

Toilet Readiness Training

Definition

- Readiness training means preparing your child for later potty training. It increases his or her chances of success.
- Readiness training means teaching your child about pee and poop. This can start at 18 months of age or earlier.

Health Information

Toilet Readiness Training

- You can help your child become ready to potty train by teaching them some special skills. You've taught your child other skills like getting dressed or using a spoon. Toilet training readiness is no different.
- Readiness training can easily happen every day as part of your normal routines.
- Remember: Readiness doesn't just happen. You need to be your child's teacher.
- Start your teaching at 18 months or earlier. Don't wait until some later time.
- Don't begin real toilet training until your child is clearly ready.
- Diapers or pullups: consider keeping your child in diapers while you are teaching readiness. Save pullups until you start real toilet training (practice runs). They can remind your child that a new stage has begun.

Care Advice

1. **At 18 Months - Begin Teaching about Pee, Poop and How the Body Works:**
 - Teach the vocabulary (pee, poop, potty, clean, messy, etc.). Use these words often.
 - Clarify that everyone makes pee and poop.
 - Point out when dogs or other animals are going pee or poop.
 - Refer to pee and poop as the body's normal trash. Do not refer to poop as dirty or yucky stuff.
 - Clarify the body's signals of a full bladder or rectum when you observe them. When your child paces, dances, crosses their legs, or pulls at their pants, explain this to them. Tell them that "the poop (or pee) wants to come out".
 - Make changing diapers pleasant for your child
 - Teach your child to come to you whenever they are wet or soiled and need to be changed.
2. **By 21 Months - Begin Teaching about the Toilet:**
 - Teach that the toilet is a special place. It is where everyone puts their pee and poop.
 - Demonstrate by dumping poop from diapers into the toilet.
 - Present using the toilet as a privilege.
 - Have your child watch you and toilet-trained children using the toilet. Prevent confusion by having Dad and any older brother sit down when they pass urine.
 - Allow him to sit on the potty chair when others use the toilet.
 - Show them all the toilets in other settings, such as stores and friends' homes.

3. **After 21 Months - Begin Teaching about the Potty Chair:**
 - After your child understands the toilet, buy them a small stand-alone potty chair. Make sure it is stable.
 - Tell them it is a little toilet for kids.
 - Let them play with it any way they like. Put their picture on it.
 - After a few days, put the potty chair in the bathroom.
 - Allow your child to sit on the potty chair when others use the toilet.
 - Don't allow sitting on it in diapers or pull-ups. Teach that when sitting on the potty, we take off our underwear (bare-bottom). This may take some extra encouragement and time.
 - Have them watch playmates and cousins use a potty chair. Young kids admire older children and like to copy their behavior.

4. **By 2 Years - Consider using Some Teaching Aids:**
 - Read potty learning books and watch potty learning videos.
 - Have your child pretend to train a doll or stuffed animal on the potty chair.
 - Potty Duck is a toy that can make potty training fun and faster. See www.pottyduck.com
 - Present underwear as a privilege. Buy special underwear. Let your child be involved in picking them out. Keep it in a place where the child can see it.

5. **Your Child is Ready to Start Real Toilet Training If:**
 - Your child knows the sensation of a full bladder and full rectum. Hiding to go pee or poop proves they recognize this urge and can wait briefly.
 - Can go 2 or more hours without passing urine. Waking up dry from naps is a good sign.
 - Poops are formed and passed 3 or less times per day.
 - Comes to you to be changed to a clean diaper.
 - Your child knows what the toilet and potty chair are used for.
 - Your child likes to sit on the potty chair.
 - Your child likes to please you and is cooperative with most verbal requests.
 - Now it's time to start real toilet training.
 - That means potty sits (practice runs) whenever you think your child might need to go. Be sure to keep it positive and upbeat. For details, see the handout, "Toilet Training: Normal".

Call Your Doctor If

- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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