



Surviving Toilet Training

Most children are ready for toilet training sometime between their second and third birthdays. This is the same time that they are experiencing what many parents call “the terrible two’s” – a time when children are exerting their own will and making their opinions known. As wonderful and funny as this time can be, it can make toilet training a real trial for parents. It is important to first remember everyone becomes toilet trained eventually. Your child will, too. Secondly, toilet training does not occur at the same time for every child. Your child will be ready when he or she is developmentally ready. If you try to pressure your child into toilet training before he or she is ready, this could result in a stressful situation for both of you.

SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS READY FOR TOILET TRAINING:

- Interest in wearing underpants instead of diapers
- Interest in being clean and dry
- Able to stay dry for several hours at a stretch
- Able to undress and dress oneself

TIPS FOR MAKING TOILET TRAINING EASIER:

- Use pull-up diapers or training pants.
- Make full use of books, videos, dolls that drink and wet, aiming tools, sticker charts, etc.
- Let the child choose some of the equipment he or she will need - underpants, a potty seat, a book or video.
- Be consistent. Regularly remind your child to try and go to the potty.
- Make it easy for your child by having a potty they can easily access or provide a step stool to get on the big potty.
- Aim for consistency in toilet training among caregivers - your daycare provider or babysitter.
- When you are out, be especially patient. Be sure to pack extra clothes in case of an accident.

EXPECT MISTAKES!

Toilet training generally takes several weeks or more for the child who is ready. If it is taking longer, maybe your child isn’t ready, and you should try again in a few weeks. Even for the child who is making progress, there will be plenty of mistakes. Be prepared to accept them with good humor and understand it is a normal part of toilet training. Reward your child with praise and be sympathetic when there are mistakes (children who are punished for toileting mistakes may end up becoming more resistant to using the toilet altogether). Finally, congratulate yourself on your patience, and celebrate with your child when you make it through the first “dry” day.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

It is normal for parents to become frustrated and overwhelmed by potty training. Call the Parent Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN for more information and techniques.

- American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org).

For more online tip cards, visit www.KCSL.org under the “Resources” tab.



Kansas Children's Service League

**Parenting questions? Call the Parent Helpline:
1-800-CHILDREN or email/text 1800children@kcsl.org**

