

Toilet Training



QUESTIONS

and

ANSWERS

How do I know when to start?

Most children are not ready until they are at least 18 months old and many are older than that. You should start **ONLY** when both you and your child are ready. It will be easier and less stressful for both of you. If most of the following statements are true, you are ready to begin toilet training.

He has a bowel movement at about the same time every day.

He wakes up from naps dry.

He stays dry for 2 hours at a time.

He is able to sit, walk, and pull his pants up and down.

He does not like to be wet.

He likes to please you.

He seems interested in the toilet.

He knows words for the toilet.

He follows directions and can tell you what he wants.

He knows when he has to go potty.

I want to toilet train him now.

I know his body language.

I do not expect any major changes in his life in the next few months.

How do I get ready to start?

Let him watch you when you use the toilet. This will help him start to understand what the potty is.

Decide on the words that you will use for bowel movements, urine, and the toilet. Use the same words all the time.

Get a potty chair and place it in the bathroom. Let him sit on it with all of his clothes on. When he feels comfortable, have him sit on it without his clothes. Do not force him to sit on it. It is okay if he does not. It means that he is probably not ready to toilet train yet. Keep the potty chair out and try again in a week or two.

Make sure you **have clothes that he can take off easily**. Bib overalls, on-sies, and pants with many buttons can be hard for him to get out of quickly.

Put his bowel movements in the potty. Have him watch you take it from his diaper and put it in the potty. Tell him that the potty is where his bowel movement goes. Let him flush the toilet and watch the bowel movement go away.

Let all of his caregivers know when and how you are planning to start toilet training.

How do I do it?

PATIENCE IS THE KEY to success.

Start by **TAKING HIM TO THE POTTY 1 TO 3 TIMES PER DAY**. Good times to go are right after waking up and after meals.

Let him **LOOK AT BOOKS OR PLAY WITH TOYS** while he sits on the potty. **PRAISE** him for sitting there, even if he does not go, but **DO NOT FORCE** him to sit there.

If he does not go on the potty and then goes in his diaper, **DO NOT SHAME HIM**. Just say something like, "Oh well, maybe next time you can go in the potty".

When he tells you that he has a dirty or a wet diaper, **PRAISE** him for telling you. Then say, "Maybe next time you can tell me before you go". When he tells you he has to go, **PRAISE** him.

INCENTIVES work for some children. Sticker charts, more playtime, and more bedtime stories are all good rewards for a job well done.

When he has had a few weeks of successful potty breaks, **GET RID OF THE DIAPERS** and switch to "big kid" underwear. Take him to the store and let him pick them. Make switching to "big kid" underwear a reward for a job well done.

TEACH THEM HOW TO WIPE themselves clean. Teach girls to wipe from front to back. Teach them to **WASH THEIR HANDS** after going to the potty.

How long will it take?

It can take **3 to 6 months** for day-time training and **longer for night-time**. Most kids have bowel control and daytime urine control by the time they are **3 to 4 years old**.

Girls usually are trained at an **earlier** age than boys are. Most girls and $\frac{3}{4}$ of boys **stay dry at night at 5 years old**.

What do I do when there are accidents?

STAY CALM. Accidents will happen. If you get upset, he will get upset. Remember that he is learning and it will take some time.

DO NOT SHAME HIM. Just say, "Oh well, maybe next time you can go in the potty".

GIVE HIM REMINDERS. Remind him to go to the potty after waking up, after meals and snacks, and before going somewhere. Point out when you see that he is holding it in (jumping around, hold his genitals).

BE PREPARED. Bring an extra set of clothes along when you go somewhere.

Things to remember...

Each child is different.

Just because your child is not interested right now DOES NOT mean that he is lazy, stubborn or bad.

If your child is not successful at first, that is okay. It DOES NOT mean that you are a bad parent.

Toilet training takes time and patience.

Your child and his interest and motivation drive toilet training. You cannot make him do it until he is ready.

Your child is the only one who can control where and when he has a bowel movement or urinates. You cannot control it.

Encourage, reinforce and praise each success.

If you feel like your relationship with your child is stressed, stop trying to toilet train. Stop if your child does not want to toilet train. Try again in a month.

For more information, talk to your child's medical provider.