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## Your 6 Biggest Potty Training Dilemmas Solved

Bette Alkazan, parenting coach and author of *Potty Learning: The Do's, Don'ts and the Oops of Poops*, answers your top potty-training questions.

By **Caitlin Ultimo**

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**Q: My daughter is terrified of the flush! How can we ease her fears?**

**A:** The flush can be a very scary thing for a child. The toilet is pretty big compared to toddlers and preschoolers, so it's no surprise that many see it as a "big scary swallowing-up monster." Be aware that this fear is normal and very common, especially for more sensitive kids. Be patient and know that the fear will subside in time. Continue to be a good example and allow your daughter to accompany you to the bathroom

and let her see and hear the flush from whatever distance she's comfortable.

**Q: My child will pee on the potty, but runs and hides whenever he has to poop. Now what?**

**A:** Be patient. Pee-pee training commonly happens before number two, and kids often start hiding as they begin to recognize the need for privacy. This is definitely a sign your child is heading in the right direction; he's just not quite there yet. This in-between time can be frustrating for parents, but it's important to give your child the space he needs to practice and mature. He will get there!

**Q: My 4-year-old is dry all day now—but still soaks a Pull-Up at night. Should I be worried?**

**A:** When kids are 4 years old, we don't typically worry about this at all. It's age-appropriate, as many preschoolers sleep very deeply and aren't able to read their bodies' cues during the night. In fact, it can take a couple of years for some kids to stay consistently dry at night. If you're concerned, always ask your pediatrician, but know that this is a common and expected part of the process.

**Q: It's been more difficult to potty-train my son than his older sister. Is that typical?**

**A:** Boys tend to potty-train later than girls, but that's not always the case. The key is to simply follow your individual child's lead. Watch for a lot of signs of readiness over several months, like: general interest in using the toilet and wearing underwear; the ability to delay gratification and communicate that he has to go; the ability to pull down (and pull up) his pants; good listening skills; and the ability to stay dry for at least two hours during the day. Potty training is not a sprint—it's most certainly a marathon, and there is no award for coming in first! Be patient and follow your child's cues.

**Q: My daughter seemed interested in using the potty for a couple of weeks, but now she refuses. How do I know if she's really ready?**

**A:** Many kids will "rehearse" going on the potty for a period of time before they're actually ready to do it consistently. That's just part of the process. The best response? Don't make a big deal about it either way. If she wants to practice, great. If not, okay. Once you notice more signs of readiness (see above), you can start training in a more structured way.

**Q: My son was a champion at the potty, but now he seems to be regressing and has accidents regularly. Does that mean we should start over from scratch?**

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**A:** There are a lot of reasons children regress. Sometimes big changes like a move, a new baby, or a new nanny can impact the potty habits of little ones. But even when nothing big is going on, regressions can happen (it's a good idea to check in with his doctor, since sometimes certain medical conditions can contribute). Your job? Just roll with it. If there is some stressor involved like a move, do your best to address that issue. Try to deal with accidents in a neutral, matter-of-fact way. This isn't a cause for punishment, and a big reaction—either overly sympathetic or angry—can reinforce the behavior. In the meantime, continue with your usual potty-training routine. Chances are, he'll be back on track before you know it.

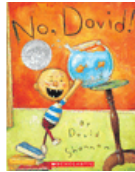
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