

Common Difficulties

Putting too much pressure on your child to learn to use the potty can backfire. Children sometimes hold their bowels in order to “win” the struggle. This will only make it more difficult for her to eliminate later.

Accidents are a normal part of training. When you notice a wet or soiled diaper, state matter-of-factly that she needs to be changed. Toddlers who are deeply involved in exciting play may forget to use the potty. Gentle reminders are sometimes needed.

Regression may occur during toilet learning. She may use baby talk, want to be held or carried, suck on fingers or objects or want her bottle or pacifier.

It is a challenge to grow up and a child needs to be given extra love and attention during this life transition.

Pour on the love!

It is common for parents to want their child to be out of diapers, sometimes before the child is physically ready. Toilet learning takes time and accidents happen, especially at night, during transitions and during stressful times. **If your child does not appear ready or able, stop and try again at a later time. The more you rush and pressure your child, the more toilet learning won't work.**

If you suspect a medical problem in toilet learning, talk to your child's health care provider.

Praising good toileting skills is more effective than criticizing your child or getting upset about an accident.

*Children **WANT** to please their parents/caregivers!*



Your child will be proud of his toileting accomplishments!
CELEBRATE!

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PARENT HELPLINE
(414) 671-0566

www.theparentingnetwork.org

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Artwork by Michael Owen Design (and his son, Brandon)



THE PARENTING NETWORK

Toilet Learning:
Let the Child
be the Guide!



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Peaceful Pottyng

Success in toilet learning depends on several factors:

- The child's readiness (Some children show signs of being ready around 18 months and others not until age three)
- The child's ability to communicate his needs
- Your patience (Refrain from pushing the child into using the toilet)
- Your understanding that this is a process that takes time

SIGNS OF TOILET LEARNING READINESS

Although a child need not exhibit all of these signs in order to be ready to toilet learn, a list of some readiness signs follows:

- Has awareness of a wet or soiled diaper
- Expresses interest in using the toilet
- Can dress and undress himself
- Can understand and follow simple directions
- Is able to tell you that he has to go to the bathroom
- Has a dry diaper for longer periods of time during the day

- Wakes up from a nap or overnight with a dry diaper
- Likes to imitate adult behavior

When several of the readiness signs appear, you can begin to:

- Teach your child the names you want her to use for toileting
- Have your child help you pick out a potty chair and let her sit on it (with diaper on)
- Have your child watch you eliminate (Imitation is important at this stage of development!)
- Change your child's diaper as soon as it is wet or dirty
- Read books together about toileting
- Praise your child when she tells you verbally or through gestures that she has eliminated in her diaper.

SITTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

Now that your child realizes that something is happening in her body that she was not aware of before, it is time to work on training in a more direct, yet relaxed and caring way. Here are steps to help your child learn:

- Once voluntary control has been developed, the child will tell you before she has to go that she needs to use the toilet.

- After he has a bowel movement, place him on the potty seat, unfasten the diaper and dump the contents into the potty. This shows him that this is where "it" should go.
- Whenever he tells you he is wet or has had a bowel movement, praise him for telling you. Remind him to try and tell you before he goes next time so he can sit on the potty.
- Encourage your child to sit on the potty whenever he feels the urge to go.
- Teach him good habits from the start. Show him how to wipe, throw away the toilet paper and wash his hands after each trip to the potty.



- If your child has other caregivers, bring them into the toilet training process so your child receives consistent messages from all his caregivers.
- Help your child feel comfortable by making the transition from diapers to training pants or underwear gradually. Wearing underwear helps him to feel more grown-up. Let your child choose the color or style he likes.
- **Celebrate accomplishments!**