

## **Advice for toilet training**

It might be helpful, in the first place, to think about the reasons why your child may take longer to become clean and dry.

### **Toilet Issues for Young Children**

Unaware of the sensations associated with urinating and passing a motion and doesn't 'read' own body signals, indicating that your child is developmentally and physically not ready to begin. Can sometimes let people know when they are wet after the event.

Not worried about feeling wet or dirty – so why do they need to change the routine? Resistant to the new routine of beginning training.

Fixed areas of where and when they perform – for example, always pooing in the bedroom in the evening.

Disinterested in using a potty or toilet

Unaware of peers' successes in this area or social expectation

Unresponsive to the motivation of pleasing someone else by becoming clean and dry Difficulty waiting to 'perform' when taken to the toilet

Suddenly becoming resistant after a period of some cooperation and success

Weeing or pooing anywhere but the toilet or potty

Anxious of the toilet in general – sitting on the seat, noise of the flush, washing hands etc

Anxious and resistant when using other toilets outside of home

Anxious when realising bits are falling from their body

Fascinated with toilet furniture rather than its function

Sensory activities mean that your child may be affected by the smells, temperature of toilet seat, noise of the flush or hand dryer etc in the bathroom

Frightened of passing a motion because it hurts to do so or unaware because motions are very loose 'Holding' on and not urinating on Resistant to stop a favoured activity to then be placed on the potty or toilet.

Reasons why toilet training often takes longer for some children

### **Social Interaction:**

May not notice other children using the potty or toilet

Little awareness of other children's habits

No understanding or notice of peer pressure to succeed

May not respond to verbal praise

No shyness or inhibition when wet or soiled

**Communication:**

Cannot 'ask' to go to the toilet with language, so may need another form of communication

May not hear speech directed to them

Doesn't understand a question, such as, 'Do you want to go to the toilet?'

Doesn't understand the concept of 'waiting'

**Resistant to change**

Happily, plays or occupies time to the exclusion of everything else

Remembers unpleasant toilet experiences and reacts uncooperatively each time

May have rituals around the bathroom which makes difficulties using the toilet appropriately

Consider if there are any external factors that are contributing to anxiety surrounding going to the toilet...

**Sensory Issues or external factors that can negatively impact:**

May react strongly to the smells and temperature of the toilet

May want to pursue fascinations with water, for example

May be hypersensitive to water, for example

May not be able to sit down on the toilet for very long

Knowing when and where to begin .....(visuals schedules support this)

A previous negative experience in a bathroom or a bout of constipation etc

Being rushed

A small steps approach often works for children who are anxious and if things aren't going to plan, hold back for a while and then start again. Try not to make the process a battle of wills but as calm and matter-of-fact as possible. Agree amongst the whole family (and school) on what you are trying to achieve in the first place, which may be just tolerating sitting on the toilet fully clothed for a while.

**Here are a few pointers to hopefully help you begin:**

Attempt training only when you feel well and prepared in terms of time and patience. For example, deciding to try to toilet train your child at the beginning of December because you are staying with relatives at Christmas would put extra pressure on you and your child to try to succeed (*however if at home for the holidays that maybe a good time*). Watch for signs that they seem to know when they have been or need to go and 'offer' the toilet or potty. Decide whether to use a potty or go straight to the toilet and help your child 'make friends' with it. Is your child too big for a potty or too small to sit comfortably on the toilet? If you decide to use a potty, place it in either the toilet or a warm room without expecting your child to do anything but tolerate it being there. If your child likes a favourite character, place some stickers on it. Have a specific toilet toy kept up high to only be played with whilst sitting on the potty or toilet. Start to move towards the bathroom to change your child when wet/soiled. Possibly use a picture that schedule which very clearly explains what to do in the toilet. For example. 'trousers down', 'pants down', 'sit on toilet', 'wait a little while', 'try to wee or poo', 'pants up', 'trousers up', 'flush toilet', 'wash hands' **(see pictures on Do2learn link at end)**

Let your child see what other members of the family use the toilet or potty for (little sister maybe a little too young yet).!

Borrowing a doll who wees water over a potty or toilet may help your child understand what to do! Watch for signs of straining or shuddering which may indicate trying to pass a motion or weeing and offer the potty or toilet. This may help you begin toilet timing your child which is often a useful stage before they recognise the need to go themselves.

If your child uses a daily visual timetable, include 'toilet stops' to help toilet 'timing' at various times in the day when even a quick sit on the toilet is enough for a reward Use of a card or phrase, 'First sit on toilet ..... then '?' (*something pleasant that would appeal to your child*), for example, might make it worthwhile for your child to have a go.

A social story setting out using a toilet in a clear, simple and matter-of-fact way may help.

Talk to your child's nursery or pre-school and discuss your ideas about trying to begin training and enlist their help also. Try to use the same approach, language and rewards

### **Some ideas to try to make the toilet a carefree experience for your child:**

If your child feels unsteady when they are sitting down, use a trainer seat in the toilet.

A handrail by the side of it or a stool underneath your child's feet.

Spray the bathroom with a mildly perfumed scent before and after your child uses the toilet (however some children are the opposite to this and the strong cleaning or perfume smells of a bathroom can be off putting).

Have some novelty or favourite soap or wash to encourage washing hands after using the toilet.

Try playing some soothing or favourite music as your child waits to 'perform'.

Try to help your child wait a little longer to go by blowing bubbles together or reading a story as they wait or have a special 'toilet' song to sing.

Place a small amount of paper in the toilet bowl to soften the noise of any splashing which could upset your child.

Give your child time and privacy to feel relaxed in the bathroom.

Visit other toilets together and reassure any anxieties around unfamiliar places and fears around hand dryers etc.

A sticker chart and 'now and next'

Visual schedule both a daily one with 'toilet stops' on and a schedule in the toilet to illustrate the process from start to finish (see Do2learn resources)

<http://do2learn.com/picturecards/DailyLivingSkills/index.htm>

<http://www.boxofideas.org/ideas/practical-skills-at-home/independant-living-skills-at-home/toileting/>

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_2/255-3157414-6991612?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=toilet+training+story](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2/255-3157414-6991612?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=toilet+training+story)