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Toilet Training

Toilet training is one of those child developmental stages parents can find frustrating and complex. Making the transition from nappy to toilet can certainly be a challenge, particularly if you feel pressurised to start the process before your child is ready.

By choosing the right time and approaching toilet training in a calm, patient manner, you can help your child get to grips with this new skill as quickly and smoothly as possible.

It is important to remember that every child is different so try not to compare your child to others. You may feel under pressure to 'get toilet training out of the way', perhaps because you have another baby on the way, or your child may be starting nursery soon.

But rushing toilet training is counter-productive and it's worth bearing in mind that:

- by the age of three, 9 out of 10 children are dry most days;
- by the age of four most children are reliably dry.

So try not to worry or compete with others – wait to start toilet training at the right time for your child.

We've put together some tips and advice to help you overcome common toilet training troubles. They cover areas such as deciding whether your child is ready for toilet training and how to support your little one as they learn this important new skill.

More information on Page 2

For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk

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iHV Parent Tips

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Toilet Training

- From about the age of 18 months your toddler will be aware that they have a wet or soiled nappy. They begin to recognise the sensation of passing urine and as they get a little older they may tell you that they need to do a 'wee'. Many parents start to think about toilet training their child between 18 and 24 months but remember that all children are different and there is no 'set' time to start the process.
- Look out for signs such as fidgeting, walking in a funny fashion or going somewhere quiet or hidden – these are all indications that your child is aware that they are about to go to the toilet, and are cues that your child might be ready to start toilet training.
- When you are ready to start toilet training choose a time when you can be at home and things will be calm and relaxed. If you have a busy few weeks ahead of you, or other pressures to contend with, it might be worth waiting until you can give toilet training your full attention, rather than trying to 'slot it in' to a busy schedule.
- Starting toilet training during the summer months can help to minimise stress and frustration for both you and your child. There are fewer clothes for your child to take off and it's easier to dry clothes when your child has the inevitable accidents.
- Talking about toilet training with your little one is a good way to provide reassurance as they embark on this new way of doing things. Visit your local library or ask your health visitor to recommend a picture book about toilet training that you can share with your child.
- You might also like to swap nappies for trainer pants, which can easily be pulled up and down while you're starting out on toilet training. Using 'grown up' training nappies can also be a good way of building confidence in your child if they're a little reluctant to move on from the security of a nappy.
- Introduce your child to a potty – explain what it's for and encourage your child to play with the potty and try sitting on it so they can get used to this new object before you start training.
- When you're ready to get going, start the day off by encouraging your little one to sit on the potty before or after breakfast. You could put the potty in the bathroom and sit on the toilet yourself to show your child how it's done.
- Give your child lots of praise as you go through toilet training together. Your little one needs lots of gentle encouragement and praise, as well as regular reminders to use the potty throughout the day.
- Consistency is vital so it's a good idea to have a few quiet days at home in the early days of toilet training. If you do have to go out, take the potty with you as it's important to keep the momentum going. Your child will become confused if you put them in a nappy for convenience, sending a mixed message that it's okay to 'wee' or 'poo' in their nappy sometimes.
- Encourage your child to sit on the potty after each meal. Even if they don't do anything it's a good way to encourage bowel movement as digestion is followed by a natural reflex to go to the toilet. Sitting quietly on the potty, perhaps with a book to look at, is a good way to get children used to going on the potty to do a poo.
- It's important to wait until your child is dry during the day before attempting night-time toilet training. Remember that night-time bladder control may take quite a bit longer to achieve, so be patient and wait until your child is truly ready for this next step (i.e. when your child is dry for several consecutive nights).
- If toilet training isn't going well and you and your child are getting frustrated, try not to worry. Leave it for another month and try again, taking it more slowly and perhaps use an incentive such as a reward chart. Your health visitor can help with common problems.

Additional Reading:

You can find lots of reliable advice on overcoming common potty training problems at:

Eric:
bit.ly/1uFCB6B

NHS Choices:
bit.ly/1md1sNC

For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk

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