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## Top Tips for Potty Training – Information for Parents

### Getting started

On average, most children begin learning to use a potty by around their second birthday, but, as with everything in children's development, each child is different.

Up to the age of 20 months, toddlers' bladders empty often, making it difficult for them to master holding on for the loo. In addition, clothing is still tricky to manage.

Most parents think about potty training with their toddler after about 18 months or as he/she approaches their second birthday but, like most milestones in childhood, there are no absolutes.

Every child develops at a different pace and it's more important to look out for the following signs that your child is ready to potty train rather than their age:

- They stay dry for a couple of hours each day.
- They take an interest when you, your partner or older siblings go to the toilet.
- They have bowel movements at regular times of the day, say, after breakfast.
- You can tell when a bowel movement is taking place, by their squatting or making a grunting sound, for example.
- They let you know they want to be changed when their nappy is wet or dirty.
- They know they need to pee and says so in advance.

Most parents would say it's not worth starting potty training until you're sure that you're both ready and you have the time to focus on it. Major upheavals, both physical and emotional, can affect the success of potty training. Toddlers can pick up the idea very quickly if they're at the right stage, when they have the ability to notice when they need to pee and wait to get to the right place.

Start using words related to the toilet around your toddler, such as pee or wee, poo or poop – whatever you say in your home. Whenever they do a pee or poo in their nappy try to encourage their understanding of what happened and why.

### **Potty pointers**

- Be positive and upbeat - present the change from nappies as something exciting.
- Give lots of praise whenever your child manages to do a poo on the potty - stress how grown up and clever it is.
- Don't rush things - sometimes if you start teaching later it takes less time, and older children can skip the potty stage and move straight to using the loo, which makes life easier.
- Expect setbacks - learning to use the toilet is just like other skills your toddler learns and you didn't expect them to learn to walk without a lot of falls.
- Never force your child to sit on the potty, this will only upset them and won't make the process any faster.
- Let your child sit on the potty fully clothed if they wish to begin with. This will get them used to it and give them confidence to use it. Give them a book or a toy to play with.
- It always takes longer for a child to learn to stay dry at night - when they start having the occasional dry nappy in the morning, it's a good sign the time is right to try going without a nappy.
- Do your best not to be angry with your child if they have an accident - just say, cheerfully, "never mind, you'll get there next time, let's get you some dry pants".
- Remember to get your toddler to wash their hands afterwards, so that using the potty or toilet is associated with hand washing from the word go.

### **General potty-training tips**

There are many tips on how to potty train your toddler. Some of the most common include:

- Leave a potty where your toddler can see it and make sure that they understand what it's for.
- Make sure your child is wearing clothes that can be pulled down easily – do not put them in vests/tops that do up with poppers as this makes it harder for them to pull their pants / pull-up down.
- If he/she has a regular bowel movement at the same time each day, try keeping their nappy off and suggest using the potty instead.
- As soon as you see that your toddler is ready to 'wee' encourage him/her to use their potty. If it's too late, don't make a fuss, you don't want them to become anxious and worried.
- You may find that your toddler will react well to lots of praise and encouragement, and will be more likely to ask to use the potty or toilet themselves. This is a good time to introduce hand washing too.

As with any other childhood routine, consistency is the key.

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