



When is it Time to Learn?



1. **Is it time to start toilet training?** You and your child both have to be ready to take this big step...
2. **The right time depends on the age and development of your child.** Many children with cognitive and/or physical disability can be toilet trained, but it might be later than other children - generally over 4½ years of age. A child with a disability may follow a different course and need more help.
3. **If your child has an IEP, ask that toilet training be included.** Special equipment may be needed at the school.
4. **Your child will show signs that he or she is ready for toilet training:**
 - start to realize that urination is taking place (often at **12 months**).
 - stools may be regular, child has no control, but may realize that something has happened (often around **15 months**).
 - may seem ready to start learning, child begins to show an interest (often by **18 months**).
 - good bowel and bladder control during the day (often around **2 years**).
 - toilet trained during the day but not during the night (often at **3 years**).
 - manages alone, may have an occasional accident (often near **4 years**).
5. **Here are some helpful hints you can use with your child:**
 - Most children are ready to learn when they start to let you know when they are about to relieve themselves. Be sure to give lots of praise when they tell you this.
 - Children learn by copying other people, so allow your child to see the toilet being used by others.
 - Start taking your child to the toilet at set times, like before or after meals, naps, going outside, and before bedtime.

(Turn page over for more “Helpful Hints”)

Helpful Hints when it's Time to Start Toilet Training:

6. **If your child has a disability you may want to try one of the following two methods:**
 - **Scheduled:** First, watch his/her natural patterns for several weeks and then you or his/her teacher will need to take him/her to the toilet on a pattern that matches his/her natural rhythm. If the child is not successful at that time, you should take him/her to the toilet every 15 minutes until he/she goes in the toilet or in the diaper. Take the child to the toilet again at the next time that meets his/her natural rhythm. Be sure to give lots of praise for going on the toilet and for any dry diapers.
 - **Time Seating:** Toileting will need to become a major goal at home and in the school setting for a period of several weeks. A structured behavior program with the following steps may help:
 - Using a 30-minute cycle of giving your child extra fluids for the first 5 minutes, then sitting on the toilet for 15 minutes and checking for dry pants a couple of times over the next 10 minutes while wearing regular underwear or training pants. Give praise for going on the potty and for dry pants.
7. **Talk to your doctor about the likelihood of toilet training your child** before spending hours and energy you may need for other care. You may want to explore funding resources or find discounts to help with the cost of diapers.
8. **Accidents are going to happen** - they are part of the learning process. Don't make a big fuss about them, but do have your child help clean up the mess.
9. **Training pants can be helpful.** Unlike absorbent diapers, these pants will allow your child to feel the discomfort of wet pants.
10. **Remember** - even though your child may learn the signals of a full bladder, fun activities can easily cause them to ignore these warning signs.
11. **Make sure that you give lots of praise along the way.** Your child will need lots of encouragement!

Skills to Teach Your Child for Toilet Training On Your Own

- Tells you when toileting needs to occur.
- Pulls up and down pants/skirt.
- Pulls up and down underwear/pull-ups.
- Gets on and off the toilet by himself/herself.
- Sits with help; later, sits independently with or without use of adaptive equipment.
- Uses toilet paper with or without assistance.
- Flushes the toilet with a switch or with assistance.
- Toilets with adult reminders.
- Washes hands after toileting.



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