



Toilet training advice for parents

Devised by the Portage Service inspired by Gina Davies

Beginning your toilet training

To begin toilet training, your child first needs to:

- be aware that their bladder is full
- know that they have to do something about it
- hold on until they get to the toilet
- go to the toilet in the appropriate place

To understand where a child is in this process, the adult needs to watch the child over a couple of days.

Do they hide or go to a special place when weeing in their nappy?

Do they stand still?

Do they wriggle and squirm?

Look for the signs.

Before you start toilet training, you will need to gather the necessary equipment.

- **Lots** of pants
- **Lots** of socks
- Changes of clothes for accidents
- A clear up kit – gloves, wipes, bags, tissues, antibacterial spray



Prepare your child

Introduce the idea of pants, tell them everyone wears pants. Make pants thrilling.

Show your child:

- pants
- pictures of pants
- your pants
- your family and friend's pants
- pants in shops
- books about pants



Buy pants (not boxer shorts - pants need to be close to the body so the child has the sensation of being wet if they have an accident)

Does your child know about the world of toilets?

- Does your child know what the toilet is for?
- Do they know what toilet paper is for?
- Do they know what a wee is?
- Do they know what a poo is?
- Which words are you going to use for urine and faeces?
- Do they know that people wee in toilet and animals wee outside?
- When shopping point out the toilet paper, tell the child what it is for.
- Girls need to go to the toilet with a female to see what happens.
- Boys need to go with a male to learn about standing up to wee.



Use lots of visuals such as pictures, photos, symbols, books, when you talk about it with them

Keep it simple

Once you decide to 'go for it':

- we recommend to use the toilet straight away - don't bother with a potty or child's toilet seat (especially for children with social communication needs)
- swap nappies for pants
- prepare the environment - clear a pathway to the loo
- **praise** and reward success
- clean up and play down accident
- **tell**, don't ask the child that they need to use the toilet 'time for toilet!'
- **encourage** 'First wee, then play'
- remind boys to hold their willy when they are standing up
- have a script: 'It's time for a wee. Wee in the toilet. Two pieces of toilet paper. Wipe (girls), Shake (boys). Flush. Wash hands. Dry hands.' Be consistent. Repeat each time.
- have a mantra – "Wee in the toilet"

To encourage the child to wee when they are sitting on the toilet:

- tickle their feet
- sing songs
- make them laugh
- give them privacy
- say 'Have a wee'



Toilet timing

If a child is not quite ready for toilet training, you could try **toilet timing**.

Use the same principles, but place the child on the toilet at regular intervals:

- on waking
- before you go to school or nursery
- mid morning
- lunch time
- mid afternoon
- tea time
- before bath time
- before bed
- nappy on

Out and about

- Find out where all the public toilets are.
- To protect your car – place a black bin liner on the seat and cover it with a towel.
- If you use a potty, make sure you use it in a toilet area and that the child helps you empty it and flushes the toilet.



Toilet phobias

Child may be:

- **afraid to sit on the toilet**

help to desensitise them by allowing them to sit on the toilet, lid down, with nappy on. Then with lid up, nappy on. Then lid up nappy undone. Then straight on the toilet seat. Note – this process could take several weeks

- **afraid of the toilet flush**

give the child plenty of opportunities to pour water into the toilet

use a jug to empty the bath water into the toilet.

Put the child in charge of flushing - mummy needs a wee, come and help her flush the toilet

- **put off by the smell of toilet cleaners or air fresheners**

use a different product



Smearing

Child might:

- think poo is another form of tactile play
provide similar experiences using a more appropriate medium e.g. treacle.
Use twice a day to meet the child's sensory needs.
- be trying to remove poo from their hands
provide wipes and show the child how to use them

Reduce anxiety

- Keep it simple
- Keep it fun
- Keep your sense of humour!

