

THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY



TOT'S LINE



1-877-817-TOTS (8687)

It's Potty Time



Potty or toilet training, like every other skill, is a skill a child needs to learn. The best way to learn this skill is with parents who are patient and loving teachers.

General guidelines state:

- ~ children begin potty training anywhere from 2 to 4 years of age;
- ~ 40% of children over the age of 3 are still using diapers;
- ~ children won't train until they are ready;
- ~ children should be physically and emotionally ready.

Read the signs of readiness below to see if you and your child should be moving onto this new skill.

When to Start Training (Signs of Readiness)	When Not to Start Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child can tell you that he has to go to the bathroom or will go and hide to use the diaper. • Will stay dry for 2 hours and/or during his nap time. • Does not like to be in a dirty diaper. • Shows interest in using the toilet or bathroom, or likes to watch you go to the bathroom. • Wants to be a big girl or boy. • Has the coordination to take her clothes on and off. • Wants to please. He is not in the "no" stage. • Is able to follow simple directions. • Bowel movements are regular and predictable. • Wants to wear big girl underpants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new baby just arrived in the family. • The family is going on a vacation. • The family is moving. • There is a recent loss of a family member. • Holidays. • Any major change within the family that you can work around.

If you feel your child has met most of the signs of readiness, it may be time to start potty training. If not, don't worry. Wait a while longer and then go back and revisit the signs. He or she may just be too busy learning other skills to focus on this right now.

HOW TO BEGIN:

1. Prepare yourself and your child. Before you begin potty training, talk to your child about potty training. If possible, pick a date and tell them about it. "Right after we get back from vacation, we are going to start using the potty." Or, "Right after your birthday, we are going to start using the potty." Talk to your children about how they are getting bigger and this is another step toward becoming a big boy or girl.

If possible, shop for big girl or boy underpants and, of course, a potty chair. Children will be more motivated if they are able to choose what they want.

2. Model. Let them go with you to the bathroom and watch you use the toilet. Talk to them (on their level) about what you are doing. Let them flush the toilet for you. Remember, kids love to model after you. BUT...only allow them to do this if you are comfortable with it. If you aren't, they will become uncomfortable with using the bathroom. Older siblings are good to imitate also.

3. Relax! A child needs a calm and patient person to help them. Learning this skill will be different for every child. If you find your child is not ready by 3, you are not alone. Wait another month or two and try again. S/he will get it.

4. Teach your child what words you use for pooping and peeing. Also make sure that other caregivers (daycare provider or relatives) use the same words to provide consistency.

5. Read books and watch videos together. See a list of books below for both parents and children. Check your local library for a comprehensive list of books.

6. Dress your child in easy to remove clothing. Unfortunately, it is time to put away all the cute overalls. Your child needs to be in clothes that they can easily pull on and off. This allows them a tad bit more independence in the new skill they are learning.

7. Set a schedule. Take your child to the toilet every 1 to 1 ½ hours, depending on their needs. It may be a little excessive, but it helps them succeed in using the toilet. You can back away after a couple of successful trips. Of course, if your child says he has to go to the bathroom in between your scheduled trips, help him get there and help with the clothes.

8. Time to sit, but only for a few minutes. A child should not be forced to sit on the toilet at all. But, encourage your child to sit there for a few minutes, no longer than 4 or 5, to give them a chance to use the potty. If they don't use the potty at that time, you may want to shorten the time in between trips to the bathroom. You should take your child to the potty about 15 minutes after eating and drinking, and right after they get up in the morning and from naptime.



9. Dance and sing. When your child has had a successful trip, do the potty dance. This can be any silly song and dance you make up. What is more fun than watching Mom and Dad dance around shouting you've pee-pee'd in the potty.

10. Clean Up. An important part of the bathroom process is learning how to clean up after you are done. This includes teaching your child how to wipe (especially important for girls to prevent infections) and always to watch their hands after.

Summertime is a wonderful time to train. Clothes are generally less restrictive. Children can run around the house in underwear.

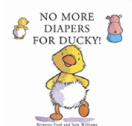
Great Resources for Parents:

- *Toilet Training Without Tears* by Charles E. Schaefer, Ph.D. and Theresa foy DiGeronimo
- *Toilet Training, The Brazelton Way* by Joshua D. Sparrow, M.D.
- *The Everything Potty Training Book* by Linda Sonna, Ph. D.



Great Books for the Little Ones:

- *Once Upon a Potty* by Alona Frankel.
- *I Want My Potty* by Tony Ross
- *Zoe's (or Zack's) Potty: A Learn-to-Go Book* by Dori Butler.
- *All By Myself* by Anna Grossnickle Hines (This is one of the few books that talk about nighttime dryness.)
- *No More Diapers for Ducky* by Bernette Ford and Sam Williams



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