

# **The Smiling Parent**

## **How to Add Humour to Raising Your Family**

By Patricia Morgan MA CCC

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“Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children. Now I have six children and no theories.” John Wilmot

Children laugh, creatively play and act silly, even making goofy faces. As a parent you have an opportunity to re-learn these three basic elements of living a joyful life. There is a growing industry of “educating” company employees to develop their sense of humour. In the meantime, you have the perfect teachers living at home with you - your very own fun toy, children.

Before you blurt out the big “but the job of being a parent is serious business” let me agree with you and add that you will cheer up your home if you take yourself less seriously. You will feel healthier and create more fond memories for your family and yourself.

All kinds of research supports the value of smiling, lightening up laughing more often. Laughing relaxes the muscular system, massages internal organs, doubles our heart rate, stimulates our nervous system, improves our lung capacity and is contagious. We know the pain is over when we smile or laugh. Plus a smile improves your appearance and is an effective way to connect.

To lighten your family atmosphere let your laughs rip and appreciate that problems are temporary. To have a sense of humour is to have the ability to see the bigger picture of life including contradictions and paradoxes. When we give up trying to be the perfect parent who has all the “right” answers we are more open to asking “Who will play Chuckle Belly with me?”

Here are some tips for adding some light hearted family moments:

- Tell about the best, worst and most embarrassing part of your day.
- Do more activities you love and share them with your children.
- Create fun and meaningful rituals for birthdays, holidays and ordinary days.
- Learn a riddle or two. “What do you get when you mix a cat with a lemon? A sourpuss.”
- Create fun surprises like love notes in lunches, dessert before first course or taking a mystery car trip.
- Join your children under their blanket fort with a picnic.
- Sing a wacky good night song from the hall.
- Have fun, yet sweet, nick names for your children like “Pumpkin” or “Peanut.”

Doodle, hum, dance, giggle, wiggle and snuggle with your children. Model that

growing up is not just hard work but includes moments of playfulness, delight and smiles.

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