

Potty and Toilet Training - Advice for Carers



Readiness for toilet training:

Sometimes a child may appear to be dry on a regular basis; this does not necessarily indicate that the child is ready to begin toilet training. It may be that the child has a regular bowel or bladder pattern rather than the child actually having some control over their toileting. In-fact it may be that the carer has become 'trained' to the pattern of the child's toileting and so they will anticipate the child's wetting with regular toileting. ***If the child does not remain dry for at least 2 hours in between wetting, they are not yet ready for training.***

- ☺ When changing child talk about 'going on the potty', 'wee-wee', 'doo-doo' or whatever words you choose to use. **USE THE SAME WORD OR WORDS EACH TIME.** Encourage the family to use the same word you are teaching the child
- ☺ Let the child watch the family use the toilet. Let them listen to and look at the result.
- ☺ Think about the potty and what one would suit your child.
- ☺ Stay with the child and praise them for sitting on the potty. Get them used to it by telling them a story or nursery rhyme while sitting on the potty.
- ☺ Record the child's toileting habits throughout the day noting the specific times and noting whether a pattern does exist.
- ☺ Choose 2 times when there is a likelihood that the child will urinate. Seat them on the potty. Stay with them. Praise the child if they do go on the potty.
- ☺ Make this time enjoyable and pleasant for the child to encourage them to stay on the seat. This is an initial step in toilet training. Do not require the child to sit for longer than 5 minutes at a time.
- ☺ Use the same words each time you are speaking of toileting and use those words when the child watches you go. When the child uses the words, immediately praise them and take them to the bathroom.
- ☺ Use training pants instead of nappies during the day.
- ☺ **Praise success and ignore accidents.** Avoid pressure, anger or fuss over accidents/refusal and praise success.
- ☺ Ignore accidents by not changing the child immediately and by encouraging the child to do much of the job of changing clothing themselves.
- ☺ Watch for gestures (pulling self, fidgeting) which might mean they have to go. Praise the child, say the word associated with toileting and immediately take the child to the bathroom.
- ☺ Watch the time carefully and ask the child if they need to use the bathroom.
- ☺ Avoid restrictive or hard to manage clothes.
- ☺ Remind them periodically and praise generously when they ask to use the bathroom.
- ☺ Tell family members to 'act out' asking to use the bathroom or just encourage family to let child know when they are going to use the toilet e.g. "I will finish playing this game but first I have to go and use the toilet".
- ☺ If the process of sitting on a potty frustrates the child, stop for a few days and then try again.
- ☺ Encourage and praise if child is successful in their toileting attempts and let them flush as reward.
- ☺ Give the child a drink of orange juice 10 minutes before they are placed on the potty.
- ☺ Running water in the sink or placing the child's hand in warm water may help to increase the likelihood of urination.
- ☺ Using a reward sheet for recording how the child manages their toileting at night and during the day. Encourage the child to tick themselves if they have been completely dry ('sunny'), occasionally dry (cloudy), or wet (rain) and at the end of the day the child can then colour in a star if they have been dry all day.
- ☺ Summertime is a good time to begin toilet training, as the child will wear little or no clothing when out playing in the garden. Often the child having worn nappies for so long is unaware of where the urine comes from. It is important to allow the child to make the connection of going to the toilet and then where learning to go in the correct place is the next step.
- ☺ The above principles can be also used for night time toilet training.

