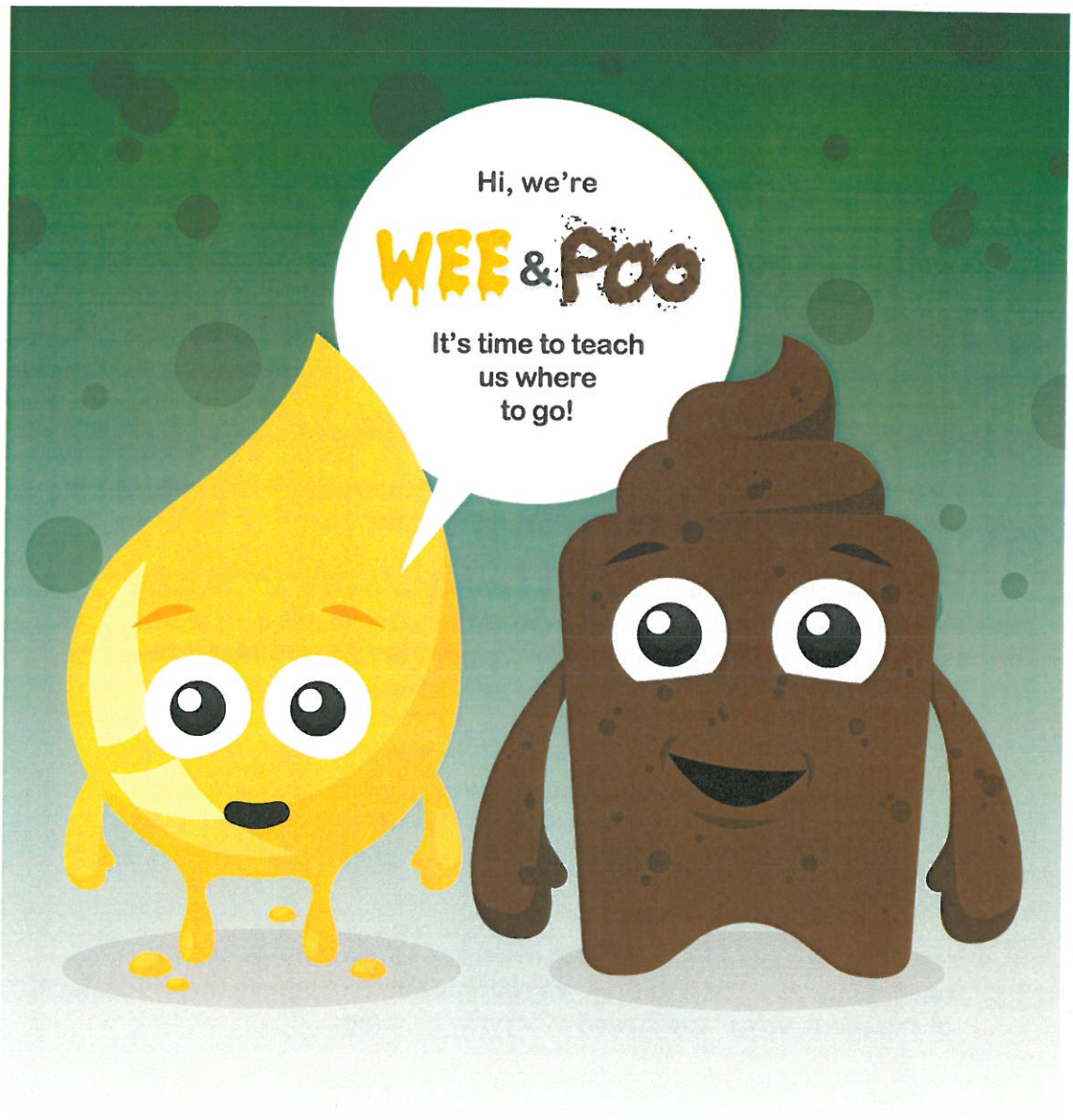
ERIC's Guide to Potty Training

eric
Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence

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How do you know when to start?

- Every child is different – they learn to walk and talk at different times, and to be clean and dry at different times. You know your child best so don't feel that you have to start potty training just because other people are!

- Choose the right time not only for your child but for you too...if you're busy with a new baby or moving house then potty training is not a good idea! Check with other people who look after your child – it's important everyone does the same thing so they need to be ready too.

- Children are ready for potty training between about 18 months and 3 years old. They need to be physically ready – able to sit themselves on the potty and get up when they've finished – and mature enough to follow instructions and communicate with you.

- Get tuned in to your child's wee and poo habits:

  - Do they poo at about the same time(s) every day? This will help you to know good times to sit on the potty.

  - How often are they doing a wee? Babies do lots of little wees, but as the bladder develops it learns to store more so toddlers do fewer, bigger wees. If their nappy can stay dry for an hour or two they should be able to keep their new pants dry for a while.

  - Today's disposable nappies soak up the wee really well. If it's hard to tell when they've done a wee, try putting some folded kitchen paper inside the nappy as this will stay wet. As well as informing you this might also help your child to associate weeing with being wet.

- If they are beginning to show some signs of awareness of when they have done a wee or poo they are recognising the signals their body is giving them, so get them ready for potty training...

Getting ready



Get your child involved with the nappy changing process. Change them standing up, get them to help with their clothing and when you've finished wash your hands together.

Get your child motivated! Plan a reward system like a sticker chart. Catch their interest by rewarding simple things like getting themselves dressed and washing their hands.

Talk about wee and poo... or whatever you prefer to call them.

Choose the terms you want to use and ask everyone who looks after your child to use them.

Tell your child if their nappy is wet or dry when you change them; talk about the wee and/or poo it contains.

Other people in the family do it too! Encourage members of the family to leave the bathroom door open and allow your child to know what they are doing. Children learn by watching what we do and copying.

Read some picture books together – there are lots available from the ERIC shop, like *How to Potty Train* by Judith Hough and Diane Titterton.

Sort out wee and poo in the bathroom! Help your child to associate wee and poo with the toilet by always changing their nappies in the bathroom, emptying poo into the toilet, flushing it away etc.

Talk to your Health Visitor and/or staff at your local Children's Centre. They will be able to give you advice about potty training, and to let you know of any parenting groups that you could attend.

Children with Special Needs can often be potty trained too. Go to *www.promocon.co.uk*, look in the publications section and read their leaflet *Toilet Training Children with Special Needs*. You'll want to plan carefully and prepare thoroughly.

Education and Resources
for Improving Childhood Continence

For information and support on bedwetting, daytime wetting, constipation and soiling and potty training call ERIC's Helpline on 0845 370 8008

Email
helpline@eric.org.uk

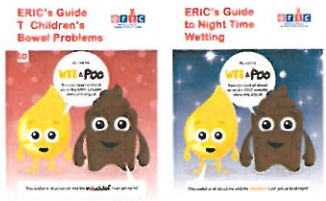
Website
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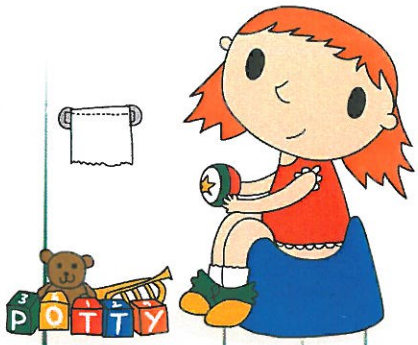
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Registered office: 36 Old School House, Britannia Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DB

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ATTENTION

START READING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE!



NIGHT TIME

When your child is reliably dry during the day you can start thinking about night times. PREPARATION is important – watch out for dry nappies in the morning, and get your child used to stopping drinks an hour before bed and sitting on the potty just before sleep. Protect the bed with a waterproof sheet; put a gentle light by the bed and practise getting to the potty or toilet. Make sure your child can pull their pyjamas up and down easily and have fresh pyjamas and bedding ready to deal with any wetting. Some children take much longer to learn night time dryness – check out *ERIC's Guide to Night Time Wetting* if bedwetting persists.

WIPING

Something else to learn... how much paper to use and how to get clean. This step often takes lots of practice and encouragement. Wet wipes and/or coloured or patterned toilet paper can help.

GOING OUT!

Once things are going well at home it's time to go out in pants. Keep the first trips short, plan where you're going and make sure you always know where the nearest toilet is. Take everything you need with you – potty, wipes, changes of clothes.

DON'T TRY AND ADD THE TOP BLOCKS UNTIL YOU'VE GOT A GOOD ROUTINE GOING AND YOU'VE MADE SOME PROGRESS!

GETTING GOING!

Goodbye nappies, hello pants! Don't substitute pull-ups for nappies...they are just a different shaped version of the same thing. You can't potty train in a nappy or a pull-up, so choose the right day and stop using them!

Build up a routine. Don't ask your child if they need a wee or poo – they haven't learnt to recognise that yet. Simply say "it's potty time" every couple of hours.

Keep a bag of toys ready to play with while they're on the potty so they remain happy to sit for 2 or 3 minutes. Use the bathroom whenever possible.

Make it a special time for you both – the whole experience will be much more positive if you invest time to learn together.

Encourage boys to sit down to wee, if not they can forget they need a poo! They may empty their bladder better sitting down too.

Give lots of praise for sitting on the potty, and for each little step like washing hands and getting dressed.

Rewards are a good incentive – but make them small and instant, like a sticker. Reward achievable tasks like sitting on the potty rather than staying clean and dry, which they might not manage at first. If the leap is too great, use Dry Like Me pads to help catch the mess and keep that nappy off! This helps the child learn too...the pad bulks up and helps them to recognise when they're wet.



AND KEEP GOING UP!

CLOTHES

Choose clothes that are easy to pull up and down – avoid fiddly zips and buttons. Practise getting dressed and undressed.

Choose clothes that are easy to wash and dry...accidents WILL happen.

PANTS

Choose pants with your child. Buy lots...they WILL have accidents. Practise wearing them for short periods to get used to the feeling.

THE POTTY

Choose a potty with your child.

Keep it in the bathroom and practise sitting on it. Consider having a second potty downstairs if your only bathroom is upstairs.

THE TOILET

If a potty is not suitable, choose a children's toilet seat together, and a step or box that is high enough to provide firm support under the child's feet while they sit on the toilet.

WHAT TO DO IF IT ALL GOES WRONG!

Don't be surprised if initially a lot of wee and poo ends up in the child's pants instead of the potty... think of it as part of the learning process. Potty training is a skill which may take some time to achieve.

Be matter of fact and just deal with it...and praise them when they get it right.

You may however decide they are just not ready the first time you try. If so, don't chop and change between pants and nappies, just STOP for a few weeks.

Go back to the 'Getting ready' stage, then check out the info on the bottom blocks...if you haven't got a secure base your potty training tower will fall down again! Make sure you're well prepared and plan when to start again.

WHAT IF THE CHILD WILL ONLY POO IN A NAPPY?

In the short term, if they ask for a nappy to do their poo in then let them. Otherwise they are very likely to hold onto their poo and the vicious cycle of constipation will begin.

Constipation may already be playing a part; hard stools will cause discomfort and make your child reluctant to poo. Read *ERIC's Guide to Children's Bowel Problems* for more information.

Some children are simply frightened of the poo falling into the potty or toilet. Give them lots of reassurance, but be firm that the place poos happen is in the bathroom. Involve them in bottom wiping and emptying the nappy into the toilet.

Then aim to move them very gradually towards removing the nappy – first by sitting on the potty/toilet with the nappy on, then loosening the nappy a little more every day, moving it away from their bottom bit by bit.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR CHILD DRINK?

The most important way to ensure healthy bladder and bowels is to check your child has plenty of fluids - a minimum of 6 – 8 drinks every day.

Water is best.

2 – 3 drinks of milk a day is fine as part of a balanced diet.

Well diluted fruit juice or squash can be included.

WHAT DRINKS SHOULD THEY AVOID?

Any drinks containing caffeine – like tea, coffee and cola.

Sweetened drinks.

Save fizzy drinks for a treat when they are older!

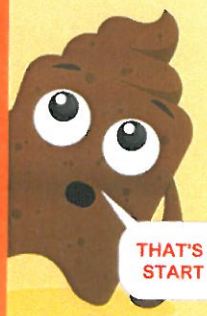
Don't limit their drinks to help them stay dry...it doesn't work! The bladder needs to be properly filled and emptied to behave properly.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS NOT CONSTIPATED

Your child should pass soft stools at least four times a week. If they are passing fewer poos than this, and/or harder poos, they might be constipated...

Leaking runny poo can also mean constipation...

... check out the ERIC website or read the leaflet *ERIC's Guide to Children's Bowel Problems* for more information



THAT'S RIGHT, START HERE!