Toilet Training: Children With Communication Difficulties
Change the child in the toilet/bathroom where possible, so that they learn to associate toileting with the specific area.

Generally, potty training is established on faeces before urine.

Choose to use either the potty or toilet. Get a child’s toilet seat and stool if necessary. If a child is already used to one style, e.g. at nursery, use the same at home if possible.

Look out for changes in behaviour at the time when a child is filling their nappy e.g. straining, crouching, moving to a corner of the room, so you can plan when the best time of day to put them on the potty is.

Try and change a child as soon as this behaviour is noticed/nappy filled so that they understand the link between their bodily feelings and the routine.
- Place the contents of the nappy down the toilet, and encourage the child to flush, wash hands etc. If possible let the child see others use the toilet at home.

- Try and sit the child on the toilet/potty 2 or 3 times a day initially. Praise them for sitting, even if only a few seconds e.g. clapping, bubbles, a favourite toy. Don’t leave a child on the potty/toilet for more than 5 minutes.

- Use an object of reference to show that you are going to move to the toilet/bathroom e.g. small taped down toilet roll (not nappy). This can be left around in case they use it to indicate their needs.

- Make sure that the potty training happens after an event, and that you establish a routine with sitting on the toilet/potty e.g. after they get up, after lunch, after bath at night.

- Where possible, let other carers and nursery know of your routine e.g. changing in bathroom, sitting on toilet after lunch etc.
Do not move too quickly with potty training. It is better to go at a slower pace, and build up than push a child before they are ready.

Set yourself goals that you can achieve, it is better to have a routine that is stuck to (e.g. only once or twice a day) than an ambitious scheme that will not be carried through consistently. Your routine can always be extended.

Do not move your child out of nappies before you have seen some success on the potty.

It may be necessary to keep your child in nappies at night for quite a while after potty training has been established in the day.

Created by
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