

TOILET-TEACHING BASICS

Toilet-teaching is complete when the child can independently go to the potty, remove his/her pants, use the potty, and pull his/her pants up. The toilet-teaching plan below usually takes about 2 weeks to 2 months for completion.

WHEN IS THE CHILD READY FOR TOILET TEACHING?

Readiness for learning to use the toilet involves skills and concepts that the child can begin learning at 12 months of age. Most children can be ready for toilet-learning by about age 2. Reading books about toilet-learning is helpful. Signs that the child is ready include:

- Child understands what the following words mean: pee, poop, dry, wet, clean, messy, and potty (you can teach these words)
- Child understands the purpose of the potty (can learn by watching family members)
- Child would rather have clean, dry diapers
- Child likes to have diaper changed (can teach walking child to come to you for change when she/he is dirty or wet; praise child when they come to you for a change)
- Child can recognize the feeling of a full bladder or urge for bowel movement
- Child recognizes the connection between using the potty and having dry pants
- Child can briefly postpone urinating or having a bowel movement (may go off by themselves and come back with a soiled diaper)

STEPS FOR TOILET-TEACHING:

Toilet-teaching should be made fun. Give the child praise and encouragement and use a lot of patience. All pressure and punishment should be avoided. The **child** needs to feel in control of the situation.

Obtain the supplies

- A floor-level type potty chair

(when feet can touch floor, child has leverage for pushing and feels more secure/
child can also get on and off independently)

- Special treats for rewards

(raisins, crackers, fruit slices, etc; things child really likes)

- Stars and/or stickers for rewards

Make the potty chair among the child's favorite things

Weeks before toilet-teaching begins, let the child go with you to get the potty chair. Help the child realize that the chair belongs to him/her: let child help you put their name on the chair, paint, and/or decorate the chair. Encourage child to sit on the chair with clothes on (may use while reading books, watching TV, eating snacks, etc.). Allow at least 1 week for the child to have positive feelings about the chair; don't start toilet teaching until this happens.

Encourage practice runs (for potty use)

When the child seems to be giving a signal (grunting, pulling on pants, squirming etc.) encourage him to try to use the potty with diapers off. You might say "try to let the pee come out". Be positive, do not force child to sit on the potty, and limit sessions to 1-5 minutes maximum.

Reward or praise your child for cooperation

Praise all cooperation with practice runs (whether or not child produces urine). When child does urinate, reward with treats, hugs, and praise. Practice runs can stop after child uses potty (by themselves/independently) two or more times. Continue to praise the child for dryness and potty use for at least 1 week. (practice runs should not be needed for more than about 2 months)

Change the child promptly after accidents

Change child's clothes in a sympathetic manner. Say something like: "You wanted to go pee in the potty, but you went pee in your pants. You will be getting better at this". Keep positive, avoid all scolding, yelling and punishment. Avoid pressure and force, they can make the child completely uncooperative.

Use training pants after your child begins using the potty

When child is cooperative about using the potty and passes about half of her/his urine and stool there, it's time for training pants. Let child go with you to buy the pants, make it a reward. Use diapers only for night and naps.