

A Child-centered Approach to Toilet Learning

Melissa Linn: On today's webinar, we are pleased to have Ms. Joan Morgenstern presenting. I'll now turn it over to Joan to kick us off.

Joan Morgenstern: Wonderful. Thank you, Melissa. To everybody who is on the webinar today, thank you very much for your willingness and your participation and for, really, your desire to better understand how to support children's independent toileting.

I'm going to begin by asking some questions. Do the children you care for have accidents often? Do any of them exhibit withholding behavior, perhaps they wet or soiled their clothing a little bit before they start toileting? Do the children in your care refuse to use the toilet when they are with you? Are some of them inconsistently wearing underpants? Do you ever find yourself annoyed with children's lack of toileting independence, perhaps judging parents for not, and I put in parentheses, potty training their children? Do you spend a lot of your day needing to clean up too many toileting accidents or perhaps spending more time in the bathroom with children than you'd actually like?

Well, if you are, then you're at the right place. Because as Melissa said, my name is Joan Morgenstern. I'm an early childhood educator and a parent coach, but I'm also a potty champion. I say potty champion with a capital P-E-E in the potty space. Hopefully, with your permission, you won't mind if I make some potty puns because sometimes it's helpful just to bring a bit of humor into this important conversation.

I became a potty champion because I asked myself a very important question. How are the children doing in this space? The answer is that many are suffering. Of those suffering, many are suffering in silence. I am delighted that you're here because we're really going to explore and better make sense of children's toileting independence so that we can support healthier and better outcomes for children. Take a deep breath, roll up your sleeves, because we are going to get down and dirty for the next 15 minutes.

This presentation is divided into three different sections. We're going to cover the why of why we are seeing so many more problems with children's toileting independence. We're going to talk about the what, the processes, the important understanding that's often missing when we think about supporting children's toileting independence. We're going to end with the solutions and how we honor our work by bringing some of this information into our classroom in a way that's going to support better outcomes for children. Let's get started.

When we think in terms of what's hindering children or the problems, what we really can talk about are four different areas. One is the name that we attribute to this developmental learning. The other is the outcomes. We're also going to discuss the reasons for children's toileting independence. Lastly, we're going to look at lifestyle impediments. Let's get started.

One of the very, very important things to consider is that we don't train children to use the potty. Contrary to what we refer to when we think about this developmental milestone, potty training is the wrong terminology to use. In fact, we train dogs, we train horses. If you were really, really competent, and talented, perhaps you would train for the Olympics. If you could see me early this morning, I tried to train my unruly hair. I can assure you that talking about this developmental milestone as a training is putting us in a mindset that doesn't support or serve children well.

Let's take a look at the difference between a training mindset and a mastery mindset. When we put ourselves in a training mindset, we think of it as something you do to another person with the goal of achieving a specific outcome. Often it's in the form of a skill that will get drilled with the adult's intention or the trainer's intention being, this is something I need you to do, and the ownership of this belongs to the adult.

Let's contrast that with the mastery mindset. A mastery mindset is the process of learning a new skill that develops over time and with patience. Instead of a skill that will get drilled, it's a skill that will get learned. The adult's intention shifts from, I need you to do this to, you will be learning how to do this. Therefore, the ownership shifts from the adult to the child.

The words we use inform the approach we take. I'm going to share in contrast two different approaches with you. One is a habit training model. The second is spontaneous recognition. When we think in terms of potty training and a training mindset, we're most inclined to think about a habit training model.

What's a habit training model? A habit training model is simply eliminating the toilet becomes a learned habit by repeating the behavior in the same way over and over again. Toileting is achieved by training one's body to activate certain functions on a time schedule, and that responsibility belongs to the adult.

We can contrast that with spontaneous recognition, which is the child begins to recognize within themselves the need to urinate or defecate because the child becomes consciously aware of the physical sensations that signaled the need to eliminate, and that responsibility belongs to the child.

When we think in terms of habit training, what that looks like is in the early stage of onboarding this learning, an adult directs a child to use the toilet about every two hours, give or take, with the hope that at some point, the child is going to produce something in the toilet, urinate or defecate in the toilet. The adult will then give the child commendation and praise for doing it. After the behavior is practiced over and over again that the child begins to make the connection that when they sit on the potty, they're supposed to urinate and defecate.

That is in contrast to the child from the onset beginning to notice and pay attention to their body signals and begin to act on those body signals by when they recognize that their body is communicating to them that they go over to the toilet and put their pee and poop in the potty.

Now, I want to be perfectly clear. Millions of children have gained toileting independence through a habit training model. I am in no way saying that it can't work. What I am saying is there's a better approach. Often, a habit training model will backfire on children. Why? Let's explore that for a minute.

Because children who are introduced to toileting independence, it typically, at the onset, occurs often somewhere between 24 and 36 months of age. At that time, we already know that children are beginning to flex their agency and autonomy. They say things like, no, me, my, I do it. They want to be in control. There's nothing that a child controls with a habit training model.

Similarly, what we also fail to recognize when we use a habit training model is that we negate the importance of children noticing and paying attention to their body signals. Body signals are a form of communication and they give us important information. They communicate about our internal state and needs, about our physical conditions, about our emotional state, about how we interpret the environment, and how we interact with others.

When we think of body signals, we start with toileting, but they also inform hunger and thirst, emotions, personal space, and boundaries. When we begin to notice and pay attention to body signals, the outcomes are for toileting, that they improve digestive health and physical well-being. For hunger and thirst, that they support regulated eating versus overeating or undereating. In terms of emotions, that they contribute to developing our self-awareness and enhance our emotional intelligence. In personal space and boundaries, that they inform healthy relationships including intimate relationships.

Minimizing the importance of noticing and focusing on body signals begins to shift our relationship and our understanding of our body signals throughout our lifetime, starting with toileting throughout our maturity.

When we think in terms of toilet learning outcomes, often, we are so pivoted on what ends up in the toilet that we fail to understand that children can have desirable outcomes or undesirable outcomes in the learning process. When we think in terms of desirable outcomes, children are very fortunate through their toilet learning journey when they acquire feelings of agency and autonomy, when they develop strong sense of body ownership, and when these contribute to a healthy self-esteem.

I use the image of a three-legged stool because it provides for children a wonderful foundation that enhances and contributes to their health and well-being. However, not all children are fortunate to have desirable outcomes. In fact, way too many children experience undesirable outcomes in their toilet learning journey. Those include performance anxiety or generalized anxiety on a physical level where there isn't a pre-existing medical condition. Oftentimes, children will experience constipation. On an emotional level, that this is sometimes the first experience a child has with the toxic emotion of shame.

When that stool is not sturdy and when there is a leg that's broken off, and sometimes more than one, what we know is that children are entering this learning with much greater

vulnerability. Not only do they not necessarily have desirable outcomes, but we need to process and make sense also of the initial learning, and sometimes, what I call the collateral damage from that learning.

One of the things that's important to understand that all learning, whether we're talking about toilet learning, other types of learning for children, or even adult learning, that the initial stage of learning, it can feel new. It is new because it's new. It's also unfamiliar. Because it's new and unfamiliar, we can be unskilled at it and those can create feelings of discomfort. It can make us uncomfortable. That's how learning goes at the onset.

The challenge with toilet learning is that not only are children in a position to handle the initial challenges with new learning, is that in the process of trying to figure this out that they end up feeling powerless, inadequate, disconnected from their adult leaders, that's includes anyone who has a significant role in their caregiving, teachers, parents, extended family, and very misunderstood.

I'm going to create another visual for that. As I mentioned, all new learning, it starts out as being new and unfamiliar. Because we're unskilled at it, it can create feelings of discomfort and make us uncomfortable. I use an analogy. It's like stretching a rubber band. A rubber band is in one form. We stretch and expand it and it grows. That stretch is stress that children experience. A moderate to mild amount of stress can help children push out or expand from one place and grow or gain competence.

However, in the event that children end up feeling powerless, inadequate, disconnected, and misunderstood, the rubber band no longer stretches. It snaps. When that rubber band straps snaps, what it means is that the stress was too great and erode the child's ability to learn. I imagine that some children that are in preschool classrooms and are really struggling in this space is because they experienced excessive stress in a way that eroded their capacity to learn.

When we think about the reasons to support children's independent toileting, oftentimes, people will say, well, the cost of diapers, they're just too great. We need to manage our budget differently. Sometimes people are motivated by the environment. That it's not good, disposable diapers, specifically, are not good for our environment. Others say it's the loss of innocence. Actually, what you change in a six-month-old diaper is less sweet and endearing in a 36-month-old diaper. Sometimes, it's just they are just too big. They don't even fit on the changing table any longer. Or perhaps, and for many this is important, that in order to transition into an older age group, that they need toileting independence.

What I want you to know is these are all good reasons, but none of these reasons will motivate a child to transition out of diapers and into underwear. Let's talk about the real reasons. One is that children feel good when they gain mastery. It builds them from the inside out and that enhances their feelings of self-worth and contributes to positive growing self-esteem.

Also, it falls under the category of self-care, of taking care of their body and being able to think of it in the same category as we do self-feeding, washing hands, bathing, brushing teeth. Being in charge of their body and executing self-care is important for young children.

Another reason. Toileting enables children to execute agency and autonomy and to see that they can affect an important outcome. Lastly, in toileting, children will learn who is in charge of their body. Are they in charge of their body or are other people in charge of their body?

Lastly, we're going to take a look at some of the lifestyle issues that are impediment to children's toilet learning. We can start with cultural norms. Toilet learning in the 20th century was often viewed as a more natural milestone. It wasn't that people had better education, it's that parents and adults in general were more relaxed and felt less pressured. Nowadays, parents are juggling many responsibilities, including work, childcare, and other life stressors. These busy lifestyles result in less time and energy to devote to children's toileting.

Similarly, disposable diapers may make adults less motivated to start the toileting process because of their ease and convenience. Additionally, because disposable diapers are so well-engineered, children are less aware of their body signals. In group care settings, we know that more and more children spend their time in group care environments. This often creates role confusion. Whose job is it to support toilet learning? Is it the parent's job or is it the teacher's job?

Additionally, that parents also have unique pressures. Sometimes they feel anxious if their child's progress doesn't align with perceived norms. Other times they can have high expectations for themselves or unrealistic expectations, expecting that the toileting process will be smooth and quick. If challenges arise or if learning goes slowly, it can lead to adult stress and self-doubt. Sometimes, parents compare themselves with other children's progress, and this can add to increased stress. Parents who hear about friends, family members, or other children who've mastered toileting without issue may end up feeling inadequate.

There are other reasons, too. That if a child shows resistance or fear related to toileting, parents often feel helpless and stressed. They're unsure how to address the emotional aspects of this process. And because they don't have better skills, they end up dismissing or diminishing children's fears, which can serve to intensify them. Parents can feel pressure to make sure their children meet school milestones on time, and that added stress continues to erode children's learning, not promote children's learning.

Interestingly, the practical aspects of dealing with accidents, cleaning up, and managing potential disruptions to daily routines feel so stressful for parents. The fear of messes and inconvenience often makes the process feel more daunting and sometimes even dangerous. When I say dangerous, what I'm really talking about is that it activates a dysregulated nervous system in an adult, which means that they then have a hard time supporting a child in the midst of a toileting accident or challenge.

Also, we can say just with COVID-19, that dysregulated nervous systems, in general, that started from COVID-19, if they haven't regained better regulation will mean that it is still difficult for children to learn.

The equation when we put all of this together, the toileting, misinformation, starting with the names, and the outcomes and we add on to it, parental stressors, that what that equals is missing skills for children with some experiencing toileting anxiety and toileting trauma.

Those are real conditions. Just to help you make sense of the difference between the two, that toileting anxiety is a child's fear, discomfort, or generalized distress surrounding the use of the toilet, typically without my apologies, typically without a severe underlying event. Where toileting trauma is a deep-rooted emotional distress, often occurring from a past negative experience leading to a long-term avoidance or fear of toileting.

What that means for you is that children in your classes, in your schools, are coming to school with limited toileting skills, and teachers of young children are dealing with children's toileting accidents, as well as children's trauma and stress around using the toilet.

We're going to go to the second part now, which is when we have an awareness that helps and can better understand the learning, the emotions, the change, and helpful language to use in the toileting toilet learning process. We support children in a way that typically they have not received support.

First, we're going to talk about two types of learning, indirect learning, and direct learning. They're both pretty self-explanatory. Indirect learning is when a child learns through observation and direct learning is specific instruction directed towards a child. Our goal with toilet learning, and we're going to address this a little more in depth when we get to the third section, the solutions, is we want to really spend more time or more conscious time teaching children indirect when they don't have performance expectations. Because at that time, stress is low. That means that learning has a better chance to be meaningful. When stress is high, it erodes the ability to learn.

We're just going to put those terms out there as a way of focusing a little bit later and increasing the amount of indirect learning we offer children, specifically around toileting.

Toilet learning involves two things. It involves the child's will and it involves specific skills. When we think in terms of a child's will, what we're really thinking about is preserving the integrity of their relationship with their adult leaders. That learning is not a place, it's a relationship between a teacher and a child. And secure attachments help children learn. We want to make sure that they feel safe and connected to their adult leaders and that there isn't any shame that's coming up during with them during toilet learning.

When we talk about shame, it can be without an intention to shame. Because unconsciously we are saying things that create a feeling of shame within children. When we compare children, Milo is using the potty, why aren't you? If we minimize children's fears, there's nothing scary

about the potty. If we attribute a label to their behavior, only babies poop in their diaper. If we threaten children, you won't be able to play outside if you don't use the potty.

Sometimes it's our unconscious comments that just roll off our tongue without our awareness such as, oh, no, accident, mess. Now, look what you did. Didn't I just ask you if you needed to use the potty? Whew, you're stinky.

When we think in terms of toileting skills, we're talking about three specific skills that I'm going to review. The first is intellectual awareness. That the child understands that pee and poo belong in the potty. Now, most typically developing children, somewhere between 13 and 18 months of age, they begin to understand that. That comes through their indirect learning just by observing other people's behavior, by hearing, I'll be right back, I'm going to use the potty.

What's important to note for us adults is that knowing and doing are not the same skill set. We start with knowing, but doing is always a little more complicated, and that requires the next two. The second one being that the child attunes to what is happening within their body. Now, we really have to pause for a moment.

Because when we put a diaper around a child's behind, what we are basically saying to them is you do not need to attune to what is happening and going on within your body. You do not need to pay attention to this at all until the time when we remove the diaper from their behind. We can make sense of the fact that that's a very big skill that children are tasked to do. It's pretty brand new to them because being in a diaper requires they do the opposite.

Lastly, we have timing. That means that the child has to get to the right place at the right time. What do we know about young children? They are not very good time managers. In fact, what's also interesting about these skills is it's not that they can have part or parts of each skill, it's that all three skills need to be integrated into one fluid movement in order to avoid a child from having an accident.

Even when we take a look at that middle school, that the child is able to attune to what is happening within their body, there are four stages that a child needs to progress through. When they're in diapers, they're typically clueless. Then the diaper is removed and they function in the past, which is they peed. Then it's the present, usually, a child kind of with that glazed look on their face, I'm peeing. Lastly, it's anticipation of a future need, which is I need to pee, which requires executive functioning skills on a child's part. That's not to say that they don't have them, but they don't have them honed well yet. Those skills are just developing.

Oftentimes, the emotional implication of this learning is totally not even taken into consideration. One question I ask all of you to think about is how well do you respond to change? Then I share a quote by Anatole France that says, "All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy. For what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves."

We don't take into consideration that some children, not all children, but some children, will experience loss. Some of those children, profound loss, and possibly even grief from the

transition, leaving diapers and moving into underwear. After all, it's the loss of the known and the familiar. It's the loss of the warmth that a wet or soiled diaper creates around a child's behind. It's the loss of the freedom to urinate or defecate wherever and whenever a child wants. For some children, it's the loss of babyhood that is associated with diapering.

Even if children do not experience loss feelings, not all children will, it is a big transition. Pause for a moment and think about what transitions look like in your classroom. Those can be tricky times of day because it's a time of uncertainty and confusion. Things are in flux and conflicting or ambivalent feelings often arise, and certainly, using the toilet requires more effort for a child.

The other change that occurs is what I call a relationship change. That this is one of the first times children sense adults' frustration with their learning pace. This is one of the first times adults overemphasize a child's performance and it can feel different for children and not in a safe or comfortable way.

Let's just take a look at other skills that children are mastering or working on in your classrooms, from independent eating to building with blocks, to holding, writing implements, to working with creative materials. Regardless of a child's progress, whether they're precocious or not, typically what they hear is a lot of reinforcement from adults and encouragement wherever they are on their learning trajectory.

When we get to toileting, not the same. All of a sudden, the adult energy feels different to children. Not in a way that makes them feel safe or comfortable, but more in a way that makes them feel judged or that they're displeasing the adults.

The other change that we want to consider is the way we talk about this. Beyond just not calling it potty training, because we don't train children to use the potty, but the other overused language that often occurs at the onset when we introduce independent toileting to children is we big them. We say to them, you're a big kid, and you get to wear big kid underwear, and you get to use the big potty. In about three seconds we've told them how big they are.

Now, we do that because in our mind, big is better. We think that's how children feel too. But the truth is that, as we mentioned before, that most children are introduced to independent toileting sometime between their 24 and 36 months of age. The developmental struggle of children that age is I want to be a big kid. Nope, I want to be a baby. I want to be a big kid. I want to be a baby. That's struggle intensifies if there is a baby at home.

If we're trying to tell a kid how big, big, big they are and they're feeling nothing more than they're going to want to be a baby, that's not going to be helpful to them. We're going to change that script, too. Instead of using big, we're going to tell them they have a new job. Now, why do we say they have a new job? Because young children love the idea of jobs. All of the adults who they are deeply attached to have important jobs.

In your classroom, you know this already, because they want to do jobs with you. Then we're going to give their job a title. You're a body boss. Then we're going to give it a description. You listen to your body so you recognize when you need to pee and poop. You take care of your body by putting your pee and poop inside the potty. It's awesome and it's cool and nobody else can do it but you.

Then we also shift from praising children to using encouragement. Praise, while it feels good, is nothing more than a positive in judgment. Let's compare and contrast the difference between praise and encouragement and how you can use it around children's toilet learning.

Praise starts with the word, I. I am so proud of you. You put your pee in the potty and that makes me so happy. It provides external feedback in the form of pleasing or displeasing somebody else. By doing that, it promotes comparisons and competition. However, encouragement builds insight. It starts with the word, you. You can feel proud of yourself. Putting your pee and potty putting your pee in the potty is big and important work. Yay for you. It provides internal feedback that builds self-awareness. In doing it increases a child's self-confidence and competence.

Even more importantly, not only does encouragement give child the ownership over their learning, but we can use encouragement when learning is moving more slowly. Hard to use praise when learning is moving slowly. We can use it in the form of an acknowledgment. This is hard to do, but you're sticking with it. It won't be long before you're able to put your pee and poop in the potty. I believe in you. We can talk about it as a skill. You figured out how to. One skill in the toileting sequence, pushed your pants down. Tell me you needed help. Sit on the potty. Wash your hands. Perspective. We can tell kids other kids are working hard on this just like you. This is not the first hard skill you've worked on. I've seen you handle other challenges too.

We can use encouragement as a tagline. It won't be long before you're able to use the potty. Soon you'll see you'll be ready to put your pee and poop in the potty. With each step, you're getting closer to putting your pee or poop in the potty.

We want to avoid weighted messages. An example of a weighted message is you can wear underpants and feel grown up, or you can wear diapers and feel like a baby. With a weighted message, one is desirable, the other is undesirable. Instead, we offer equally weighted messages. You can go to the potty with me or by yourself, which do you prefer? You can use the classroom potty or the hall potty, which do you choose? You can keep the stall door open or closed, which feels more comfortable?

When accidents occur, don't ask questions. Keep it factual. We're not going over to the child and saying, did you pee in your pants, because likely the child will answer no. Instead of it being a conversation about getting out of dirty clothes and into clean clothes, it'll be a conversation about, are you telling the truth or not telling the truth. We keep it factual. Just state the facts. I see your pants are wet. You'll need to go inside and change them.

We're now getting to the third part, which is the solutions. Honoring our work through your, what I call, pre-work, attitude, and utilizing our curriculum. When we really want children to succeed, one of the things that we can do, and it informs their ability to notice and pay attention to their body signals, is to do that around eating. When children are eating or children are drinking, you can say to them, is everybody hungry today? You're all listening to your body. Your body's telling you it's time to eat. If a child comes over to you and says they're thirsty, you can say to them, you're listening to your body. Your body's telling you it wants something to drink.

The goal here is to help normalize the words, listening to your body and taking care of your body, because those are the two parts of their job when they become a body boss. They need to listen to their body and take care of their body. There are many, many ways that you can tell children they take care of their body throughout the day, from washing their hands to eating healthy food, to keeping appropriate distance between themselves and others, to getting outside and exercising their body, to taking deep breaths, to resting at nap time. All of those are in service of taking care of their body.

While it adds some extra words to your dialogue, and it may sound a little clunky when you're saying it, our goal here is to not normalize that they're a big kid and not normalize that we potty train children, but instead to normalize how well children already listen to their body and take care of their body.

I say to you all in the most empathic way, dear early childhood teacher, do you ever feel like changing diapers, removing wet clothing, or dealing with soiled pants interrupts your teaching? What if we adopted a new perspective and integrated toileting tasks into the core of our teaching practices? Imagine if we viewed these toileting responsibilities as honorable actions and essential components of our educational approach. By embracing this mindset, you will make a profound impact on the children you care for, transforming these everyday tasks into opportunities for optimal growth and learning.

You want to take a look at your classroom and you want to and we're going to go through a handful of slides about this, about bringing potty play into your normal classroom learning centers. We already know that play is how young children integrate knowledge and make sense of their world. They act out their experiences. In doing that, they're better able to process the information and learn. using three dimensional materials adds an element of active engagement for children. We want to use potty props in our classroom. Melissa, if you can please show this.

[Music Playing]

Joan: Thank you. We want to be very deliberate. Teachers are so thoughtful about the types of books that they bring into their story time. It's also wonderful when we bring potty books to normalize using the toilet and teaching skills during story time. As well as with puppet shows,

too. We can add interesting ways to engage children with literacy and active engagement using stories and puppet shows as well.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Five little totties learning to go potty. Do you need a diaper? Each one shouted, not me. First totty left his diaper on the floor. She put on he put on some underwear,

Toddler: And went.

Teacher: And now there are four.

Toddler: [Inaudible]

Teacher: There are four more diapers. 1, 2, 3, 4. Are you ready to try it again?

Toddler: [Inaudible]

Teacher: When I say not me, you can say it with me. You don't even have to wait. Four little totties learning to potty. Do you need a diaper?

Toddler: No.

Teacher: Each one shouted, not me.

Toddlers (In unison): Me.

Teacher: The second tot said, I have to make a pee. She sat, and she wiped, and she flushed. Now, right, that makes only three. Now, the pink undies. What do you think? Are you ready for the next one? Three little totties, 1, 2, 3. Learning to go potty. Do you need a diaper? Each one shouted, not me.

The third tot said, I have to go poo. She sat down and pushed. That left only two. Check it out. He has fancy shorts. Just in case some of you wear shorts. How many are left? Let's see. 1, 2. Two more left.

Two little totties, learning to potty. Do you need a diaper? Both shouted, not me. The fourth tot said, diapers are no fun. Throw it to the side, she did. She went straight to the potty. That left only one pants. Now she's got undies. How many are left?

Toddlers (In Unison): One.

Teacher: Just one more, are you ready? One little totty, learning to potty. Do you need a diaper? Tell her you helped me. She said, not me. They listen to their body. Now, I think I'm ready to be a body boss. Off went her diaper with one excited toss. There we go. I have five little totties, now all use the potty. Do they need a diaper?

Toddler: Yeah

Teacher: Together they said, not me. They listen to their body. They know just what to do. These tots are body bosses just like you. Just like you. Friends, you did a great job helping me.

[Video ends]

Joan: That's just one example of how we bring that into the classroom, into our storytelling, fingerplays, and flannel stories. Also, using our dramatic play centers, I know that majority of early childhood classrooms have dramatic play, and those are often housekeeping or kitchen centers.

This was a classroom that transitioned their housekeeping corner into a bathroom area where children were really working on toileting skills. They have potty books there. There was a hamper. They had the flannel story up there. They, of course, kept the sink. And it really supported children's learning in a very, very meaningful way. Remember, when we do it through play, stress is low. When stress is low, then learning increases.

More examples. I use these pictures right here. You want to be very, very careful. I should put a big circle through here with a red line. We want to make sure that if we're recreating potty play areas, that we have dolls that look like preschool or toddler-age children, that we avoid putting infant-looking dolls in our toileting play centers because infants aren't using the toilet. Toddlers and preschoolers are, and we want to give them the appropriate imagery and play props. We can also use miniature toys. These are dollhouse pieces that recreate bathroom scenarios, micro-dramatic play.

I'm coming to the very end and I thank you for staying with me. I think I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge all of the important work that you do. I know adding toileting onto this list creates more responsibility for teachers. But if you just pause for a moment and look at the word teacher in all the words within it, we have the word teach, we have each, each female, each male. We ache for the children that struggle.

Because teaching is about reaching clear to the heart of another human being and using everything you have to make a positive difference. That is your legacy. That is what you do each and every day. What I say is, Thank you for being a potty partner and for using our potty power in wiser ways, because together, we can become the change we wish to see in the world. One child, one diaper at a time.

I'm going to turn it back over to Melissa.

Melissa: Thank you, Joan. I'm just getting my video up. Thank you for all of this important information and perspective that you've shared with our audience, Joan. We look forward to seeing you again tomorrow. As a reminder to all, we have an office hour, and that's when we'll have Joan answer your Q&A questions. Bring your questions to the office hour and remember

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Thank you all. Thank you again, Joan.

Joan: Thank you very much. My pleasure.

Melissa: You can close the webinar.