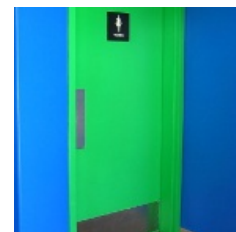




Using a Public Bathroom: Information for Parents of Toddlers

Helping an opposite-sex child on the toilet is certainly easier during the toddler years. As children grow and become more aware of gender differences (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/Gender-Differences.aspx>)—and more aware of their surroundings in general—public bathrooms can become an increasingly uncomfortable place for both parent and child.



It is best to take your child to the bathroom corresponding with your own gender through at least age four. After that, if he objects or if you feel uncomfortable, you may decide to send him into his own gender's bathroom while you wait within hearing distance right outside the door.

First, though, help him practice removing and refastening his clothes, flushing the toilet and washing his hands (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-to-Illness.aspx>), and performing all the other routines of bathroom use that you have been reinforcing up to now.

Now is also a good time to reinforce the concept of "private parts" and to instruct him to come to you immediately if he is approached in the bathroom by someone he doesn't know.

Additional Information:

- Preventing Child Abductions (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/all-around/Pages/Preventing-Child-Abductions.aspx>)
- How to Ease Your Child's Separation Anxiety (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Soothing-Your-Childs-Separation-Anxiety.aspx>)

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