

## A19 – Toilet training

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**Aim:** to support the child with achieving increasingly independent responses by providing a structure to help them achieve increasing tolerance and acceptance of unfamiliar or new tasks, and help them to identify their position and what they need to do.

**Start to prepare them by teaching them about the process.**

- Use words to express the act of using the toilet eg 'pee', 'poop', and 'potty'.
- Ask the child to let you know when a nappy is wet or soiled or Identify behaviours, say, "Are you going poop?" so that they can associate with the urge to go to the toilet or potty.
- Get a stable potty chair or a seat infill to reduce the aperture of the toilet pan and practice sitting. At first the child can sit on it with their clothes or pad on, and when ready, the child can go bare-bottomed.
- Encourage the child to attend to toileting with their peers, to observe the independence being followed in the general process, while you support them in developing use of the toilet.
- Establish a routine time for sitting after meals to take advantage of the body's natural tendency to have a bowel movement after eating (this is called the **gastro-colic reflex**).
- Establish a regular time of day when they tend to have a bowel movement, to follow their lead at key times.
- Make sure the child is wearing suitable simple pull up clothes for ease of training.
- If the child is independence in dressing, this will allow them to have better control over what they can do to help, and to build their confidence and self-esteem.
- Make sure that everyone supporting the child – not only the parents, but babysitters and grandparents - follow the same routine. Let them know how you're addressing the issue and ask that they use the same approaches so the child won't become confused.

Above all, be sure to praise the child's attempts to use the toilet, even if nothing happens. And remember that accidents **will** happen. It's important **not** to show disappointment when they wet or soil themselves. Instead, tell them that it was an accident and offer your support.

Be prepared to **allow the child to adapt** to their own methods or preferred way of doing things eg, how they choose to get on or off the toilet, to prepare their clothing or to stabilise themselves when seated.

**Equipment:** to give them the opportunity to feel positive and take some control of the task in organising what is needed and use of equipment.

- If the child has poor balance and stability, ensure they have a simple grabrail at an appropriate height, to stabilise transfers on or off the toilet and for sitting.
- A bath step may be required to support under their feet for improved stability and assist with evacuation of bowels. [www.nrs-uk.co.uk](http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk)
- Surgical gloves may be useful for the child to wear, if they are tactile intolerant, to support them in wiping themselves.

## **Strategies that may help toileting skill achievements**

- Describe what you are doing each time throughout the toileting process.
- Encourage them to assist you by pulling up or down pants and praise their achievements
- Try to use the same routine each time to reinforce their understanding and learnt concepts.
- If appropriate, create a visual system to let the child know the step or sequence of steps to completing the goal. Help them understand how long to sit (sing potty song, length of one song on tape player, set timer one minute, etc).
- Give advance warning of flush, setting up flushing cue system, such as 'ready, set, go' and allow them to flush.
- Assisted handwashing process to finish the task.

**Frequency of use:** Time between attending the toilet to be at least one and a half hours.