

### A different idea of fun

Last summer, my darling husband suggested that we take a day of rest and relaxation. That sounded so nice! I had visions of being a couch potato while letting the day pass slowly and quietly. But I must have momentarily forgotten that I was the mother of crawling baby!

I made a few attempts to recline on our couch, but it never lasted long before I had to get up and chase my daughter Melise.

You would think I would be able to set her down with a pile of toys and she'd be satisfied, but that's not the way reality works. I finally gave up on my idea to relax for the day (and I gave up on ever doing it again until Melise and all my future children grow up and move out!). I had to think of something that would entertain Melise without making me work too hard. So we did laundry!

I know laundry sounds like a chore, but for us it was a summertime game! The washing part of it was quite standard, of course. Melise liked to sit on the washing machine and bob up and down in rhythm with the chug-chug-chugging.

The fun really began when it was time to dry the clothes. We have something 10 times more fun than a dryer—we have a clothesline! It may be old-fashioned and a little labor intensive, but when I was hanging laundry Melise would crawl happily around on the grass at my feet. All our pets would gather (we have a dog and several cats) and the whole group enjoyed mingling in the shade of the clothes as they flapped in the wind.

The fun didn't stop there! When the clothes were dry, Melise helped me collect them. I set the laundry basket below each item and held Melise high against my chest. As I pinched each clothespin, she would grab the item, enthusiastically pull and then drop it into the basket below. Along with each step, I would prompt her with "Grab! Pull! Drop! Good job!" We weren't really a well-oiled machine, and more than a few items missed the basket, but the giggles made it worthwhile!

## The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

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The next step was to sort the clean clothes. Here I would take full advantage of my daughter's delight in "unloading" any type of basket, box, drawer, etc. that she could get her hands on. I would set Melise down next to the basket and tip the basket toward her. Without hesitation, she would pull each item out and toss it over her shoulder.

I had to work fast to catch each thing, fold it and pile it. The only problem was that if Melise emptied the basket before I had a chance to fold everything she would then turn around, pick up the folded items and throw them back in the basket! A strong sense of humor was required for this step.

Finally we reached the great reward at the end of laundering. When there were no more clothes going in and out of the basket, that was the time for a certain baby to crawl into the basket or pull it over on her head. Whether she was imagining she was sailing in a boat or a birdie in a cage, I knew she was loving every second of it!