



# Toilet Training



*Helpful tips and advice*

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## When is the right time to start toilet training?

Up to the age of 20 months, toddlers' bladders empty often, making it difficult for them to master holding on for the loo. However, children usually begin toilet training around their second birthday, but as with everything in children's development, **each child is different**. If you are struggling or need a little advice and support then ask your health visitor or G.P.

### **It's usually best not to start toilet training your child during times of stress, such as:**

- The arrival of a new baby in the family.
- Starting a new childcare arrangement.
- Moving from a cot to a bed.
- Moving house.
- Family relationship problems.
- When a family member is ill.



### **It might be a good time to start toilet training when your child can:**

- Stay dry for a couple of hours each day.
- Take an interest when you or older siblings go to the toilet.
- Have bowel movements at regular times of the day. E.g. after breakfast.
- Demonstrate when a bowel movement is taking place, by squatting or making a grunting sound for example.
- Let you know they want to be changed when their nappy is soiled.



It can take longer for boys to learn, especially as they also have to master weeing while standing up. Most boys learn sitting down first. Dads or older brothers can show them how to do it the other way.

Some parents find it easier to toilet train their children in summer, when toddlers can run around with fewer clothes on. If this isn't the right time for your child, however, don't worry. Always go with your toddler's readiness.



### **Our top tips:**

- Follow your child's lead—when he's ready to use a potty he will let you know.
  - Be positive and upbeat—show the change as something exciting.
  - Give lots of praise whenever your child manages to do a poo on the potty. Stress how grown up and clever he is.
  - Don't rush things. Sometimes if you start teaching later, it takes less time. Toddlers over two and a half may learn almost overnight.
  - Expect setbacks. Learning to use the toilet is just like other skills your toddler learns—you expect a lot of falls before walking comes easily.
  - Give your toddler clothes that can be pulled up or down easily. You may also want him to wear training pants at first, to cope with those inevitable accidents.
  - Never force your child to sit on the potty. This will only upset him and won't make the process any faster.
  - Some toddlers enjoy picking out their own potty and toilet seat.
  - Many toddlers are afraid of the sound of the toilet flushing or don't like to see poo being flushed away. If your child feels like this, just wait until he has run off to play, then flush.
  - It always takes longer for a child to learn to stay dry at night. When he starts having the occasional dry nappy in the morning, it is a good sign that the time is right to try going without a nappy.
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- Do your best not to be angry with your child if he has an accident. Just say cheerfully, "Never mind, you'll get there next time. Let's get you some dry pants."
- Remember to get your toddler to wash their hands afterwards so that using the potty or toilet is associated with hand washing from the word go.



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