

# big PLANS in print

Connecting Big Plans' Parents to their Communities

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## Bounce Back from Setbacks

### Help Kids Handle Disappointment

No one – including Supermom – can prevent kids from experiencing setbacks in life. Your daughter may miss the class field trip because she caught a nasty cold. Or she may come home crying when her science-fair project earns a lower-than-hoped-for grade.

Kids' disappointments are no fun for parents to witness. But kids learn to lift themselves up when they get knocked down. Marriage and family therapist Christina Steinorth, M.A., author of *Cue Cards for Life*, says parents can help kids learn to bounce back from adversities by taking a teaching role. During tough times, aim to build your child's coping skills and reinforce the value of persistence. Here's how.

**Acknowledge emotions** – Family and art therapist Erica Curtis, MFT, says kids' setbacks may feel intensely personal to parents. When our kids hurt, we hurt too. "Parents need to clarify their own feelings about the situation," she says. "A parent may be more disappointed – or may assume the child is more disappointed – than the child actually is."

Research shows we are biologically wired to catch others' emotions through a process called emotional contagion. Mirroring others' feelings promotes and preserves social connections by allowing us to feel empathy. But there is a downside: It's easy to forget whose feelings you're feeling. When that happens, you may overreact or respond with ways that amplify your child's distress instead of helping them regroup.

It's important to get an accurate read of your child's feelings about what happened. Sometimes kids share intense bad feelings with parents then move on quickly. Other times, kids may feel truly and utterly devastated. Pay close attention to your child's words, body language and behavior. All of these things

provide insight into kids' feelings and give clues about how effectively they are coping.

Accept your child's emotional reaction, even if it seems overblown. "Parents need to be able to tolerate kids' bad feelings," says Curtis, even if they are uncomfortable. Take a deep breath and remind yourself parenting is hard. If needed, step back and tend to your own emotions first, so you can give generous comfort and support to your child.

**Build coping skills** – Start by giving your child a safe place to share their experiences. "The most important thing a parent can do is to listen actively. That means nodding, paraphrasing back what you've heard and asking questions instead of offering solutions," says Curtis. If your child reports, "I wanted our team to be called the 'Crushers' but the other guys didn't listen," mirror his feelings by responding, "It sounds like you really wanted the team to choose the name you suggested." This shows you are listening and validates your child's point of view.

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As your child describes the situation in greater detail, "encourage her to identify and label her feelings," says clinical psychologist and mom Nerina Garcia-Arcement, Ph.D. Assigning specific emotion words to feelings helps kids address them more effectively. A child who says, "I feel angry because my best friend blabbed my secret to everyone else," is ready to explore potential responses. One who just cries and moans, "It's awful," is not. Labeling emotions gives kids a sense of control and composure and decreases the chance they'll act out in harmful ways to express their feelings.

As your child explains what happened, prompt them to identify potential reasons for the setback. For instance, you might ask, "What do you think got in the way of you running a faster race?" Instead of letting them focus on one or two obvious reasons, encourage your child to come up with more. There is usually a range of factors, both personal and situational, that may have affected an unhappy outcome.

Explore each reason with your child to identify ways they could do things differently next time. This helps your child move from feeling

bad to doing better. For instance, noting they felt tired before the race started might lead your child to come up with ideas about eating a snack before the track meet or going to bed earlier. Specific action steps empower kids to bounce back on their own terms.

Encourage your child to write down their intended actions, so they'll remember the plan. This also reinforces their commitment to change. Offer your support by asking what you can do to facilitate your child's goals. "Parents have to commit to making changes along with the child," says Garcia-Arcement. If your child says they need more practice to make first chair in the clarinet section, you may need to tweak the afterschool routine to find more practice time or designate a music-practice space in your home. Bottom line: Do what you can to create a supportive environment.

**Pay it forward** – After the pain has passed, talk with your child about what they learned. Focus on knowledge gained and skills developed. Perhaps your child learned how to speak up for themselves. Or maybe they built project-planning skills – such as goal-setting and task-scheduling – that they can

apply to other endeavors. If your child can't articulate what they learned, share your own observations. And don't forget to tell them you're proud of their improvement. Kids need to know parents notice.

When the next setback happens, remind your child how they handled previous situations and encourage them to apply past learning to present challenges. Be a confidant and a sounding board. Help your child find their own way forward. Then step back and watch them grow through adversity. Responding to disappointment with confidence, grit and good humor is the key to being a happy, successful person.

*Heidi Smith Luedtke, Ph.D., is a personality psychologist, mom of two and author of Detachment Parenting. Learn more at [heidiluedtke.com](http://heidiluedtke.com).*

## NURTURE YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVITY

# CRAFT BUILD

**Did you know that Michaels' stores offer a Kids Club with craft projects for kids each Saturday?** Just \$2 per child ages 3 and up, for a 30 minute creative craft project. All supplies included. Register for a session every half hour (10am to 11:30am) each Saturday. See a store associate to join the fun!

In November kids have the chance to create a handprint wreath, a felt stocking, a reindeer tree ornament and a snow globe! See [canada.michaels.com](http://canada.michaels.com) for details.



**Did you know that Home Depot offers FREE Know-How Workshops for kids ages 4-12?**

Children accompanied by an adult can construct projects from pre-fabricated kits, learning Do-It-Yourself skills and tool safety, while enjoying a real sense of accomplishment. Projects are different every month, so check with the Home Depot website for more information on specific projects, dates, and store locations. **When:** Second Saturday of each month (check website as dates may vary) **Time:** 10 am – 12 pm **Where:** Participating Home Depot locations **Website:** [www.homedepot.ca](http://www.homedepot.ca)



## FREE SPLASH, SWIM & SKATE

The City of Calgary recognizes the right for children to engage in play and recreation activities in the community. In celebration of upcoming National Child Day, The City is hosting family-friendly swim and skate times at select City of Calgary Facilities on **Sunday, November 17th, 2013**. Please check website for all locations and times: [www.calgary.ca/recreation](http://www.calgary.ca/recreation)

### Looking for MORE free events?

Various pools will be offering FREE public swimming and skating on November 11th - Remembrance Day and various arenas will be offering FREE public skating on December 26th - Boxing Day.

**Check the website for more details on FREE City of Calgary events.**



# Embracing the Journey of Motherhood with Local Mother's of Preschoolers Groups



If you are a mother of preschoolers, you know first hand that being a mom can be exciting and scary at the same time. The Mother's of Preschoolers Organization (MOPS) realizes this too, so for over thirty years has been dedicated to connecting moms to a community of women in their own neighborhoods. Better moms make a better world and MOPS doesn't want any mom to feel alone. Mom's meet to laugh, cry and embrace the journey of motherhood together while their children are engaged in the MOPPETS program.



MOPPETS is an excellent program staffed by caregivers who will nurture your children in a preschool-like environment. Upon arrival, children are signed-in to the program by their caregiver. Then, the children are able to interact through play, coloring, crafts, and songs appropriate to their preschool age. They will also receive a healthy snack before mom picks them up. MOPPETS is available for ages 0 to Kindergarten (although many moms keep their newborns/tiny ones with them during sessions. A good rule of thumb is that if they crawl/move around they would do well in the nursery part of the MOPPETS program).

While the children are enjoying themselves at MOPPETS, moms will have the chance to connect with other moms. A typical MOPS morning may include: welcome and announcements, an icebreaker, coffee and snack, a speaker and topic presented, and discussion.

Examples of topics covered may include: Post Partum Depression, Dealing with Cold/Flu Season, Gardening, Budgeting, Organizing, Meal Planning and Prep (Crocktober has become a staple in my MOPS group – moms are given the ingredients and are instructed on how to prepare the meal. They take the meal home for their own crockpots so their families can enjoy. Tips on crockpot cooking are also discussed during this morning), Motivational Speakers, Spa Day (moms are pampered with manicures/pedicures, massages, facials, waxing, sugaring, etc. and are encouraged to relax), Marriage, Mini Boot Camps, Movie Pajama Day, Parenting Tips and Tricks, Mom Makeover, Taking Care of Mom, and more! The list is endless, depending on what moms want to learn about!

Moms are often divided into groups for discussion time and are encouraged to share things they have learned about the topic discussed while inspiring one another with practical advice.



There are currently four local MOPS groups in the Calgary and surrounding area that meet once or twice a month, while providing childcare through the MOPPETS program. Most groups meet between September and June, and moms are welcome to join a MOPS group at any time of year.

Although MOPS groups are started by local churches, you do not have to belong to a church to participate. All mothers of preschoolers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## Local MOPS Groups

### Claresholm MOPS Group

Faith Community Baptist Church (Across from General Hospital) Claresholm, AB  
Meetings: every Thursday from 9:30 – 11:30  
Contact: Shauna Fankhauser at 403-625-2744 or shaunafankhauser@gmail.com

### Crossfield MOPS

Crossfield Baptist Church  
285176 Alberta Hwy 2A, Crossfield, AB  
Meetings: 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 9:15 – 11:00  
Contact: Yvonne Paulson at 403-946-5651 or cbcoffice@telus.net

### Faith Community Baptist MOPS/ MOMSnext

Faith Community Baptist Church  
2104 Yankee Valley Blvd. SW, Airdrie, AB  
Contact: Denise Daniel at 403-948-6727 or ddaniel@fcbcairdrie.com

### Lutheran Church of Our Saviour MOPS/MOMSnext

Lutheran Church of Our Saviour  
8831 Fairmount Drive SE  
Calgary, AB  
Contact: Tricia Dang at 403-226-8551

*Cost of attending MOPS varies from group to group, depending on the funding they have available from outside sources. Childcare is often included as part of your MOPS fee, although some groups have a separate fee for childcare. Contact your local MOPS group to find out more information about cost.*

**You can also contact Erin Lowe, MOPS Ministry Coach at 403-556-8842 or erinblowe2@gmail.com to find a group in your area. If you have school-aged children, look for MOMSnext. Moms still need support and community as new challenges and issues arise with school-aged children. For more information on MOPS groups around the world go to [www.mops.org](http://www.mops.org)**

## Healthy Nut-Free Kid-Approved Snacks

Are you looking for a nutrition-packed nut-free snack to send with your child to preschool? Besides fresh fruit and veggies, here are three other easy, packable, healthy snack recipes submitted by local nutritionists. Not only are they perfect for a safe, nut-free snack time, they are also kid-approved!

### NUT-FREE TRAIL MIX



Parents are always looking for healthy, portable snacks. Trail mix is a very nutritious snack, but many store-bought varieties contain nuts, which are not allowed in most schools now. Yet it's so easy to make your own custom trail mix! Easy to portion into small to-go containers to keep in your diaper bag or car.

Mix together any of:

1. Seeds (pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds)  
*\*for children over 4 years or age due to choking hazard*
2. Dried fruit (chopped apricots, dates, prunes, raisins, cranberries, cherries).
3. Freeze-dried fruit
4. Dried cereal (Cheerios or Shreddies)
5. Pretzels pieces

No need to add sugar or oils, or to bake. Just mix together! Note - If making a big batch, add the dried fruit just before eating to avoid the other items from absorbing the moisture and losing their crunch!

Trail Mix Recipe Submitted by:  
**House, MSc, RD**  
[www.firststepnutrition.com](http://www.firststepnutrition.com)  
Ph: 403-608-3240

Quinoa is a great source of protein and dietary fiber

### MINI QUINOA PIZZA BITES

Serve this tasty snack hot or cold. Try making a batch to freeze so you can just take them out as needed! Delicious, nutritious, and gluten-free!

- 1/3 cup onion, chopped
- 1/2 yellow pepper, chopped
- 1/3 cup cherry tomato, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 bunch fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/3 cup pizza sauce
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup cooked protein (either turkey/chicken sausage, turkey bacon, ground turkey etc.)
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- Pinch of sea salt/pepper as needed

Directions: Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Fill greased mini muffin tin with mixture and pat lightly with spoon. Bake 20 mins at 350 degrees. Yield is 28 bites (to cook the remaining 4 quinoa bites, fill the empty spaces in the muffin tin with water.) Option - May also omit pizza sauce from mixture and serve it separately for dipping.



Image source: [www.thewaytohisheartblog.com](http://www.thewaytohisheartblog.com)

### BANANA BREAD



- 1.25 cup of whole wheat flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
  
- 1/2 cup Brown Sugar/Sucanat
- 1/4 cup Grapeseed Oil/Safflower Oil (Canola Oil will also work if these healthier oils are unavailable)
- 2 Whole Eggs
- 2 Bananas
- 1/2 cup Cauliflower Puree (if not available, add an extra banana)
- 1 tsp vanilla
  
- 1/2 tsp: flaxseed, chia seed, wheat germ, oat bran (optional for added fibre)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350. Prepare either 12 muffin tins or 2 mini loaf pans.
2. In a bowl or zip lock bag, mix the first 5 ingredients.
3. In a blender or by hand, mix the next 6 ingredients.
4. Add the flour mixture to the wet mixture and mix until just combined. Mix in the last few ingredients (seeds, bran, etc.)
5. Pour into muffin tin or loaf pans. For muffins, bake for about 30 mins, for loaf pans, bake for about 55 mins. They are done when a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

Notes: Cauliflower puree is steamed cauliflower, blended to a puree. You can freeze it in 1/2 cup portions and use as needed. Pureed veggies are a really easy way to get veggies into kids without them knowing. Once veggies are cooked/baked in a recipe and cooled, you don't taste them but still get the benefit of the veggie.

Mini Quinoa Bites and  
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