



THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

TOT'S LINE



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# Potty Time Challenges

*When life presents major changes, potty training set backs or regression may occur. Remember, 40% of children over the age of 3 are not completely potty trained and are still using diapers. Be Patient!!!!*

## **My child was toilet trained, but then she started having accidents again:**

Occasional regressions are a natural part of healthy growth and learning. It is very important not to overreact or make your child feel bad or ashamed when they have an accident. Pick a relaxed moment to have a little talk, letting your child know that you think she's old enough now to be in charge of learning to use the toilet. Try to find ways to make her feel like a big girl and reinforce any steps she takes toward independence. Tell her that many children have accidents and they are a part of everyday learning. Reassure her by changing her into clean dry clothes. Make a schedule to go to the bathroom every two to three hours. Don't ask if your child has to go to the bathroom when you are quite sure she does, send her.

When bathing, use a mild soap and a detergent. Irritants, such as bubble bath or harsh soaps, can lead to a urinary tract infection which may cause your child to have more frequent accidents.

Restricting your child's fluid intake, especially caffeinated beverages, can also help with training. Salty foods cause children to retain water, which causes accidents. Make sure you do not restrict fluid intake to the point where they become dehydrated.

## **New Sibling Setbacks:**

Many children regress and have accidents when there are changes in the daily routine such as a new sibling. Sometimes the older sibling feels out of place and threatened because the new baby is getting a lot of attention. Remind the older sibling that she is special and she is now the big girl. Remind her of all the exciting things that come along with being an older sibling. For example, if you assign tasks that she is capable of doing, she can be Mommy's or Daddy's little helper. Spend time alone with her when the baby is sleeping or someone else is taking care of her. Get back to a schedule of going to the bathroom and set a timer. Reward her success and as much as possible let her help you clean up when she has an accident. If she refuses to help clean up, have her sit down nearby so she can learn by watching.

### **My child won't poop in the potty:**



Many children learn to urinate in the toilet before they learn to have bowel movements in the toilet. One reason your child may be refusing to use the toilet for bowel movements is that she's constipated. If so, the pain she feels when she tries to poop may heighten any discomfort she has about using the potty in the first place. This creates a vicious cycle: she withholds poop, which makes the constipation worse, and when she finally goes it's painful, so she fears using the potty. It's important to determine if your child is constipated. **Signs of constipation include** very small, hard, dry or rock-like stools, blood-streaked stools, pain or crying during bowel movements, stomach pains, crankiness or restlessness during the day, straining hard, loss of appetite, and strange body language such as clinging, hiding, crossing ankles, and squatting.

Make sure your child is eating enough fiber-rich foods such as whole-grain breads, broccoli, and cereal through the day instead of all at once. A good rule of thumb is that your child should eat enough grams of fiber to equal his age plus five (for example, a 4-year-old needs 9 grams of fiber each day). Make sure your child is getting enough fluids such as water, prune juice, and other diluted fruit juices. And be careful not to give her too many dairy products, which can make constipation worse. If nothing else works, consult your child's pediatrician.

### **Tips to train your child to have a bowel movement in the toilet:**

While patiently working with your child, you can put a diaper on her to have a bowel movement and then take the diaper and flush the poop down the toilet. For those children who the diaper seems to make them feel secure, some experts recommend cutting a hole in the diaper and allowing the child to wear the diaper on the potty, but having the BM go into the toilet.

If your child is fairly regular, make note of the times she usually has a BM and try to make sure she's near a toilet then; you'll need to get his daycare provider or preschool teacher in on the plan as well.

Read children's books such as Everyone Poops or the Princess and the Potty to help her get used to the idea of pooping in the potty.

Offer a lot of praise when you see your child making progress.

You might also try giving your child a special reward, such as a small toy or a bedtime video, for having a bowel movement in the potty.

### **My son insists on standing up while having a bowel movement:**

This is common for children that are used to defecating in their diaper while standing. Trying to having a bowel movement while sitting probably feels unnatural and uncomfortable for your child. Encourage your son to sit on the toilet to for about 3-5 minutes. Continue to encourage him this way particularly fifteen minutes after a meal and right before bedtime when the urge to have a bowel movement is greatest until he accidentally has a bowel movement into the toilet. Reward him for each success.

## **Stay Tuned for Next Month's Continuation on Potty Training Challenges and Nighttime Training**

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