

# ~\* Little Moments for Big Laughs \*



Playful  
Heart  
PARENTING

By  
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LITTLE  
MOMENTS  
FOR  
BIG  
LAUGHS

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# HONK IF YOU'RE READY FOR THE BEST PART OF YOUR DAY

One afternoon, my three-year-old son and I were hanging out while his baby sister napped.

I decided to try out one of the “little moment” ideas from this book to see if it would make him laugh.

I made a “goose beak” with my hand and started honking, saying, “HONK! HONK! Hey, who let this silly GOOSE in here?” I pretended to peck my own face and bottom, all the while saying, “Hey, knock it off!”

## **(Idea #82)**

“Nooo! Stop it, Mommy!” he cried, shooing my goose-hand away.

I wasn’t offended or discouraged. There are a million reasons why he wasn’t into it in that moment.

I can't force someone to laugh at something that doesn't resonate with them. But I *can* shrug it off and switch gears, while staying in "play mode."

So, I decided to find a playful way to stop.

I made the goose "attack" my face and then blew out a big breath, making it fly away with a scream of "AAAA!!" as it disappeared.

THAT got a big ole belly laugh.

"*Do that again!*" he squealed.

What had felt like a "flop" had now morphed into a hilarious little game where we both pretended to be honking geese, puffing and blowing each other away with all our might.

At one point, we accidentally bonked heads, and his eyes filled with tears.

*(Note: play often leads to tears. It's a safe space for emotions to surface and be released.)*

He cried for a moment, and I comforted him. But then, he looked up with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and I knew what he wanted.

“HONNNNK!” My goose hand shot back up out of nowhere, and he laughed hysterically, blowing it away with all his strength.

This ended up being my favorite part of the day.

And while #82 was the inspiration, it wasn’t the answer for connection.

The answer was me deciding to keep things lighthearted and not force anything. I was willing to try something else and follow his lead, tuning in to where the moment would take us.

That's my wish for you as you read through these ideas.

Some might feel out of character for you, or you might feel like you don't have the energy for them.

*(You might surprise yourself.)*

Some might feel totally easy and doable.

*(Start with those!)*

And some might inevitably “flop,” met with an eye-roll or a “Stoppp!”

That's okay. Keep going. Because you never know what random little twist will lead you to the best part of your day...

...and maybe even one of your kiddo's favorite *childhood memories*.

## WHAT THIS IS:

This is a collection of quick and quirky, random ideas meant to **sprinkle playfulness and laughter** into your day!

From goofy faces and silly dances to bawking like a chicken, each suggestion is intended to make your kids laugh and bring **spontaneous joy** into the everyday.

Think of these ideas as **inspiration** rather than “scripts.”

Take what you love, leave what you don’t, and add **your own unique twist!**

Along the way, you’ll hear **real words from real parents** who’ve written to me about the power of silliness.

You’ll also find **tips** for getting more comfortable being playful and silly if this doesn’t come naturally to you.

## WHAT THIS ISN'T:

These are **not structured games** or planned activities. And they don't require setup or clean-up!

Please note that this book is **not about using playfulness as a “tool”** to gain cooperation from your children. Instead, these ideas help loosen the vibe in your home, connecting everyone in a lighthearted way while meeting your kids' natural need for play.

## HERE'S THE BONUS!

A **natural byproduct** of a playful environment is decreased tension and power struggles!

Laughter also allows us to let go of stress and be more present for our kids. The **lightness** that follows makes it easier to connect, be patient, and approach parenting with more grace.

## AND THERE'S AN EVEN BIGGER BONUS...

When kids feel **safe enough to be silly** with us, their defenses come down.

They're free to **express their emotions**, and they learn they can come to us when things are hard.

As they grow, they'll understand the importance of love, **empathy**, and grace.

They'll learn how to lighten up when someone makes a mistake, care less about being "cool," and more about **connecting** with others.

They'll see that **laughter** really is the best medicine — even in the toughest of times.

And they'll **carry those values forward**, passing on the gift of warmth and laughter to those they love.

# THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

Thank you for being the kind of grown-up who values the joy and connection that **silliness** brings.

Silliness doesn't mean we ignore life's challenges — it **prepares** us to face them with a little more laughter and a lot more love.

And that **ripples outward**, creating more connection, joy, and kindness in the world.

All that to say... yes — a simple toot joke really can make the world a **better place!**

So, without further ado, please enjoy these ***Little Moments for Big Laughs!***

# SUPER-SILLY CHALLENGES

1. Challenge your child to a “**tongue twister-off**” — here are two classics: “Red leather, yellow leather” and “Unique New York” — try to say each one five times, fast!
2. Challenge your kiddo to a 15-second **thumb war**, but act weak, wimpy, and flabbergasted by their thumb strength!
3. Challenge your child to a **nostril-flaring contest** and see who can flare their nostrils the fastest!
4. Randomly start **patting your head and rubbing your belly** at the same time, while standing on one foot. Challenge your kiddo to join you!
5. Challenge your child to do the “**Elvis lip.**” Relax your face and lift one side of your upper lip. Then, try to lift the other side of your lip — it’s tricky!

## SUPER-SILLY CHALLENGES

6. Randomly try practicing **ventriloquism**, with your hand as a puppet. Ask your kids if they can see your mouth moving and challenge them to try. Tip: “*I like stinky cheese*” is an easy one to start with!

7. Challenge your child to a **fast-clapping contest** to see who can clap the fastest. Use a stopwatch and try to count each other’s claps!

8. Challenge your child to a **fast-stomping or hopping contest** — use a stopwatch and see how many stomps you can each do in 30 seconds. Count out loud for each other.

9. Challenge your child to **let out all their air and then try to laugh**. The result is hilarious. Of course it’s more fun if you join in!

## SUPER-SILLY CHALLENGES

10. Challenge your kids to a contest where you try to **sneakily stick stickers on each other** without noticing throughout the day. Whoever snuck the most by the end of the day wins!
11. Challenge them to an **arm wrestle** and lose dramatically.
12. Do a **try-not-to-laugh challenge** where you get really close to each other and say, “Meoowwww” or whatever random thing you want, trying to make each other laugh while keeping a serious face.

# STARTING SMALL

TIP:

Start so small! Try a goofy face like your **weirdest smile in the mirror**, when no one is around for just a moment. No one's watching, so see if you can let go for just a second. **Can you make yourself laugh?** That's a great start!

“

*I became a mother last year during law school, and with so many things happening at once, playfulness was at the back of my mind and my creativity quite low.*

*Today I got my child to laugh so hard by dancing around with a silk scarf as I chased a fly. The out-of-breath giggles definitely fueled my energy levels. It's amazing how the simplest of things can make the moment fun and memorable.*

”

## SILLY FACE SIMPLICITY

13. Use a dish towel (or even just your hand) to hold up and down in front of your face and “**magically” change your facial expressions** each time you lower it.

14. Challenge your kiddo to a spontaneous “**staring contest**” and stare as intensely as possible.

15. Draw a **fake mustache** (with eyeliner or using sharpie and tape) and see how long it takes your kids to notice. Pop out and say, “*I mustache you a question!*”

16. **Tape the tip of your nose to your forehead** to make it point upward. Bonus points for snorting like a pig when they notice, just to be silly!

17. Pop out from around the corner and make a **random silly face** just to surprise them.

## SILLY FACE SIMPLICITY

18. Hand your child an imaginary “**silly face remote**” and ask them to change your face. Let them point it at you as you make different silly faces and offer to take turns!
19. Hang upside down over the front of the couch and put sunglasses or **glasses on your chin to turn it into a face.** Add two little dots for eyes if you want! Extra points if you sing a song and sneak the word “chin” into the lyrics.
20. Randomly make an “**I’m gonna get you!” face** and chase after them (if it seems welcome)!
21. Try really hard to **touch your tongue to your nose** and ask if they think they can!
22. Ask, “*Does this look a little fishy to you?*” and make a “**fish face**” with your lips.

# FIND THE FUNNY

TIP:

Try to find humor in any “mistakes” you make during the day. We’re absolutely allowed to feel frustrated and overwhelmed. But the smallest shift of working to **laugh things off** whenever possible can lead to big change.

“ —

*I have been struggling.*

*But the other day, I was silly  
and my eight-year-old  
laughed out loud for the first  
time in a really long time.*

*I’m inching my way back to a  
place where I am present,  
but the little moments are  
helpful pieces of sunshine,  
even if few and far between  
for now.*

— ,

## KOOKY CHARACTERS

23. Pretend you're a **robot whose batteries are dying** and beg your kids to plug you back in or change your battery — talk in robot voice, of course!
24. Do your best "**villain laugh**" out of nowhere and then ask if they think you'd make a good Disney villain voice. Challenge them to do a laugh, too.
25. Have your **feet strike up a conversation with each other**. Pretend they're scared of your child.
26. **Walk into the room like a model** on the runway, walking towards your kids, stopping, posing, then walking back out with a serious face. Bonus points for throwing on something ridiculous.
27. Say, "**How do you DO?**" in an exaggerated, "proper-sounding" voice when your child walks into the room.

## KOOKY CHARACTERS

28. Strike a **superhero-esque pose** and ask, “*If I were a superhero, do you think this would be a good pose for me?*”
29. When you walk into the room, cover your face and say, **“Please, no pictures, no autographs... I know I’m famous, but why must the paparazzi follow me EVERYWHERE!?”**
30. Use a **news anchor voice** to narrate something ordinary happening.

Example: “And we’re *LIVE in the Smith household where Charlotte is about to take her first bite of a sandwich!! Charlotte, what’s going through your mind right now?*”

Make sure to hold up an invisible microphone.

## KOOKY CHARACTERS

31. Use an **auctioneer voice** when offering snacks.

Example: “*Okay, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, what do we have here? We’ve got a delicious apple! Going once, going twice, SOLD to the little one in the front!*”

32. When they’re getting ready for the day, act like a **sports commentator** narrating and rating what they’re doing.

Example: “*And now Benny’s putting his right foot in the shoe, look at that perfect placement, that skill. The judges are definitely gonna give him a 10 for this.*”

# LOOK TO THE KIDS

TIP:

Let your kids lead the way. Kids are the best teachers when it comes to silliness.

**Observe how naturally carefree and joyful they are,** and let them show you the beauty of letting loose and not worrying about what you look like.

“ —

*I had such an “aha” moment the other night.*

*I was being silly and my son giggled and said, “I don’t understand, but this is so fun.”*

*Our kids can feel when we are having fun with them, even if they don’t exactly “get it.”*

————— ,

## UN-SERIOUS SCENARIOS

33. When you're about to help brush or style hair, say, "**Welcome to my salon!** *Have you been here before? You look so familiar!*"

34. **Pretend your child has suddenly gone invisible** and say, "Where did you go?! Did you turn on your invisibility power again??" Swipe at the air around them, missing them on purpose, getting really confused and scared, especially if they touch you or make a noise.

35. **Pretend your kid's foot is a phone ringing.** Go to answer it and get angry at a telemarketer or pretend to be ordering a pizza. Get a call on the "other line" and use the other foot to be talking on two phones at once.

36. **Pretend to text a friend** using your child's foot as a phone.

## UN-SERIOUS SCENARIOS

37. Ask them a **silly small-talk question** like, “So what do you do for work?” Act surprised if they say, “I’m a kid!!”

38. Pretend to **fall asleep standing up**, mid-sentence. Bonus points for snoring.

39. Address your child as royalty, **bowing or curtsying** and calling them, “Your highness” or “Your majesty!”

40. Pretend to **forget how to get to the bathroom** in your own house and ask your child for very detailed instructions, but keep “getting lost.” Jump up and down, crying that you gotta go NOW!

41. When you accidentally drop something or bump into something pretend to **be the voice for that thing**. For example, “Hey! Watch where you’re goin!” in a silly voice for the “wall.” Bonus points for acting confused and having a fake conversation with it.

# SHORT BURSTS OF SILLINESS

TIP:

Make it a game with yourself!

Challenge yourself to be silly for just **30 seconds** — then reflect and try to notice if you feel lighter afterwards.

“ —

*I have four kids and zero brain space or time to set up cute games or anything else, but I can implement these simple things.*

*Just the mindset shift has changed my life and my kids' lives for the better.*

” —

## TOOT HUMOR

42. **Blow up a balloon then let it go**  
flying around the room and say, “Excuse ME!”
43. Try to perfect your **“armpit fart”**  
(cup your hand under your armpit, press your arm down to trap air, then quickly move your arm up and down to make the sound)!
44. Simply make a **loud, silly toot noise** with your mouth when you squat down, jump, or do any movement.
45. Have a contest to see who can make the **most believable toot** sound.  
Tip: blowing a raspberry on the inside of your elbow usually produces a good one!
46. If the ketchup/shampoo/whatever bottle makes a loud noise exclaim, **“WHEW! Pardon ME!! Pee-yeww!”**

## TOOT HUMOR

47. Play “**I sleep, you fart,**” where you simply pretend to be asleep and they get to wake you up with a loud fart noise and you have a big, silly, dramatic reaction. Then trade roles. Sounds simple, but this is genuinely hilarious.

(Fun fact: my son invented this game when he was two)!

### **A Note to Parents on Potty Humor:**

If potty humor feels **uncomfortable**, you’re not alone! Kids love potty humor because it’s silly, surprising, and taps into their **natural** curiosity.

It’s okay to **loosen up** and laugh — it can actually strengthen your bond.

You can also **teach** that potty jokes belong at home, where kids feel safe to be themselves, and not in public or the classroom.

# PUSHING PAST EYE ROLLS

TIP:

Even if your attempt is met with a groan, remember that your efforts to bring more joy and lightheartedness are **worth it**. It can take experimenting to find what sense of humor feels best to you and to your unique relationship.

“ —

*I've been trying to bring fun back after some emotionally trying events.*

*My nearly six-year-old often resists, telling me to stop trying to be funny.*

*But tonight I spoke to him in a gibberish language and he loved it. Then the three-year-old wanted a turn. I am glad I didn't give up; I am so encouraged by this moment of connection!*

————— ,

## MUSICAL AMUSEMENT

48. Hum some **original theme music** for either yourself when you enter the room (or for your child when they enter the room)! *Think Kronk from Emperor's New Groove.*

49. Sing everyday phrases in an **operatic voice** like, “Good mooooooorning!”

50. When asking your child what they want for a snack, channel the Spice Girls and bust into **“Tell me what you want, what you really really want!”**

51. Shout **“WHOOOMP! There it is!”** (a la Tag Team) when you find something you've been looking for.

52. **Tap a rhythm** with your hands on a random item and ask them to guess what song you're thinking of.

53. Insert **mild potty humor or silly random words** into a familiar song.

# EXPERIMENT

TIP:

Make a **weird, random noise** — like a “Boinnnggg!!!” when you’re all alone. Don’t worry about trying to make it funny. Just let it happen. Did it make you laugh at yourself? Good. You’re onto something!

“

*Thank you for your reminders to mix in play without having to make a big “plan” out of it.*

*The other day, I picked up a hanger that was next to me and put it on my head, pretending it was a chicken beak.*

*We fell into fits of laughter which led to playing the chicken dance song. They kept dancing as I cooked supper while we all laughed.*

”

## WIGGLE FOR GIGGLES

54. Attempt to start **moonwalking** out of the blue.
55. Start doing “**the robot**” **dance** out of nowhere.
56. Announce that it’s time to floss in a serious tone, but then **start doing the “floss”** — as in the dance move – not flossing your teeth!
57. Say, “**Walk this way!**” Then do a silly dancing walk, march, hop, etc.
58. When the microwave or oven beeps, strike a different **dramatic pose** with each beep.
59. Start **disco dancing** with no music. Say, “*What? Haven’t you ever heard of a silent disco?*” Bonus points for playfully challenging your kiddo to a disco dance-off (music optional)!

## WIGGLE FOR GIGGLES

60. Start **dancing to the ringtone** when the phone rings and pretend to be really into it like it's the best song you've ever heard. Bonus points for saying, "*What is this song? It slaps!!*" or whatever the cool kids are saying these days.

### **A Note to Parents on Insecurity:**

If singing or dancing feels **awkward**, remember this: kids don't care how we look or sound — they care about our presence and joy.

My husband is definitely not a trained singer (I am, for the record!), but our kids still beg to hear him sing because it's about the **love**, not the pitch.

When we let go of self-consciousness, we're **modeling freedom, playfulness, and self-acceptance**.

# BONDING THROUGH HUMOR

TIP:

If your family has an **inside joke**, especially resulting from one of these shared silly moments, **lean into it!** Reference it often, leaving little notes with it written inside or whispering it as you hug them before bed.

“

*This has magically diffused so many almost-tense moments recently.*

*We used to get into stubborn and shouting standoffs.*

*It's made me feel so much more real and relaxed and not stressed.*

*I always hated that my husband was the “fun one,” and now I feel happy even having 15 minutes of silly time before bed with her.*

”

## PHYSICAL FUNNIES

61. Tape a piece of paper with "**Hug Me**" written on it to your own back.
62. Ask your child for a **high five** and have a **big, dramatic reaction** to the force, exclaiming how strong they are, shaking off your hand.
63. Ask, "**What if I hugged you like this?**" and give the strangest, silliest hug. OR: "What if I smiled / laughed / shook hands like this?"
64. Say, "**Quick! What am I?!**" Then strike a pose as something random (ice cream cone, elephant, etc.)
65. Give your child a high-five but hold up two fingers and say, "**High-TWO!?**"
66. Hold out your fist for a "**knuckles**" bump, but at the last second, switch to two fingers and say, "**Snail!?**" Or make up your own goofy twist!

## PHYSICAL FUNNIES

67. Start moving in **slow motion**, speak in a low, slow voice, and say, “Heyyy, who pressed the slow-mo button on my remoooote??” (Go with it if they pretend to press “fast-forward” or “rewind!”)

68. Act like you’re **trapped behind an invisible wall** (like a mime) and say, “Hey! Who put this invisible wall here?!”

69. **Amuse yourself** by crying, “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up!!” in a frail little voice and begging them to carry you.

70. **Freeze** your body and face, then say through clenched teeth, “Hey! Who pressed the pause button? I’m stuck!! Can someone please press play??”

71. Proudly brag that you can **“stand on one finger!”** To prove it, crouch down, put your finger on the ground and place your foot on top.

# PERFECT IS BORING

TIP:

Being silly means getting more **comfortable being imperfect** — and that's exactly what makes it fun! If that feels impossible, remember that this is a practice. The more we **practice**, the more naturally silliness comes.

“ —

*I'm almost in tears writing about what a profound effect playfulness has had on me.*

*My daughter and I have both been through a lot and it's taught both of our brains huge seriousness and anxiety.*

*Learning that I don't have to take everything so seriously has changed everything.*

— ,

## FOODIE FOOLISHNESS

72. Subtly **smush a bite of brownie over your teeth** and wait for the opportunity to smile — act clueless.
73. Try to **balance a spoon on your nose** at dinner — or between your upper lip and nose (like a mustache!) by making kissy lips.
74. Hold a **banana up to your ear like a phone** and answer it very seriously.
75. Before taking a bite of your **food**, hold it up to your ear and pretend it's **whispering something to you**, then apologize to it that you're about to eat it.
76. Pretend to be a **cooking show host**, taking a bite of food with an exaggerated reaction. Hold a contest to see who can be the most convincing in showing how delicious their food is.

## FOODIE FOOLISHNESS

77. **Stomp over to your food/snack** with big, slow “giant” stomps and say, “Fee, fi, fo, fum... I’m going to eat you — YUM!” just for fun.

78. When **preparing food, sing**, “That’s the way (uh-huh, uh-huh) I like it! (uh-huh, uh-huh!)”

79. Grab a **spatula as your “microphone”** and launch into your go-to karaoke song, really getting into it. Bonus points for somehow working the word “spatula” in there!

80. Welcome your children into your **“restaurant,”** giving it a random silly name and weird restaurant policies like, “Sorry, we don’t allow smiling in our restaurant!”

81. Make up a silly, short, simple **chant/rap** about whatever you’re about to eat.

# DO IT FOR THE MEMORIES

TIP:

Imagine one of these silly moments becomes a favorite, creating a **core memory** your child has forever. Maybe they even replicate it with their children someday. How amazing is that?! And all because you went for it.

“ —

*Last night, while tucking my five-year-old to bed, I pretended that he was a huge teddy bear and exclaimed how lucky I was because this was the “greatest gift ever!”*

*He giggled and hugged me tightly, whispering, “This teddy loves you a lot.”*

*Couldn’t help the tears that rolled down my eyes. Tender moments like these form core memories.*

————— ”



## ANIMAL ANTICS

82. Transform your **hand into a “goose beak”** and start honking and playfully pecking around. Say, “Hey, who *let this silly goose loose in our house?!*” Start “pecking” yourself and pretend to be furious.

83. Put a **glove on your head and pretend to be a rooster**, shouting, “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” to get everyone energized in the morning.

84. Say, “Can you please hold this **invisible penguin** for me? Thanks!” Then pretend to carefully hand them a penguin.

85. Slowly stand on one leg, tuck your arms into your sides, look confused, then say, “Oh no, I forgot to take my anti-flamingo medicine and I’m **turning into a flamingo!**” Take some invisible medicine to “make it stop.”

## ANIMAL ANTICS

86. Arch your back, **hold up your arms by your chest like a T-Rex**, and try to drink a glass of water. Say, “Wow, I’m *really glad I’m not a T-Rex... this is really hard!*”

87. Start **waddling and quacking like a duck** out of the blue, and invite your little “duckling” to follow along. Bonus points for continuing to randomly quack throughout the day.

88. **Bawk like a chicken** each time you try to talk and act surprised and confused. (*Tip: say “backpack” over and over again with lazy lips!*)

89. Pick up one of your child’s **stuffed animals** and **pretend they’re whispering** an exciting story into your ear. Respond with things like, “No WAY. *The teddy bear said THAT? Well what did you tell her?!*”

## ANIMAL ANTICS

90. Shove a **stuffed animal under your shirt** and say “Oh, no... I’ve got a tummy ache. I really shouldn’t have eaten that alligator/panda/whatever it is!”

91. Challenge each other to do your best **“whale voice”** (like Dory from *Finding Nemo*).

92. Let your kids choose any animal and try to make **random puns** related to that animal throughout the day.

Creativity challenge! Example: If they pick “cow,” you can say, “So. Anyone seen any good mooooovies lately?”

93. Do a **“crab walk”** (Sit, lift hips, walk sideways on hands and feet) and say, “I can’t help it... I’m just feelin’ really CRABBY today!” (This can be a playful way to get out of a funk if you actually are feeling crabby)!

## HOW DO YOU FEEL?

TIP:

When you and your child belly laugh, **what emotions come up** for you? Can you feel your muscles loosen and stress melt away even if just for a moment? Paying attention to how you feel can be the best encouragement to keep going.

“ —

*This is making me a better parent.*

*We need compassion, empathy, and play in our world more than we need anything else right now.*

— ”

## WARDROBE WACKINESS

94. Come into the room with **socks on your ears** and say, “What? My ears were cold!”
95. Ball up a pair of socks and shout, **“Hot socks!!”** Throw the sock ball back and forth like in “hot potato.”
96. Use a **rolling pin** to try to gently “de-wrinkle” your child’s outfit (while they’re wearing it).
97. When you put on your shoes, start shuffling your feet around and say, “Oh no... did someone cast a **magic shuffling spell** on my shoes? They won’t stop shuffling!”
98. Tuck a scarf or shirt into the waistband of your pants in the back and pretend to be astonished/concerned that **you’ve grown a tail!**

## WARDROBE WACKINESS

99. Put a **hooded sweatshirt on backwards** and pull the hood up over your face, exclaiming, “Hey! What’s *going on? Are we having a solar eclipse? Who turned out the lights?*”

100. Try to **balance a hat on your bum** and ask them if they think that’s a good fashion choice and if it might start a trend.

101. Write a **fake name tag** for yourself using a post-it note or piece of paper and tape that says “*Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_*” — insert something silly like a ridiculous nickname, made-up funny word, or something from a family inside joke. Put it on your shirt and wait for everyone to notice.

# INVITE YOUR INNER CHILD

TIP:

Imagine **your younger self** standing next to you now, and invite that child to join in the fun.

Tell them it's safe to be silly.

“ —

*This is actionable, doable advice that can be immediately applied without tons of money and time away from my kids to learn how.*

*I have childhood trauma. I need to work on healing, but my kids need their mom now.*

*They deserve fun and playful attention now. And it's been fun for me, too.*

————— ,

## LOVEY DOVEY LAUGHS

102. **Clap wildly and cheer** for your child when they enter the room, just because you're excited to see them.

103. When cuddling/hugging, exclaim, “*You'll never escape from this cuddle, NEVER!*” When they escape, keep your eyes closed and **pretend to keep cuddling them**, then open your eyes and be flabbergasted that they actually escaped!

104. Start speaking in rhymes like, “Oh no... I think I have **rhyme-itis**... your highness!!”

105. Use an **imaginary “lasso” or “fishing pole”** to try and “catch” your kiddos and draw them in for a hug! Of course, this can only be done if they think it’s fun and are eager participants.

106. Do the **“raise the roof”** move and chant “Whoop, whoop!!” to greet them.

## LOVEY DOVEY LAUGHS

107. Make up **mushy-gushy names** for your kids, like, “*I love you, my little schnookie-pookie-wookie-doodly-ding-dong-bear!*” See if they can come up with an even more ridiculous one!

108. Spontaneously start listing some of your **favorite things** about your child — but keep it silly and lighthearted like, “*One of my favorite things about you is you admit it when you toot!*” Of course, you can sprinkle in some heartfelt, non-silly things too.

109. Give them a round of applause for doing a great job on something but say, “*Clapping with my hands isn’t enough. I’m so proud of you I have to clap with my FEET, too!*”

110. Come up with a **secret handshake** with your child with silly sound effects. Challenge yourselves to remember it the next day... and the next...

# GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

TIP:

Acknowledge how hard it is to be an adult juggling so many responsibilities. Remind yourself that **you still deserve to have fun and laugh.** The two can coexist.

66 —

*I don't even know how to explain how valuable this mindset shift has become.*

*I was always the “fun/silly aunt” and wished I could be that as a mom, too.*

*I'm not sure why it felt different as a mom, but when I realized this, it felt like I got a massive chunk of myself back.*

*My kids and I enjoy our time so much more.*

— ,

## BEFORE YOU GO...

I want to leave you with this:

The real magic doesn't lie in following a script or getting every idea "perfect." It's in you finding your own unique way to connect with your child in a way that feels true to who you are and also makes them laugh.

Your child is one of a kind, and so are you! Your approach to play should be, too. You're the expert on your child's sense of humor. When you listen to their cues and follow your gut — that's where the best connection happens.

Our attempts at silliness won't always be a "hit," and that's okay. Playfulness in parenting isn't being a clown around the clock with an adoring audience. It's just being more intentional about showing up playfully when we can.

I hope that it's been helpful hearing from other parents who've felt just as awkward, unsure, or overwhelmed as you might feel — but who found their rhythm in simple, silly moments.

As you can see from their stories, you are far from alone if this doesn't come naturally to you!

There's no "right way" to be silly. If it feels awkward at first, that doesn't make you any less of a parent. It means you're trying, and that means a lot.

So, here's your permission to shrug off some of the seriousness and let your playfulness come from your heart.

Silliness in parenting is not a one-size-fits-all approach — and the more you allow yourself to experiment and embrace the fun, the more natural it will feel.

My wish for you is that you'll start to notice that those little moments of laughter connect you and your child in ways nothing else can.

Here's to you finding your own rhythm, trusting in your instincts, and letting laughter lead the way.

I'm cheering you on!

Love,  
*Mia*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mia is a theater educator, performer, and mother with a passion for play, creativity, and laughter.

As a mom to two littles and stepmom to an older child, Mia understands the complexities of family dynamics and the challenges of connecting with kids at different stages of life.

Mia's mission is simple: To help families create more joyful, meaningful moments together through laughter, even on the busiest days and in the hardest of seasons.

You can find more of her tips, games, ideas, and heartfelt anecdotes on Instagram at **@playfulheartparenting**.

