

Riverview firefighters get emergency 'potty training'

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HF - RCMP & Fire Dept

Toddler rescued after getting arm stuck in new toilet

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Kids will get into the darndest places — as Shannon Richard of Riverview discovered the hard way yesterday.

Her 2½-year-old son Aidin managed to get his arm stuck in a toilet which had not even been hooked up yet. In fact, it was still in the box in which it came.

Rescuers from the Riverview Fire Department were called to the scene and finally had to break the toilet bowl with a hammer before they were able to extricate the little boy's



Shannon Richard and 2½-year-old Aidin had a rough morning yesterday when Aidin got his arm stuck in a toilet.

arm. Fortunately, the youngster only suffered some swelling and bruises.

Shannon noted that she has been potty-training Aidin. She was in bed and he

was playing in the bedroom at 8 a.m. yesterday

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and she heard him say that he was going to "peepee." She shouted to him that she would be with him in just a minute.

"I turned around to go get my housecoat," she said, "when I heard him say 'Mommy, I'm stuck.'" It turns out that Aidin was playing a game in which he was "pretending to wipe himself with toilet paper and then putting it in the toilet."

However, the toilet was not the one normally used by the youngster, but rather a brand new one that was upside-down in the cardboard box in which it arrived.

So the toddler was actually pushing the paper into the little hole that empties into the toilet bowl, explained Deputy Riverview Fire Chief Milt Cawley.

"This little flapper valve at the bottom of the tank is normally closed. But since the new toilet had not been installed yet, it was open," he said.

When she found him, Shannon said Aidin's arm was jammed into the valve all the way past his elbow.

"When I saw how far down it was, I wasn't sure how I could get it out. I tried to move the toilet but it was too heavy for me to hold.

"He was screaming and crying and I could see that his arm had swollen and I felt his fingers and they had gone limp. I thought he had broken his arm. I finally called 911 and remember the lady at the other end of the line trying to calm me down, while EMS (emergency measure services) and an ambulance were on their way here."

Shannon said the response was quick and they arrived at her home within a couple of minutes.

Cawley said the boy was wedged into the hole so firmly that whenever they tried to pull the valve out, it only tightened on his arm. The fact that his arm was bent and not straight at the time worked against them sliding it out of the opening without causing him a lot of duress, he said.

Rather than put Aidin through needless pain and trauma, the deputy chief said it was decided that the best solution was to break the toilet.

"So we put a blanket over the mother and child in the form of a tent to protect them against any flying debris and smashed the porcelain tank with a ball-peen hammer," said Cawley. "As soon as we got the kid's arm free, we checked to make sure there was no deformity or broken bones and there weren't."

"Aidin's tears stopped just as soon his arm was free again," said Shannon.

"It was a big relief for me. But I have to consider this to be a major setback for me in potty-training him," she laughed.

Shannon and her husband Dan bought the 50-year-old home on Yale Avenue on June 28 and have been renovating it since. In that time, they've been careful to keep Aidin away from the rooms where the tools and equipment are located.