

# The Laughing Mom

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

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## Sorry, Mom

Every parent waits anxiously for the day that their kids are capable of doing things independently. We grow weary of feeding, dressing and navigating all these extra bodies, right?

But then, they start saying, “Me do it!”

Suddenly, it seems so hard to let them do things on their own! It is painful to watch them clumsily and sloooooowly figure things out. But we have to let them—sigh!

One morning, we were all having cereal. Melise, my 3-year-old, ate her bowl quickly and peeped, “More please!”

I faithfully filled her bowl with cereal, but before I could reach out for the milk she was holding on to it. My initial reaction was to stop her. Melise’s confident look made me pause. I assessed the milk jug, which had only a cup of milk left. I thought to myself, it’s such a small amount of milk, what could go wrong?

“Go ahead, Melise.” She looked surprised, so I waved my hand encouragingly toward the milk jug. She was so excited!

She tipped it a tiny bit toward the bowl. The milk wasn’t even close to pouring out. “You’ll have to tip it more, honey.” She was concentrating very hard on her cereal bowl as the target. She screwed up her face with determination and tipped it a little more.

I could see the milk start sliding up the wall of the container. Any second now, it would flow out

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the opening. My hands were open in my lap, ready to fly to the rescue. But Melise didn't seem to be moving anymore. Alina, my baby, started crying from her high chair, so I turned to her ... and in that moment the balance of the jug tipped toward the bowl! Out of the corner of my eye I saw the milk run out in a big wave! It hit the bottom of the bowl, knocked it sideways and flooded the table.

I yelled! Melise dropped the jug and held her hands straight up in the air, as if she was surrendering. In two leaps I reached the bathroom, grabbed the handiest towels and got back to the table.

"Out of the way!" I hollered at Melise. She jumped out of her chair, and I pushed the towel into the puddle that was starting to shower down onto the floor. Is there anything worse than a milk puddle on wood floors? I guess I should be thankful it's not carpet.

I sighed as I mopped up the puddles. From behind me I heard a little voice say, "Sorry, mom."

I looked around to see Melise hugging the back of my chair and hiding her face. "Oh no, baby," I said, "this was all Mommy's fault. I should have guessed the milk would come out like that."

Melise perked up a little, but replied, "No, it's my fault. All my fault, Mommy."

I tried to convince her that it wasn't, but the more I tried to take the blame, the more she mimicked me and tried to take it back. After a few minutes, the mess was all gone and we were laughing as we argued over whose fault it was.

Raising children is a give-and-take relationship. We give permission and take blame, as needed. It is an upward climb! Much of the time we might be carrying our kids up that mountain called "childhood," but it is nice to be reminded that they are itching to do the climbing themselves, holding our hands right beside us!

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