

Toilet Training



★ Facts about Toilet Training

- The perfect age to begin toilet training is different for every child. Your child's biology, skills and readiness will determine when she/he can take over her/his own toileting.
- It takes about 3-12 months from the start of training to daytime toilet independence. Children need to be able to:
 - Have a period of 2 hours dry . Some diapers are too 'dry' when wet to give children the sensation they need a change
 - Follow directions
 - Sit for 3-5 minutes
 - Shows an interest in bathroom habits
 - Understands the physical signs (some children are more in tune with their bodies than others) and can tell you before they have to go and can reach the potty on time
 - Has words for pee and poop
- The age that a child masters toileting has absolutely no correlation to future abilities or intelligence
- Nighttime dryness is achieved only when a child's physiology supports this - you cannot rush it
- Most children urinate 4-8 times each day, usually every 2 hours or so.
- Most children have 1-2 bowel movements each day, some have 3, and others skip a day or 2 in between movements. In general, each child has a regular pattern.
- More than 80% of children experience setbacks in toilet training.

★ Strategies to Build Awareness

- Help your child identify what's happening when she/he wets or fills her/his diaper. Tell her, "you're going to poo-poo in your diaper."
- During diaper changes, talk about using the toilet in words your child understands. *"Soon you will pee/poop in the toilet. You will flush your pee/poop down the toilet and then you will wash your hands."*
- If you're comfortable with it, bring your child with you when you use the toilet. Explain what you're doing. Let her/him flush the toilet if she/he wants to.
- Start giving your child simple directions and help him to follow them. For example, ask him to get a toy from another room or to put the spoon in the dishwasher.
- Encourage your child to do things on her own; put on socks, pull up pants, carry a cup to the sink, or get a book.
- Have a daily sit-and-read together. Include books about toilet training.

★ Strategies to get Started

- Use a potty or toilet insert. Have about 10 or 12 pairs of training pants, four or more elastic-waist pants or shorts, and a supply of pull-up diapers or disposables with a feel-the-wetness sensation liner,

- Have a stool for the toilet your child can use to get up to the toilet and rest her/his feet on while sitting on the toilet. Talk with your child about what the potty or insert is for. Let your child sit on the toilet with or without clothes to get used to it.
- Read books about toileting.
- As you start to introduce using the toilet, make it a routine. Choose one or two times to consistently use the toilet.
 - Right when he wakes up and right before bed
 - Before or after a snack or a meal
 - Before leaving the house
 - Before a bath
- Avoid asking if your child needs to go to the bathroom – they will often say “No!” Instead, tell her/him it is time to go to the toilet. *“It’s time to go to the bathroom”* or *“Let’s go sit on the toilet now.”*
- Offer choices when you can of how to get to the toilet. *“Shall we walk or hop to the toilet?”* *“Shall we hold our hands up high in the sky or down low and swing them?”*
- Boys and girls can learn sitting down. Teach your son to hold his penis down. He can learn to stand when he is tall enough to reach.
- When sitting on the potty, to pass the time, read a book, sing a song, talk about your day. Your child must relax to go
- Expect dry runs – that is ok! Keep with the same routine and give her/him an opportunity later to try again. **The first success is cooperating with the routine.** Encourage your child by saying *“Good try. We’ll try again later.”*
- Expect accidents – they are going to happen. When accidents happen at home, most of the urine gets soaked up in the clothes with (hopefully) only a little getting on the floor. If it does, don’t make a big deal about it. Vinegar and water will help clean it up. When cleaning up the urine say something like *“Oops, missed the potty this time. Don’t worry. Pretty soon you’ll get it in the toilet.”*
- Matter-of-factly use diapers or pull-ups for naps and bedtime.
- Either cover the car seat or use pull-ups or diapers for car trips.
- Visit new bathrooms frequently when away from home.
- Be patient! It will take three-twelve months for your child to be an independent toileter.
- **Praise and encouragement are important**

★ **When to take a Break**

- If your child has temper tantrums or sheds tears over potty training, or if you find yourself getting angry, then stop training. Try again in a month or two.
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★ **Bed-Wetting**

- Young children wet the bed for biological reasons: his kidneys aren’t sending a signal to his brain while asleep, his bladder hasn’t grown large enough to hold a full night’s supply of urine, or he sleeps so deeply he doesn’t wake up to go to the bathroom.
- You can’t teach a child to be dry at night until his physiology allows this – it is not under his control.
- Never wake your child to take him to the bathroom. You’ll just disturb his sleep.
- It’s normal. Half of all three-year-olds and 40 percent of four-year-olds wet the bed several times a week. Also, 20 to 25 percent of five-year-old children and 10 to 15 percent of six-year-olds don’t stay dry every night.

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- Bed-wetting is hereditary, so if one or both parents were bed wetters, a child has a much better chance of being one.
- For a bed-wetting toddler or preschooler, the solution is simple: have your child use the potty before bed, and then have him sleep in a diaper, padded training pants, or disposable absorbent pull-ups. When he has a week of dry mornings, it's time to change to underpants and use a mattress cover until he consistently stays dry all night.
- According to the National Kidney Foundation, you only need to talk to a doctor about bedwetting if your child is six or seven years of age or older or if there are other symptoms of a sleep disorder, such as loud snoring, or symptoms of an infection, such as painful elimination.

And most importantly...be patient! Learning to use the potty is best done when everyone is relaxed and understands accidents will happen!

Information for this handout is taken from the book, *"The No-Cry Potty Training Solution"* by Elizabeth Pantley.

