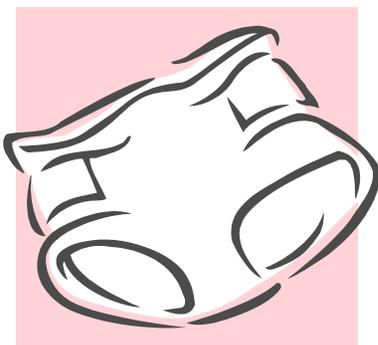


Potty training, potty learning, toilet teaching...the process by any other name would be just as daunting. In case you hadn't heard, the process of weaning your toddler off diapers is no longer called "toilet training," at least not by parents in the know.

The reason for the name change? Dogs are trained, children are taught. Parents who approach this developmental milestone with the belief that they are "training" their child--the way you can train a dog by giving him rewards when he responds to certain commands with appropriate behavior--are likely to discover the hard way that toddlers withdraw or become belligerent when forced to do things.

So don't think of it as "training"; think of it as "teaching".



## How to Assess Toileting Readiness?

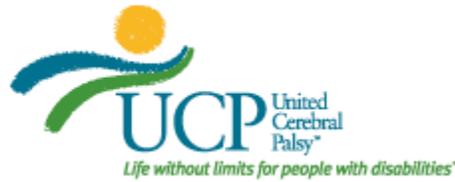
Knowing the signs of toileting readiness in your child can help alleviate potty training frustrations.

1. Be sure that your child is able to understand and follow simple instructions.
2. Consider your child's language capabilities. Does s/he know and understand "wet" and "dry", and can differentiate between the two?
3. Determine your child's competence at understanding words such as, "pee, poop, toilet or potty". Can your child show you where the potty or toilet is when asked?
4. Take notice when your child begins to exhibit an interest in pleasing you. This can be a good time to introduce your toddler to the potty chair or toilet.
5. Take notice of longer dry spells between diaper changes. This indicates your child's muscles are strengthening and beginning to control urine flow.
6. Take notice when your child begins having bowel movements on a fairly consistent basis. This indicates a strengthening of the muscles that control the bowels.
7. Recognize your child's desire to do things independently as a vital cue for training readiness.
8. Take notice when your child exhibits an interest in using the toilet or asks questions about toileting. This is a good time to let your child go through the motions on his/her own potty chair.
9. Determine if your child has the coordination skills necessary for independent toileting. Can your child pull his/her pants up and down independently?
10. Consider your family's life events. Has there been any recent change in schedules or routines that may be stressful for your child? Potty training is best accomplished when your child is feeling secure and happy.
11. Acquaint your child with toileting terms early, by offering confirmation and instruction during diaper changes. ("Did you poo in your diaper? Let's clean up and put the poop in the toilet.")
12. Allow your child to watch you and other family members use the toilet, let your child flush it and briefly explain the reasons for using toilet paper and washing hands.
13. Change your child's diaper as soon as possible after soiling so s/he doesn't become comfortable with, or even enjoy, being soiled.



## Potty Training Tips

- \* **Let** your child practice sitting on the potty or toilet, with or without clothes, to help build familiarity with the new process.
- \* **Be** sure your child's clothing is easy to pull on and off.
- \* **Avoid** button, snaps and belts during potty training.
- \* **Praise**, praise, praise, whenever your child is willing to sit and try to go.
- \* **Remember** that sitting for more than 10 seconds is progress.
- \* **Don't** expect something to happen every time. If nothing happens, tell them, "That's OK", or "Good try, we'll try again later."
- \* **Don't** put too much pressure on them by just standing and watching. Be prepared to keep them company by reading aloud or singing a song to pass the time.
- \* **Praise** your child for every deposit in the potty chair, especially during early learning stages.
- \* **Remember** the toilet seat can seem awfully big to your child.
- \* **An** adapter seat and a step-stool can make it feel more secure. If you don't have an adapter seat, let them sit facing sideways or even backward for a more secure position.
- \* **Keep** toilet paper where little hands can get it.
- \* **Never**, never, NEVER punish your child for an accident. Clean up in a matter-of-fact way, no matter how hard that may be to do.
- \* **Remember**, they're LEARNING. They won't get it right every time. A child anxious to please may agonize over what they think is shameful behavior because of your reaction.
- \* **Always** accompany your child into public restrooms.



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# All About Potty Training



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