KidsInclusive EnfantsInclus
Centre for Child & Youth Development
Centre du développement des enfants et des adolescents

Kingston Health Sciences Centre
Centre des sciences de la santé de Kingston

Toilet Training

Toileting Training Prerequisites *(ErinoakKids – A Learning Journey – September 2007)*

- Child can remain dry consistently for two hours when awake
- Child is dry after naps
- Child's bowel movements are regular and predictable
- Child can give some indication when urination or a bowel movement is about to occur (e.g. facial expression, hiding, posture)
- Child can follow simple instructions
- Child is able to walk to and from the bathroom and pull up and down pants
- Child is uncomfortable in wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups

* use attached toilet training tracking sheet to record when your child is wet or dry to see if there is a pattern or length of time between eliminations

Creating a Toilet Training Routine

- Upon awakening, take your child to the bathroom to remove diaper/pull-up, sit on toilet and put on underwear
- Keep your child's bladder full by giving him/her as much fluid as you can throughout the day (called 'flooding')
- Start with taking your child to the bathroom every 20 minutes and have them sit on the toilet to try and eliminate
- When walking to the bathroom, start to use words or pictures such as, "pee" or "bathroom", so the child starts to understand/pair the use of the words with the routine and act of using the toilet/bathroom ("It's time to go pee")
- Start to increase the length of time between trips to the bathroom as your child can tolerate it and not experience accidents (e.g. if going every 30 minutes for 2-3 days with no accidents, increase the time to 45 minutes; then if no accidents for 2-3 days, increase to every 1 hour, etc.)
- The ultimate end goal is for your child to self-initiate when they need to go to the bathroom (e.g. child approaches you and says "pee" or "bathroom", then successfully eliminates on the toilet)

Use a Reinforcer

- Choose a highly preferred item that will only be used for toileting (e.g. M&Ms, iPad, cheesie, light up spinner)
- The reinforcer can only be used for toilet training and must deny access to this item at any other time
- Start by reinforcing your child for sitting on the toilet
- You can use toys, books, sing songs, etc. to keep them entertained while sitting

- Use social praise for sitting ("Good job sitting on the toilet", "Look at the big boy/girl sitting on the toilet", etc.) and encourage them to stay on the toilet for a reasonable amount of time (e.g. start with 15-20 seconds and build up a tolerance)
- If no elimination on the toilet - offer a smaller reinforcer (e.g. a mini M&M)
- When elimination happens…
    - If successful urination on the toilet, offer the highly preferred reinforcer (e.g. a regular M&M) and social praise ("Great job, you peed on the toilet!!")
    - If successful bowel movement on the toilet, offer a bit more of the reinforcer (e.g. 3 regular M&Ms) and social praise ("Wow, you went poop on the toilet!!")
    - In either scenario, provide it after the bathroom routine has been completed (pee, wipe, flush, wash hands reinforce); you can use social praise for the steps in between

Things to Consider

- Once you start a toileting routine, eliminate the diaper/pull-up completely (night training and bowel movements may take some additional time)
- If going somewhere that it is not acceptable to have an accident, put the diaper/pull-up over top of the underwear
- Remove the diaper/pull-up immediately upon arriving to the destination or leaving the situation where the diaper/pull-up was required
- 'Pee pads' can be purchased at grocery stores or larger box stores to help prevent couches or mattresses from getting wet/soiled

Accidents…oops!

- Remain calm and stay positive; this is a learning process and learning through mistakes can be an important tool
- Keep conversation to a minimum and do not give the child a lot of attention when cleaning up as we do not want to socially reinforce the accident
- After clean up, have the child sit on the toilet and explain to the child (in a calm and neutral tone) that we pee and/or poop on the toilet



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