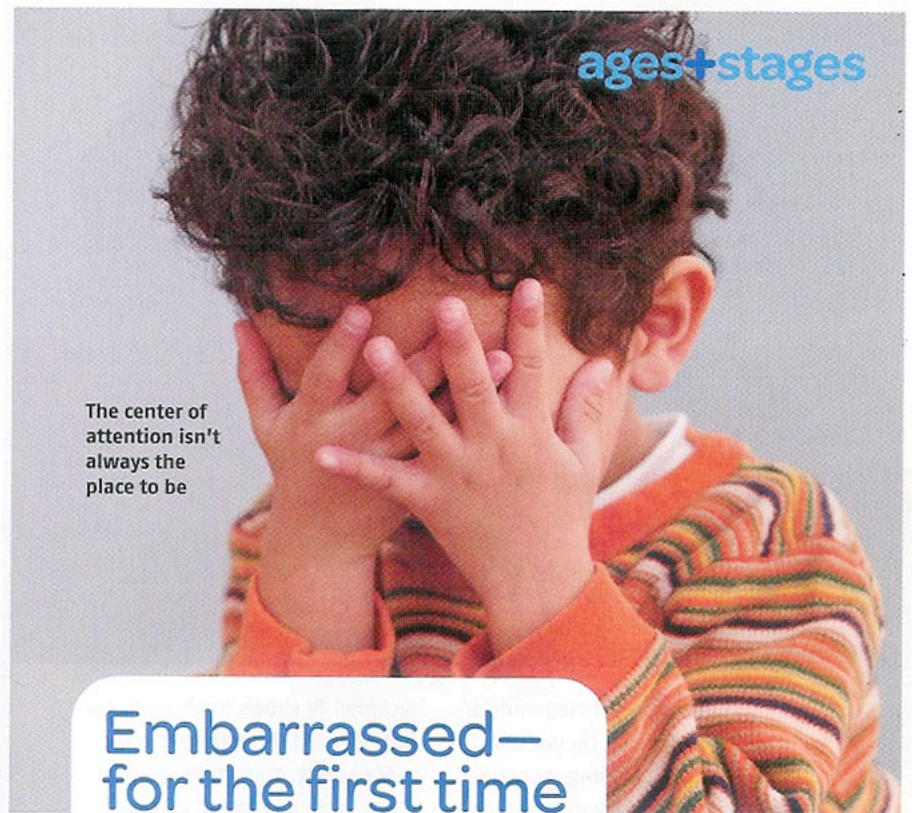


Parenting, October 2007



ages  
2-3

A stinky diaper or spilled juice might make your toddler cry for a whole new reason these days: embarrassment. He might blush or cry, turn away, or even run off.

That's because around age 2½, as toddlers become less self-absorbed, they begin to worry about what others think of them, says Janice Zeman, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA.

**Kids this age are starting to understand social norms—and they don't like the way it feels to be noticed or singled out** because of a mistake or sometimes even for praise. It's disconcerting, and they can take embarrassment hard, especially because it's such a new emotion.

To soothe your mortified kid, tell him it's okay to feel embarrassed sometimes (it'll help him to have a word to put to the emotion). Remind him that you love him, perhaps tell him a story about a time you were embarrassed too, and then help him move on to something else. —ANNE FORD