

Basic Information:

Toilet training is an important transition for children and families alike. It can be an important step for children who are entering a new stage of going to school and can impact social situations.

How do you tell if your child is ready for toilet training?

Children are typically ready between 18 months to 3 years; it is important to look for certain signs of readiness before starting a toilet training routine:

- Asking caregiver for diaper change, becoming upset by a dirty diaper, or hiding when going to the bathroom in the toilet.
- Interest in watching parents going to the bathroom or playing with bathroom materials such as toilet paper or toilet seat.
- Child can walk to the bathroom and follow simple commands.
- Child understands language surrounding toileting.



Parent/Caregiver Tips:

- Start with routine for sitting on the toilet during set times during the day (after waking up, before/after mealtimes, before leaving the house).
- Have child wear clothing they can easily remove by themselves (elastic waistbands). Have child practice pulling pants up and down.
- Redirect child to go potty in their diaper in the bathroom instead of hiding somewhere else in the house when toileting.
- Do diaper changes in the bathroom to help children learn that toileting happens in the bathroom.
- Have child help gather supplies for diaper changes.
- Let child empty diaper with firm stools into toilet and flush toilet to learn about how the toilet works and to get used to the sound of flushing.
- Make the bathroom a fun environment: Read a book on the toilet, sing songs while using the toilet, start a fun handwashing routine after diaper changes.
- Calmly clean up any accidents (avoid punishment) and praise all successes. Bring extra clothes when leaving the house to avoid embarrassment over an accident.
- Decide if you'd like to implement a reward for using the toilet (stickers, coloring a picture, etc).

Next Steps:

If you are concerned that your child is late to toilet train, continues to have consistent elimination patterns, or your child is not showing any signs of readiness past 3 years, reach out to your pediatrician or a developmental therapist.

Additional Resources:

- **Establishing Toileting Routines for Children**, The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.: <https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Youth/Establishing-Toileting-Routines-for-Children-Tip-Sheet.pdf>
- **Potty Training: Learning to Use the Toilet**, Zero to Three: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/266-potty-training-learning-to-the-use-the-toilet>
- **Potty Training Your Child**, Seattle Children's Hospital: <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/development/toilet-potty-training/>