

The Right Time To Start Toilet Training: Children's Readiness

<https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/the-right-time-to-start-toilet-training-children-s-readiness/>

Children mature at different rates

Each child is unique and will become ready to start the toilet training process at his or her own "right" moment.

Most children in the United States start toilet training between 18 and 32 months old

Nighttime bowel control typically occurs first, followed by daytime bladder control, then daytime bowel control and lastly night time bladder control
Bed wetting is not uncommon in children under six

Getting Started

Parents can lay a good foundation:

Label elimination processes using terms they want children to use in conversation “wet, pee, poop, dry”

When children start dancing around, grimacing, touching their diapers, passing gas, or making stomach noises that are not associated with hunger, point them out to children while they are happening, explaining their connection to the toilet.

Read children's books about “pee and poop” regularly

Have children watch older siblings/parents and become familiar with sounds such as flushing

Show enthusiasm

Physiological Readiness:

Regular bowel movements 2-3 times a day

Dry for 2 hours

Recognition they are wet or diaper is soiled 18 months

Sensation awareness: grabbing at their diaper or standing or crouching differently so as to be more comfortable as they eliminate

Come to you when soiled

Take off diaper

Cognitive Readiness

Understand and use basic words such as potty, toilet, diaper, poop, pee, penis

Understand and follow two or three-step instructions that convey sequences of events, such as "Take off your pants and then sit down"

Tell/signal when they feel the urge to use the toilet

Emotional Readiness

Desire for privacy

Show independence

Self regulation; ability to wait or sit

Shows curiosity

Physical Readiness

Walk

Balance

Step

Grasp/grab

Pull

RED FLAGS

Absolutely no interest in parents' or older same-sex siblings' toileting habits

Avoids or actively resist any attempts at "potty talk"

Does not display any awareness of their own bodily elimination

Does not have the basic abilities to get dressed and undressed

Lacks interest to sit on the potty comfortably

Big life change

WAIT A FEW MONTHS and TRY AGAIN!!!

PREPARING the SPACE

- Toilet insert
- Potty chair
- Travel potty
- Step stool
- Waterproof mattress pad/liner
- Wipes or toilet paper within reach
- Books/toys
- Soap
- Towel
- Baggies (for soiled items)
- Extra clothes

CLOTHING

- Pull-ups, training pants or underwear (lots)!!!
- Some parents put the child's underwear inside of the diaper so child “feels” the wetness
- Dress for Success: clothes should not have buttons, snaps, or ties that need to be undone or done.
- Elastic waist bands are are the easiest type of garments for children to get on and off.

ADULTS APPROACH

Positive attitude

Remain calm, warm, encouraging, upbeat

Communicate a consistent messages

Show excitement with children in their successes

Provide support and encouragement in their challenges

Realistic expectations

"Letting go" of waste products does not come naturally to all young children. Some children are nervous about the process and are too tense to perform. Parents may need to encourage such children to relax and to let their bodies respond naturally.

PROCESS

Use practice sessions; take children to the bathroom and direct them through the various toileting steps during times when it is likely they will need to use the bathroom (e.g., before bedtime, after a nap, first thing in the morning, or an hour after a big meal)

During the first few practice sessions, verbally and physical help the child with each step

Children should practice wiping themselves each time . However, Mom or Dad should always ask for the "last wipe," so they can make sure that children's little bottoms are completely clean.

Boys can urinate while standing or sitting, girls always sit. Often times boys start by sitting and move to standing

Encourage all adults to use the same sequence of steps

Note: Some children find it easier to poop than to pee at first.
Some children automatically do both.

Sometimes it may be helpful to encourage children to push a little bit in order to help themselves poop.

REINFORCEMENTS

Some parents use positive reinforcements with their or bullseyes to the toilet for boys

Most children respond to praise once readiness skills are master and adults are prepared and consistent

If adults become frustrated children typically will regress or take longer to master skills

Accidents are completely normal during toilet training and should be expected. Toddlers and Preschoolers have not yet fully learned how to recognize their body's sensations when its time to eliminate. Children become distracted or are preoccupied, tired, excited, stressed, or are getting sick. It is also possible that children have developed an infection that is interfering with their toilet abilities.

Resources:

Web sites:

For Parents

<https://parksplacelearningcenter.com/toilet-mastery-teach-child/>

Special needs:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3592490/>

Book List