
Learning to, uh, go potty

**Lowly rubber duck finds a new calling —
with multiple social benefits**

After more than 50 years of floating around in bathtubs with not much to do, the iconic rubber duck finally has a mission — help prepare small children for potty training.

A new social enterprise has redesigned the yellow rubber duck as a squirt toy with a toy toilet that attaches to a bathtub wall with suction cups.

Designed for children ages one to three, Potty Duck aims to make potty training fun. Children squeeze the duck to make it pee in the toy toilet. By playing with the toy in a sink, bath or small tub, children learn what a toilet is for and where pee belongs before they ever sit on the



Pediatrician Shelly Mann: Learning through play

real thing. It teaches children what to do and expect at potty time.

Potty Duck was created by two people who believe that children learn best through play and discovery. Dr. Shelly Mann is a pediatrician with 20 years of experience helping families with potty training boys and girls. Fred Longenecker is a part-time inventor, stay-at-home Dad, and long-time Montessori parent.

"We got the idea when my two-year-old daughter was taking a bath," says Longenecker. "She picked up a bathtub squirt toy and squeezed it to send water shooting from its mouth. I noticed a few drops of water leaked from a second, smaller hole on the

More than a splashy toy, this duck cares about the environment and global sanitation.

bottom of the toy. I made the hole a bit bigger, and that night we had a lot of fun making the squirt toy pee. A few days later, our daughter stood up and said, 'I want to go like [the squirt toy].' We hurried off to the bathroom for one of her first successes!"

By adding fun to the learning process the product reduces stress.

"A well-prepared child catches on more easily," says Mann. "Kids quickly see that pee belongs in a toilet, so they know what is expected when they sit on a real toilet."

One parent wrote, "Before Potty Duck, our two-year-old wasn't interested in potty training. Potty Duck captured his imagination and made it fun!"

Longenecker also sees an environmental benefit, noting that diapers are one of the top three landfill items. Studies show that:

- A baby undergoes 5,000 to 8,000 diaper changes before completing potty training;
- 95 percent of American babies



Fred Longenecker: Part-time inventor, full-time Dad

use disposable diapers;

- In 2012 landfills received 3.6 million tons of disposable diapers;

- Each year 250,000 trees are used to make diapers.

"Cutting back on diapers is a great way for families to reduce their footprint," he says.

Potty Duck has other layers of impact. A tenth of the proceeds go to organizations that build toilets and improve sanitation for children around the world (eg., Honduras). "For these children and many others, access to toilets and clean water go hand-in-hand," says Longenecker. "Clean restrooms help to reduce the spread of disease."

Packaging is handled by a northern Indiana company that employs people with disabilities, so each purchase "helps to create an enjoyable place for people to work."

The Potty Duck Set (\$19.95 for duck and toilet) meets or exceeds all requirements for children's toys in the U.S. and Canada and is BPA-free and phthalate-free. For more, go to www.PottyDuck.com. ♦