TOILET FLUSH HANDLE ATTACHMENT AND METHOD FOR TOILET TRAINING

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Abstract

An attachment device adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle is disclosed. The attachment device can be configured to provide additional locations for an individual to engage and actuate a toilet flush handle when flushing a toilet. Some embodiments of the attachment device can be configured to reduce the force necessary to actuate the flush handle as well as provide engagement locations at various heights. Embodiments of the attachment device can also be provided in a method for toilet training an individual.
TOILET FLUSH HANDLE ATTACHMENT 
AND METHOD FOR TOILET TRAINING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present disclosure relates to flush handles for toilets, and more particularly, to flush handle attachments for providing additional gripping areas and for use in toilet training individuals.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Toilets and toilet flush handles are known in the art. In many configurations, an individual engages and actuates the flush handle to flush the toilet. In many instances, the flush handle is operably connected with one or more components located on or near the toilet and provides an area an individual can grasp to flush the toilet. For example, some flush handles include a handle or lever portion connected with a pivot portion, the pivot portion being pivotally connected with the toilet. In such a configuration, the individual can flush the toilet by pushing or pulling or otherwise engaging the lever portion of the flush handle to pivot the flush handle. The force required to pivot the flush handle when flushing a toilet can vary based on a variety of parameters, such as friction and fluid pressures. The handle shape and size as well as where an individual engages the handle can also affect the force necessary to pivot the flush handle. Accordingly, the ease with which an individual may engage and actuate a toilet flush handle may be affected by the handle configuration and location. In some instances, individuals, such as toddlers, may have a difficult time engaging and actuating a flush handle to flush a toilet.

[0003] During the early years of life, young boys and girls begin the toilet training process, perhaps under the direction of a parent or other care provider. The toilet training process involves a number of different aspects. One such aspect includes providing instruction and encouragement to a youngster to flush a toilet after use. However, the lever portions on some toilet flush handles are configured with a relatively small area in which to engage the flush handle, making it difficult for a youngster to actuate and pivot the toilet flush handle. In addition, the height at which the flush handle is located relative to the floor and/or the specific location of the flush handle on or near the toilet may also make it difficult or awkward for a youngster to reach and/or engage the flush handle. A youngster’s difficulty or inability to actuate the flush handle may contribute to discouragement during the toilet training process. Further, a youngster may have some difficulty remembering the lessons and/or method steps taught to him or her by the person providing instruction on toilet training. As such, a youngster attempting to use a toilet without direct supervision of his or her instructor may become frustrated or discouraged when forgotten steps and/or lessons are revisited during subsequent instructional sessions.

[0004] Teaching tools are available to help with the process of toilet training an individual. One currently available teaching tool called “Flushin’ Friends,” supplied by Parents of Invention, includes a cover for a toilet flush handle in the form of an animal design, such as a hippo or an alligator. The Flushin’ Friends cover provides an elongated portion corresponding with the animal nose or snout connected with a rounded portion corresponding with the animal’s head. As such, the Flushin’ Friends cover conforms to the general shape of a toilet flush handle (i.e. an elongated lever portion connected with a generally rounded pivot portion). When connected with a toilet flush handle, the animal designs of the Flushin’ Friends cover may give the toilet flush handle a more aesthetically pleasing appearance to a youngster. However, the Flushin’ Friends cover appears to simply cover an existing toilet flush handle and does not appear to provide additional gripping areas at different locations and/or heights. Furthermore, the Flushin’ Friends cover does not appear to include indicia that might otherwise help a child understand and/or remember how to use a toilet flush handle.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Aspects of the present disclosure involve an attachment adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle. As discussed herein, the attachment device can be configured to provide additional locations for an individual to engage and actuate a toilet flush handle when flushing a toilet. Other embodiments of the attachment device can be configured to reduce the force necessary to actuate the flush handle as well as provide engagement locations at various heights. Further, embodiments of the attachment device can be provided in a method for toilet training an individual.

[0006] In one form, a toilet flush handle attachment includes: an attachment member adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle; an engagement member having an outer surface defining an engagement area, the engagement member including a distal end portion and a proximal end portion; and wherein the proximal end portion is connected with the attachment member.

[0007] In another form, a toilet flush handle attachment includes: a cover adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle having a length defining a first moment arm adapted to pivot about a pivot axis; an engagement member connected with the cover, the engagement member including a distal end portion; and wherein when the cover is connected with the toilet flush handle, the distal end portion of the engagement member defines a second moment arm with respect to the pivot axis that is longer than the first moment arm.

[0008] In a method of teaching an individual to flush a toilet, the method includes the steps of: (1) providing a toilet flush handle attachment having: (i) an attachment member adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle; (ii) an engagement member defining a gripping area, the engagement member including a distal end portion and a proximal end portion; and (iii) wherein the proximal end portion is connected with the attachment member; (2) connecting the toilet flush handle attachment with the toilet flush handle; and (3) demonstrating the how to actuate the toilet flush handle to flush the toilet by engaging the gripping area.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a toilet and a flush handle.

[0010] FIG. 2 is a detailed view of the flush handle shown in FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a detailed view of one embodiment of an attachment device.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a detailed view of the attachment device shown in FIG. 3 connected with the toilet flush handle of FIG. 2.
FIG. 5 is a front isometric view of a second embodiment of an attachment device. FIG. 6 is a rear isometric view of the attachment device shown in FIG. 5 connected with a toilet flush handle. FIG. 7 is a front side view of the attachment device shown in FIG. 5 including indicia. FIG. 8 is a front side view of the attachment device shown in FIG. 7 including indicia.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Aspects of the present disclosure involve an attachment adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle. As discussed in more detail below, the attachment device can be configured to provide additional locations for an individual to engage and actuate a toilet flush handle when flushing a toilet. Embodiments of the attachment device can also be configured to reduce the force necessary to actuate the flush handle as well as provide engagement locations at various heights. The attachment device may include an engagement member connected with an attachment member. The attachment member is adapted to connect with the toilet flush handle, and the engagement member provides engagement locations wherein a user can engage the attachment device to actuate the flush handle and flush the toilet. The attachment member can also be configured to cover the toilet flush handle and to provide engagement locations in addition to the engagement locations on the engagement member. In addition, the attachment member can be configured to releasably connect with the toilet flush handle in various ways. The engagement member can be provided in various forms and can include various appendages to increase the number of engagement locations. The engagement member can be configured to extend away from the toilet flush handle in any number of directions to provide easier access to the flush handle as well as provide engagement locations at various heights.

As discussed in more detail below, embodiments of the attachment device can also be provided in a method for toilet training an individual. More particularly, the attachment member can be configured to help encourage and teach a youngster to flush a toilet after use. In one example, the attachment device may be configured to allow an individual to more easily flush a toilet by providing increased locations in which to engage the flush handle. In another example, the engagement member can be configured as a figurine to attract the attention of and encourage use by a youngster. Such figurines may be provided in various forms, such as anthropomorphic animals, cartoon characters, and the like. In yet another example, the attachment device can include various indicia to provide instruction and encouragement to an individual during the toilet training process. For instance, some indicia can provide instruction on how to flush the toilet.

FIGS. 1 and 2 show one example of a toilet 100 provided with a flush handle 102. In many instances, toilets 100 are connected with or include a water source 104 fluidly connected with a bowl 106, which in turn, is fluidly connected with a drain 108. The flush handle 102 can be operably connected with various types of arrangements of plumbing components that allow an individual to selectively introduce water into the bowl to move waste deposited therein into the drain (i.e. flushing the toilet). In some toilet configurations, the flush handle is pivotally connected with some portion of the toilet or other fixture proximate thereto. As shown in FIG. 1, the toilet handle 102 is pivotally connected with a tank 110. It is to be appreciated that the flush handle can be connected with other portions of the toilet or external components, such as a pipe. Many flush handles, such as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, include a handle or lever portion 112 connected with a pivot portion 114, the pivot portion 114 being pivotally connected with the toilet 100. The pivotal connection between the flush handle 102 and the toilet 100 can define a pivot axis 116 about which the flush handle 102 pivots. As such, the individual can flush the toilet 100 by engaging the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102 and pivoting the flush handle. For example, an individual can flush the toilet 100 shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 by engaging the flush handle 102 to move the lever portion downward and pivot the toilet flush handle about the pivot axis 116 in the direction shown. It is to be appreciated that the toilet and toilet flush handle depicted herein are provided for background information for the following description of embodiments of the attachment, and it is to be appreciated that embodiments of the attachment device discussed herein can be configured with various different configurations of toilet flush handles and toilets. For example, the attachment can be configured to connect with various types of flush handles that extend upward, downward, leftward, and/or rightward from the pivot axis and/or extend outward from the toilet tank.

As previously mentioned, embodiments of the attachment device are adapted to connect with toilet flush handles and are configured to provide additional locations for an individual to engage and actuate the toilet flush handle. FIGS. 3 and 4 show one embodiment of an attachment device 118. More particularly, FIG. 3 shows an isometric view of the attachment device 118, and FIG. 4 shows the attachment device 118 connected with the toilet flush handle 102. As shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, the attachment device 118 includes an engagement member 120 connected with an attachment member 122. The attachment member 122 is adapted to connect with the toilet flush handle 102 and support the engagement member 120 extending therefrom. The attachment member 122 shown in FIGS. 3 and 4 includes a loop member 124 having an aperture 126 defining an elongated rectangular cross-section adapted to receive the lever portion 112 of the toilet flush handle 102. The attachment member 122 may be connected with the toilet flush handle 102 by sliding the loop member 124 over the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102. The connection between the loop member 124 and the toilet flush handle 102 can be maintained through a frictional engagement. However, it is to be appreciated that the attachment member 122 shown in FIGS. 3 and 4 can also be configured to connect with the toilet handle 102 in various different ways, such as with screw fasteners, clamps, hooks, loops, clips, and adhesives. In addition, the attachment 118 can be configured to connect with toilet handles having various cross sectional sizes and shapes, such as round, square, and oval.

The engagement member 120 of the attachment device 118 shown in FIGS. 3 and 4 provides additional locations for an individual to engage and actuate the flush handle 102 when flushing the toilet 100. More particularly, the engagement member 120 includes a proximal end portion 128 and a distal end portion 130. The proximal end portion 128 of the engagement member 120 is connected with the attachment member 122, and the distal end portion
extends outwardly away from the flush handle 102. When connected with the flush handle 102, a first portion 132 of the engagement member 120 extends downward from the proximal end portion 128 to a second portion 134. The second portion 134 is angularly offset from the first portion 132 and extends outwardly away from the pivot axis 116 and to the distal end portion 130. The outer surface of the engagement member defines an engagement or gripping area 136 where an individual can grasp or otherwise engage the attachment device 118 and flush the toilet 100. For example, when the attachment device 118 is connected with the toilet flush handle 102, an individual can push or pull on the engagement member 120 to pivot the flush handle 102 in the direction shown when flushing the toilet 100. Although an individual can still engage the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102 to flush the toilet, the gripping area 136 provides additional locations at various heights where an individual can engage and pivot the toilet flush handle 102. The additional engagement areas 136 and locations thereof can be useful during the toilet training process, because the attachment device 118 may make it easier for a toddler to reach and engage the toilet flush handle 102 to flush the toilet. It is to be appreciated that the engagement member 120 can be configured in various ways and can include one or more appendages extending therefrom, defining additional gripping areas. Further, the attachment member 122 can be configured such that when connected with the toilet flush handle 102, the engagement member 120 can extend in various different directions relative to the pivot axis 116, such as upward, outward, and inward.

Embodiments of the attachment device 118 can also be configured to reduce the amount of force that would otherwise be required to actuate the flush handle 102 when flushing the toilet 100. The forces an individual must exert to pivot the flush handle to flush a toilet can vary based on a variety of parameters. For example, fluid pressures and frictional forces can create a resistance torque on the flush handle that must be overcome in order to pivot the flush handle when flushing the toilet. When flushing the toilet 100 shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, an individual may apply a force F on the lever portion 112 in the downward direction, which creates an actuating torque. Once the actuating torque exceeds the resistance torque, the flush handle 102 will pivot in the direction shown. The distance D between the pivot axis 116 and the location where the force F is applied to the flush handle 102 defines a moment arm. Therefore, the actuation torque equals the force F multiplied by the distance D. Accordingly, the shorter distance D becomes, the greater force F is required to generate a given actuating torque. Alternatively, the longer distance D becomes, the less force F is required to generate the same actuating torque. In other words, as an individual engages the flush handle 102 closer to the pivot axis 116, the individual may need to exert a larger force on the flush handle in order to pivot the flush handle for a given resistance torque. As such, embodiments of the attachment device 118 can include gripping areas 136 located to provide a longer moment arm than the any moment arm provided on the toilet flush handle, making it easier to actuate the flush handle 102 to flush the toilet.

As discussed above with reference to FIG. 2, as the distance D (i.e. the moment arm length) increases between the pivot axis 116 and the location where an individual applies force F to pivot the flush handle 102, the force F required to pivot the flush handle 102 decreases. As shown in FIG. 4, the maximum distance D (i.e. flush handle moment arm length) on the toilet flush handle 102 is limited by the length of the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102. The engagement area 136 near the distal end portion of the engagement member may provide a distance D2 (i.e. attachment device moment arm length) that is longer than the distance D1 provided by the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102. As such, an individual that engages the attachment device 118 near the distal end portion 130 at or near the distance D2 can pivot the flush handle 102 by exerting less force than would otherwise be required when applying a force to pivot the flush handle at distance D1. Thus, the attachment device 118 may allow an individual to apply less force to flush the toilet than otherwise would be required. Providing a lower activation force can be useful for individuals during toilet training by making it easier for a toddler to flush the toilet.

As mentioned above, embodiments of the attachment device can be configured in various ways to connect with different toilet flush handles and to provide additional areas where an individual can engage and actuate the flush handle to flush a toilet. For instance, FIGS. 5-7 show a second embodiment of an attachment device 138 having an engagement member 140 connected with an attachment member 142. As with the first attachment device embodiment 118 discussed above, the attachment member 142 of the second embodiment 138 is adapted to connect with the toilet flush handle 102. However, the second embodiment 138 differs from the first embodiment 118 in various ways. For example, as discussed in more detail below, the attachment member 142 of the second embodiment 138 is adapted to cover the flush handle 102, and the engagement member 140 is configured to be more aesthetically pleasing to and/or more likely to attract the attention of a youngster.

As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, the attachment member 142 includes a body 144 providing a cover 146 for the flush handle 102. The body 144 includes a top side 148 and a bottom side 150 separated by and connected with a right side 152 and a left side 154. The top, bottom, left, and right sides are connected with and extend rearwardly from a front side 156 to define an open back side 158. When the attachment member 142 is connected with the toilet flush handle 102, the right side 152, left side 154, top side 148, bottom side 150, and front side 156 of the attachment member 142 extend over and cover corresponding areas on the flush handle 102. As with the first embodiment 118 of the attachment, the attachment member 142 of the second embodiment 138 can be connected with various types of the toilet flush handles in various ways. For example, as shown in FIG. 6, the attachment device 138 includes a piece of double-sided adhesive tape 160 extending along a portion of a bottom surface of the top side 148 of the attachment member 142. Accordingly, the attachment member 142 can be connected with the flush handle 102 by placing the top side 148 adjacent an upper surface of the lever portion 112 of the flush handle 102 such that the adhesive tape 160 sticks to the lever portion 112. The adhesive tape 160 can be configured such that the attachment device 138 can be removed without great difficulty while at the same time
connecting the attachment device with the flush handle 102 with enough strength to help prevent the attachment device from disconnecting from the flush handle when flushing the toilet. When connected with the flush handle 102, an outer surface 162 of the body 144 provides engagement areas 164 for an individual to engage and flush the toilet.

[0026] It is to be appreciated that the attachment member 142 can be configured with different shapes and sizes than those depicted herein. For example, the attachment member 142 can be configured to connect with the toilet flush handle to effectively extend or lengthen the lever portion of the flush handle. As such, the attachment member can be configured to provide a relatively long moment arm with respect to the flush handle pivot axis 116, requiring less force to flush the toilet. As discussed in more detail below, the outer surface 162 of the body 144 may also provide locations where various types of indicia such as designs, logos, letters, wording, and advertisements can be placed. Such indicia may be used to provide encouragement and instruction to individuals engaged in the process of toilet training.

[0027] As shown in FIGS. 5-7, the engagement member 140 includes a figurine 166 providing additional locations 168 for an individual to operably engage and actuate the flush handle 102 when flushing the toilet. In the embodiment shown, the figurine 166 is configured as an anthropomorphic animal in the form of a frog 170. The engagement member 140 includes a proximal end portion 172 corresponding with a head, face, and arm/shoulder region 174 of the frog 170 connected with the attachment member 142. From the proximal end portion 172, the engagement member 140 extends away from the attachment member 142 to a distal end portion 176. The distal end portion 176 includes two appendages 178, corresponding with a first foot region 180 and a second foot region 182 of the frog 170. A mid portion 184 of the engagement member 140 extending between the proximal and distal end portions 172, 176 corresponds with a torso region 186 of the frog 170. When connected with the flush handle 102, the engagement member 140 extends downward from the proximal end portion 172 to the distal end portion 174. In addition, a first set of fingers 188 and a second set of fingers 190 relating to the frog 170 are connected with the top side 148 of the attachment member 142.

[0028] As shown in FIGS. 5-7, an outer surface of the figurine 166 defines the engagement or gripping areas 168 where an individual can grasp or otherwise engage the attachment device 138 and flush the toilet. The gripping areas 166 provide additional locations at various heights where an individual can engage and actuate the toilet flush handle 102. For example, when the attachment device 138 is connected with the toilet flush handle 102, an individual can push or pull on the torso region 186 and/or the first and second foot regions 180, 182 of the frog 170 to pivot the flush handle 102 and flush the toilet. An individual can also engage the attachment member cover 146 to flush the toilet. As discussed above with reference to the first embodiment of the attachment device 118, the engagement member 140 of the second embodiment 138 can be configured such that the distal end portion 176 of the engagement member 138 can provide a relatively long moment arm with respect to the flush handle pivot axis 116, requiring less force to flush the toilet.

[0029] As discussed in more detail below, the additional engagement areas and locations of embodiments of the attachment device can be useful during the toilet training process, because the attachment device may make it easier for a toddler to reach and engage the toilet flush handle to flush the toilet. It is to be appreciated that engagement members can be configured in various ways and can include one or more appendages extending therefrom, defining additional gripping areas. For example, the head, face, and arm/shoulder region 174 of the figurine 166 shown in FIGS. 5-7 could be reconfigured without arms curving upward. As such, the figurine 166 could then be configured with additional appendages in the form of arms extending outward from the torso region 186 of the frog 170. Further, engagement members can be configured such that when connected with the toilet flush handle, the engagement member extends in various different directions. For example, engagement members can be configured to extend upward and/or downward relative to the lever portion of the flush handle as well as extend outward and/or inward relative to the flush handle pivot axis and/or toilet tank.

[0030] Although the engagement member shown in FIGS. 5-7 includes the figurine 166 in the form of the frog 170, it is to be appreciated that figurines in other forms can be used. For example, other embodiments of the attachment device can include figurines in the form of other animals, such as bears, ducks, and the like. In addition, the engagement member can include figurines in forms other than animals, such as action figures, cartoon characters, and the like. Still other embodiments of the attachment device can include a plurality of engagement members connectable with each other and/or with the attachment member. Yet other embodiments include engagement members that are removably connected with the attachment member or other engagement members. It should also be appreciated that the engagement member can be configured in forms other than figurines.

[0031] As mentioned above, embodiments of the attachment device having various different characteristics can help an individual being toilet trained to more easily learn to flush a toilet. For example, as discussed above, the attachment device can be configured to allow an individual to more easily reach and engage a toilet flush handle. As such, the attachment device could aid a youngster with relatively poor or undeveloped coordination and/or a relatively short reach to more easily engage a toilet flush handle. In another scenario, the attachment device may be configured with engagement areas that allow an individual to actuate a flush handle with less force than would otherwise be required, as discussed above. Thus, the attachment device can be configured to make it easier for a youngster to actuate the flush handle when flushing the toilet, which may help prevent an individual from becoming discouraged during the toilet training process. In other scenarios, embodiments of the attachment device can be configured with figurines or other aesthetically pleasing characteristics that may encourage and/or remind a youngster to flush the toilet.

[0032] As mentioned above, embodiments of the attachment device may also be used as a teaching tool to help toilet train an individual. For example, a toilet flush handle attachment device configured in various ways, such as in accordance with the embodiments described above, can be provided in a method of toilet training an individual. In one method, the attachment device may first be connected with a toilet flush handle. Next, a person may demonstrate the use
of the toilet flush handle attachment device to the individual being toilet trained. For example, use of the attachment device may be demonstrated by grasping or otherwise engaging the attachment device in various different gripping areas to push or pull to pivot the toilet flush handle and flush the toilet. The individual being toilet trained may then engage the attachment device to flush the toilet in accordance with the instructions and demonstrations provided.

[0033] As mentioned above, in addition to providing additional gripping areas, the attachment device can be configured with an appearance that encourages or reminds an individual to flush a toilet. For example, the attachment device can be provided in an aesthetically pleasing form to attract the attention of youngsters engaged in the process of toilet training. In one scenario, the attachment device 138 shown in FIGS. 5-7 includes the figurine 166 in the form of the anthropomorphic frog 170. The frog 170 may attract the attention of a youngster and provide a reminder to flush the toilet. In another scenario, the attachment device can be provided with stickers or magnets that may be selectively affixed to the attachment device. The stickers or magnets may include various indicia signifying or corresponding with an individual’s progress in the toilet training process. In yet another scenario, the attachment device can be reconfigurable to change form in accordance with an individual’s success and/or progress in the toilet training process. For example, the attachment device can be provided with a group of figurines adapted to releasably connect with the attachment member and/or with each other. The different figurines can be connected with the attachment device to signify progress in the toilet training process. In one example, the figurines can be provided in different sizes, such as a family of bears. Younger/smaller bears can be displayed early in the toilet training process and older/larger bears can be later displayed to correspond with an individual’s advancement in the toilet training process.

[0034] Embodiments of the attachment device can also provide various locations where different types of indicia such as designs, logos, letters, wording, and advertisements can be placed. For example, indicia may be disposed on the attachment member and/or engagement member to communicate information to a user. As used herein, the phrase “disposed on” is used to mean that the indicia are disposed on or otherwise provided with the attachment device. For example, the indicia may be printed directly on the outer surface of the attachment device, or printed on a separate substrate, such as a label that is affixed to the attachment device. The indicia may be applied using any known method, including printing. As used herein, the term “print” is intended to broadly cover all forms of forming visible marks on an attachment device, label, tag, or other substrate. The indicia can be selected to communicate information to a user. The information may relate to the general manner and/or desirability of using the attachment device to flush a toilet, or may provide instructional or descriptive information regarding the attachment device and/or toilet.

[0035] As used herein, the term “communicate” refers to the ability of indicia to impress an idea or message upon, or trigger a cognitive response within, a user. As such, communication may rely upon a user’s experience or knowledge to arrive at the intended message. Additionally or alternatively, the indicia may illustrate simple concepts that are understood at a basic or visceral level that does not require the prior knowledge or experience of a user. In any event, the indicia is cognitively functional in that it conveys a message that is generally capable of being understood by a recipient user.

[0036] The indicia may be in the form of any visual communication suitable for communicating information regarding the attachment device and/or toilet to a user. Accordingly, the indicia may include icons, which may comprise, but are not limited to, pictorial symbols, photographs, drawings, cartoons, and logos. For example, the icons may be provided as drawings of a child or an anthropomorphic image of an animal using the attachment device and/or toilet. Similarly, the icons may include well-known cartoon characters or brand logos, or characters specifically created to be associated with the attachment. The icons may further include symbols, such as arrows, to indicate motion or movement.

[0037] The indicia may be arranged in any manner to communicate the desired information to a user. The indicia may be a single icon or a series of icons. Each icon may include one or more visual prompts. Where a series of icons are provided, the images may be arranged in any suitable fashion, such as, but not limited to, vertically, horizontally, diagonally, circular, and combination thereof.

[0038] The indicia may optionally include a character graphic that can increase a user’s interest in the attachment device. The term “character graphic” is used herein to refer to a graphic containing an anthropomorphic image, and in particular an image having or suggesting human form or appearance which ascribes human motivations, characteristics or behavior to inanimate objects, animals, natural phenomena, toys, cartoon characters, or the like. The character graphic may be associated with popular characters in the media, advertising or well known in a particular culture. For example, the graphics can be associated with characters that the user, particularly a child, care about and want to identify with.

[0039] Exemplary indicia 192 that may be used with the attachment device is illustrated in FIG. 8. The illustrated indicia 192 includes a plurality of icons to provide information regarding use of the attachment device and toilet. Specifically, indicia 192 includes a first icon 194 and a second icon 196 representing thought bubbles emanating from the head region 174 of the frog 170 and leading to a third icon 198 representing the thought represented by the frog 170. In particular, the third icon 198 shows an anthropomorphic animal in the form of a frog 200 flushing a toilet 202.

[0040] It is to be appreciated that embodiments the attachment device can also be configured with accessories or elements that provide physical signals of correct use.

[0041] Examples of such elements can include a flag, a buzzer, and/or a light. In one scenario, the attachment device may include a flag that is adapted to pop-up or otherwise be displayed when the attachment device is used to actuate the flush handle on a toilet. In such a configuration, a child may be encouraged to show a parent or other caregiver the extended flag indicating the child had correctly used the attachment device. The parent could then acknowledge the child’s success and reset the flag or signal. In other scenarios, the attachment device may be configured with sensors, transmitters, etc. that allow the attachment device to be incorporated into an interactive bathroom suite.

[0042] While some icons may illustrate how to use the attachment device, the icons need not instruct use of the attachment. For example, the attachment device 138 shown
in FIG. 8 includes a fourth icon 204 representing a hand print. In another example, the attachment device may include a simple repeating pattern, such as the hand print of an anthropomorphic frog. While such indicia may not provide instructions regarding use of the attachment device and/or toilet, the indicia may communicate to a user that the attachment device is intended to be engaged by a user’s hand. For instance, the fourth icon 204, either alone or in combination with the first set of fingers 188 and the second set of fingers 190 connected with the top side 148 of the attachment member 142, may act as a reminder to an individual to engage the attachment with his or her hand. In addition, the location of the indicia on the attachment device may further communicate to the user where to grasp the attachment device during use. Graphics other than the image of a hand may be used to attract a user’s attention and indicate a gripping location. For example, the attachment device may include images of a cookie, spoon, or other object commonly grasped by a child. Alternatively, the indicia may include images of stars, balloons, or other items easily recognized by a child, or patterns and decorative designs that would attract a child’s attention.

In other embodiments, icons may further include numerical representations to identify the order in which to perform method steps shown in the icons. For example, a first icon may include a graphical representation which indicates that opening a toilet lid is a first step. A second icon may include a graphical representation indicating that sitting on the toilet is a second step. A third icon may include graphical representations indicating that wiping and discarding a wipe or toilet paper are third and fourth steps. A fourth icon may include a graphical representation indicating that flushing is a fifth step while a fifth icon may include a graphical representation indicating that closing the toilet lid and flushing the toilet are sixth and seventh steps.

As noted above, the indicia may be provided on either or both the attachment member and the engagement member. As such, it will be appreciated that both the attachment member indicia and engagement member indicia may incorporate one or more common visual elements. For example, both indicia may include common visual elements of an image of an anthropomorphic frog and an image of a toilet, among others. Furthermore, the common visual elements need not be identical in both the attachment member indicia and engagement member indicia, but instead may be merely similar. Examples of similar graphical representations that would be considered as illustrating a common visual element include similar icon themes (such as using non-identical images of an anthropomorphic frog), similar color schemes, or similar text fonts or syntax. Furthermore, while the embodiment of FIG. 8 discloses indicia on the attachment member with a plurality of visual elements, only a single common visual element may be used to communicate the desired information to a user. It will also be appreciated that different indicia may be on both the attachment member and the engagement member.

It is to be appreciated that the indicia and/or the figurine of the attachment device could correspond with a broader system of use of related accessories. For example, the figurine (or other common indicia, iconography, instructions, etc.) may be provided on the attachment device, as well as other accessories relating to use in toilet training. Examples of such accessories may include a soap dispenser and/or a wipes dispenser adapted to hold flushable wipes for use by toddlers. In one scenario, the attachment device, the wipes dispenser, and the soap dispenser may include indicia that illustrates and reinforces all of the steps of using a toilet, wiping, flushing, and washing hands. Other types of accessories could also be used in such a system.

The indicia disclosed herein are particularly suited for attachments intended for use by children. As such, the exemplary indicia illustrated herein are intended to be readily understandable by a pre-literate child. As used herein, the terms “pre-literate” and “incapable of reading” are used interchangeably to mean the inability of a child to correctly understand, comprehend and follow prompts written in a language that the child can speak without assistance of a caregiver. The ability of a child to recognize letters and/or read one or two isolated words still means that the child is “incapable of reading” since he or she is unable to understand, comprehend and follow such written prompts, without assistance. However, this definition of “incapable of reading” does not exclude the child from being able to understand, comprehend and follow visual prompts which are presented in the form of drawings, icons, symbols, gestures, cartoons and the like. Furthermore, while the disclosed embodiments are capable of being understood by a pre-literate child, it is not necessary for the indicia to be understood at this level.

The dimensions and values disclosed herein are not to be understood as being strictly limited to the exact numerical values recited. Instead, unless otherwise specified, each such dimension is intended to mean both the recited value and a functionally equivalent range surrounding that value. For example, a dimension disclosed as “40 mm” is intended to mean “about 40 mm”.

All documents cited in the Detailed Description of the Invention are, in relevant part, incorporated herein by reference; the citation of any document is not to be construed as an admission that it is prior art with respect to the present invention. To the extent that any meaning or definition of a term in this written document conflicts with any meaning or definition of the term in a document incorporated by reference, the meaning or definition assigned to the term in this written document shall govern.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it would be obvious to those skilled in the art that various other changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to cover in the appended claims all such changes and modifications that are within the scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:
1. A toilet flush handle attachment comprising:
   an attachment member adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle;
   an engagement member having an outer surface defining an engagement area, the engagement member including a distal end portion and a proximal end portion; and
   wherein the proximal end portion is connected with the attachment member.
2. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the attachment member comprises a body adapted to cover the toilet flush handle.
3. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the attachment member is adapted to releasably connect with the toilet flush handle.
4. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the attachment member defines a second engagement area.
5. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the engagement member comprises a figurine.
6. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 5, wherein the figurine comprises an anthropomorphic animal.
7. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the toilet flush handle is adapted to pivot about a pivot axis; wherein a length of the toilet flush handle defines a first moment arm with respect to the pivot axis; and wherein when the attachment member is connected with the toilet flush handle, the distal end portion of the engagement member defines a second moment longer than the first moment arm.
8. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, further comprising indicia communicating instructional information relating to the use of the toilet flush handle attachment.
9. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 1, wherein the attachment member comprises a piece of tape.
10. A method of teaching an individual to flush a toilet, the method comprising the steps of:
   a. providing a toilet flush handle attachment comprising:
      (i) an attachment member adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle;
      (ii) an engagement member defining a gripping area, the engagement member including a distal end portion and a proximal end portion; and
      (iii) wherein the proximal end portion is connected with the attachment member;
   b. connecting the toilet flush handle attachment with the toilet flush handle; and
   c. demonstrating the how to actuate the toilet flush handle to flush the toilet by engaging the gripping area.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the engagement member comprises a figurine.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein the figurine comprises an anthropomorphic animal.
13. The method of claim 10, wherein the attachment member comprises a body adapted to cover the toilet flush handle.
14. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of providing indicia on the toilet flush handle attachment.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein the indicia comprises instructional information relating to the use of a toilet.
16. A toilet flush handle attachment comprising:
   a cover adapted to connect with a toilet flush handle having a length defining a first moment arm adapted to pivot about a pivot axis;
   an engagement member connected with the cover, the engagement member including a distal end portion; and
   wherein when the cover is connected with the toilet flush handle, the distal end portion of the engagement member defines a second moment arm with respect to the pivot axis that is longer than the first moment arm.
17. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 16, wherein the engagement member comprises a figurine in the form of an anthropomorphic animal.
18. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 16, further comprising a piece of tape connected with the cover.
19. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 16, wherein the figurine includes a proximal end portion, and wherein the proximal end portion is connected with the cover.
20. The toilet flush handle attachment of claim 16, further comprising indicia on the cover, the indicia communicating instructional information relating to the use of a toilet.