



### The great nap conspiracy

Every parent I say this statement to nods in sympathy: “Melise has been skipping naps lately.”

To write this column, and the several other writing projects I have, I need time to sit at a computer without worrying about the mischief my little girl is getting into. That makes nap time a very precious time of the day. Its value increases greatly when it becomes a rare event!

Nap transitions happen every few months with every child. When babies are really little, they take many short naps in a day. Eventually, those naps settle out to two or three.

Most parents I’ve talked to say their children hold onto this basic pattern until around their first birthday. As if they suddenly think they’re too old for nap time, they skip the first nap of the day more and more often until there is just one nap time.

According to my personal research, children should keep to one nap after that until they are 3 or 4 years old. Every so often, I doubt the legitimacy of my research sources.

I remember a particularly stressful time right before Melise turned 2. She had been in a pattern of crashing everyday around 1 p.m. Then she skipped a nap one day. She played right through it! She was terribly cranky at suppertime, but it was just one day, right?

A few days later she missed her nap again. And it started coming in a pattern of every three days. . .then every two days. . .until one day I realized that more days were passing without a nap than with one. I was stunned and befuddled.

## The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

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Suddenly, I wasn't getting any writing done. The work was piling up on my desk as Melise ran happily around it all day long. Life kept moving around me so quickly that I scrambled to keep up. I never could sit still long enough to figure out what I was going to do about this problem.

One full week passed in which Melise did not take a single nap. As the next weekend approached, I tried to look on the bright side. Sure, I wasn't getting any writing done, but there was a sort of musical retirement party that Sunday afternoon for our church's pastor. With Melise skipping her afternoon nap, that meant that I could sing during the party. It would work out just perfectly.

I believe the Sandman decided to play a joke on me, and here comes the punch-line.

As the party started, I ran around with Melise in tow getting my music together and such. Melise seemed to be enjoying herself, so I had no concerns whatsoever. I was singing with the very first group, so when I saw them getting ready I put Melise on my hip and headed to join them. After a few steps, Melise moved strangely in my arms. I turned to look at her and stopped dead in my tracks. She had fallen asleep!

I stared at her in disbelief for a moment until her head lolled to one side and I had to catch her mid-fall. I tried to transfer her quickly into her grandma's arms, but she woke with screaming alarm.

I took her back, threw her over my shoulder (where she immediately fell back asleep) and joined the group to sing. I figured it was better to sing with a sleeping baby in my arms than have her screaming through every song!

After that, Melise returned to her regular nap time routine. As Melise goes through these transitions every few months, I remind myself it always settles out after a few weeks. But I also have this nagging fear for the day when she decides to never nap again!