

Tips for Parents of Young Children



Parenting.
Give it time.

Toilet or potty training

(suitable from 2 years)

Learning to use the toilet is a big step for your child. Don't rush it. Most toddlers are ready to use the potty or toilet between 2 and 3 years old. Let your child learn at their own pace.

Some children take longer than others and this is completely normal. You can start toilet training from around two years old, but it will be different for every child.



Tips:

- **Wait until your child is ready.** Your child has to know when they need to go and how to hold on. Most children become interested in using a potty or the toilet on their own. If you wait until your child is ready, toilet training is more likely to go smoothly.
- **Try to work out when your child is ready.** Look for these signs: your child knows when they've got a wet or dirty nappy; they may tell you they're passing water, or doing a wee; they know when they need to wee and tell you in advance.
- **Do it when there aren't too many changes to your child's life or routine.** Avoid times when there is already a lot of stress or change in the family, like moving house or having a new baby.
- **Make things familiar.** Put a potty where your child can see it and show them what it's for. You could let them sit their teddy or doll on it. Let your child see you using the toilet and explain what you're doing.
- **Make sure they're comfortable and secure.** You can choose to use a potty or the toilet but make sure your child is comfortable and secure. Use an adapted seat and step if your child is using the toilet.
- **Look out for when they fill up their nappy.** You might notice that your child has a bowel movement, or poo, at a certain time of the day. You could watch out for signs your child needs to go. They might jiggle, pass wind or hide behind the curtain. Try encouraging your child

to go on the potty at this time. Don't insist on them staying on the toilet or potty until they do something. A few minutes is enough. If they don't want to go, that's fine. If they do go, give them lots of praise.

- **Dress for success!** Buy your child some pants and put them in clothes that are easy to pull up and down. Trousers or leggings with elastic are great.
- **Expect some accidents and setbacks.** Some days your child will be happy using the potty or toilet. On other days they will have lots of accidents. This is normal. Your child might be dry for ages and then go back to having more and more accidents. This may happen if your child is worried about something like going to nursery, moving house or a new baby. Try to be patient and give them time to settle down.
- **Help your child avoid accidents.** If your child hasn't done a wee or a poo for a while, remind them that they might need to go. Children often get very caught up in playing and forget. If they don't want to go, that's fine. Try to make sure the potty or toilet is easy to get to and use.
- **If it's all getting too much – stop for a bit and try again in a few weeks.** It can take 3-4 weeks for children to become dry. For some children, it can take several months.
- **If your child has a long-term illness or is disabled they might find it more difficult to learn to use a potty or toilet.** Visit the **Contact a Family** website (cafamily.org.uk) for information and further sources of support.
- **If you are worried there might be a problem ask your health visitor or GP.**

Staying dry at night

If your child has a dry nappy regularly in the morning – try letting your child sleep without a nappy:

- Remind your child to use the toilet before bed.
- Let your child know that you'll help them in the night if they wake up needing to go.
- Leave a night-light or potty in their room if they are afraid to get up at night.
- Protect the mattress with a waterproof cover or pad.
- It may take a few weeks for your child to learn to stay dry all night. If it's all getting too much – stop for a bit and try again in another month.

Some children are 3-4 years old before they are dry at night. Some children still wet the bed at five or six years old. This is considered normal.

For more helpful tips on toilet training and on positive parenting techniques, visit: gov.wales/giveittime