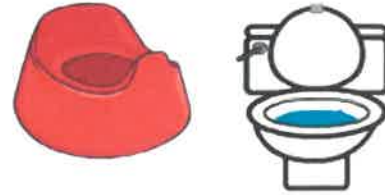


# Potty and Toilet Training Tips



## The “Ready, steady, go!” of toileting advice for Parents:

### When to start?

All children are different but your child may be ready to start potty or toilet training if he or she:

- ❖ Goes to a certain place (eg stands behind the sofa) to do a wee or poo in their nappy, indicating some awareness of his or her own body / toileting needs
- ❖ Seems uncomfortable when a nappy is wet or soiled and somehow lets you know about this
- ❖ Wakes up from a daytime nap with a dry nappy, indicating control of bowel and bladder
- ❖ Shows an interest in the potty or toilet, perhaps trying to copy an older sibling or parent
- ❖ Co-operates with you during toileting routines, perhaps by pulling trousers up and down for instance or pulling a nappy off to help you

### **“READY...?”** BEFORE starting a toilet or potty training programme:

- ❖ Start using underwear over your child’s nappy as early as possible so that your child becomes used to this item of clothing and can begin to help you pull the underwear up and down during nappy changing times. Underwear with favourite cartoon characters on can be very popular with some children!
- ❖ Avoid using pull-up nappies as they are so super absorbent that children do not feel wet in them. Also we do not want a child to get used to getting fully undressed each time they have a nappy changed....so ordinary nappies with the sticky side tabs are best for toilet training purposes.
- ❖ Start changing your child’s nappy directly next to a toilet so that they become used to being in this environment. If possible, start to change your child’s nappy while they are standing up and let them see faeces from their nappy being flushed down the toilet.
- ❖ If you want to use a potty, keep a potty next to the toilet as well.
- ❖ Gently start to encourage your child to sit on the potty or actual toilet very briefly after taking off their nappy, with no expectation to do a wee or a poo in it at this stage. You just want your child to get used to it being part of their nappy changing and toileting routine.
- ❖ Encourage your child to pull their own trousers up and down and to wash their hands as well.
- ❖ You may want to use a little stool to put under their feet when sitting on the toilet and to help them reach the taps safely. Some families buy toilet seat adaptors or seats with steps attached. There are plenty of toilet training products available in shops and online.
- ❖ Start to show your child a nappy or wet wipes / toilet roll each time you take them to the toilet area so they know what to expect.
- ❖ Choose which words to use with your child, eg wee, poo and then use these consistently. Ask family and nursery staff / teachers to use the same words as well to help your child know what to expect
- ❖ Visual supports such as symbols or photographs of the potty / toilet / stages of the toileting routine are also very useful to help your child to understand when it is time to use the toilet or have their nappy changed and what will happen during the routine.  
Your Pre-school teacher can support you with these when the time is right.
- ❖ Make sure the toilet area is comfortable but limit too many distractions! You know your child best! A warm mat on the toilet floor that can be easily washed is a good idea. Some children are upset by bad smells or the noisy flush of a toilet – consider changes that make it easier for your child, ventilating the room or playing gentle background music. Maybe hang a poster of your child’s favourite things, but keep it simple enough for you and your child to manage!
- ❖ Try to work out when and where your child is using their nappy over a few days– do they have regular times? Make a note over a few days to see if there are any patterns. This will help you know roughly when to take them to the potty /toilet in the early stages of potty / toilet training
- ❖ Keep drinks and mealtimes regular as this helps to regulate bowel and bladder movement.

## Pre School Teaching Team

- ❖ If your child is constipated, or seems in pain when doing a wee or a poo, please seek advice from your GP, Health Visitor or Paediatrician to help with this before starting to toilet train your child.

### **“STEADY...”** Getting organised to start potty / toilet training!

- ❖ Before removing the nappy to start the potty or toilet training make sure you have enough spare / clean clothing for your child in advance, especially socks, pants, leggings or tracksuit trousers for your child so that not having enough clean clothes becomes a problem and you end up putting a nappy back on.
- ❖ Keep plastic bags to put soiled clothes in straight away and cloths / wipes to quickly tidy up any toileting accidents as they occur
- ❖ Roll rugs or carpets up if you are worried about toileting accidents to reduce stress and upset when accidents happen. Disposable changing mats or disposable incontinence pads are useful for bed, sofa and car seat etc.

### **“GO!”** Nappy off during the day!

- ❖ Decide when you as a family are ready to remove the nappy consistently during the day. It is important that you have time and patience to devote to toilet training as it can be very time consuming and upsetting if things do not work straight away. Change makes us nervous! This is normal. You may want to choose a time when you are at home with your child for a few days to start, or in the summer when your washing dries quicker and children can wear shorts.
- ❖ Dress your child in comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Have clean spare clothes ready.
- ❖ Take your child to the potty or toilet routinely, you decide what feels right – some parents choose every half an hour, others just when a child wakes up/after meal times / before bed – you know your child best – just try to be consistent and adjust according to your child’s needs.
- ❖ We advise sitting boys and girls on the toilet for a wee as it is easier for them to then do a poo in the toilet in the early stages.
- ❖ If your child has a toileting accident, quickly take them to sit on the toilet so that they make a connection between doing a wee and a poo and sitting on the toilet.
- ❖ Try not to get upset or cross with your child if he/she has an accident, just say, “Wee/poo in the toilet” or “Toilet time” and calmly go through the routine as usual, helping them to become more independent over time
- ❖ Gently praise your child when they use the toilet or potty – some children may find noisy celebrations upsetting or insist upon applause each time, which can be difficult habit to break!
- ❖ Try to get your child used to using different toilets quickly if you can, to avoid them only using one toilet and refusing to use any other toilet when they are out of the home.
- ❖ Be gentle with yourself and your child – learning new skills takes time and energy. You have started a journey to increased independence for your child and should be proud of yourself and your child! Plan fun things to do as well for you and your child so you have things to look forward to and time to ‘recharge your batteries’ and relax. Ask for support if you need it from family and professionals that know your child well and take your time.



**If you or your child are having difficulties with potty or toilet training, do discuss this with your Health Visitor, your child’s Paediatrician, Nursery setting or Pre-school Teacher. You can also contact a number of organisations for advice and support on this issue:**

- <https://www.eric.org.uk/guide-for-children-with-additional-needs>
- <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-support/>
- <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/blog/toilet-training-children-with-additional-needs/>

If your child has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition, please see the National Autistic Society website for Autism specific toileting advice for parents:

- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/toileting/parents>