

Toileting Procedures for PreK Students

It's time to start a fresh year in Pre-K and I want to help your family have a successful experience. Many of our parents have questions concerning potty training expectations in our classes. Our Pre-K classrooms typically serve up to 22 four-year-old students and our PreK 3 classes serve up to 18 three-year-old students. All of our classes have a restroom in the classroom and students are allowed to use the restroom at ANY time. Students are never asked to wait unless there is another student in the restroom.

Does my child need to be potty trained to attend PreK? Will the PreK teacher train my child to use the potty?

While it is not mandatory that your child is potty trained to attend public PreK, your child should be potty trained by age 3. The teacher will not be spending individual time teaching potty training skills. While the teacher will set a schedule and encourage your child, the classroom teacher is responsible for the academic curriculum and assessment for a classroom of students. The aide in the classroom is there to assist when there are accidents; however, she is also responsible for giving academic support to students in small groups and stations. It is not possible to spend the amount of time that is necessary to potty train a student at school.

At what age should my child be potty trained?

At age three, most students are in the last phases of potty training as they learn to use unfamiliar facilities, adjust to the bathroom schedule, learn to wipe independently, and build confidence to tell the teacher when they need to use the bathroom. No matter where your child is on the potty training journey, we all need to work together to make your child's experience as smooth as possible.

When should the potty training journey begin?

As soon as your child is following one-step commands, using a small vocabulary, and curious about the toilet, it is important to begin the training while there is a positive and receptive attitude. Typically, this can gently occur as early as 11 months but, I suggest no later than 2 years. Of course, we are always mindful of meeting the needs of each individual little person! Just remember that waiting too long is going to make the process longer and more frustrating for you, your child, and your child's teacher.

What is the best clothing for potty training?

As your child is training, you will dress him/her in loose elastic waist pants that allow your child to be independent; however, please be sure to teach your child how to snap and zip pants before you send that little learner off to school. Our schools require

school uniforms and it can be challenging to find uniform pants with elastic. You can help little fingers strengthen by providing many tiny toy choices at home, like mini Legos and small stringing beads. Belts are cute, but they are often the cause of “not making it” in time or tears when kids are unable to fasten them. Please send in extra clothes. An accident happens to someone on a weekly basis as we all learn about each other’s needs and how to use new facilities. Your child will feel confident and cared for if the clothing preparations are in place.

How do you increase independence?

While at school, it is difficult for the teacher to stop what she is doing to assist your child every time he or she goes to the restroom, so it is important to teach independence. Once your child is using the potty, gently and slowly decrease your assistance. Choose one step and let your little one complete that step all by themselves, then move to another step when he/she feels success with that step. Gently lead your child to pull up the pants from bottom to waist, then from feet to waist, then pants and underwear, then pulling off the toilet paper, then wiping. It is important that your child is confident with wiping before coming to school. Start that training by at least age three. Confidence at the toilet is the key and it happens when you slowly add steps that your child does all alone. Encourage your preschooler to look at the teacher’s eyes, say her name and say in a confident voice “I need to use the bathroom, please.”