

Toilet Training Tips



Is Your Child Ready?

- ✓ Considering your child's language capabilities, s/he understands the words "wet" and "dry" and can differentiate between the two.
- ✓ Your child can show you where the potty or toilet is when asked.
- ✓ Your child has longer dry spells and needs less frequent diaper changes.
- ✓ Determine if your child has the coordination skills necessary for independent toileting. Can your child pull his/her pants up and down independently?
- ✓ Consider your family's life events. Has there been any recent change in schedules or routines that may be stressful for your child? If a child has a stressful event (move, divorce, new sibling, etc...) they are likely to regress and want to do what they have known, i.e. wearing diapers. Training is best accomplished when your child feels secure.

Tips:

- Change your child's diaper as soon as possible after soiling so s/he doesn't become comfortable with being soiled.
- Remove bowel movements that your child has in their diaper and deposit in the toilet, and tell your child that bowel movements go in the potty. Your child can wave "bye-bye" to their bowel movement as it goes down the toilet.
- Make sure that all of your child's caregivers, including babysitters, grandparents, and child care workers follow the same routine.
- Avoid buttons, snaps, and belts during potty training. Your child's clothes should be easy for her/him to pull on and off.
- Don't offer food as a reward for going potty. Instead, you might want to keep a chart of your child's successes. You can use stars and stickers and allow your child to put them on the chart.
- Use tactful suggestions and flattery, but no disapproval for failure.
- Do not force your child to sit on the toilet. Instead, have a kind, consistent expectation that they will use the toilet just as you and older children do.

Common Problems:

- Accidents - NEVER punish a child for an accident. Clean up in a matter of fact way, a child may agonize over what they think is shameful behavior if you have a negative reaction.
- Won't have a bowel movement on the potty - Most children who refuse to go to the toilet for their bowel movements (but they will go in a diaper) have had problems with constipation. If your child's "poops" are hard, it may be painful for them to use the potty. This may be a sign that your child has constipation and may not be getting enough fiber. Here are some examples of foods that are high in fiber:
 - Whole grain cereals such as Cheerios, Bran Flakes, granola, Grape Nuts, Raisin Bran, and Shredded Wheat
 - Fruits (apples, bananas, apricots, nectarines, oranges, kiwi, strawberries, pears, raisins, papayas, mangos, raspberries, rhubarb, dates, prunes)
 - Vegetables (artichokes, green beans, peas, carrots, corn, kale, potatoes, pumpkin, yams) and legumes (beans, lentils).