



potty-training tools for toddlers  
charts, books, kits, rewards, and more!

## **POTTY TOTS®**

### **CORPORATE BACKGROUNDER**

#### **A DAUNTING CHALLENGE FOR PARENTS**

As parents, we face many daunting challenges, and along with forcing fruits and vegetables, and limiting television, potty training can certainly be one of the most discouraging. Jill Leech and her husband Greg were reminded of this when their third child, Shannon, adopted from China back in 2004, began the very difficult process of potty training.

Both Jill and her husband had already gone the course with their first two children, Ricky and Emily, however, even with the past experience they seemed to really be struggling this time around. In addition, little Shannon seemed to be displaying some behaviors that concerned the couple. Jill's Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a teaching credential in Social Sciences didn't seem to be enough to help Shannon, so the couple began looking for outside help and decided to attend some parenting classes. What they found was that children who have been diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder, Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Pervasive Development Disorder, or labeled as "strong-willed" can commonly have issues with potty training and that they need structure to feel secure. The couple also learned that all kids, especially those with these types of disorders, function best with a lot of visuals and structured programs, which include positive reinforcement and tangible rewards.

#### **AN IDEA BORN OF NECESSITY**

Jill began searching for some type of product that would work for Shannon, and that could assist her in her plight to move her daughter out of diapers and on her path to development and independence. What she found was that although there was a large selection of products on the market, they were primarily singular in focus and did not appeal to multiple learning styles. In addition, many of the products were not specifically designed or created with the intent of engaging the child in the process, showing them the how to "go" and making the process fun.

Jill learned that all of the potty charts available on the market consisted of graphs with stickers to keep track of a child's progress. None of the resources that she found showed the child the steps of potty training, in sequence, so that they could understand what to do next. She noted that in many cases the packaging and product were kid friendly but ultimately they included instructions geared towards the parent rather than the child. Jill also found that there were not many products available for children of color.

Understanding that her daughter needed a visual product that she could relate to, Jill decided to develop a personalized, illustrated potty chart, which showcased all the necessary steps involved in going potty. Shannon quickly identified with the little Asian girl that Jill drew on her chart and she was motivated to follow the six steps because she could plainly see what was expected of her. Not only was Shannon beginning to use the potty all by herself but she felt independent and had a sense of pride when she accomplished these tasks.

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## **CORORATE BACKGROUNDER / PG. 2**

### **SHARING THE SECRET – THE POTTY TOTS ARE BORN**

As a teacher, Jill understood that independence and pride are critical in fostering a child's self-esteem so she decided to share her success, and began making personalized potty charts for children of family and friends. Jill also shared these charts and schedule cards with the instructor of her parenting class, who ultimately shared them with other parents in her program. Jill received extensive positive feedback, was encouraged by stories from all the parents and kids she helped, and came to realize that there was need for this type of product on the market.

With the hopes of helping even more parents, Jill was inspired to develop a resource that would aide parents of all children, especially those who might be disabled or delayed in some way, in the daunting challenge of potty training. With encouragement and creative input from her sister, Jenny Le Blanc, also an educator and a mother of three, in October 2007 she put to the task of developing a comprehensive and interactive potty training program geared towards children.

First the team wrote a story that children could relate to and was sure to use characters with varied personalities and different nationalities, so all kids could identify with one of the personalities. With that, the Potty Tots®, a group of ten ethnically diverse preschool characters were born. Next, utilizing these fun-filled tots, they formally designed Jill's popular illustrated potty charts. The charts were customized for both boys and girls, and so each child could even select which of the ten tots they wanted to use to help them with their potty training endeavor.

It was also very important that the program address multiple learning styles, (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) which is reinforced through a variety of program components. The story book was animated on a DVD so young children could easily follow along and original songs were developed (the Potty Song, Potty Rock, and Potty Stomp) to help kids sing and dance their way to remembering the six steps in potty training. Jill also understood that a successful program must have a way for the kids to keep track of their progress and to gain positive reinforcement with praise and rewards. Therefore, she created a "Toilet Bowl" game, fashioned after the Super Bowl.

### **CREATING A POTTY TOTS COMMUNITY**

In August of 2008, after about one year's worth of planning Jill and her team launched the Potty Tots Training Program. The unique kit became available online and through select retail outlets. At that time Jill introduced her ten fun-filled characters to the world, with the hopes that her product, and the additional resources she developed, would aide other parents and children in the difficult chore of potty training.

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## **CORORATE BACKGROUNDER / PG. 3**

### **CREATING A POTTY TOTS COMMUNITY (CONT'D)**

The primary objective of the program is to make potty training fun for kids and stress free for parents. Therefore, it was important to Jill not only to offer the product, but also to help children and parents through this developmental stage by providing an interactive and comprehensive resource. Jill created an online community of support and resources at [www.potty tots.com](http://www.potty tots.com). An integral part of the Potty Tots program, the site includes a "Parent's Page" with an FAQ section; an online informational newsletter called "Tidbits for Toddlers;" and "Tales from Toddlerhood," a Parent's Blog which offers parents a glimpse into one witty mom's world of raising two toddlers and the adventures they encounter every day.

In addition, there is a "Just for Tots" page, which is designed for the express purpose of having fun while learning about potty training. The section includes coloring-pages, interactive games and a "Meet the Potty Tots" page. The parent and child also can log on together to create and print a unique Potty Tots "Diploma," complete with their picture once the child's potty training has been mastered.

The company debuted their product in September of 2008 at the ABC Kids Expo in Las Vegas. After bringing the Potty Tots to life and seeing how well these characters, their message, and assistance were needed and received, Jill and the Potty Tots team have gone back to work. They are currently identifying additional ways to aide parents and children during developmental milestones. With plans to launch new accessory products as soon as the first half of 2009, Jill is continuing her endeavor to provide additional resources, which address the developmental needs of children, while providing an interactive and fun learning experience. The company also has plans to expand online resources, which include offering a forum on the web where parents can share experiences and see advice from other parents in similar situations. There also are plans to enhance the "Just for Tots" section with more interactive games.

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