



TOILET TRAINING

WHEN TO TOILET TRAIN

Before your child can be successfully toilet trained, there are certain physical things he or she must be able to do and certain ideas he or she must understand. Children are able to do these things at different ages but the typical age range is 2-3 years old. 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 a parent 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 or she has soiled his or her pants
- Has trust in his or her mother/father and wants to please
- Has a sense of independence and wants to try to do things for himself or herself
- Feels proud of being able to do a task

SUGGESTIONS

- Put a potty chair in the bathroom and introduce it as your child's own. Let him or her sit on it with his or her clothes on. Sit with your child awhile and read a book, etc. Make the association for your child between the regular toilet and his or her potty chair.
- 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.
- After he or she has become familiar with the potty chair, ask him or her to sit on it without his or her diaper at the time a regular bowel movement is expected (often after meals). Do not expect him or her to sit more than 5-10 minutes.
- If the previous step 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- If your child begins "stool holding behavior" (creating large, hard stool with painful defecation), put him or her back in diapers and tell your child that it is his or her choice to poop when he or she wants to poop.