

Toilet Learning in the Toddler Community

The toilet learning process happens during a sensitive period for toddlers. When we begin preparing children whom we feel are ready to begin the toilet learning process we collaborate and discuss the next steps with parents to work together as a team. Some of the factors that play apart in deciding if your child is physically, emotionally, and developmentally ready for toilet learning are:

- Eagerness to toileting practices
- Pulling pants up and down
- Frequent dry diapers
- Enthusiasm and happiness within the process

When your child begins to show interests in this process, the teacher will speak to you directly. In the beginning stages we always suggest that you begin adding morning and night time toileting to your daily routine. In the morning when your child wakes up allow him to sit on the toilet, then at night during the bedtime or bath time routine allow him to sit on the toilet.

Once your child transitions to underwear we eliminate diapers/pull-ups completely in the classroom. We ask that you do the same at home. Essentially, your child is training his bladder and bowels, pull-ups are counterproductive to this natural process. We observe your child's toileting patterns and follow a toileting schedule to help avoid accidents. Please be mindful that accidents are normal. We ask that you send your child to school with several changes of clothes that are easy for him to pull up and down on his own, this supports independence and ensures success in the toileting process.

We look forward to partnering with you on this journey of toilet learning!

Let's do this!

Keep in mind that toilet learning takes practice, enthusiasm, and consistency.

Cotton underwear at all times is best – even during sleep and travel.

Day and night training are best completed at one time. Day training in isolation will lead to more accidents, possible power struggles, and confusion for your toddler.

Tips:

- Remember that your child is learning a new skill. Mastery will vary for every child. Mastery depends more on your parental consistency and attitude than on your child's abilities.
- We are retraining the bladder to empty out completely and empty out at one time.
- Pay attention to your child's habits and nonverbal cues. Children will show us in many different ways that the bladder is full (fidget, grab, cannot sit comfortably).
- Have fun with your child picking out the underwear.
- In the beginning, do not expect your child to tell you when he has to go – this will come later, much later.
- Watch fluid intake. This is a good time to wean from any bottle habits, especially before bed at night.
- It's a good idea to slow the family social life down a bit (just for a couple of weeks). Let your child practice this new skill in a calm, familiar environment.
- Keep in mind that ALL caregivers of your child need to be "on the same page".

Process:

- Parents and caregivers initiate the process by encouraging a sitting routine (about once/hour).
- Dress your child minimally and for independent dressing.
- Parents and caregivers support the training by assisting when and where necessary.
- Observe your child's elimination habits – document if necessary.

- Always sit your child on the toilet after an accident. Most children will stop themselves when they have an accident, so there is still more to empty into the toilet.

What you need to get started at home:

1. A child friendly toileting environment → Small potty, insert for adult toilet with stool, or travel toilet (for public use)
2. Access → Ensure that your toddler can get to the toilet on their own and make clean clothes accessible for changing in case of accidents.
3. A bed → Cribs hinder the child from going to the toilet independently. Simplify the bedding; strip the bed down to the bare minimum. (Hospital grade wet pads are great for mattress protection)

Clothing:

- Bottoms with elastic waist bands pull up and down with ease.
- Rubber shoes are easily cleaned after accidents.
- Several changes of underwear

Exposure:

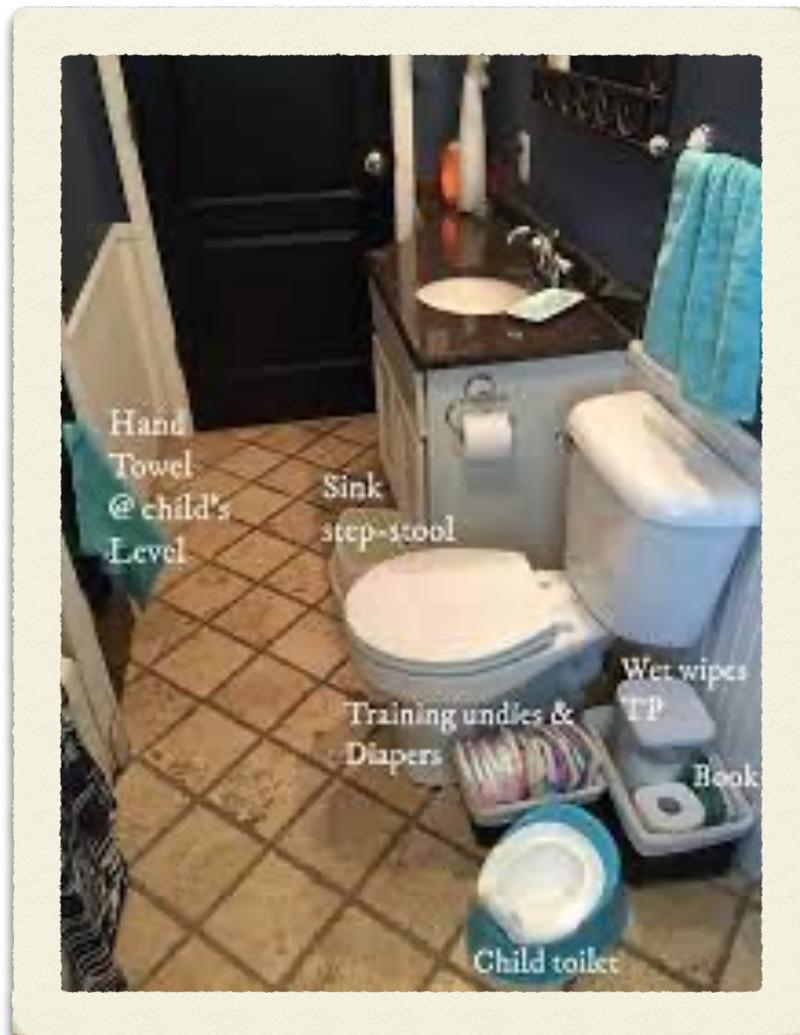
- Modeling by parents and siblings
- Sitting on the toilet at common sense intervals (bath time, meal time, travel times) *Never force a child to sit on the toilet
- Encourage independent dressing practices

You got this! Let's go!

The Prepared Environment

What you need at home for independence in the bathroom:

- Make every bathroom in your home easily accessible
- Child's size toilet or toilet seat and step-stool for adult toilet
- Clean underwear in a basket next to toilet
- A hamper for soiled clothes
- Toilet paper and wipes within the child's reach
- A step-stool for the sink
- Soap for hand washing
- A hand towel at child's level



Toileting Bootcamp

First, hunker down at home. Make sure you have limited outside plans and that your child is healthy and well-rested. Don't go **ANYWHERE** for 3 to 5 days. I won't lie to you, the first couple of days are going to be difficult. You will question yourself and wonder if you should just give up and wait a few more months before trying again. **DON'T QUIT.** You both can do it.

Next, take your child's diaper off and put on those special undies you two picked out together. Make a big deal about the undies. Talk about the characters on them. Remind your child that "*You don't want Mickey Mouse to get wet!*" Tell them that they can keep their undies dry by running to the toilet when they have to pee.

In the beginning, take your child to the toilet every 30 to 45 minutes. You can read a book on the toilet to try to spend a little more time there, but **never force it.** Elimination is one of the few things toddlers have control over, and trying to force the issue could result in your child becoming sick from holding it in. Sometimes they will refuse to sit on the toilet when you tell them to — that's fine. Your child may have an accident, or they may know their body and ask to go sit when they really have to go.

When your child successfully eliminates on the toilet, talk about your observations. What did it sound like when she peed/pooped on the toilet? What color was it? Use real, grown-up terms when discussing these things — your child doesn't need to be baby-talked.

What about when your child has an accident? Your child will have many, many accidents. **DON'T GIVE UP.** The first time they have an accident, show them how to change themselves. Have the child sit on the toilet to see if there's any more. Show the child how to clean up the accident on the floor. This allows the child to take ownership of the elimination process and provides more motivation to use the toilet instead. If the child has a poop accident, dump the poop into the toilet — that's where it belongs. After about three days of consistently following these steps, your child will have fewer and fewer accidents and be more successful on the toilet! Having accidents is completely normal. Don't berate your child for accidents or punish them — just use the natural consequence of having to clean up the accident and change their own clothes.

We do day and night training together. It will take time before your child stays consistently dry throughout the night. A good practice is to wake your child to use the toilet during the night to keep them dry, instead of using a diaper (pull-up).

That's it! This method works well both in the classroom and at home. You got this! And we got you!