



## TOILET TRAINING

### WHEN TO TOILET TRAIN

Before your child can be successfully toilet trained, there are certain physical things he must be able to do and certain ideas he must understand. Children are able to do these things at different ages but the usual time is between 2-3 years. Do not try to introduce toilet training at the same time other major changes are happening in your household, such as a new baby, moving or mother going back to work.

### PHYSICAL SKILLS REQUIRED

- Be able to walk well
- Be able to sit down and get up alone
- Can pull clothing up and down
- Can control sphincter muscles — is able to stay dry for several hours.

### IDEAS UNDERSTOOD

- Can understand simple questions and directions
- Can let you know he has soiled his pants
- Has trust in his mother/father and wants to please
- Has a sense of independence and wants to try to do things for himself
- Feels proud of being able to do a task.

### SUGGESTIONS

1. Put a potty chair in the bathroom and introduce it as your child's own. Let him sit on it with his clothes on. Sit with your child awhile and read a book, etc. Make the association for your child between the regular toilet and his potty chair.
2. It may be helpful to obtain a book at your library or bookstore about a small child using a potty. Read the book often so your child will identify with the child in the story.
3. After he has become familiar with the potty-chair, ask him to sit on it without his diapers at the time a regular bowel movement is expected (often after meals). Do not expect him to sit more than 5-10 min.
4. If step 3 is accepted, you may increase to 2-3 times a day. If successful, introduce underwear that your child can manage to get up and down alone.
5. Ask your child every hour to urinate in the potty, gradually lengthening the time as your child gains more control. After a few months, your child should go to the potty without being asked.
6. This should not become a battleground between you and your child. **If the above does not work, forget it for a few weeks and try again. Most parents try to potty train too early. I think the best age is 2 years 4 months** for the average child. If you do no training, most children will potty train themselves at age 3-3.5 years through imitation.
7. If your child begins "stool holding behavior" that is creating large, hard stool with painful defecation, put him back in diapers and tell him it's his choice, he can poop when he wants to poop.