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Keep dads out of preschool potty duty - UPDATED

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By **Jenna Myers Karvunidis**, September 30, 2011 at 12:29 pm

"You don't have to write it down. But if I find out a strange man has pulled my daughter's panties down in the bathroom, she will no longer be enrolled here."

I was in a meeting with the director of the preschool who had just said they can't give it to me in writing, but they would try to accomodate my request. You see, I made an excruciating oversight last spring when I shopped for preschools for my then barely two-year-old. *School!* I thought. Learning! Colors! Finger paint! Through the open houses and school tours, all I saw were smiling happy (female) teachers, adorably disheveled toddlers and fun-seeming other moms. Cool, right? What I never considered were the logistics of the bathroom.

This particular school has a culture of its own. It's a positive atmosphere, open-minded, progressive. "Not stuck in the 1950's" someone said to me yesterday. This is a place where dads are made to feel welcome, where they are seen as equal and involved parents. This is a place where two-dad families are ushered in with open arms. Rad. I love the love. I'm sure all the parents are wonderful.

And just in case, the extensive vetting process includes a criminal background check and fingerprinting to make sure of it because, you see, parents have to put in time in the classroom - "rotating assisting duty" which includes taking tots to the bathroom . For two-year-olds, that means a heavy hand in the pulling up and down of undies and the occasional wipe. That could be any assisting parent, like, say, a dad. Gulp.

The facts all sprang together at once on Tuesday. I suppose last spring I knew dads could be assisting in the classroom, and I knew toddlers have to go potty, but I naturally (and falsely) assumed the women would be taking them. You know, the staff. Or the moms? Surely women took the girls to the

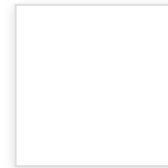
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Jenna Myers Karvunidis

Jenna Myers Karvunidis is a vegetarian park activist with two baby girls and a foxy hubs who is never home.

High Gloss And Sauce

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Jenna Myers Karvunidis on [High Gloss and Sauce](#)
Posted Monday at 5:23 pm

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bathroom and cleaned their accidents, right? As I dropped Bee off on her first day this week and took one last peek in the door, I saw a man I'd never met and the whole icky, sticky situation fell on me like a lap full of spaghetti. While I'm at home kicking it up over laundry, my daughter is a mile away MAYBE having some dude I've never met cleaning her butt. I popped into the school office and my suspicions were confirmed: we don't fit in here.

I'm not trying to criminalize these guys. I love men. I married one! As a matter of fact, I pick and choose when I'm a feminist because I'm not down with man-bashing. However, we don't live in a world where child-molesting is equal-opportunity. 99% of sexual predators are men, only 1% are women and girls are over twice as likely as boys to be sexually abused.

Perhaps when my daughter is older and can better communicate we can talk about who is okay to touch what, but for my two-year-old, I want the clear idea to be "men don't go anywhere near that part of my body". Not the friend's dad at school, not the friend's dad at our house while mommy is busy hosting a BBQ. Not the new strange man in class, not the new strange man anywhere.

I know I'm being sexist. The feminist, progressive, modern, cool kid perspective is "we teach children appropriate touching and that men can be trusted, not feared". I understand that. I understand the other moms at the school may see it that way. I understand I could be wrong and we're not in the "socio-economic risk demographic". I get it, but I don't feel it.

What I feel is a lifetime of empathy for the damage sexual abuse can cause. This is my daughter. If something were to happen to her, there are no second chances, no do-overs. She and I would have to mine through the muck and I can't live with going against my gut if I put her in that situation.

And is it really fair to the men to be required to take a little girl to the bathroom when her mom is some lady you don't even know who's paranoid of molesters? Yeah, I'm sure it's a real delight for those guys. And what about legally? Say a little girl does accuse him of something - what recourse does he have? If I were a man, I'd run so far from that bathroom, you'd see smoke.

So. For me and my family, no dudes in the bathroom stall. I'd rather be wrong than find out if I'm right. Hopefully we can stay at the school. She does love her finger paints.

UPDATE OCTOBER 2

Happy outcome! The director called me this morning to confirm the preschool will honor my request that only female caregivers will take Bianca to the bathroom. YAY. But wait, that's not all! The executive board also decided this issue is worthy of a policy change. They formed a task committee to research standard practices at other preschools and will institute a change based on that and other findings. It sounds like they completely see my point of view and were baffled themselves they never

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Posted October 14, 2011 at 10:41 pm

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Posted October 5, 2011 at 9:53 pm

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from **Job Stalker** by BrendanTripp
posted Wednesday at 11:45 pm

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addresses this before. She even laughed, "these are the growing pains of a hippy dippy co-op".

I'm so excited! I actually feel like I made a little difference in the world. High fives for mama bears, right? That stress headache I had for two days was worth it.

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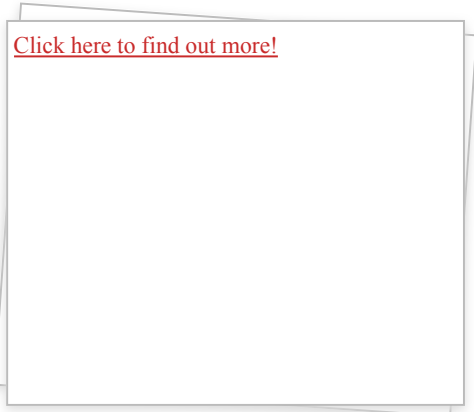
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mivie0513 said 2 weeks, 5 days ago

23

from [The Beeronaut](#) by Mark McDermott
posted Wednesday at 11:30 pm

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I swear at the end of every day I wait

I 10000% agree with you. Modern day or not, some strange man should not be wiping the rear end of your daughter. It's just not right and goes against everything we're taught about how to protect our children. I, honestly, would be uncomfortable with this situation and my son, so I can only imagine how strange it would be with my daughter. It is so difficult to let our children grow up and move into new phases, like school, where they could fall victim to some terrifying situations.

Reply



Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 2 weeks, 5 days ago

In reply to [mivie0513](#):

I just wish the school had been clear about all this. I certainly learned my lesson - NEVER ASSUME!

Reply



Bugsy1211 said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

I think it's an interesting question, and I have to be honest I can't decide where I land. On one hand I completely see what you're saying and on the other hand, for me, meh. In general, unless the parent creeped me out I *think* I'd be ok with it. But we're not in preschool yet, so maybe I'll change my tune when I'm actually face to face with this. I asked my husband what he thought, and he actually didn't really care so much about the gender of the parent, but was completely out of sorts about the thought of any parent taking our daughter to the rest room. He thinks it's fine for parents to come in for storytime or to pass out crackers at snack time, but things like bathroom time should be left to the teachers. So essentially he would rather have a male preschool teacher doing bathroom duty, over a female parent. I'm on the fence with this one too, ha!

Reply




Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

In reply to [Bugsy1211](#):

I guess I was "meh" about it too until I was actually standing there, looking at a strange guy in the classroom and about to actually hand over my daughter. It just never clicked before that.

I'm waiting on the executive board's reaction I guess and the director is supposed to talk to the teachers. I'm kind of pissed to feel like an outcast right now.

I'm actually starting to get pissed about all kinds of things, like why are they putting the feelings of these adults before the safety of my child? If I have to leave the school, where will she go since classes fill in the spring? And can we get our money back? It was fucking \$4k to send her there and I'm hit with this bs.

 for the camera crew to pop out of no where and say "YOU'VE BEEN PUNK'd." But it never happens so I just write a blog!



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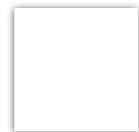
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Reply

zoomama said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

I think you should trust your gut on this one. I know that my husband would be super creeped out to have to do something like that with anyone other than his own children. I think dads that are okay with it need to rethink it as well. It sucks that you didn't know before hand too. I hope it works out for you.

Reply

Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

In reply to [zoomama](#):

Their whole thing is they don't want to offend the gay dads by telling them who they can and can't help in the bathroom. I don't care if the man is gay, straight or Santa Claus. I don't want his mitts on my kid's skivvies!

Reply

ladyl said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

I had to register just to respond to this post. I totally agree with you! I have boys and would not want a strange man "helping" them in the bathroom. It seems like they could deal with this so simply, without laying out the discrimination card. No parent volunteers participating in bathroom help, possibly with the addition no one alone with children in the bathroom (two adults at all times, to make sure nothing skivy is going on). I'm amazed they don't have a policy like this in the place now. It seems like a huge liability issue. Like you, I think about this stuff though, are other parents not? The world is too scary.

Reply

Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 2 weeks, 4 days ago

I think the other parents are assuming like I was that the women help the girls, if not all the kids. Or maybe they don't care? I ran it past one mom and she seemed really caught off guard.

It annoys me that the school is challenging me like, "shouldn't you teach your child that men can be trusted?" instead of letting me parent the way I want to.

The whole thing is turning into a clusterfuck. I'll know more Monday.

Reply

christinewhitley said 2 weeks, 3 days ago

You might want to seriously think about withdrawing her from the school.

[No fare hikes, service cuts in 2012 CTA budget - if union cooperates »](#)

from **CTA Tattler** by Kevin O'Neil
reblogged Wednesday at 4:27 pm

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from **Being Catholic...Really**:

[Being Bullied ... Really](#)

If you don't feel that she is in a safe environment, then you will spend the whole time she's at school feeling anxious. Is that the experience you want for yourself or your daughter?

I say this with some sadness since my daughter attended that same school and had a truly wonderful experience. You have to do what's right for your family, though. Not what everyone else thinks is right or the best or whatever.

She's only two, and will probably be fine waiting until next year to attend preschool. You will have a lot more options at that point -- including CPS where teachers are forbidden from helping kids in the bathroom at all. They have to wipe themselves and change their own clothes if they have an accident. Sounds like you'd be a lot more comfortable in that situation.

Reply

 **Jenna Myers Karvunidis** said 2 weeks, 3 days ago


In reply to [christinewhitley](#):

It's not that she's not ready for preschool, it's that this school's bathroom situation is a perfect storm I'm not keen on: men, alone, toilet facilities separated from classroom by two brick walls and a hallway, school putting men's feelings over her safety etc. If it were one of those things, it actually might be different.

I may indeed end up withdrawing, pending another meeting and more info this week. I'll keep this thread posted. You would have thought something this huge (and unique) of a situation they might have made known before people like me waste time and money. I get a little more furious every time I think about it.

I'm glad to hear you had success though.

Reply

 **AmandaP** said 2 weeks, 2 days ago


I would think that the gay dads would be just as concerned about men helping their daughters in the bathroom. Just because they are gay doesn't mean that other dads who might help in the bathroom are as well.

I also think the school would recognize that, yes, not all men are untrustworthy and that not all men need to be feared, BUT when teaching a 2 year old (or even my 5 year old) about inappropriate touching, it is easier for them to understand that no men should be touching her down there. Kids that young don't know how to tell the good guys from the bad guys (and adult women can't always tell either).

The school needs to handle the issue better. Maybe only teachers or aides can do bathroom duties. It is safer than random parents doing it. A criminal background check is great, but how many sexual predators out there don't have a criminal record yet?

Go with your gut and don't back down.

Reply

 **mpurkis** said 2 weeks, 2 days ago

I've said before that I totally agree with you on all points. You stated this wonderfully. My husband said the same thing, that he would never dare be alone with a strange child, just because of the potential of false accusations. He even said that if he ever found himself home with Kira and a friend of hers that he would sit in one spot with a camera on him at all times until I came home LOL.

I wouldn't be comfortable if the bathroom was down the hall away from the main classroom either. One thing we really like about Kira's preschool is that the bathroom is a little room right off the main classroom, and the door is never shut and no adult, even a woman, is alone in this wee cubicle of a bathroom with a single child.

Reply

 **Jenna Myers Karvunidis** said 2 weeks, 2 days ago

UPDATE!!!

I'm going to update the post as well, but I'm THRILLED that . . .

a) They agreed to honor my request ASAP so I can feel good about dropping her off tomorrow and . . .

b) They are revamping the school's policy! The executive committee decided it was a worthy issue and formed an investigative team to figure out what the details should be.

HUGE victory! They even apologized to me that this hadn't been dealt with sooner and attributed it to growing pains of being a small parent-run co-op.

YAYAYAYAYAY!!!!!!!

Reply



Dawnn said 2 weeks, 2 days ago

I feel you on this one. When my oldest daughter was in a home daycare, the lady got married. I came in to pick her up one day and the new husband was changing her diaper. Anyone with a baby girl knows that sometimes a BM can get in other spaces and there he was with his hand in all crevices. I nearly blacked out I was soo angry. Needless to say I took her out of that daycare. I must add that these are people from my sisters church so we did know them but still.... I DO NOT WANT SOME MAN's HAND IN MY CHILDS A\$\$!!

Reply



Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 2 weeks, 2 days ago

In reply to [Dawnn](#):

I toyed with the idea of nannying a while back and I remember a mom was uncomfortable that my husband would even be home one day a week. She didn't like the idea of him in them house and her kid was a boy who would have been with me the whole time.

I can certainly understand why you were mad - I would have been too and we are NOT alone.

Reply



Johntheother said 4 hours, 14 minutes ago

Jenna Myers Karvunidis.

Your claimed, but unsourced statistic - that 99% of sexual predators are men, only 1% are women is an egregiously false, and hateful lie. And when we discuss abuse of children, as your article focuses on, then a factually backed up claim would be that women are the world's champions at abusing children.

The US Department of health and Human Services show mothers abusing children at more than double the rate of fathers.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/figure3_6.htm

Reply



Alzoids said 3 hours, 52 minutes ago

In reply to [Johntheother](#):

Thank you! I hate hearing that made up 99 - 1 percent statistic. Knowing the the author of this just pulled it from nowhere, except maybe jezebel.com, really angers me. People just don't do the research they should anymore.

Regarding the rest of the issue, I don't believe that the gender of a person should bar them from helping children. What about the male children that get helped by female teachers? I guarantee you that the

boys won't get the same new treatment that the girl students get.

Reply

fb_avatar

André Berry said 3 hours, 45 minutes ago

In reply to [Johntheother](#):

THANK YOU JTO, I was just about to point out this woman as an obvious liar. I notice how she failed to cite ANY source backing her claims while you have a legitimate source. I bet our comments will be quickly erased and I have thusly screen captured your comment on this posting.

Reply



Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 1 hour ago

In reply to [André Berry](#):

Liar? That MEN account for nearly all documented sexual abuse? You are lying to yourself if you believe anything different.

Reply

fb_avatar

André Berry said 38 minutes ago

In reply to [Jenna Myers Karvunidis](#):

No I'm not lying and the several links posted by those in opposition to your tired post back us on this. Not only that the source you posted is partly or fully run by feminists such as Susan de Silva. We know how they fabricate statistics for profit.

I also notice you repeatedly use the same tired shaming ad hominem attack on everyone that legitimately disassembles your argument. The form factor of this logical fallacy is as follows:

Why are you fighting for men to get into little girls panties"

Grow up and learn how to argue with logic, not emotions and psycho babble.

Reply



Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 28 minutes ago

In reply to [André Berry](#):

Again, why are you guys trying to change my mind? IT WON'T CHANGE. You may use perfectly sound logic, you may use unsound logic, you may bully me, you may scare me, you may send hate mail to my house but I will never, ever change my mind on this.

Reply

Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 1 hour, 25 minutes ago

In reply to [Johntheother](#):

<http://childmolestationprevention.org/>

Reply

pgarrett said 1 hour, 13 minutes ago

In reply to [Jenna Myers Karvunidis](#):

Have you actually read the link you just posted?

Quote: "Did you know that most children who are sexually abused, are abused by a family member or close friend? Did you know that "stranger danger," by comparison, is quite rare?"

Your link does not support your argument. It in fact support Johntheother's.

Reply

Jean Valjean said 1 hour, 5 minutes ago

In reply to [pgarrett](#):

Of course she didn't read it. She just entered "child sexual abuse" into Google and linked the first website she came to. She was relying on our laziness to get away with her lies.

Taken from her link: "In reports of daycare workers who are abusers, women account for 40 percent."

pwned

Reply

Jenna Myers Karvunidis said 1 hour, 1 minute ago

In reply to [Jean Valjean](#):

Again, we're not talking about violent abuse, we're talking about SEXUAL abuse and it's normally caused by men. It's a fact. Get over it.

Reply

Jean Valjean said 55 minutes ago

In reply to [Jenna Myers Karvunidis](#):

Children pulled out of burning buildings, whisked out of the way of speeding cars are also normally caused by men.

Even though all these men have been background checked, will have limited time with children you still want