



Toilet Training

Helping your child move out of diapers

You & Your Child

A guide for
new parents

Don't expect toilet training to be a snap. There is more to it than sitting your child on the toilet and expecting him or her "to go."

Most children don't learn to use the toilet until they are at least 2 years old. Boys usually take 6 months or so longer than girls to learn. Many pediatricians say you should hold off toilet training until your child asks or shows some desire to learn.

And toilet training doesn't end once your child begins to use the toilet during the day. Learning to stay dry at night usually takes longer. Children, on the average, manage to stay dry at night around age 3. But it is not unusual for bedwetting to continue until age 7 or for a child to have a few nighttime accidents even later.

Your patience will go a long way. Toilet training should never be forced on a child. Never demand that your child go to the potty. And never punish your child for not going. Children learn to use the toilet at their own speed. Forcing them doesn't make them learn any faster – it may make the process longer – and it may strain your relationship.

ON BACK

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN
TO USE THE POTTY.



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HELPING YOUR CHILD MOVE OUT OF DIAPERS

Decide what words to use

Some parents use “urinate” or “pee-pee” or “weewee.” Some parents use “bowel movement,” “BM,” or words like, “poo-poo” or “ca-ca.” Others call it “potty.” Words allow your child to tell you when he or she is going or has the urge to go.

Get a potty chair

An adult toilet is too high and big for a small child. Use a child’s potty chair, especially one that sits on the floor rather than one that fits on top of the toilet seat.

Begin a daily routine

You can – especially if your child is having regular bowel movements – begin a daily routine of removing the diaper and placing your child on the potty around the time he or she usually goes. Don’t force your child to do it or to sit there too long (no longer than 5-10 minutes).

Pick out underpants

Once your child is ready, it’s time to pick out underpants or training pants. Have your child pick them out. Make it a big deal. Get your child excited about learning to use the toilet.

Dress in “easy” clothes

Dress your child in clothing that is easy to pull up and down. Sweat pants work well.

Praise successes

Praise your child when he or she goes to the potty successfully, but don’t overdo it. Too much excitement can make your child anxious about doing it right every time.

If he or she does not go after sitting for a few minutes, don’t push or punish. Simply say, “I guess you don’t have to go yet.”



HELPING YOUR CHILD MOVE OUT OF DIAPERS

Give friendly reminders

Your child may forget to go to the potty, especially when he or she is playing. So give friendly reminders throughout the day. But don't nag. When you think it's time, just ask if he or she needs to go to the potty for a few minutes.

Stay calm

Accidents will happen. So stay calm. Don't scold, belittle, or punish. Simply take your child to the potty to make sure he or she is finished. Reassure your child that it won't be long before he or she will learn to make it to the potty on time. Be prepared for accidents when out of the house.

Try again later

If your child seems confused or never makes it to the potty on time after several days of trying, he or she may not be ready. Go back to diapers. Try the potty again in a few weeks, or even months, when your child seems ready.

Children usually don't stay dry at night until after they've mastered staying dry during the day. So use diapers at night and for naps at first. Signs that your child is ready to stay dry at night include:

- Few daytime accidents.
- Going 3-4 hours without urinating during the day.
- Waking up dry in the morning.
- Waking up early to use the potty.

Most children will have accidents after giving up a night diaper. You should handle these calmly and reassure your child he or she will eventually learn to use the potty at night.

Use protective sheets or pads until your child stays dry at night.

