

# Curbing Bathroom Talk

A nonchalant parental attitude and a bathroom time-out will make potty talk much less fun.

It invariably crops up in the preschool years – our old friend the Potty Mouth. You might hear something like, “This soup looks like pee” or “You’re a poo-poo head!”



You might also notice children being fascinated with words for various private body parts and saying them loudly in inappropriate settings. At this age, they are potty-training, or just finished with it and newly interested in the body parts and vocabulary that go along with the process.

Don't be surprised or too worried, says Jan Faull, parent educator and co-author of *Mommy! I Have to Go Potty! (2nd ed.)* "This practice is common in children up to age 5," she writes. "The variations on the use of such words are only limited by a child's imagination which, during the preschool years, is fertile and unbridled. If your child notices that this talk bothers you a great deal, it usually only gets worse."

Tools – As Faull points out, reacting in an annoyed or shocked manner will only reinforce the behavior (some preschoolers are very interested in making Mom and Dad lose control). Here are a couple ideas from her that will help curb the bathroom talk.



- **Act a little bored.** Appearing shocked, startled or even disgusted will encourage the behavior. A calm, disinterested attitude from you will not be a fun reaction.
- **Take your child to the bathroom for bathroom talk.** If potty mouth becomes a persistent problem, then each time your child indulges in it, escort him calmly to the bathroom.  
Say, "If you need to use bathroom talk, the place to use those words is in the bathroom." When you get there, sit down and tell your child that you will listen. Don't act shocked, just listen, and when your child is finished, ask him, "Are you done using bathroom talk now? If you need to use those words again, let me know. I'll come to the bathroom with you any time to listen." This approach defuses the negative attention such words can bring.
- **Remove the child from the group.** If your child finds it hilarious to use potty talk in front of her friends, remove her from the group. Tell her, "Those are not polite words to use with your friends. Go to your room until you're ready to use better words." If you're out in public, take her to the restroom, as described above.

You'll find more practical tips you can use right now in *Mommy! I Have to Go Potty! (2nd ed.)* by Jan Faull, M. Ed. and Helen F. Neville, B.S., R.N.