

Going to the Toilet

Potty Training

Many children find toilet training difficult. Some learn quickly, while others can take longer. It is not uncommon for children to slip back occasionally after they have made good progress.

Children learn better when they are not anxious, so although it can be frustrating, especially when out and about, try to keep calm.

When to begin potty training?

All children are different, but a good guide that they are ready to become toilet trained is if they:

- Can remain dry and clean for two hours or more
- Are aware when they are emptying their bladder or bowels
- Show an interest in sitting on a potty or toilet
- Have a regular pattern to when they wet or soil their nappy

Preparing for potty training:

- Decide whether to start using a potty or to begin directly using the toilet
- A good way to prepare is to start a toilet chart to see how often your child might need to use the potty. If a pattern emerges introduce 'potty time' just before that time
- If no pattern emerges, you could start to "try for a wee on the potty" before lunch or bath time. The traditional routine in nursery and school is for children to be asked to go to the toilet and wash their hands before morning break, lunch time and before the end of the day. This is a good routine to aim for
- Choose a rewarding activity for you and your child to do while they are sitting on the potty. For example, looking at a book or picture or listening to nursery rhymes or a story CD.
- Make sure you have plenty of time and do not rush your child. Give them time, but do not keep them there so long that they get bored – five minutes is plenty
- Talk to your child about what you are doing. For example, say that "we are waiting for a wee-wee". Games and activities that involve blowing, such as bubbles and whistles, will naturally encourage the stomach pushes needed to go to the toilet
- When your child is successful, offer them a reward e.g. sticker reward chart
- Gradually increase how often you have potty time. It is a good idea to start trying two hours before and two hours after a time that seems to be successful

Using training pants:

Training pants are like a nappy with an elasticated waistband. They are less tightfitting than a nappy and are easier for both you and your child to pull up and down, although many children can move straight from nappies to pants. You can start using training pants at any stage once you have begun potty training. A good time to start is when you have one successful potty time every day.

Other tips:

- Children may be more aware that they are wet or soiled if they are wearing pants and loose fitting clothes, rather than nappies
- Remember, all children are different. Some need to use the potty more often than every two hours and others may be able to wait three hours or more but then need to go urgently
- You will need to rely on your instinct and knowledge of your child to come up with a potty training plan that suits them
- Speak to your Health Visitor or School Nurse for further guidance