

# Toilet Training



## Your child may be ready to toilet train when:

- They show interest in using the toilet
- They stay dry for two hours or longer
- They are able to pull up and push down their pants
- They are able to verbalize when they need to go, or have gone, pee or poop in their diaper
- They are able to independently (or with minimal assistance) get up on and down off the toilet

## You may be ready to toilet train when:

- You have the time. Toilet training will not be successful if you cannot commit to it
- You have taught your child the words your family uses around toileting, everyone feels comfortable using them, and you have shared them with your child's teacher and other caregivers
- You have the necessary tools (see below)
- You are aware of the possible challenges and setbacks, have realistic expectations, and are ready to support your child with ample positivity

## Readiness:

Both you and your child play a large role in successful and effective toilet training. It is important to look for these signs of readiness before starting on your toilet training adventure.

**There are, however, some times that we suggest you do not toilet train your child, even if they are beginning to show readiness. These include:**

- While traveling
- Around the birth of a sibling
- While transitioning from a crib to a bed, or making any other life transition
- While moving

**These transitions will already be challenging for your child. Introducing toilet training during these times could create additional stress, making the process challenging for everyone involved.**

# Getting Started

## Things you need to start toilet training:

- **Underwear:** Your child may be motivated to keep their underwear dry if they've helped pick them out while shopping.
- **Diapers:** When your child starts training, they will likely need to continue to wear diapers for sleep and travel. When a diaper is needed, they can wear their underwear over the outside of the diaper. We suggest using regular diapers rather than pull-ups:
  - Having your child wear pull-ups while toilet training can be confusing because they feel very similar to regular diapers, making it understandably confusing about where they should be peeing and pooping. Some families choose to do “pants off” training at home during this stage in order to help children gain physical awareness of their bodily functions.
  - We suggest adapting to a standing diaper change routine during this transitional time. Allowing your child to participate by pulling down their pants, holding up their shirt, undoing the diaper tabs, etc., will reinforce many of the skills needed for successful independent toileting.
- **A Stool:** Since your child will be using a regular size toilet most of the time, we suggest using it from the beginning (rather than a potty seat or insert). A stool will help your child get up on and down off the toilet safely and independently. Your child may need to be coached about where to put their hands to safely balance on the toilet and not fall in!
- **A Positive Attitude:** Children become excited about successes when they see others around them excited. Your child will have accidents, and it is important to remain calm and matter of fact while helping your children through them. Accidents are part of the learning process, and they serve as a reminder to send your child to the toilet more often.
- **Consistency Between Caregivers:** Make sure all caregivers are following the same routine and using the same words for both body parts and bathroom acts. Let your child's teachers know of any specific language or routines that you want to share.

# Toilet Training Tips and Tricks

- Introduce the toilet and all parts of the process to your child. Encourage them to be present when you or an older sibling are using the toilet to get them comfortable with the routine.
- Dress your child in clothes that are easy for them to push down and pull up in dependently.
- Establish a routine. We suggest using a timer and sending your child to sit on the toilet at regular intervals (typically 30-45 minutes to start). Find your child's rhythm over time and take their lead.
- Do not force your child to sit on the toilet if they do not want to. In the beginning, they may only sit for a second or two and that is okay!
- If your child is playing and you notice them crossing their legs or squirming, let them know it is time for them to sit on the toilet because their body is telling them they need to go. Reassure them that they will be able to come back to what they are playing with.
- Make going to the toilet fun for your child! That may mean that you need to stay in the bathroom with them, reading a book or talking with them while they sit.
- Often children are excited to get toilet paper and flush, but we suggest that you let your child know they will be able to do those things only after they have done something in the toilet, as this can be very motivating for them.
- When your child has an accident, state matter-of-factly what happened, and be reassuring, (i.e. "You didn't make it to the toilet in time so your pee came out into your pants. Sometimes accidents happen. But, now that you don't wear diapers anymore, your pee needs to go in the toilet. You can tell me when you feel pee coming and I can help you get to the toilet more quickly. We'll try again next time!"). Make a mental note to take your child to the toilet more often.

**Remember to celebrate all successes, both big and small**

*A little bit of positivity goes a long way*

**Sources:**

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/toilet-teaching.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/infant-and-toddler-health/in-depth/potty-training/art-20045230>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/266-potty-training-learning-to-the-use-the-toilet>