NHS Lothian - University Hospitals Division
Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy

Thinking About Toilet Training?

Is your child ready for toilet training?



Signs your child is ready for toilet training:

- They tell/show you they need a wee or poo – before or after it's happened.
- They hide when going for a poo – this shows awareness that a poo is coming.
- They have dry nappies for longer.

Remember:

- You have to be ready for toilet training too.
- If you start and it's not going well, you can stop and come back to it later.
- Some children never show signs of being ready – you can still try toilet training.

More information can be found here:

- www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/readiness-for-toileting-information-sheet/
- www.parentclub.scot/articles/potty-training-top-tips-success

Even if your child isn't quite ready there are things you can do

- Keep nappy changing/ toileting activities in the bathroom so they link toileting with that room.
- Reduce fun interactions when changing nappies – keep it dull to help motivate them to want to move on from nappies.
- They could help tip their poo into the toilet from their nappy to understand where poo goes.
- Get them used to sitting on the toilet by sitting on it at other times– e.g. take their socks off when sitting on the toilet.
- Practise other skills involved in going to the toilet e.g. pulling trousers down and washing hands.

If your child is ready here are some first steps



- There are lots of different ways to toilet train.
- You want to get your child sitting on the potty/toilet at the point when they need to go. To maximise your chances of doing this:
  - Try to identify when they are peeing or pooing in the day.
  - To identify if the nappy is wet, you could put a paper towel in their nappy.
  - Take them to toilet 15-20 mins after a meal or drink.
  - Some children clutch between their legs or cross their legs when they need to go.
  - Look out to see if they hide when they need to poo. If they do, try them on the toilet when they go to hide.

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If your child is ready here are some first steps (continued)

- Make sure your child feels safe and secure sitting on the toilet
    - Think about whether you want to use a potty or a toilet - this will depend on the age and size of your child.
    - Make sure their feet are supported (e.g. a step).
    - An insert or family toilet seat can make the hole smaller, so your child doesn't feel like they're going to fall down.

- Sit them on the toilet/ potty for 2-3 minutes. A motivating (wipe clean) toy/book that just comes out at toilet time can help get them sitting down. Don't worry if they don't do anything.

- Toilet training picture books and the free *Poo goes to Pooland* app can help explain what's expected. Perhaps your child could look at the app whilst sitting on the toilet.

Understanding the routine



- Do things the same way each time. This will help your child to know what's going to happen and what you expect of them.

- Pictures can help some children to understand the steps involved in going to the toilet
  An example can be found at; (www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/245917/visual-aid-for-toilet-training-boy-small-images.pdf)

- If your child doesn't understand pictures a photo, a song or an object can help to give them a cue it's time to go to the toilet or get changed;
    - An object signifier could be a toilet roll, sheet of toilet paper, toy toilet.
    - A specific song is known as a 'song signifier' and the same song needs to be used every time. An example song can be found here https://vimeo.com/channels/1012818 or by scanning the QR code.

- Use simple words to describe each step - say the same things each time as this will help your child remember what to do.

If you are concerned about your child's bowel movements or continence please contact your GP or for pre-school children your Health Visitor.

Other useful information:

✓ General information about continence and potty training; www.eric.org.uk/ & https://www.eric.org.uk/videos-about-wee-and-poo

✓ General information; https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/potty-training-top-tips-success & https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/2068/life-skills-for-little-ones.pdf

✓ Ready Steady Toddler; http://www.readysteadytoddler.org.uk/

✓ Toileting equipment information; /www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/toileting-equipment/