

Tips on preparing for the potty

Teaching your child to use the potty needn't be hard work. But it does require significant preparation for both the child and the parent. Here are some tips on preparing for the potty.

- **Make potty training your top priority.** Make potty training a top priority on a consistent basis when you have the emotional and physical energy to do it. Even if your child shows signs of potty training readiness, you may not be ready for it as a parent.
- **Clear your schedule before training.** Select a time to begin the potty training when your family's routine is least likely to be disturbed with house guests, vacations away from home, a move, and so on. Make sure you're not pre-occupied with other major commitments such as work, either. Long holiday weekends are ideal to start.
- **Choose your words carefully.** Decide what words you use to describe body parts, urine, and bowel movements. Avoid using words like "dirty," "naughty," or "stinky" to describe waste products. These negative terms can make your child feel ashamed and self-conscious. Treat urination and bowel movements in a simple, matter-of-fact manner.
- **Explain the way things should be.** At the start, explain to your child that it's time to put her "pee-pee" and "poo-pee" in the potty. Tell your child that when s/he feels the need to go she should hold it in just long enough to walk to the potty, sit down, and let it go.
- **Talk up the advantages.** Talk to your child about the advantages of being trained: no more diaper rash, no more interruptions for diaper changing, and the pleasure of being clean and dry. Discuss training as an important stage of growing up.
- **Use dolls or action figures.** Sit your child's favorite doll or action figure on a pretend toilet, explaining "the baby is going pee-pee in the potty." Put diapers on his favorite stuffed bear. Then graduate the bear to underwear.
- **Introduce a book or video.** Present books and videos about toilet learning so your child can see other children learning to use the potty. These materials are available online or in your local bookstore. And just as some adults enjoy reading materials while sitting on the toilet, a toddler's favorite books can help the minutes quickly pass. You can find links to mom-tested and recommended potty training books and videos by clicking [here](#).
- **Pick a potty day.** Get a calendar and ask your child when s/he wants to begin to learn how to use the potty. Circle the date in a bright color and keep reminding her/him that "potty day" is almost here.
- **Check the seat.** Watch the tilting toilet seats. Some seats have a tendency to fall quickly when put upright. If the seat tilts or must be supported by hand, change it. The seat must stay up so it doesn't fall down and strike a boy's penis when he is urinating standing up.
- **Squash the roll.** If your toddler likes to unroll the toilet paper, try this. Before you put a new roll on the roller, squash the roll so that the cardboard roll inside is no longer round. This way, it will not unroll as fast. Also, little ones who are potty training will not get too much paper per tug on the roll.