

POTTY

The present invention relates to the field of potties for young children, in particular portable potties for use when out and about.

Conventional travel potties are known in the form of a folding device that is
5 configured to be very compact and light weight so that it can readily be packed in a suitcase or, even inserted into a changing bag. These devices comprise a substantially flat angular seat component with a number of legs, typically four, pivotally attached to the seat component. In use the legs are folded down and a disposable bag is attached over the seat component. The child sits on an upper
10 surface of the seat component and uses it as a normal potty. Any waste is collected in the bag, liquid being absorbed by an absorbent pad contained within the bag. The bag is subsequently tied up and disposed of at the parent's convenience. The potty can then be re-folded and packed away.

Disadvantages associated with such a device are primarily that it is dissimilar to
15 a standard potty so that the child finds it quite alien to use. Furthermore, the device is significantly less stable than a standard potty and the child may not feel secure when trying to use it. Furthermore, whether it is hygienic to carry around a thin plastic bag with human waste contained therein is, at best, questionable.

20 An alternative device is marketed as a 'spill proof' device, wherein a two component plastic bowl having a loosely attached lid is provided. Such a

container must be kept flat once used, until a public convenience can be found and the device can be cleaned out. Such a device may have merits for keeping in the car where, for example, it can be kept flat in a foot well. However, such a device is impractical for use when away from the car and is not, therefore, particularly portable once used. Whilst such a device avoids the use of plastic bags to contain the waste, the other aforementioned disadvantages, namely the lack of stability and the lack of familiarity are still associated with this alternative device.

It is desirable to provide a travel potty that has a high level of portability and which addresses the aforementioned disadvantages.

According to the present invention there is provided a potty comprising:

a seat portion having an upper surface contoured so as to receive the bottom of a child when the potty is in an open state, the seat portion comprising a cavity for receiving waste from the child;

a lid portion, connectable to the seat portion, the lid portion being arranged to engage with the seat portion to form a seal therebetween when the potty is in a closed state; and

securing means arranged to urge the lid portion towards the seat portion preventing relative movement therebetween when the potty is in the closed state, the seal being configured to inhibit egress of any waste contained within the cavity irrespective of the orientation of the potty.

By providing a securely sealable potty, a stable platform for a child is achieved together with the versatility of a device that can be used anywhere, even if there is no imminent prospect of visiting a public convenience to clean out the device. Furthermore, there is no requirement to subsequently transport a flimsy bag
5 containing human waste until a suitable disposal location is found. Once the potty is in the closed state the orientation of the potty can be changed without risking the egress of said waste. The potty can, therefore, be carried naturally by a handle or other means using a single hand. Alternatively the used potty can readily be stowed under a buggy or over a buggy handle. The potty can
10 then be emptied and cleaned when it is safe, convenient and hygienic to do so.

A sealing member may be located between the seat portion and the lid portion to effect the seal formed therebetween when the potty is in a closed state, this sealing member may be provided by a compression sealing member.

The lid portion may comprise a compliant bung, configured to engage with an
15 inner surface of the cavity of the seat portion, to form a seal therebetween when the potty is in a closed state. The compliant bung may comprise a compliant ring connected to a periphery of a core portion, the ring being configured to deform upon contact with the inner surface of the cavity to thereby form a lip seal therewith. The compliant bung may comprise a plurality of compliant rings
20 each ring being connected in parallel with the, or each, other ring onto the core portion, each ring being configured to deform upon contact with the inner surface of the cavity to thereby form a multiple lip seal therewith.

The lid portion may be pivotably connected to the seat portion. The lid portion may be detachable from the seat portion.

The securing means may comprise one or more releasable latch mechanisms. Alternatively, the securing means may comprise a strap. The strap may be tied
5 around the potty or it may be provided with a buckle, a clasp or a ratchet mechanism.

The present invention will now be described in more detail, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which;

Figure 1 illustrates a travel potty in an open state;

10 Figure 2 illustrates a cross section of a lid portion of the potty of Figure 1;

Figure 3 illustrates the potty of Figure 1 in a closed state;

Figure 4 illustrates cross-sections of alternative lid portion 5 of a potty; and

Figure 5 illustrates an alternative sealing means comprising a strap.

Figure 1 illustrates a travel potty 10 comprising a seat portion 15 and a lid
15 portion 20. The seat portion 15 comprises a contoured upper surface 25 that is ergonomically designed for a child sit comfortably thereon. A cavity 30 is formed in the seat portion 15 having an opening in the upper surface 25. The upper surface 25 and cavity 30 are, preferably, formed from a single piece of material e.g. a moulded plastics material, to present a smooth surface to assist
20 cleaning thereof. The cavity 30 is configured to receive waste of a child sitting on the upper surface 25 of the seat portion 15 of the potty 10.

The shape of the upper surface 25 resembles that of a conventional potty so that it is familiar to any child intending to use the device 10. In particular, a raised portion 35 is provided at a front region of the upper surface 25. The raised portion 35 is configured to act as a means of deflecting urine into the
5 cavity when the potty 10 is being used by a little boy.

In a first embodiment, the lid portion 20 is connected to the seat portion 15 via a hinge 40. The lid portion 20 can, therefore, be pivotally rotated onto the seat portion 15 such that the potty 10 can be closed. As shown in Figure 1, the lid portion 20 comprises a protruding core portion 45 having a compliant bung 50
10 mounted thereon. The compliant bung 50, as illustrated in more detail Figure 2, comprises one or more compliant rings 55 located about a periphery of the bung 50. In this embodiment, three compliant rings 55 are shown, however, a single ring 55 may suffice. Indeed, where the bung 50 is formed from a suitably compliant material, it may be preferable to omit compliant rings 55, thus
15 presenting a smooth surface which may be easier to clean.

Fastening or securing means 60 is provided between the lid portion 20 and the seat portion 15. A moveable latch portion 60a, provided on the lid portion 20, is urged over a stationary receiving portion 60b, provided on the seat portion 15, to engage therewith. The fastening means 60 serves to secure the potty 10 in a
20 closed state. A release mechanism, here a button 65, is shown in Figure 3 which illustrates the potty 10 in its closed state. Depression of button 65 causes

moveable latch portion 60a to be displaced and thus to disengage from receiving portion 60b thus releasing the fastening means 60.

Figure 3 further illustrates how a handle 70 is connected to potty 10 preferably, on the seat portion 15. The handle 70 is, preferably, located on a peripheral surface of the potty 10 so that the potty can be readily carried, even by a child. Further, the handle 70 is preferably sufficiently large to hang the potty 10 over the handle of a buggy.

In operation, once the potty 10 has been used, the lid portion 20 can be brought into contact with the seat portion 15 to close the potty 10. The periphery of the compliant bung 50 is urged into contact with an inner surface of cavity 30 and the latch portions 60a, 60b engage with one another. Where compliant rings 55 are present on bung 50, the rings 55 are each deformed to provide a lip seal against the inner surface of the cavity 30. In the illustrated embodiment, three such rings 55 are provided, thus providing a multiple lip seal against the inner surface of the cavity 30 once the lid portion 20 is brought into contact with the seat portion 15.

In an alternative embodiment, the lid portion or the seat portion may be provided with one or more circumferential sealing components, located around a peripheral portion thereof as illustrated in Figure 4. This sealing component e.g. an O-ring seal 80a (Figure 4a) or a compression seal 80b (Figure 4b), is arranged to be brought into contact with a corresponding peripheral region of the opposing seat portion or lid portion respectively. A potty comprising a

circumferential sealing component may, but need not, additionally comprise a compliant bung.

In another embodiment, a lid portion may be fully detachable from the seat portion of the potty in use, but brought into contact therewith and secured thereto after use. Such a configuration is particularly useful if the potty is additionally to be used around the home as the seat portion alone would be less bulky for everyday use.

The lid portion may be secured to the seat portion using two or more latching mechanisms or, alternatively, an adjustable strap 85 may be used to maintain contact between the lid portion and the seat portion as illustrated in Figure 5. Such a strap may be tied around the potty, or alternatively, the strap may comprise a buckle 90, a clasp or a ratchet mechanism. Recesses 95 are preferably formed in an outer surface of the potty to inhibit movement of the strap and location brackets 100 may also be used to enhance location of the, or each, strap.

After potty training, the potty 10 provides a convenient, hygienic, desirable option for any parent travelling or otherwise out and about with children.

As the potty 10 is a robust device, suitable for everyday use, it provides the parent with the option of having a single device rather than separate potties for use respectively at home and on the move.

A recess or otherwise flat portion may be provided on the outside of either the lid portion 20 or the seat portion 15 or both. An illustration or representation of a character may be applied to this portion to further enhance the desirability of the potty 10 to a child. Alternatively the entire external surface may be highly
5 decorated to produce the same effect.

Each of these aforementioned advantages encourage 'ownership' of the potty by the child. As a consequence, potty training of the child becomes less onerous/stressful and is, in turn, more readily achieved.

In summary, the travel potty 10 is configured so that it appeals to a child as it is
10 a robust device that may be carried around, indeed, it may even represent characters from a child's favourite book, thus encouraging ownership of the potty 10 and, consequently, encouraging use of the potty 10 by the child.
Furthermore, the potty 10 is a practical device for the parent as it can be readily transported when out and about, the child is happy to use the potty 10 and,
15 once used, the contents can be securely retained within the potty 10 until a convenient time for disposing of the waste and cleaning of the potty.

CLAIMS

1. A potty comprising:

a seat portion having an upper surface contoured so as to receive the bottom of a child when the potty is in an open state, the seat portion comprising a cavity for receiving waste from the child;

a lid portion, connectable to the seat portion, the lid portion being arranged to engage with the seat portion to form a seal therebetween when the potty is in a closed state;

securing means arranged to urge the lid portion towards the seat portion preventing relative movement therebetween when the potty is in the closed state, the seal being configured to inhibit egress of any waste contained within the cavity irrespective of the orientation of the potty; and wherein the lid portion comprises a compliant bung configured to engage with an inner surface of the cavity of the seat portion to form a seal therebetween when the potty is in a closed state.

2. A potty according to Claim 1, wherein the compliant bung comprises a compliant ring connected to a periphery of a core portion of the bung, the ring being configured to deform upon contact with the inner surface of the cavity to thereby form a lip seal therewith.

3. A potty according to Claim 2, wherein the compliant bung comprises a plurality of compliant rings, each ring being connected in parallel with the, or each, other ring onto to the core portion, each ring being configured to deform upon contact with the inner surface of the cavity to thereby form a multiple lip seal therewith.