

Diane's Story – My Little Pooh Bear

My little Pooh Bear is six years old. He floats along a line they call "ADD/autism spectrum".

I have met many children who are more affected than he, so I guess I should be counting my blessings. At the meeting that draws us all together, Suppers for Families with ADHD, we are all parents of boys. Among us we have collected a sizable mass of information on behavioral interventions, dietary interventions, and educational interventions. We could write a book. And my chapter would be called "Rabbit Pellets and Skinny Snakes: Pooh Bear's Journey on the Toilet". We had our lunch and cleared away the dishes before I got going.

My son Ricky had the stinkiest poo I ever smelled. When a guest speaker introduced us to the idea that a brain is affected by the toxins in a child's gut, I knew exactly what she was talking about; a big part of his problem was brain effects from a fetid colon.

So for those of you who are wondering if your child's (or your) foul moods and poor concentration relate to digestion, there are five questions that will help you know.

How many times a day does your bowel move?

Is it a "grunty" or easy to pass?

Does it stink?

What does it look like: rabbit pellets? a banana? a skinny snake? mashed potatoes?

Does it sink or float?

When I asked my son to describe his stool in these terms, he returned, "Mine is like a long windy garden path with a house at the end." How poetic. What he was describing was old stool that he grunted out, followed by more recently formed, softer stool. Some kids actually seem to have diarrhea but they are squishing out soft stool around areas of compacted hard stool. Mind you, I'm talking about all this in polite company and a couple of the people are rapt.

I've become quite accomplished at the art of reading poo. What you want to observe is that at least once or twice a day, your child easily passes something like a banana. Ideally it will be floaty and might have an odor but will not stink.

As a mother, I would have triumphed if my child had accomplished proud toileting by age three, but the grunting pain got in the way. Ricky's six. It seems like a feat that he now takes care of business himself. There were two big hurdles. Pooh Bear was like a drug addict for wheat and milk products, and the ones like pizza that combine the two seemed like opiates. They *are* like opiates.

We also had to fill the hole in his diet with fruits and vegetables, and that took months. I had to deny him the foods he craved and keep making fruits and vegetables available, over and over and over. On a diet of whole foods he is pain free in the bathroom and passing "a banana" a day. He's still on the spectrum, but the changes have been encouraging:

- * His ability to focus and stay "on task" has increased.
- * His vocabulary and complexity of language have increased.

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- * The frequency and duration of tantrums and melt-downs have lessened.
- * He has become an increasingly social little guy who wants to participate with his peers and have friends over for play dates.