



Potty Training 101

Things to Consider Before Beginning Potty-Training:

1. Your child's ability to communicate their toileting needs.
2. Sensory awareness.
3. Sensitivity to stimulation.
4. Ability to follow simple, routine-related directives.
5. Your child's ability to self initiate locomotion (preferred, but not necessary).
6. The ability to sit and hold their body in a basically upright position.
7. Ability to imitate.
8. Sequential learning.
9. Anxiety level.
10. Ability to generalize behavior to new situations.
11. Your child is no longer drinking bottles.

General Guidelines for a Potty-Training Program:

1. Consistency between home and school and across environments and caregivers is essential.
2. Everyone involved with the potty-training program should follow the same procedure.
3. Toilet-training can be frustrating and requires time and patience to be successful.
4. Use edible and social reinforcers. Edible reinforcers need to be specific to each child and according to their individual preferences. The selected edible reinforcer should **ONLY** be used for toilet-training. Social reinforcers should describe the child's behavior and include phrases such as, "Hooray! You did pee-pee on the potty!" or "Good sitting on the potty!" Social reinforcers may also include Hi-5's, hugs, kisses, clapping, etc.

Beginning a Toileting Program:

1. Collect baseline data to determine your child's elimination patterns.
2. Check your child's diaper every ½ hour over several hours for three (3) days. Indicate on the chart if the diaper is wet/dry/soiled. The program may be initiated when your child's diaper is dry for at least one hour.
3. Your child may begin to demonstrate awareness of bodily functions by verbalizing, hiding while eliminating, or tugging/pointing at their diaper when it is wet or soiled.

Materials:

1. A small potty-chair that will allow the child to put their feet flat on the floor (potty seats attached to toilets are not recommended).
2. Heavy cloth training pants. Pull-ups are not recommended.
3. Rubber pants at home and on the bus are acceptable.
4. Pants with elastic waistbands (i.e., sweat pants) that your child can easily pull up and take down.
5. A timer set at specific intervals to indicate when the child is to be brought to the potty.
6. Reinforcers (i.e., edibles, stickers, audio/video tapes) specific to your child's preferences to reward your child for appropriate pottying behaviors.
7. Toileting charts to collect baseline data and to monitor their progress.

Introducing the Potty:

1. Bring your child to the bathroom while saying, "Let's go potty."

2. Remove your child's diaper and verbally indicate to them if it is wet or dry. Sit your child on the potty.
3. Provide your child with edible and social reinforcers for sitting on the potty.
4. Increase the amount of time that your child can sit on the potty (i.e., 1 minute, 1 ½ minutes, 2 minutes, etc.) to a maximum of 5 minutes while using reinforcers. When your child can consistently sit on the potty, proceed to the Toilet Training Procedure.

Toilet Training Procedure:

1. Set the timer for 30 minutes. When the bell sounds, lead your child to the bathroom stating the designated phrase to describe the behavior (i.e., "Let's go pee-pee.")
2. Have your child remove their pants and diaper with as little assistance as possible. If the diaper is dry, provide an edible reinforcer while verbally reinforcing the behavior (i.e., "Your diaper is dry. Good staying dry!"). If the diaper is wet, say, "Your diaper is wet. We do pee-pee in the potty."
3. Place your child on the potty for one minute for each year of their age. Make sure that they are secure and that their feet are on the floor. Reinforce them with edible and social reinforcers. You may reinforce them by saying, "Good sitting on the potty."
4. While sitting, play games, read books, and sing songs to help your child relax.
5. Listen for the beginning stream of urination. As soon as urination begins, provide immediate edible and social reinforcement (i.e., "Hooray you are doing pee-pee on the potty!")
6. Chart each visit to the bathroom.
7. In between trips to the potty, do a dry pants check. If your child is dry, provide them with edible and social reinforcers. If the diaper is wet, say "Diaper is wet! We do pee-pee in the potty." Bring your child to the potty and repeat Step 2. Have the child sit for one minute.
8. When your child urinates every 30-45 minutes or stays dry and has few accidents in between, gradually increase the time in between trips to the bathroom.
9. Begin by increasing the interval by 15 minutes and continue to provide reinforcers until your child is time-toilet-trained for 2 ½ hours.

Training Pants:

1. The use of training pants should be initiated when your child eliminates on the potty 25% of the time.

2. Training pants should be used at all times, except when traveling, naptime, and bedtime.
3. When your child is dry 75% of the time, put your child in “Big boy/Big girl” underwear. Decorative underwear with favorite characters provide additional motivation to stay dry. When you are traveling or when your child is sleeping, place a pull-up on your child with their underwear over it. Upon reaching your destination or upon your child waking up, remove the pull-up and take him/her directly to the bathroom.

Self-Initiating:

1. All attempts to self-initiate (i.e., signing, verbalizing, going into bathroom) should be socially reinforced.
2. Watch the clock. If your child has not self-initiated after 2-2 ½ hours, take him/her to the bathroom.
3. Initially, self-initiation will occur infrequently. It will increase over time.

Fading Out Reinforcement:

1. Reinforce with a food reinforcer only when self-initiation occurs. Give smaller, less frequent food reinforcement, but continue to give social reinforcement.
2. Social praise and your physical presence in the bathroom should decrease in frequency and duration. Stand farther and farther away from the bathroom. Provide social reinforcers when your child has completed toileting.

Troubleshooting:

1. Refusing to go to the bathroom:
-Provide your child with edible reinforcers as they move closer and closer to the bathroom/potty.
2. “Jumps” off the potty:
-Time how long your child can sit on the potty. Gradually increase sitting intervals (i.e., 10 seconds, 15 seconds, 1 minute, 2 minutes, etc.) using social and edible reinforcers. When your child is able to sit on the potty for 2-3 minutes, decrease the amount and frequency of reinforcement for sitting. Begin the toileting program.

3. When asked, your child indicates that he/she does not have to go to the bathroom:
 - Do not ask. Say instead, "It's time to go potty."
4. Your child is restless while sitting on the potty:
 - Play games, sing songs, blow bubbles, etc. Involve your child in activities interesting to them.
5. Your family is active and is not home to adhere to the time schedule:
 - The use of a portable potty encourages success!
6. Your child is fearful of the adult-sized toilet:
 - A small child-sized potty is better when introducing potty-training. It will encourage self-initiation since your child will not need to climb onto it. It will also minimize gravitational insecurity.
7. Diaper is wet in between time intervals:
 - Take your child to the bathroom and have them assist in removing the soiled clothes. Say, "No pee-pee in diaper. You do pee-pee in the potty." Avoid physical punishment. Have your child sit on the potty for 1-3 minutes. Socially reinforce your child for sitting on the potty and for any additional elimination. Once re-dressed in dry clothes, provide verbal reminder to keep pants dry. When appropriate, have your child assist in wiping up a wet floor.
8. High frequency of wetting and low frequency of appropriate elimination:
 - Do dry diaper checks every 15 minutes. If the diaper is dry, say, "Good staying dry." Give social and edible reinforcers. Take your child to the bathroom on the time schedule. If there is no improvement, decrease the amount of time between trips to the potty to increase your child's rate of success.
9. Infrequent urination:
 - Increase the amount of fluid your child takes in throughout the day.
10. Your child will urinate on the potty, but will not have a bowel movement:
 - When you realize that your child is having a bowel movement, bring them to the bathroom and say, "We do poo-poo in the

bathroom," and allow them to complete their bowel movement in their diaper while squatting/standing in the bathroom.

-Gradually move your child to sitting on the toilet with a diaper to have a bowel movement.

-Begin to put your child on the toilet without a diaper for bowel movements.

-Provide social reinforcers for bowel movements made on the toilet.

Books of Interest:

1. "The Potty Train" by Hochman, Kennison, and Anderson
2. "Once Upon A Potty" by Alona Frankel
3. "The Potty Book" by Capucilli and Stott
4. "Toilet Training Children with Down Syndrome." (Special Needs: Realizing Potential): An article from Pediatric News by Nancy Grace
5. "Toilet Training for Individuals with Autism or Other Developmental Issues," 2nd Edition, by Maria Wheeler
6. "Toilet Training for Individuals with Autism & Related Disorders" by Maria Wheeler
7. "No More Diapers for Ducky!" by Bernette Ford and Same Williams
8. "Elmo's Potty Time"
9. "Sesame Beginnings: Potty Time! Book"

IPad Apps:

1. "Potty Training Story - Learning With The Animals"
2. "Potty Time"
3. "The Potty Show"
4. "Potty Baby"
5. "Potty Time With Elmo"
6. "I Have To Go!!!"
7. "Going Potty With The Wonkidos"
8. "The New Potty: A Little Critter Book"
9. "Once Upon A Potty" (Girl/Boy)
10. "Potty Training Time"
11. "Time To Potty"

Other Resources:

1. Elmo's Potty Time DVD
2. Bear in the Big Blue House - Potty Time With Bear
3. Go Potty Go!: Potty Training for Tiny Toddlers

