



# TOILET SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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**Ideally start once your little one is weaning (6-9 months) but if your child is older don't worry, it's never too late to start!**



## **Step 1 - Getting started**

**Don't panic we're not taking the nappy off yet!**

- **Establish healthy eating and drinking habits** (can help to prevent constipation).
- **Change your child in the toilet** (if you can). It starts the connection between wees, poos and the toilet.
- **Get the equipment you need** such as potty, toilet seat reducer and step. (Your Occupational Therapist may be able to provide some equipment so do ask).
- **Start by introducing sitting on the potty once or twice a day.** This can be done even if they need support to sit.
- **Tip the poo from the nappy/potty down the toilet** and flush the toilet.
- Once your child is happy to sit on the potty or toilet you then move to step 2.





## Step 2 - Introducing regular potty or toilet times

- When your child is sitting for a minute or so, **build up the length of time they can sit on the potty or toilet**, to a maximum of 1 minute per year old, eg maximum of 3 minutes for a 3 year old.
- Then **increase the number of times they sit on the potty or toilet**, until they are eventually sitting when they wake up, after all meals and drinks, before a bath and bed.
- For children starting early, sitting on the potty/ toilet will soon become part of everyday routine.
- For older children you may need to introduce a reward for sitting on the potty or toilet.
- **Let them see family members use the toilet.**
- **Talk about wee and poo when changing the nappy**, and the need to stop what you're doing and go to the toilet when you need to do a wee.
- **Start to introduce sitting on the toilet**, as well as the potty, if not already doing so.
- **Give specific praise** 'Good boy for sitting on the toilet', 'Good girl you did a wee/poo.'
- If you happen to catch a wee or a poo, **give lots of praise** which may be sufficient for younger children. For older children a reward may be necessary.
- If they can, **get your child to help pull their pants/ trousers up or down, wash/dry their hands and flush the toilet.**



## Step 2 - Introducing regular potty or toilet times cont.

- **Play wet and dry games;** use toys, pants, flannels etc. Oh, look this is wet, can you feel it?
- **Include role play with dolls and teddies** around going for a wee and poo, having clean dry pants.
- **Verbalise, sign and show a picture of the potty** and encourage the child to copy with lots of praise for successful attempts. This is the first step in the child eventually learning to self-initiate going to the toilet.

**At the end of this step, it's hoped your child can sit happily on the loo for at least a minute for their age (long enough to do a wee or a poo).**

**We're not really expecting the child to consistently use the potty/toilet yet (that will come later).**



## Step 3 - Timed toileting

- **Identify your child's habits** - how long can they stay dry for?  
Is there a set time they open their bowels?
- **Assessing how long they can stay dry** -
  - I. Put folded kitchen towel in nappy
  - II. Check hourly and make a note if wet/dry (change if wet)
  - III. Do this for 3 days (does not have to be consecutive days)



## Step 3 - Timed toileting cont.

- If your child appears to be continuously wet still introduce hourly timed toileting and then repeat the baseline assessment once timed toileting is established. If your child continues to appear to be constantly wet you should discuss this with your Health Care Professional and get it checked before moving on, particularly if your child is over the age of 5 or has a history of wee infections or other related issues. Constipation is a medical condition when someone struggles to poo and this can affect toilet training. Constipation should always be treated - please see our separate publications on the subject.
- Once you have identified roughly the length of time your child can stay dry for, it's time for timed toileting. **Take them to the toilet at the time interval you've identified (but no more often than every 60 minutes or so)** and keep a record so you can see when timings might need to be adjusted (Potty Whiz app is good for this).
- The timings should always follow the last wee rather than the clock.
- We often **use social stories to help raise awareness**. These are stories that are tailored to a social situation (in this case toilet training) to help a child to understand something new. These can be personalised and show a favourite character using the loo as well as your little one. It can also incorporate the reward you are using for success on the toilet/potty. We recommend Let's Talk Visuals on Facebook.
- If they can, **get your child to help pull their pants/ trousers up or down, wash/dry their hands and flush the toilet.**
- When you get around 50% of wees and poos on the toilet/potty it's time to prepare to move to step 4 (removal of the day-time nappy).

**During this 'timed toileting' step some parents choose to use washable trainer pants in preparation for step 4 when ordinary undies are worn.**

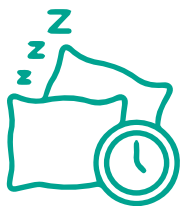




## Step 4 - Going into pants

(Do give us a shout if you need help)

- **Make sure everyone who looks after your child knows the plan** for the nappy coming off.
- Be prepared there may well be lots of accidents as your child starts to experience and need to respond to the sensation of weeing, so **have plenty of pants, changes of clothes, have protective covers for sofas, car seats, pushchair etc.** Puppy pads are often used by parents as cheap and easy to source.
- Time to take the nappy off during the day!
- **Keep taking your child to the toilet or potty at the times you were.** As time goes on you will be able to increase the timings between toilet trips.
- It can take a lot longer for your child to self-initiate - be able to tell you they need to wee or poo, so don't expect that to happen right away. A toilet picture, constant use of the toilet sign and using the words toilet/potty, wee and poo will help.



## Step 5 - Night time control

Becoming dry at night is a physiological process that unlike daytime dryness cannot be taught.

Some children will become dry at night spontaneously within a few months of being dry during the day.

Most children will be dry at night by the time they are 5 years old.





## Step 5 - Night time control cont.

If your child is still bedwetting beyond their fifth birthday and has been dry in the day for at least 6 months, then this is known as enuresis.

Enuresis is a medical condition which can and should be treated. Assessment and treatments are available for all children, including children with Down syndrome. Please seek advice at this stage.

## Further information

**Scan code to join toilet training for up to 5 years old Facebook group**



**Scan code to join toilet training for aged 5+ Facebook group**

