

Basic rules to remember:

- Start when your **child is ready**.
- **Never force you child** to use the potty.
- **Take your time** in toilet training.
- Remember that **every child and family has their own way** of doing things.
- **Keep positive** – give your child lots of praise for successes
- **Don't blame your child** for accidents.

If you would like further help in managing your child's head banging, then speak to your GP or Health Visitor. You can also contact First Steps directly, where there are Child Clinical Psychologists who are here to help;

For more information, help, and advice, please contact:

First Steps
Early Intervention & Community Psychology Service

Hackney Ark
Downs Park Road
London E8 2FP
Tel: 020 7014 7135
Fax: 020 7014 7251

Further information is also available at:

www.enuresis.org.uk
<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

If you have any issues or concerns please contact:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service
(PALS): 020 8510 7315/7728

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Clinical Psychologists
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Tips for toilet training and managing toileting problems

An information leaflet for parents



Incorporating hospital and community health services, teaching and research



This leaflet aims to help parents to toilet train young children. Here we answer your questions and give top tips. Please talk to a member of our team if you have any other questions.

When should I start toilet training my child?

There is wide variation in the age that children become toilet-trained, even in the same family. Toilet training will only be successful when a child is ready! If your child shows signs of readiness you can begin toilet training about 2½ years. Most children learn bowel control before they learn to control their bladder. Start this training when you have the time and patience and don't have too many other family pressures.

Signs of Readiness - look for when your child:

- Can stay dry for three hours or more
- Recognise the signs that he or she has to go
- Can pull their pants down and up by him or her self
- Seems interested or motivated to become potty trained
- Is imitating others going to the bathroom
- Can follow simple instructions.

How should I start toilet training?

In the weeks before you start toilet-training, take your child with you to the toilet or leave the bathroom door open. Explain what you are doing. Many parents choose to start toilet-training with a potty, because it is portable for use without much notice! Praise any interest your child shows in the potty or toilet. Some children might refuse to sit on the toilet. Keep tension to a minimum. Ignore any rebellion, and if necessary stop attempts to toilet-train. You can gradually try again when they are more ready.

There will probably be some setbacks. It is important not to tell your child off for accidents. Try to stay calm and positive.

Top Tips

- Dress your child in clothes that are easy to pull up and down.
- Try to sit your child on a potty or toilet a few times a day for five to ten minutes. Try to do this after meal or drink times.
- Some children need to build up to using the potty gradually. Try praising for sitting for a few seconds while fully clothed, then for a few minutes, then for sitting bare-bottomed.
- If your child seems to be scared of sitting on the toilet, try using a trainer seat and foot support.
- Praise your child every time he or she uses the toilet or potty, even if it was just a fluke.
- You may want to dress your child in normal pants, or let them play outside with few clothes in the summer. This helps them to learn the difference between wet and dry.
- Make sure your child knows he or she can ask for help to use the toilet if they need it.

What about night time?

The best time to withdraw the night-time nappy is when there have been several dry nights in a row – this may be a long time after your child is dry in the day. Praise your child when they have a dry night and do not make a big deal when they are wet. Children generally enjoy earning stickers for dry nights on a wall-chart.

How can I deal with any problems?

Wetting and soiling are common in young children. It doesn't mean they need to go back to using nappies.

If you continue to have difficulty with toilet training, check with your GP that your child is not constipated and doesn't have diarrhoea or a urinary problem.