

POTTY TRAINING

By, Monique Hudson, M.Ed.

Is it time for potty training...

Before you decide on potty training your child first decide whether the child is ready? Take the quiz below and if you find yourself saying TRUE to most of the questions, it may be a sign your child is ready.

If you are considering potty training your child at this time, take this quiz --- TRUE or FALSE: (adapted from article written by Joanna Mackenzie)

1. My child is dry at least two hours at a time, or is dry after nap each day.
2. My child's bowel movements are regular and predictable.
3. My child becomes uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers and asks for them to be changed.
4. My child asks to use the toilet or the potty chair.
5. My child asks to wear "grown-up underwear."
6. My child can pull his/her pants down and can walk to and from the bathroom.
7. My child can indicate when he/she is about to urinate or have a bowel movement.
8. My child knows when he/she needs to use the bathroom.

The next step is to talk with your child's primary caregiver. Find out what signs your child is showing at school that they may be ready to begin potty training. The teachers in the two and three year old classroom have assisted in potty training numerous children and are "Professional Potty Trainers".

The final step is deciding if you, the parents, are ready to take this leap. You have to be willing to commit to a full 10 days of your child being in underwear. That means there WILL be accidents. And there will be lots of laundry. It may take longer to go places and do things because of the frequent stops to the washroom. Don't worry; there are things you can purchase to make it a little easier. The child will not be successful if the parent is not fully committed to the process of potty training.

Okay, we are ready, now what?

Now you have decided your family is ready to start potty training. The first step is to get prepared. Read and sign the Toilet Learning Orientation. If you are concerned about things around the house and car getting wet, you can purchase waterproof pads from your local retail store that can cover car seats, couches, beds, etc. There are also plastic underwear that can go over regular underwear when you are out, to minimize the clean up.

We do not believe that wearing Pull-ups, Easy Ups, or any of the diaper type training pants are a useful or effective way to potty train a child. Pull-ups are just like diapers, they absorb causing children not to feel wet. We prefer that you supply regular, thin, cotton underpants. That way, the child is more aware when she or he has had an accident. Pull-ups can be used as “Bedtime underwear”. Staying dry through the night is usually the last thing to come.

Preparing my child for potty training...

Having your child involved in the whole process is the best way to go.

Decide how you will explain to your child that they will no longer wear diapers. The key is to get the diapers out of the house or at least out of the view of your child. Some families have the child bring all their diapers to a younger family member or neighbor’s house, or donate the diapers to charity, because they don’t need them anymore. Some families wait until the diapers are all out, and then tell the child there are no more diapers, and it’s time for them to wear big boy/girl underwear. Remember each child is different and you will know the best way to tell your child.

If you plan on using Pull-ups for bedtime we would suggest getting a design that your child has never seen before and calling them “bedtime underwear”.

The next step is involving your child in getting their new “Big Girl/Boy Underwear”. Take your child to the store and let them pick out the underwear. It helps them get excited and gives them ownership about the whole thing. Some children have come to school with their “Big Boy/Girl Underwear” in a gift bag and very excited to share.

Ready, Set, Go...

So you took the quiz, talked to everyone involved, read the orientation, got the underwear and everyone is ready. We suggest that you start on a weekend at home. Plan to spend the weekend in the house if possible. Put your child in underwear, show them where the potty is and tell them if they feel like the need to go potty to go in there. Keep the day low key. When your child has an accident simply bring them to the potty and remind them to go potty in there. Don’t make a big deal about accidents. Say something like “Oops. Remember your potty is over there. Go potty in there and you will stay dry.” You can have the child assist in the whole clean up to make the child more aware of what happened. Don’t get frustrated, or at least try not to show any frustration. This is your child’s issue not yours. This is something your child will have to work out on their own.

If starting potty training on a weekend at home it is not possible talk to your child’s primary teacher. We have had children who have started at school. Don’t worry about the mess of potty training at school. We have experienced lots of accidents and have no problem cleaning up behind accidents. Being a two and three year teacher means potty training.

If you have any further questions about potty training please see your child’s teacher.

Toilet Learning Orientation

Toilet learning should be a positive experience for a child. It should take only a short period of time, if the child is ready. Toilet learning is as individual as learning to walk. There is no right age by which all children should be using the toilet. Problems in toilet learning usually arise because adults do not pay attention to the child's lack of readiness.

We will try toilet learning with your child for 10 days. If the child shows no interest, is fearful, or showing no progress, your child will go back into diapers until we decide together that your child is ready to try again.

We're listing helpful hints of ways we can work together to minimize frustration and maximize success. Of course, *encourage your child, and continue the process at home.*

- Have your child wear loose-fitting clothing he or she can manage independently, such as elastic waist pants that are easy to pull up and down. Do not dress your child in overalls or t-shirts with snaps between the legs. Dresses are also not a good idea because the child cannot see to pull down pants.
- We prefer that you supply regular, thin, cotton underpants, rather than pull-up diapers. That way, the child is more aware when she or he has had an accident. Pull-ups are just like diapers, they absorb causing children not to feel wet.
- Please bring a bag with at least five pairs of extra clothes, including socks, *every day*. Label all clothing with the child's name. Bring an extra pair of shoes as well.
- Decide at the beginning if little boys will sit or stand.
- Have your child start wearing underwear at home the weekend before we initiate it here. *By all means, continue the program at home, having the child wear underwear rather than diapers.* If you feel you need to, the child can wear a diaper at night, but first you must try getting the child up once during the night to go to the bathroom.
- Here, we have the bathroom available at all times, both for easy access and to encourage the child's interest, seeing other children use the toilet. The child goes to the potty with a buddy for positive reinforcement.
- The child will be told, "It's time to go potty now" (or whatever term you prefer) every 30 to 45 minutes the first and second week, as necessary.
- Unfortunately, because of health regulations, teachers cannot wash out soiled clothes. We will put them in a plastic bag for you to take home and wash.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Caregiver Signature _____ Date _____

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