Folding a load of clothes, I felt a tug on my pants.
Looking down, baby Elsie was grinning from ear to ear. And then she took off, wobbling toward her brother James as he lined up his Monster Jam trucks.
Elsie took her first real steps last week while my family and I were on vacation. The timing couldn't have been more perfect. With the living room curtains highlighting the mountains and our family gathered around, she stood directly up and walked over to us from the dining room. Before you could blink, cameras and telephone recorders came out. The living room was transformed into a movie set with Elsie as the star.
I am really excited to see Elsie exploring the house, following me around as I do chores and chasing her brother around. But part of me is sad to see my little baby taking one more step toward getting older.
"I want her to stay a baby," I told my husband Jason, as we watched her walk to the bedroom. I know that we have a long way to go, filled with memories. But I can already see what so many parents told me about time flying by with raising your children.
James is already four years old. He plays his second tee ball game tonight. He can wash his hands by himself. He took his first shower alone this morning. His vocabulary is growing everyday. He even did his first "I'm too cool to kiss you goodbye" at daycare the other day. Before I know it, he will be asking me for money. He will beg his dad to take the truck out for a spin. He will bring his first girlfriend home.
But I can still remember feeling him kick for the first time while we were expecting. I can remember his little face on the day he was born. I can remember how nervous Jason and I felt when we brought him home for the first time.
I laugh now but, Jason and I handled our first dirty diaper like a bomb squad. We spent many nights asleep in the recliner with him on our chest because that was the only way he would go to sleep. I teared up when I heard him say "momma." His first steps were on his first birthday. And now he is my little man. He doesn't let me rock him to sleep anymore. He actually helps me now with Elsie's diaper changes. But I still like hearing him say "momma."
And baby Elsie is no different. The moment Jason and I discovered we were expecting our second child, those same feelings came back.
I can remember feeling her kick that first time. I also remember the huge smile I got on my face when I was told she would be a little girl.
I remember the fear we felt when she almost arrived a month early. But then the feeling of love and happiness came back over us when she waited to arrive on time and in good health.
We handled the diaper changes a little better, and she actually sleeps on her own. But we still

sing “You are my Sunshine” when she is resting in our laps. We have tea parties and picnics in our living room with her. And we are anxiously awaiting her first real word other than “baba” and “gaga.”

And now Elsie is walking. It just seems to happen too fast.

Much like James, she too will come to us for money one day. The house will probably get hectic when proms and dances start happening. Those pre-teen dramatics will come our way. And bless the first boy who comes to the Patterson home for a date. (Jason said that won’t happen until she’s 30).

But I guess that is just part of being a parent. You raise them to let them go, but then you want to hold on to them with each step they take in that direction.

For now, we’ll just enjoy the wild crazy ride that comes with parenthood.

I know when it’s time to get off, we will wish we could go just one more round.