

# Potty Training Power Struggles

**Tip**--When a power struggle over toileting surfaces, a parent's best bet is to drop out of the battle.

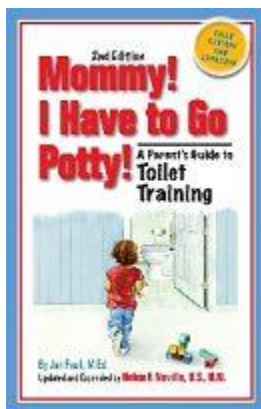
**Keep in mind**--A power struggle between a child and parent is an emotional battle over who is in control.



Jan Faull, parent educator and author of [\*Mommy! I Have to Go Potty! \(2nd ed.\)\*](#) advises parents to hold on to their control when the issue is one of safety--such as the car seat--but to relax when it comes to toileting. "You can't exert control in an area where you have none," she explains, "and your child's bowel and bladder muscles are not under your control. It's better to drop out of the struggle and turn control back over to your child."

Tell your child, "You don't have to poop in the toilet if you don't want to. Someday you will poop in the toilet, but for now if you want to keep going in your pull-up, that's fine with me."

1. Clean up your child's messy pants /pull up, matter-of-factly, and without scolding. Do not make eye contact or talk.
2. Don't give your child any attention when he messes his pants. Don't look for signs of a bowel movement, don't suggest he use the toilet, don't look at him, don't talk about bowel training in front of him.
3. Don't make potty training the center of your relationship with your child. Make sure you have plenty of discussions and experiences together that have nothing to do with potty training.
4. After a week of this, teach your child how to clean himself up in the bathtub after messing his pants /pull up (*obviously because of logistics this must be done at home & not school*). Your goal here is to show that the natural consequence of messing one's pants is cleaning oneself up. Be friendly and kind, not punishing. Supervise this step, to make sure he is clean at the end.
5. If your child complains or cries, be sympathetic and upbeat, "I know it's hard, but someday you'll use the toilet and you won't have to clean yourself up anymore." Do not say, "If you'd use the toilet, you wouldn't have to clean yourself."



6. Set two times daily where your child is required to sit on the toilet for 1-to-5 minutes. You can call it Poo-Poo Time. He is not required to perform, only to sit. Slowly increase the time to five minutes. You can read to him or tell stories. This helps him become comfortable sitting on the toilet.
7. Sit back and wait. Be patient. You can't hurry the process.
8. When your child finally does use the toilet, don't go overboard with praise. A simple "Good for you" and a hug will suffice.

You'll find more practical tips you can use right now in [\*Mommy! I Have to Go Potty! \(2nd ed.\)\*](#) by Jan Faull.