



## TOILET TRAINING READINESS

**Learning to use the toilet is an exciting time for toddlers and parents. It's a partnership, you and your child working together to achieve an important milestone in both your lives.**

The great news is : - toilet training is skill that needs to be developed like any other. You and your child are already good at this! Already, your child has learnt many things – how to eat, to walk, to gain your attention....All of those skills are learnt In the same way, following the same process – and it's the same process that you are still following when you are learning new things too.

- We model – watching and copying
- We get curious and ask questions
- We try it out
- We get good at it

**Preparation is critical so before you and your child begin the actual training, lets look at the toilet training continuum.....**

# **THE TOILET TRAINING CONTINUUM**

## **THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY – BIRTH TO 2.5 YEARS**

### **YOUR CHILD – NAPPIES TO UNDIES**

#### **STAGE 1 SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS WATCH ME 0-18/24 Months**

Learning by

- Copying
- Watching
- Being involved

#### **STAGE 2 ACTIVE CURIOSITY SHOW AND TELL – 18/24 months-20/26**

Learning by:

- Watching and listening
- Asking questions
- Recognising what their body is telling them
- Wanting to know more about their body and yours

#### **STAGE 3 SKILL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT - 20/26months – 3.5 years**

Learning by:

- Trial and error
- Having accidents
- Asking for help
- Mastering in familiar environments

#### **STAGE 4 SKILL MASTERY EVERYWHERE/EVERYTIME 2 years onwards**

Learning by:

- Practice
- Transferring their skill to everywhere

### **PARENTS – HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Be your child's role model  
Normalise going to the toilet  
Be positive about the toilet and going to the toilet  
Create good fluid habits

Set the scene – create the environment for success  
Answer questions positively  
Encourage awareness of 'going to the toilet' signals  
Familiarise your child with the toilet  
Recognising that your child is physically ready

Create a no fuss environment  
Let your child 'have a go'  
Move from nappies to undies  
Recognise accidents are part of skill development  
Support and encourage success

Trust your child and accept that mishaps occasionally happen  
Seek help from a continence specialist if your child has regular accidents  
Now it's time to start thinking about night time.

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**Are they ready?**

**Are you ready?**

**What does readiness look like**

**Lets Explore to Be Sure**

Stage 1 and 2 of the toilet training continuum introduce your child to toileting as a normal, everyday occurrence. Its something everyone does and they too will be able to be in control of their own body, to tune in, to understand and connect signals and then make the appropriate decision. This awareness starts early in a child's life.

The training and trialing stage is another step towards independence and there can be lots going on!!! Its best to begin stage 3 when you can provide support to your child and when the child and the family doesn't have any additional pressures to cope with – like a new brother or sister, or beginning childcare.

As we know, every human being is unique. Some children find some skills easy to develop and others struggle with different skills. We can't predict which ones a child will master quickly and which skills will present the greatest challenge. However we do know that matching how we train with how the child best learns will ensure a positive journey for the child. You can make a huge difference to your child through the choices you make and by being supportive and encouraging all the time, every time!

It can be hard for parents to watch their child struggle, not have instant success – remember it is training and eventually all children master it. It's just another step, just another learning process for your child and you are a critical partner in their success.

Research suggests that the 'best' time to train most children is between two years and two and a half years. This window presents as the most successful time for children to try and train.

**So how will you know when to begin the trying and training stage.....**

Your child will give you a number of clues to say, **Its time and I'm ready...**

These clues can be:

### Physical Readiness

What's happening for your child	What can you do
<p>Your child will be able to hold onto their wee for longer periods of time (at least one to two hours.) Your child will start to show signs that they know when they need to poo such as going to a private place to poo. Your child is able to pull their pants up and down</p>	<p>You can start recognizing the daily patterns of your child's toileting. Are they able to hold on? Dressing your child in more appropriate clothing to encourage independence - buckles and buttons may not help. Encouraging your child to go into the toilet room as their private place to poo rather than behind the couch as this helps them to learn where it is appropriate to go for the toileting process.</p>

### Language

What's happening for your child	What can you do
<p>Your child will develop language around toileting. They will begin to tell you they are doing, have done or are about to do wee or poo. They are telling you that they recognize that this is an event and they have a feeling that it's important. They begin to recognize the signals from their body.</p>	<p>Teach them the words they need to communicate with you about their actions. Your job here is to provide positive feedback, lots of praise because they can recognize what their body is telling them and the fact that they have told you. You can also help by linking physical feeling with wee and poo. You can say - <i>I think you are doing a wee or poo</i> when you recognize signals by the child - a scrunched up face, grunting, fidgeting, crossing their legs, hiding. Then you talk about the next step - connecting the signals and taking action.</p>

### Curiosity

What's happening for your child	What can you do
<p>Your child may begin to be very curious about toilets, what happens in them and the body parts involved.</p>	<p>It's time to provide the equipment that they will need and let them help you put it in place - a potty or seat for the toilet (with a step), let them put the potty where they would like it to be. Let them explore sitting on it with their nappy on or let teddy or dolly sit on it. Let them go with you to the toilet and encourage them to ask questions and flush the toilet. Changing your child's nappies in the toilet room or near the toilet will also help your child to know where the wee or poo need to go.</p>

## Physical Discomfort

What's happening for your child	What can you do
Your child may begin to recognize that they don't actually enjoy the feeling of a wet or soiled nappy. You'll notice them pulling at their nappy	You need to make sure that going to the toilet is as easily accessible as possible. Leave the door open or the potty available. Make sure your child has clothing that is easy to get on and off. You may choose to leave pants or nappies off if the weather is warm, this may mean your child can reach the toilet in time as they don't need to remove clothes.

**This preparation will maximize success for the child in the skill development stage.**

### Stay away from

- Setting a date for success, it will take as long as it takes
- Expectations that other people create, listen to your child not people who are not involved

### Some more resources

Check out our **Top 10 Tips for Toilet Training** and our series of eBooks at [www.toilettrainingeducators.com.au](http://www.toilettrainingeducators.com.au)