

# TEACHING TOILETING SKILLS TO THE YOUNG CHILD

By using some general guiding principles, by remembering that every child progresses at his own rate, and with your personal investment of time, patience, interest and a calm attitude, you will usually be successful. Toilet training is accomplished by the three R's:

**R**OUTINE

**R**EPETITION

**R**ELAXATION

## I. WHEN TO BEGIN?

The maturity of a child is very important when teaching toileting skills. Age is not the most important factor. Toilet training will be best accomplished when the child is developmentally physically and emotionally ready to start. Prior to starting, ensure the child is healthy before taking on this endeavor. Ensure the parents will also be supportive and a consistent plan is in place both at home and in child care. Discussions with parents prior to starting and clear contracts outlining toilet learning procedures will help ensure clear communication and expectations. Make sure all parties are on board and have the time to teach this skill.

## II. CHILD BEHAVIORS THAT MAY INDICATE THEY ARE READY:

### ➤ Physical Behaviors:

- The child stays dry for at least two hours during the day.
- The child wakes up dry from naps.
- The child will pee or poop regularly; before bath time, after meal, etc.
- The child may stop playing, moves to a certain place or squats in a quiet place.

### ➤ Cognitive Behaviors:

- The child is curious about how the body works.
- The child sees a connection between the body and the potty.
- The child understands the sequencing before, during and after the experience.
- The child comprehends the potty books and they are relevant to their actions.

### ➤ Social Behaviors:

- The child wants to follow others into the bathroom.
- The child imitates trying to use the toilet.
- The child enjoys helping others.

### ➤ Emotional Behaviors:

- The child is asking questions about pottyng.
- The child likes clean diapers.
- The child asks to be changed.
- The child is willing to sit still to master the task.

### ➤ Verbal Behaviors:

- The child knows their body parts by name.
- The child can follow simple two-step directions.
- The child can tell you what they need.
- The child has developed some independent skills.



### III. PREPARING THE CHILD FOR TOILET LEARNING:

- Familiarize the child with the toilet and toileting process.
- Familiarize the child with toilet terminology.
- Read appropriate books about toilet learning.
- Have children wear clothes that are easy to take off and to put on.
- Talk about it, talk about it, talk about it, talk about it.

### IV. GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Ensure the child is comfortable when using the toilet. Having the ability to place their feet on the floor will promote security. Potty chairs /smaller seat covers on toilet with stools may help.
- If you must go every 15 minutes to make it a success, that's what you need to do.
- Ensure the child is getting enough fluids and has a proper diet.
- Stay relaxed.
- Realize that it takes time and energy to master this process.
- Have good communication with all the individuals involved with the child so that everyone handles the process the same way. Consistent techniques, using the same language, and giving the same rewards to the child is important.
- Have plenty of training pants and clothing.
- Use training pants instead of diapers.
- Make sure the toilet is easily available.
- Rewarding progress is important. Praise, a smile, a loving pat, or hand clapping are all appropriate rewards well earned.
- Avoid power struggles. Give appropriate choices or ask questions.
- Reinforce all types of success.
- Minimize the accidents, they happen.
- Bowel training is usually the last to master.
- Teach the child to use toilet tissue, wiping from front to rear. It may be necessary to guide the hands at first. This is very important, particularly for girls, to avoid infection.
- End every toilet session with a regular routine of washing and drying hands.

### V. TOILET LEARNING BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

- Once Upon a Potty – Alona Frankel
- Everybody Poops – Taro Gomi
- Ian's Potty – Pauline Oud
- On Your Potty – Pauline Oud
- Ruby's Potty – Emma Rogers
- I want My Potty – Kane Miller
- Uh Oh Gotta Go – Bob McGrath

