

Toilet training tips

Toilet training is best tried when a child shows some signs of wanting to be toilet trained for example, wanting a dry nappy on, showing an interest in using the toilet or hiding when they are doing a poo in their nappy.

But children with special needs or behavioural difficulties may not show any signs. Therefore, they require some added support to help them achieve toilet training. This is best done at a young age so that new experiences are not introduced too late. Late toileting can cause toilet fears. Choose a time that suits your child and your family, i.e. the holidays when there is no school run and life at home is less rushed, or when your child is well and not under any particular pressure for example about to start school.

- Let your child see other members of the family use the toilet
- If possible do not use a potty, encourage the use of the toilet from the beginning as you will only have to retrain your child to use the toilet at some point. A potty is not used in nursery or school so adapting the toilet would be easier for your child in the long run.
- Try not to use 'pull-ups' as these are so absorbent your child never feels the wetness against the skin.
- Place pants on under the pull ups/nappy so they begin to feel wet (or use kitchen towel in the nappy/pull up as these products are very absorbent and this will enable your child to feel wet)
- Expect accidents. These accidents teach children cause and effect – this will really help them to learn.
- Change your child in the bathroom; let them get used to this room, this is the place where we go to the toilet.
- Make the toilet a nice environment. Ensure the toilet seat is a good fit/use aids to ensure they are comfortable i.e. a mini seat, a step for the feet and a hand grip if required. Stickers and glitter may be helpful as rewards.
- Monitor how often your child passes urine and then offer them the toilet at the same time intervals.
- Praise passing urine or doing a poo in the toilet.
- Make toilet time a nice time. Chat about your day. Listen to music, sing or read a story. (blowing bubbles can aid with pooing as it contracts tummy muscles)
- If possible, place the poo from the nappy in the toilet and say goodbye to the poo, so they understand that the poo goes in the toilet.

If your child really becomes too distressed with toileting and it is upsetting them. Stop; try again in a few months' time.

Contact your local children's centre or health visitor for further support if required.

ERIC.ORG is a website for a charity that supports Children and families with toileting issues. Lots of support and information can be accessed on this site.

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