



## Potty Talk: How Parents Can Discourage the Behavior

My three-year-old daughter's interest in toilet training has come with an unfortunate side effect: potty talk.

While I am happy to see her learning to use her potty with relative ease, I am very tired of hearing the words pooppy-head, butt, and pee-pee shouted out in public places, followed by gales of laughter. How can I stop this kind of talk without dampening my child's interest in her potty?



Bathroom humor, or potty talk, commonly accompanies toilet training and preschool development in general. Three- and four-year-olds become interested in these words as they hear them increasingly from you during toilet training (</english/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/default.aspx>) or from their friends during play. Not only do these new terms seem to hold the key to the puzzle of how their bodies work and why boys and girls differ—two issues that fascinate them at this age—but they offer the added punch of terrific shock value. Saying “pooppy-head” is bound to get a strong reaction from you and plenty of laughter from your daughter's friends. What preschooler could resist such a word?

### How to Discourage Potty Talk

You can discourage this behavior (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Normal-Child-Behavior.aspx>) by taking care not to overreact to it. If your child gets no shocked response, using the words is not as fun. Calmly acknowledge her motive for using such terms (*“That word sounds funny to you, huh?”*), then redirect her attention (*“I know a good joke. Listen to this . . .”*).

It is not too soon, also, to start teaching your child that certain behavior is appropriate in some situations but not in others (*“Talk about bathroom stuff with Mom and Dad, not with your brother's friends.”*). As long as you don't expect perfect results right away and don't focus too intensely on this issue, it will pass.

**Last Updated** 1/21/2014

**Source** Guide to Toilet Training (Copyright © 2003 American Academy of Pediatrics)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

