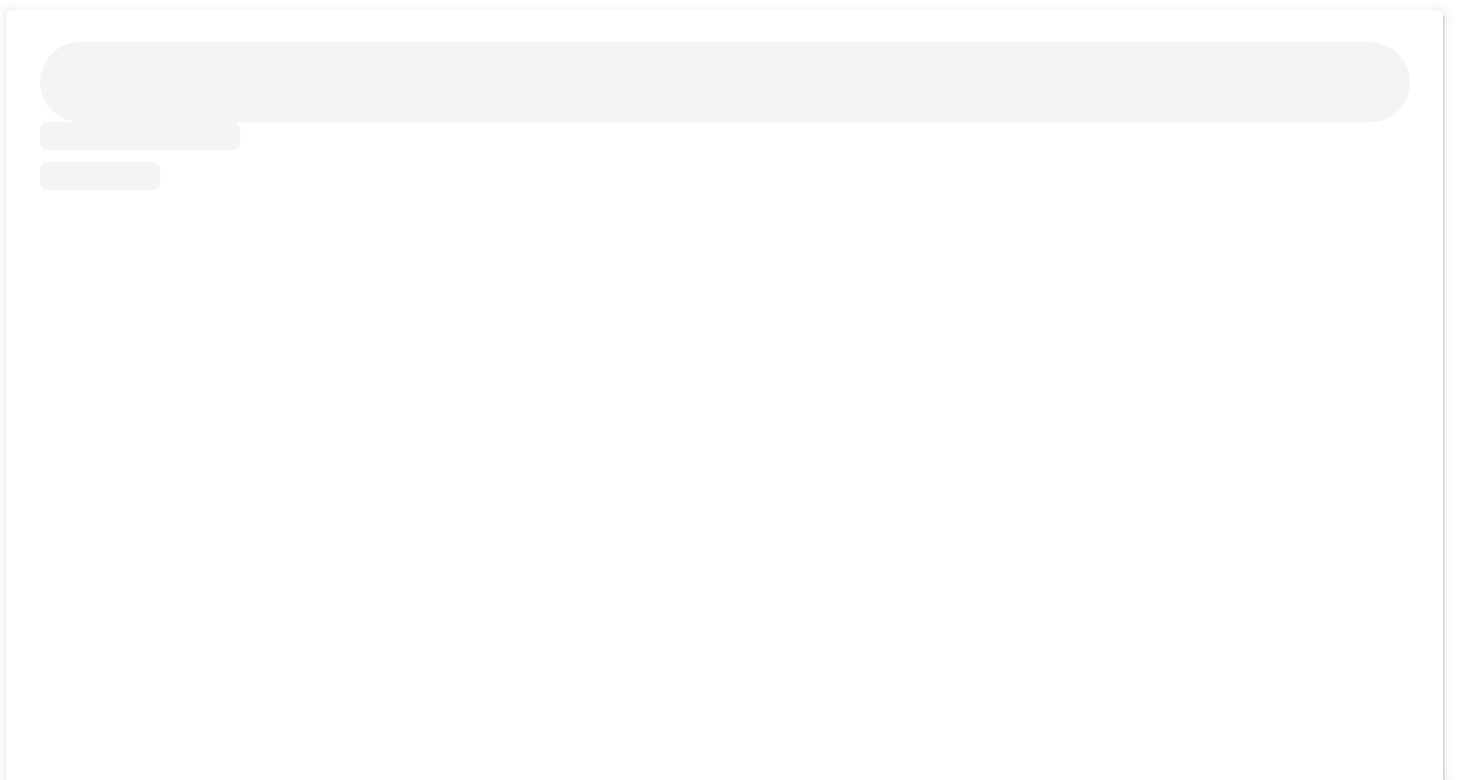
Lasting damage from sun exposure—including skin cancer—can happen in childhood, so Samantha Lawi created a better sunscreen experience for families.

August 25, 2025 By [Melanoma Research Alliance](#)

This post is by Dana Deighton, the Director of Communications and Engagement at Melanoma Research Alliance

Samantha Lawi, a mom of two, didn't set out to become a sunscreen entrepreneur. But like so many great ideas, [Sqween](#) was born out of necessity and a deep personal motivation.

In 2023, Lawi launched Sqween, a dermatologist-approved, 100% mineral, broad-spectrum, SPF 30 sunscreen designed with kids and parents in mind. Housed in a cheerful, mess-free 2 oz squeeze brush applicator, Sqween is available in several kid-approved colors including light green, pink, sky blue, rose gold, and additional ones on the way (think metallic and school colors!). But it's the story behind the product that makes it especially powerful.





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A post shared by Sqween (@get_sqween)

Lawi has always made sun safety a family priority, particularly after her father-in-law passed away from Stage IV melanoma, which started as a small mole. It was this experience that underscored a sobering truth: melanoma can affect anyone, and [early detection](#) and [prevention](#) are key. Knowing that much of the lasting damage from sun exposure happens in childhood, Lawi was determined to create a better sunscreen experience for families. One in five will have some form of skin cancer by the time they are 70. Sqween wants to change the world by the way we all engage with sunscreen at an early age. By being proactive instead of reactive, Sqween wants to change the metrics from 1 in 5 to 1 in 50, then 1 in 100, etc...

Like so many parents, Lawi experienced a daily tug of war of getting her young daughters to apply sunscreen. From toddlers who squirm and hate the sticky feeling of someone rubbing their faces to older children who don't want to pause the fun to apply, and tweens, who crave independence but often miss key spots. Not to mention the constant reminder from schools and camps to make sure kids apply sunscreen at 8am before they arrive for the day. In the mess and rush to get out the door, along with the challenge of reapplication after swimming, sweating, or outdoor activities, it's no wonder sunscreen can feel like a chore for both parents and kids. All these challenges drove Lawi to pursue a better product, and based on what she found in stores, it quickly became evident that she would need to be the mother of invention.

Sqween was born out of need. Lawi believes that good habits form organically when they are designed to be fun and empowering. Sqween is transforming sun protection for kids (and adults) into independent play that gives parents the confidence that their kids grow up engaged with healthy skin care. Sqween hits all the marks: engages interest, addresses child and adult application challenges, is a great sensory activity for the neuro-divergent community, melanin inclusive with various fun colors (which are also great for school & team spirit!), and allergy aware by being fragrance-free, paraben-free, 100% mineral, and reef safe.

Lawi shared there have been psychological insights built into every facet of this product. If you watch kids and adults, you want to make this fun, safe, effective, and efficient. It's no-fuss for athletes that want to keep their hands clean and non-greasy—great for all athletes including golf, tennis, baseball, soccer, field-hockey, rowers, runners, and also winter sports like skiing. With its sheer, mat-based formulation, it's comfortable for most users. On top of all of that, Lawi believes in teaching kids to do things on their own for future independence, and models her own behavior accordingly, and believes Sqween is one sunscreen kids ask for and can handle with little adult assistance.



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Despite not having a background in chemistry, Lawi approached the creation of Sqween with an entrepreneurial vision and scientific rigor. As a mom of two daughters, putting a strong team together was paramount. Lawi engaged a USA based, woman-run laboratory to help her develop the formula she envisioned, ensuring every ingredient and feature met the highest standards of safety, effectiveness, and appeal to kids and parents alike.

Every detail – formulation, packaging, colors and application method was developed with intention and input from children themselves. The result: a sunscreen that kids are excited to use and parents can trust. In fact, the name Sqween is inspired by the adorable way that toddlers say “sun-scween” and Lawi named for it what it is: clean, squeezable sunscreen. Lawi is proud that Sqween is Mom-made and gives kids the confidence to take sun protection into their own hands and parents a way to teach healthy sun care habits that last.

When asked if it’s for adults too, Lawi always likes to say:

“Age is just a number, the only number that matters is your SPF. We’re all kids at heart.”

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