



### Laughter doesn't always come easy

I'm not always a laughing mom.

Sometimes I'm a frustrated mom or even an "I've had it up to here" mom. It seems that the older and more independent my daughter Melise gets, the more she does the things that she knows she's not supposed to. I'm sure a developmental expert could explain to me why this is very healthy behavior, but that doesn't make it any less aggravating.

Spilling water is the latest thing that is being repeated more often than necessary. Mere months ago Melise would pick up a glass, take a drink and set it down again with the greatest care to show off her very grown-up abilities. Now she picks it up, takes a sip, then up-ends it while watching me for my reaction. And my reaction is very predictable: I frown and say, "Stop, Melise; we don't spill water on purpose!" And I grab the nearest towel to mop up the puddle.

My reaction is so predictable, repeated about ten times every day now, that you would think Melise would actually get bored by it and move on to a new tactic. But she doesn't. The result of this situation is that I have an ever-present pile of wet towels and a lot of pent-up frustration!

Just a note here about towels. There was a time I would never use anything but a disposable towel to wipe up a puddle. Why dirty a perfectly good cloth towel with a job like that? Then one day, I realized that if I kept using disposable towels to wipe up every mess Melise created, either accidentally or on purpose, then we would go broke! So now we use the hand towels, the kitchen towels, the bath towels, or any other absorbent material handy that can be thrown in the wash. (I've even used shirts out of the laundry hamper.)

But the spills—the spills! They just keep coming!

## The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

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Just recently, Melise decided to pretend to take a drink of water while letting it spill around her mouth and down her front. She stood there contemplating the result and decided that she wasn't satisfied with it at all. She pulled her soaked shirt away from her body and cried out, "Wet!"

"Yes, baby, your shirt is wet because you spilled water on it." I said. "Let's try not to do that anymore, okay?" Melise nodded, so I removed her shirt and let her go back to her meal. What do you think she did? That's right, she took another drink and let the water spill down her front again.

What did I do? Well, being the calm, cool, always level-headed mother that I am, I walked into the next room where I could stomp my feet, make ugly faces, and jump up and down in frustration out of sight of my impressionable toddler. Oh yes, I threw an adult tantrum. And that's not the first time. And it probably isn't the last time either!

It sounds awfully unlady-like, I know, but after that I was able to return to my daughter with my patience intact again. I mopped her up and handed her a sippy cup.

After that, we went outside, turned on the water to the garden and I let her stand amidst the spray from our leaky soaker hoses. She loved it! Well, she loved it for five minutes; then she realized that her clothes were soaked and gave me that same grumpy cry, "Wet!" This time, though, it made me laugh!