
Toilet Training Advice A step-by-step approach

Step 1 - Setting the scene

The key advice is to start early and to build toileting into every day routines. This can be done by:

- Changing the nappy in the bathroom to build this connection.
- Empty the dirty nappy into the toilet, flush it away and wash your hands.
- Introduce the language of wet/dry and clean/dirty (use same language in preschool).
- Introduce them to the potty from when the child can sit. This could be built into a routine – possibly each evening before bath time or every morning. The squatting position can help with constipation.

Step 2 - Develop the skills

The aim of step 2 is to get the child to sit on potty or toilet as part of their day and then gradually increase frequency or duration. By doing this you are helping to build the skills that children need in order to become toilet trained. These skills can be built into their day as part of a daily routine.

- Make sure the child is comfortable and feels safe sitting on the potty or toilet (ideally go straight for the toilet if you can). Use a toilet seat insert and a step for feet to help support.
- Take the child to the toilet/potty first thing in the morning, after each meal and before bath time. Sit there for up to 2 minutes (start with a shorter amount of time and build up to the 2 minutes. Use a kitchen timer as a visual aid).
- Begin to work on the child pulling their own pants up and down. Show them how to put their thumbs into the waistband to help with this. Loose clothing such as Pyjama bottoms and jogging trousers are ideal for this.
- Have an open door policy so the child can see other people going to the toilet. This is so they realise that it is something everybody does.

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- Prepare the child by having a social story about using the potty/toilet or watch videos such as Tom's Toilet Triumph on YouTube.
- If your child is anxious about sitting on the toilet/potty try having a 'special toilet toy' to distract them while they are sat there. Ensure this toy is only for when they are on the toilet/potty.
- To encourage longer sitting, use a timer. Build up from 10 seconds and gradually increase the time.
- Use lots of animated praise and possibly give a meaningful reward e.g. clapping, stickers, edible treat. If it is a tangible reward only give it for the toilet time.

Step 3 - Identify patterns

Before you remove the child's nappy, you need to establish how frequently the child wees and poos. To do this:

- Choose a few days when you can focus on identifying these patterns.
- On the first nappy change of the day put a kitchen roll pad inside the nappy.
- Use a chart and do a baseline assessment by checking every hour to see if it is wet/dry, soiled/clean or both. On this chart note when they have had a drink and how long they can stay dry for.

After a few days you will hopefully see some patterns emerging and you will then be able to move onto timed toileting. This is where the child spends some time sitting on the potty/toilet when hopefully a wee or poo is imminent. It is really important that the child experiences the feeling of needing to go to the toilet so try to wait an hour so that they get this response and recognise that the bladder is full.

By the end of step 3, the child should be sitting on the potty/toilet on a more regular basis and doing wees and poos more regularly.



Step 4 – Nappy off

Once you have completed steps 1 and 2 and you know the child's toileting habits from step 3, the time has come to remove the nappy all the time they are awake. This includes when you are not at home. Once the nappy comes off, it doesn't go back on.

In this step the child should be happy to sit on the potty/toilet and the adults should have some idea of when they go and the child should have had some success on the potty/toilet already. Timed toileting in this step is about trying to gradually increase the time interval of how long the child can stay dry for and helping to progress towards the child being independent.

Some top tips:

- Wearing pants or trainer pants will help the child to have more awareness of when they are wet.
- If the child has an accident, treat it as a learning experience and be matter of fact about it.
- Keep looking for signs that they may need the toilet and give plenty of positive reinforcement.
- Keep a record of when the child has a wee or poo to help adjust timing.
- If possible phase out prompts so they start to ask to use the potty/toilet (some children may always need to be prompted/reminded).
- If still using the potty, try to move onto the toilet.
- Take a portable potty when going out and don't go back to a nappy.

This approach is recommended by

Bladder and Bowel UK

Helpline 0161 607 8219

www.bbuk.org.uk

Email bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk

Videos explaining the approach are available at

<https://www.facebook.com/DSUKPADSPods/>