

Toilet Training

Moving from nappies to pants or knickers can be a nervous time for parents and carers and a big change for children and can cause some anxiety. The most important thing to note is there is no size fits all approach. Each child is individual and will need different strategies that best suits them in order to be most effective. Also, some children will take to using the potty or toilet really quickly, while others may need a little more time.

Signs of Readiness

The right time to start toileting is when your child is ready, but some children will never show signs of readiness but that does not mean they will not be able to do it.



But how do you know when they are ready?

It's important to know that a child will only be ready for toileting when their brain starts to notice the signals coming from their bladder and bowels. This will vary for all children. Some children notice the signals when they are around 2 years old, while other children may be 3 years old. Each child is different. There are also social and behavioural cues such as being able to follow instructions, cooperate, and communicate their needs clearly with you.

Some of the signs:

- Wanting to sit on the toilet or potty.
- Asking to be changed as soon as their nappy is wet/soiled.
- Telling an adult, they need to do a wee/poo.
- They stay dry for around 2 hours before having a wet nappy.
- Hiding when they need a poo.
- Pulling at their nappy.

Preparing for toilet training

Clothes:

- Choose clothes that are easy to pull up and down, avoid fiddly buttons and zips.
- Choose clothes that are easy to wash and dry.
- Practise getting dressed and undressed.

Underwear:

- Choose pants/knickers with your child.
- Buy plenty, they will have accidents.
- Practise wearing them for short periods of time to get used to the feeling of pants/knickers.



Potty or Toilet?

- Choose a potty with your child.
- Keep it in the bathroom and practise sitting on it.
- It might be a good idea to have a second potty downstairs if your only bathroom is upstairs.
- If a potty is not suitable, choose a children's toilet seat together.
- Also choose a step that is high enough to support under the child's feet while they sit on the toilet.

Preparing your child for toilet training

- It is best to make sure there are no big changes coming up in your child's life as toilet training can be stressful.
- Allow them to watch a trusted adult on the toilet so they can see what happens.
- Show them the potty/toilet seat that you have and how it works.
- Make sure they are drinking enough water and having enough fibre. This will ensure a soft stool and will make it easier for them to sit and poo.
- Teach your child the correct words for using the toilet, introduce the words wee, poo, potty, toilet.
- Goodbye nappies, hello pants/knickers. You can't toilet train in a nappy or a pull-up, so choose when to start toilet training and stop using them!
- Routine is key! Don't ask your child if they need the toilet, they haven't learnt to recognise that yet. Simply take them to the toilet every couple of hours, saying "Toilet/potty time".
- If your child is hesitant or reluctant to sit on the potty/toilet, don't force them or make an issue of this. This can cause them to associate the potty/toilet with negative feelings.
- Have a bag of toys ready to play with while they are on the potty/toilet. This will help to keep them happy to sit for 2 or 3 minutes. Try and use the bathroom whenever possible.
- Give lots of praise for sitting on the potty/toilet and for washing hands and pulling their clothing down and up.
- Use rewards, they are a good incentive. It's important that they are small and instant for example a sticker. Make sure the reward is an achievable task like sitting on the potty/toilet rather than being dry all day.
- Accidents happen, if your child doesn't quite make it, don't worry or feel you need to discipline them, instead reassure them that they are okay and they can have a go next time.

Wiping

- This step often takes lots of practice and encouragement.
- Show them how much toilet paper they will need to wipe their bottom or vagina. Make sure you show how to wipe a vagina from front and go downwards. Teach your son to shake the last few drops of urine out of the penis.

Going out

- Once things are going well at home it's time to go out in pants/knickers.
- If you can, keep the first trips short, plan where you're going and make sure you know where the nearest toilet is.
- If your child goes to childcare, let the educators know and pack lots of spare clothes.
- Before you go anywhere, take your child to the toilet, even if it is only a short car ride. For longer car rides, take them to the toilet when you get to your destination.
- Take everything you need with you - potty, wipes, changes of clothes.

Night time

- Once your child has mastered toileting during the day, they may take longer to learn it at night time.
- Some children may still wear nappies or pull ups for several years after they learn to use the toilet during the day.
- The most common sign of being ready for night time training is a few mornings in a row of dry nappies in the morning.
- To get ready for sleeping with no nappy or pull up's, its best to have a waterproof mattress protector on the bed.
- Get your child used to stopping drinks an hour before bed and sitting on the potty/toilet just before sleep.
- Make sure your child can pull their pyjamas up and down easily.
- Put a night light by the bed and practise getting to the potty/toilet.
- Make sure you have fresh pyjamas and bedding ready to deal with any wetting.
- Some children take much longer to learn night time dryness. Accidents will and do happen. Just like day time training, take it at your child's pace.

REMEMBER - every child is unique, and they will master the toilet in their own way, please don't lose heart if things don't quite go to plan. It is really common for children to have periods of regression, just as you thought you had cracked it.

It's also really common for children to have mastered it in one place (home) but struggle in another (childcare setting).

Take things at the pace of your child offering support and encouragement along the way. Make using the toilet a positive experience so they find it easy and comfortable.

Tips for Potty Training - Welsh Government



<https://youtu.be/5WsjVLLpNxc>

Useful Websites:



The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity

[Home - ERIC](#)