

## Self-Care Toileting



Toilet training is challenging for everyone. As with all new skills, this task will take time to learn and will require practice. Being patient and remembering that it's all new to your little one will help you and your child get through it together.

When deciding to start toilet training getting the right environment is important. It can sometimes be harder to undo unhelpful habits than learn the actual skill (e.g., if the nappy is usually changed in the living room moving to the bathroom may be a little more difficult).

The following hints may help you to progress with toilet training your child.

- Generally, a child should be able to stay dry for 1-2 hours before you try to toilet train. Check nappy regularly and note a pattern of times when wet/dry/ dirty over a week.
- Make sure your child has the sitting balance and the ability to remain seated for even a few minutes.
- For some children the concept of using a potty may confuse them and it may be better to sit them on the toilet from the beginning using a toilet insert and a step to support their feet.
- Always change the child's nappy in the bathroom. Keep everything associated with nappy changing in the bathroom.
- Begin by sitting your child on the potty/toilet with a nappy on and gradually work towards removing it.
- For boys be flexible with regards to sitting or standing, go with what they find easiest.
- Take your child to the toilet with you so that they can see how you use it.
- Try to keep good eating, drinking and exercise routines as this will make passing fluids and stools easier.
- Encourage your child to sit on the potty/toilet before or after bath as part of a normal routine.
- Encourage sitting on the potty/toilet after snacks and meals.



- If your child is mobile take off lower garments and nappy in standing then sit him/her on the potty/toilet.
- Let the child help flush the toilet and see where the stools go.
- Decide and stick to consistent words for stools and urine (e.g., wee or poo) and be consistent with the word for the toilet e.g., toilet or bathroom.
- Help your child to understand the concept of wet or dry in other daily routines so that your child knows what “wet” feels like. Modern nappies are very absorbent so try wearing a pair of pants inside the nappy to allow your child the feeling of being wet.
- Choose appropriate clothing. Loose fitting garments, larger buttons, Velcro fastenings, elastic waistbands can all help to simplify the task and avoid frustration. For girls, it is easier for them to pull garments down to and out of the way, rather than trying to hold a skirt up around their waist while trying to wipe their bottom.
- Allow adequate time for your child to succeed and try not to rush them.



### **Supporting children with additional needs**

Children with additional needs may find the process towards stopping wearing nappies more difficult and they will need more support with learning to use the potty or toilet. Provide support by meeting your child where they are developmentally to work on the skills that they need to progress with toilet training. The process you need to follow is the same. Scan the Eric QR code at the bottom of the page for further information.

### **Environment**

There may be elements of the environment in the bathroom which can be distracting or upset your child. Considering some of the following may be helpful.

**Temperatures** – Is the bathroom too hot or too cold, is the floor cold?

**Noise** – Is your child distracted or upset by the noise of the extractor fan or the flush of the toilet.

**Water**- Is your child more interested in playing with the water in the toilet bowl and turning on the taps?

**Smells** – does your child really dislike the smells they make when they go to the toilet?

Here is some advice which may help.

### **Scared of flush**

- Begin by allowing the child to stand away from the toilet where they find the noise bearable. Then gradually encourage the child to move closer to the toilet. Always let them know when you are going to do it, give some warning e.g., ready, steady, go.
- Allow the child to do the flush.
- Don't flush unless there is something to flush.
- Encourage your child to put the lid down to reduce flushing noise.
- Store a couple of folded bath towels on top of the cistern to dull the noise of the cistern being flushed.

### **Too Interested in the Flush**

- Cover the toilet handle.
- Give your child something to hold to play with.
- Use visual prompts to show when the right time to flush is.
- Place a sticker on the handle and give your child some schedule to make it clear to them when they can flush the toilet.

### **Too Distracted/Overly interested in playing with water in WC.**

- Give a water feature toy to play with e.g., glitter tube.
- Cover seat until using it.
- If standing, give a clear visual clue where to stand. e.g., coloured spot on the floor



### **Running Taps**

- Give them a set appropriate time when they can run the tap e.g., after they have used the toilet, brushed their teeth or washed their face and hands.
- Let your child control the on and off but set a timer for how long they can run the tap.

## Smells

- Put some Vicks VapoRub under your child's nostrils prior to them going to the toilet. Why not make your own version of this rub by looking online for recipes and ideas.
- Try putting a few drops of essential oil on a folded piece of tissue and have your child hold it under their nose.
- Various companies have developed odour neutralisers that prevent the smell from escaping out the toilet after a bowel movement. These can be found in the toilet cleaning aisle of your local supermarket.
- There are a variety of air freshener available however children who are sensitive to smell can find some of these artificial fragrances overpowering, particularly in the confined space of a bathroom so it is better to find out what your child likes before using this method.



## Other Ideas

- Have a consistent approach and routine which everyone follows e.g., home, nursery, child minder, relatives.
- Tell your child verbally and visually, if required, about each stage. You may want to get advice from your speech and language therapist if appropriate about how best to communicate this.
- Use visual prompts or a toilet schedule to show your child what to do. See page 5 for an example of this from Speech and Language Therapy.
- When you start, choose a few days when you have time i.e., a weekend or a holiday at home.
- When you start remove the nappy for the whole day and wear pants. If you have to put a nappy on to go out leave the pants on underneath
- As you progress try gradually to use as many different places as possible to use the toilet. e.g., visiting friends, shops.
- When sitting on the toilet read them a favourite book, give them a toy or sing a song for your child.

# Toilet Schedule



toilet 	pull trousers down 	sit down 	wipe bottom 	pull trousers up 	flush 	wash hands 
toilet 	pull trousers down 	sit down 	wipe bottom 	pull trousers up 	flush 	wash hands 

PCS and Boardmaker are trademarks of TobiiDynavox LLC. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

**Further resources:**

For more resources to help with developing skills or for further helpful tips and tricks, please visit our website or lookout for our Facebook posts.

[www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot](http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot)

[www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders](https://www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders)



To view “Meeting your child’s sensory needs – toileting” video in our sensory mini-series.



Please visit these websites by scanning the QR codes.



**Eric Potty Training**



**Contact.org Potty Toilet Training PDF**

