



Toilet Training Methods

Here are a few methods for potty training. **You can talk with your child's doctor about what may be the best method for your family.**

As a reminder, accidents are **expected and normal**. The key to all of the methods is to stay calm, positive and encouraging. Never force your child to sit on the potty or get into power struggles.

The Child Oriented Approach

Follow your child's lead and support whatever they are ready for! With no set schedule, this method has the least pressure and commitment, but can take longer. Rewards are not recommended since the process can take weeks or months depending on your child's interest.

- 1 Around 18 to 24 months old, allow your child to sit and explore the potty. Praise your child's interest in the potty.
- 2 Once they show interest in the potty, encourage your child to sit on the potty without clothes throughout the day, for example before bedtime. Again, praise the behavior and make it fun.
- 3 When your child poops in their diaper, help them empty the poop into the potty.
- 4 Encourage your child to go diaper-less at home for short periods of time and try to use the potty frequently throughout the day. Parents should praise any attempts the child makes to sit on the potty or go to the bathroom.

Fast and Targeted Approach

Goodbye diapers! This is the fastest method but requires families to have dedicated time at home for a few days to practice. Accidents are also expected in this method, and rewards can be used if desired.

- 1 Schedule at least 3 days in a row at home to help train your child.
- 2 Decide on a reward (like a sticker) if you'd like.
- 3 Have your child wear underwear and talk to them about the plan to use the potty. You can say:

"From now on you're not going to have any more diapers, because you're going to get to wear the underwear you picked out! Every time you have to go to the bathroom you can tell me, and we will rush to the toilet, pull your underwear down and go! And then you'll get a sticker! If you start going before you tell me, it's ok. Just say 'POTTY' and I'll know to help you get on the potty and you'll still get your sticker."

- 4 Increase liquids to make sure there are lots of opportunities to practice going to the bathroom.



- 5 Pay close attention. If your child seems to need to go to the bathroom, take them. Remind them to let you know when they need to use the potty. (Note: You may want to prompt them to try at least every 2 hours. Avoid any forced sitting on the potty.)
- 6 Praise any success and reward immediately.

! Remember: Success includes a child tell you they have to go even if they don't make it to the potty, or trying to use the potty even if they have an accident after.

The Behavior Shaping Approach

Break potty training down into small steps! A blend of both approaches, this method has some structure but doesn't require as much intensity as the fast and targeted plan.

How it Works:

- Create a potty training plan that works for your family. In this method, you choose the steps that work for you (see the examples below).
- Reward success at each step with a small token (like a sticker) and your praise. When successes at each step are consistent (for at least 5 days in a row) help your child move on to the next step.
- Continue this process until your child has mastered all steps and is potty trained.

- 1 Your child tells a grown up when they need to pee or poop. Reward every time.
Once your child can do this well for 5 days, move to the next step!
- 2 Your child walks with you to the bathroom. Reward every time. Parents can help with this step by saying:

*That's great that you told me you need to pee.
Let's get to the bathroom and you can get a sticker!*

Once your child can do this well for 5 days, move to the next step!

- 3 Your child sits on the potty and tries to pee or poop, but does not have to be successful. Reward every time. *Once your child can do this well for 5 days, move to the next step!*
- 4 Your child must pee or poop in the potty. Again, always praise and reward!