

TOILET TRAINING BASICS

Toilet training is one of those things that everyone hopes will go smoothly, but usually they have little idea as to how to make that happen. There seems to be a crucial age—roughly between 18 and 24 months when the child becomes aware enough of his bodily functions to notice a relationship between things like urinating and feeling wet afterwards. Generally, a child is between 2 and 2 ½ when training is begun but there are children who are not ready until closer to 4 years old. It is a developmental task, and your child needs to be ready physically, emotionally, & neurologically before this task can be accomplished.

REMEMBER...NO PARENT CAN TOILET TRAIN A CHILD UNTIL THE CHILD IS WILLING TO BE TRAINED!

So, the first things to look for are signs of readiness.

- Physical maturation of the muscles necessary for sphincter control as evidenced by walking well.
- Shows obvious discomfort when in soiled diapers, can locate pain & is developing some coordination.
- Can follow simple directions & uses language to make her needs known.
- Can anticipate & postpone events in his daily life.
- No new stresses are present.
- There are primary caretakers present in her life to provide approval & attention.

Once the above indicators are present, then there are things to do before the actual training begins:

- Have him observe others in the bathroom.
- Have the potty chair or insert ring for the toilet available & visible.
- Take her with you to purchase training pants.
- Create a name for urine & feces. Name these for him so that he has the appropriate words to use.
- She will start using those words to identify when she is urinating or defecating.
- **Punishment has NO place in toilet training!**

REMEMBER...THIS IS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY TASKS THAT YOUR CHILD IS ATTEMPTING TO MASTER AT THIS AGE. BE UNDERSTANDING OF FREQUENT LAPSES.

- As your child is closer to being ready to be trained, you will notice more dry periods during the day. You may also notice a pattern to his defecation—very often after a snack or meal.
- Dress her in clothing that is easy to remove.
- Initially, boys may prefer to sit backward on the toilet seat to urinate.
- Nighttime control follows success with daytime control.

REMEMBER...SUCCESS DEPENDS TO A GREAT DEGREE ON PARENTS' POSITIVE ATTITUDES & PATIENCE IN FOLLOWING THROUGH AND HELPING THE CHILD

If you try potty training & it isn't going well, put the child back into diapers for a few weeks & ignore the issue. Then, when the 'heat' has been off for a while, try again. Restricting fluids, waking the child at night & placing the child on the toilet for long periods of time really are very ineffective. Don't make this a battle; it's not worth it! Back off!