

TOILET TRAINING – TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

- **Be Patient:** If your child is afraid of the potty chair, don't pressure them to use it. Put toilet training aside for 1 or 2 months, and give your child time to get used to the idea of the potty chair and to be comfortable with it.
- **Setbacks:** Setbacks are to be expected, not to be seen as a failure or regression, but as a temporary step back. Setbacks are normal and may occur when your child feels too much pressure or there's changes in their environment (ex.: new sibling, new daycare, etc.). Setbacks can be frustrating, but your child needs encouragement and reassurance from you. Try to remember that this is your child's task, not your own.
- **Coordinating Plans:** Make sure to coordinate your toilet training plans with others who may be with your child during the day (caregivers, grandparents, day care staff members). It is important that they know how you want your child to be trained so that the child receives the same message throughout the day and across environments.
- **Parental Encouragement:** Make this experience as positive, natural, and nonthreatening so that your child feels confident that they are doing it on their own. Often, what seems like laziness in your child is resistance to pressure or immaturity. Your child is likely to want to be trained as much as you want them to be trained.
- **Sit First:** Boys should learn to urinate sitting first, because if they stand first, they may not want to sit to have a bowel movement.
- **Hand Washing:** Have them practice washing their hands with soap and water every time they gets off the potty, even if they don't do anything. This step can also be incorporated after diaper changes.
- **Communicating:** Watch for behaviour, grimaces, or poses that may signal the need for a bowel movement, and ask your child if they need to go.
- **Flushing:** Let your child flush if they want to. Because some children do not like the sound of the toilet or are afraid of the toilet, be sure to determine whether your child is scared.
- **Clothing/Diapers:** Keep your child in loose, easy-to-remove clothing.
- **Dry and Clean:** Your child's skin is just as likely to get a rash from wetness or exposure to stool as it did during infancy. Therefore, keeping your child dry and clean is as important during training as it was when they were an infant. Change your child regularly, and do not leave them in soiled clothing as a training method.
- **Night time Training:** Night time or naptime dryness may occur at the same time as daytime dryness, although it may not occur until a year or so later. Aside from taking



your child to the toilet before going to sleep, a night time potty chair kept by the bed can make it more convenient for your child when they wake during the night.

- **Toilet Paper:** If handling toilet paper is out of their league, just do the task for them. They may eventually learn how by mimicking your moves — but for now, you can remove the possible frustration involved in their desire to be clean but lacking the coordination to accomplish that.
- **Moods:** Consider your child's moods and the time of day your child is most approachable. Plan your approach based on when your child is most cooperative. If your child is generally shy and withdrawn, they may need additional support and encouragement.
- **Accidents Happen:** Even if your child is fully trained, accidents will happen. Accidents may occur when your child is excited, fearful, absorbed in play, or awakened from a bad dream. They may also occur if there is any changes routines. When your child is sick, expect accidents until they are better. However, if there are repeated, unexplained accidents, there is the possibility of an allergic reaction or an illness.
- **Stool Texture:** Check your child's stools. It is very important that they are soft. Hard stools can be very painful and are difficult to pass. If your child's stools are hard, add fibre to your child's diet. When the stool is softer, reassure your child that now it won't hurt.

Additional tips:

- **Time timer:** using a timer may help your child stay on the potty for a few minutes, which increases the chances of voiding in the potty.
- **Make it fun:** Have a basket of “potty toys” near the potty so your child can use them while they are on the potty. This helps to keep them on the potty longer as well as motivate them to play with the toys they only get while on the potty.
- **Praise:** Praise your child throughout the toileting routine, even if they don't void in the potty. When they do void, have a potty party and a special reward.
- **Position:** If your child cannot reach the floor (either from the potty or toilet), have a stool for their feet so they are well supported and feel comfortable while seated on the toilet.
- **Routine:** Incorporating using the potty at regular/predictable time into the daily routine will help to regulate and have your child used to using the potty as an everyday activity. For example, before and after meals/snacks and outings.
- You can also use social stories or videos to discuss potty training with your child.

Resources: Pediatrics (1999) Issue 10 Volume 3; pampers.com

