

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is a growing experience for all. This crucial step is a process that takes time, patience, and understanding from both the parent and the child. This issue of Baby Bytes offers parents time-tested and easy strategies to independent toileting.



DID YOU KNOW???

- The "right" time for toilet training is not set in stone. Most children are ready for training between 2 years and 2-1 /2 years of age. However, some may be ready as young as 18 months, or as old as 3 years.
- Your child may be ready to use the potty toilet as they become aware that their diaper is wet or dirty.
- The toilet learning process is a matter of helping your child take the steps toward independence.
- It can take several months, so watch for signs that they are ready to move from one step to the next. Be patient.
- The best time to begin toilet learning is when you can spend a lot of time with your child, when your child seems happy, and when there are no major distractions or traumatic events in their life; e.g., new sibling, divorce, moving, illness, new caregiver.

Source: Canadian Paediatric Society, 2009

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TOILET LEARNING

- Sometimes a child might prefer their own potty so that they can feel in control of what's going on. A regular toilet may be more challenging for some children.
- Introducing the potty is important:
 - i) Show them the potty
 - ii) Tell them what it's used for (what goes in it)
 - iii) Leave it close to the toilet
 - iv) Let them sit on it while fully dressed

- Praise your child when they use the potty.
- Change diapers and/or accidents as soon as possible. Emphasize the importance of staying clean and dry.
- Remember that accidents do happen. Watch for signs that let you know they need to use the toilet. Encourage your child to tell you when they need to pee. Be sure to praise them even if they tell you after the fact.
- All caregivers (dad, mom, babysitter, childcare ...), should use the same approach and method to toilet learning.
- Take them to the bathroom when they ask you.
- Wait patiently for 3-5 minutes, try again later.
- Dress your child in clothes that are easy to take off and on.
- Always carry an extra pair of dry pants.
- Remind your child to wash their hands after using the potty.
- Be prepared for setbacks; e.g., accidents, bedwetting.
- Be sure not to punish or overreact.
- When your child has used the potty successfully for at least a week suggest that they try cotton underpants or training-pants. Make this a special moment.



SIGNS OF READINESS

Your child ...

- Knows that they have wet or soiled their diaper and lets you know about it.
- Tells you that they want to go to the toilet.
- Recognizes the meaning of bodily functions; e.g., "pee", "poop", "wet", "mess"...
- Shows a preference for clean diapers.
- Shows signs that they need to go to the toilet e.g., squatting or holding their private parts.
- Has regular and/or predictable bowel movements.
- Can stay dry in diapers for several hours in a row.
- Can follow one or two simple instructions.
- Goes off by themselves for privacy when filling their diaper.
- Watches you on the toilet and asks questions.

Canadian Paediatric Society, 2009 www.simcoemuskokahealth.org