

Toilet Training

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. Most children are eager to learn how to use the "potty" and are proud of their achievement.

Toilet training is easiest when children are physically and emotionally ready, which happens between age 2 and 3 years. Don't be alarmed if a child doesn't train as fast as other children their age; individual children mature physically at different rates.

The secret to success is patience and timing. Emotional readiness also is important. Many bright, normal, healthy, 3-year-olds may not be interested in learning to use the toilet. Learning is a full-time job for most toddlers, and learning to use the toilet may not be as important as learning to climb, jump, run, and talk. A toddler who resists toilet training now may be ready in 3 to 6 months - often learning almost overnight.

Ideas to help with toilet training:

Relax! A calm, easygoing approach to toilet training works best. Learning to use the toilet takes time, and each child is different. You will find that one child learns to use the toilet at age 2 and another learns at age 3-1/2. This is normal.

Begin reading potty books to the child. Many good books have been written about learning to use the potty and may be found at your local library or bookstore. Reading a book together helps children understand the process and understand that other children also learn to use the potty.

Just getting to the potty on time is a major task for most children. You can help make the job easier by dressing children in easy-to-remove clothing. Avoid buttons, zippers, and belts.

When a child tells you that he or she needs to use the potty, help with clothing and sit the child on the potty for a few minutes. Stay with the child. You might keep some books close by. Reading a book together helps pass the time and takes the pressure off for an immediate result.

After 4 to 5 minutes, help the child off the potty. Give hugs and praise for a successful effort. Comment simply that the child can try again later if the effort wasn't successful. Don't be surprised if the child has a bowel movement or urinates right after being taken off the toilet. This is not unusual. Accidents and near misses generally **are not an act of defiance or stubbornness**. It simply takes time to learn this new skill. If accidents seem to be frequent, it may be best to try toilet training a few months later.

Wipe the child carefully. Wipe girls from front to back to prevent infection. Teach children to always wash hands with soap and water after using the potty. Set a good example by washing your own hands.

- **Best potty training tips from parents:**
www.babycenter.ca/toddler/pottytraining/parentstips/
- **Potty training boys:**
www.babycenter.ca/toddler/pottytraining/forboys/
- Potty training girls:
www.babycenter.ca/toddler/pottytraining/forgirls/