

By BILL DZUGAN

Like a trained professional, almost on cue, she looks up at her mother to say "stinky." And from her seat on the couch Karen Burch looks down at her 20-month-old daughter in agreement. Diapers is Tiffany Lisa Burch's business, and she's just done her business. Now both mother and child think it's time for a change.

With child in tow, Karen heads upstairs at her Meadowvale home for a new pair of diapers. At the Burch home Cuddlers is the only kind of padding to wear, because the Sears product has turned Tiffany toward a spanking new modelling career.

When Simpsons-Sears Ltd. introduced the new line of disposables, the company needed somebody's bundle of joy to appear diaper-clad on the Cuddlers box. A phone call to the Ellen Henderson Agency brought Tiffany and a handful of other kids to the casting playpen. "She was the only bald baby there," explained Karen about the session last October where Tiffany emerged as the Cuddlers kid.

"They liked her because she had no hair," said Karen. "On the diaper box she could be either a boy or a girl. If she looked just like a girl, people with little boys would walk by the diapers and say they look like they're just for little girls.

"And they liked her eyes. They said she had the biggest eyes they'd ever seen on a kid before."

One of those big, ocean blue eyes emerged peek-a-boo style from the side of the couch on which the Cuddlers box sits. "Who's that on the box," asks mom playfully.

"It's Tiffy," points out the 33-inch-high toddler with her unique hiccupping laughter as background sound.

When Karen put Tiffany up on the studio table with that sneak preview pair on her bottom, she wondered how her child would perform for the audition. "She had been walking for a couple of months," said Karen, "and I thought it would be tough to get her onto her hands and knees again. But she just turned and smiled and they loved it."

The Burches, Karen and her husband William, registered Tiffany at the modelling agency after continuous coaxing from family and friends. "People just kept saying she looked like a Gerber baby," said Karen, who finally took Tiffany to the agency last April.

"It's not like Brooke Shields where they exposed her body and then tried to get the money back," said Karen. "I don't think I've done anything wrong."

The hundreds of dollars that Tiffany has made for herself will be set away for her use when she gets older. "I like it," Karen said. "It's great for Tiffany. I'm not pushing her at all. She's just making a few hundred dollars for herself.

"I'm going to keep her going at it. It's not hurting her at all. And if it's something I don't want her to do under the hot lights, then I won't let her do it," she said.

Karen described her 26-pound daughter as "very easy going." She picks up on every word people say and repeats words and often sentences. "You've got to watch what you say around her," said Karen.

As the only grandchild in the family, Tiffany gets a lot of attention. With her picture decorating the boxes of Cuddlers at Sears Square One and the other stores across Canada, the family is both surprised and pleased. "I didn't think she'd get a diaper box," said Karen. "I thought she might be in the catalogues. Everybody was so happy.

"I didn't think it would really work out. But when they finally came out I was so excited," she said. "I went up to Square One just to look at them on the shelves."

Since then, Sears has purchased the total rights to the distribution of Tiffany's pictures. So for years to come, she could be seen on every Sears Cuddlers box and display board.

The new design for Cuddlers features comfortable elastic fit legs that help prevent leaking. They include extra padding for increased dryness and the "sure-stick" adhesive fasteners eliminate the need for safety pins. Changing baby, thanks to Cuddlers, is quicker and faster.

Within minutes, back at the scene of the crime in the Burch living room, Tiffany and her mother returned with another pair of Cuddlers minutes after the accident.

"They've saved me on a few occasions," said Karen. "They're good with the elastic straps around the bottoms."

The diapers are contoured to fit the child perfectly with no unnecessary bulking. Surrounding the stay-dry barrier is a leakproof plastic backing.

Now that Tiffany has made her

first breakthrough, her mother hopes something like a commercial could be on the horizon. Jean Heaton, an assistant at the Ellen Henderson Agency, claims there is no way to estimate the potential of someone like Tiffany.

"It all depends on the clients and what they are looking for. In this business it's difficult to predict," said Heaton. "Until the phone rings you don't know what the client might want. Sometimes they're looking for character; sometimes for other specifications."

When Tiffany finally appeared for her big day with the photographer she just ambled up and blinked her eyes. He took to her right away. "She didn't seem to mind a bit," said Karen.

"You're a little show off," kidded Karen fondly to Tiffany who responded with one of her upturned nose smiles. "Every kid's got a little bit of ham, I think."

But while other children may have the ham, few can also raise the money to pay for the mustard to go with it, as Tiffany has done. "She just really liked the photo session," explained Karen, about Tiffany's performance under the lights. "She sat there like a little professional. She just knew what she was doing.

"When I have another child, it will be in the agency from day one. And from that day on it could get a job. But the agency won't know until the day they get an offer."

Most parents remember the day their child first walked or talked. At the Burch household however, they'll always remember Tiffany's first job. And they've got the pictures to prove it.