

# PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

[www.parentline.org.au](http://www.parentline.org.au)



## Toilet Training

### REMEMBER:

- *Toilet training cannot be rushed*
- *Its timing is generally linked to your child's developmental readiness*
- *Readiness is delayed when there are many changes in a child's life*
- *A relaxed, positive and supportive attitude from parents is the most helpful approach*

For parents of very young children, conversations often focus on ages at which children are out of nappies during the day or at night. Unfortunately, these discussions are often more anxiety provoking than helpful.

Family comparisons may not be useful in determining when a particular child is ready to use a toilet or potty. Suggestions about training methods, although meant to be helpful, can be interpreted as criticism of parenting style or of a child's lack of maturity.

### Something You Cannot Rush

Toilet training is not something you can do before your child is ready. If you can resist the expectation to train earlier rather than later, you will be free to assist your child's natural development in this area. For instance, some children will not be interested in using toilets or potties until many of their peers are already trained.

Some children may be more motivated to use the toilet in a social situation with their peers, particularly when they have reached the age of wanting to be "friends".

### Be Positive and Relaxed

Children often use the arena of toilet training or eating in which to demonstrate their newly developing independence. In other words, they may resent all attempts to train them if they wish to assert their own autonomy. Parents insisting on compliance in toileting may deprive their children of their own feeling of success. Although it is fine to have some energy invested in toileting, it is better that is positive rather than negative.

*Proudly managed by*



## Be Encouraging

Encouraging any signs of independence in toileting will make the process a happier one for all involved, for example if children indicate their need for the toilet or potty, thank them for letting you know.

Having a potty in sight is also likely to increase the likelihood of its use. Sometimes wearing no pants in summer increases a child's sensory awareness and hence their awareness of the beginnings of urination.

Punishment is usually not successful in toilet training. Give praise when they are successful. When a child has an accident it is best to encourage them by saying something such as 'that's OK, I know you are trying very hard- let's change your pants now'

## Pick the Right Time

Only begin training when you know there are no big changes about to occur. These include events such as moving house or having a new baby.

When your child is ready to start using a potty or toilet, find out through experimentation their particular likes and fears. With this knowledge you will be better equipped to plan how best to encourage the process.

## Make Sure They Feel Safe

Be aware if your child has a great fear of the toilet or bathroom then you may work on overcoming this fear before you actually start toilet training.

Also know that if your child is a particularly private person, then you might arrange for privacy while they begins their toileting.

## SIGNS OF READINESS

Here is a list of behaviours that may indicate your child is ready to start toilet training

- Your child can stay dry for longer periods as evidenced by occasional dry nappies.
- Your child has enthusiasm for wearing pants and using a potty or toilet.
- Child indicates they has just done a 'wee' or a 'poo' - or that she has the wants to go to the toilet.
- Child wants to use potty but is not always successful. They have not got the timing right yet.
- Child has occasional dry nappies at change time.

## READINESS SIGNS - QUIZ

### Answer True or False

- My child is dry for at least two hours at a time, or is dry after the afternoon sleep.
- My child's bowel movements are regular and predictable.
- My child comes with wet or dirty nappies and asks for them to be changed.
- My child asks to use the toilet or the potty.
- My child asks to use grown-up underwear or at least requests to be without nappies.
- My child can access the toilet and remove their pants.
- My child is able to communicate needs and follow simple instructions.
- My child is curious about the bathroom habits of others (friends, parents) and tries to imitate them.

If your answer is "True" for most of these statements, then you know your child is ready for toilet training.