



Tips for Toilet Training

Toilet Training Methods: Take one step at a time!



Contact a Child and Youth Services therapist for more specific advice for your child.

1. Plan regular and consistent daily toilet times.

It is most helpful to plan regular toilet times soon after a sleep, meal times and 'big' drinks when natural urges to wee or poo are more likely to occur.

However, sometimes your child may indicate a 'need to go' with words or behaviour, such as pulling at their pants or wriggling or leaning on furniture. It is good to move quickly to the toilet at these times.

Shift all nappy change routines to the bathroom and include a toilet sitting time as part of every nappy change.

2. Establish a toilet time that is short, fun and relaxed.

To begin, stay close to your child and use a story book, photo book, puzzle, song, talking or play with a toy to help your child stay sitting.

For boys, it is best to start toilet training with sitting on the toilet for both wee and poo. Introduce standing for a wee later, when your son is more familiar with the toilet routine.

Always practice independence skills as part of every toilet time, such as pulling pants up and down, getting on / off the toilet, toilet flush and hand washing.

3. Provide clear and positive communication.

In the early stages of toilet training, avoid asking your child; 'do you need to go to the toilet?' as they will often say 'no!' Instead use a clear prompt 'toilet time,' and lead your child quickly to the toilet.

Talk about wee and poo going into the toilet. Talk about being clean and dry. Use positive words of encouragement. Add visual picture cues to support their understanding.

4. Maintain consistent teaching methods.

Specific methods are needed to teach the independence skills that your child is still learning, and cannot yet manage by themselves. Teaching methods can include short verbal directions alongside; gentle guidance, sign language and visual cues.

Children will learn skills through practice and repetition. As your child develops these skills then any assistance or guidance can be gradually withdrawn.

5. Consider additional teaching tools. Some examples:

- Doll or teddy play with a potty.
- DVD animations: A highly recommended DVD is: *Are you ready? An animated toilet training resource* by Disability Services.
- Toilet training Apps: A highly recommended App is: *Toilet Training for Children with Special Needs* by Victorian Continence Resource Centre.
- Children's story books (from bookstores and public library) about learning to use the toilet.



6. Use praise and rewards for participation.

Always give your child praise for their participation in the toilet routine. Use positive words, add a smile and clap hands or give a High 5. Let other important family members know, such as tell the siblings, send a text to Dad, phone Grandparents.

It is not essential to use other reward systems, like a star chart. But this approach can be helpful for many children. But remember; choose a small and inexpensive reward that is meaningful to your child, give the reward straight away and always tell your child why they are getting the reward. Lastly, avoid long term use of rewards. Keep the focus of toilet training on your child developing independence.

7. Manage 'accidents' as a learning opportunity.

Having wee and poo 'accidents' is very common during toilet training. Some helpful tips:

- Keep the whole clean up routine in the bathroom.
- Always have a short toilet sitting time once the wet / soiled clothing is removed.
- Involve your child in dressing and washing hands just like their usual toilet routine.
- Keep the clean up routine calm with minimal fuss and attention.

8. Monitor progress.

Toilet training does take time. So notice your child's progress, no matter how small that may seem!

- Notice progress with the number of times your child uses the toilet for wee or poo during the daytime.
- Notice progress with your child learning independence skills, such as moving to the toilet, pulling pants down / up, remembering the toilet flush, washing and drying hands.

Remember to be **P**ositive, **P**atient and **P**ersistent.