California's Great Start

Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Practices Toolkit

Supporting All Children from Preschool through 3rd Grade

California Department of Education

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the California Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), Tony Thurmond, for setting a vision to leverage historic investments in public education to transform our California schools and ensure equity for all children. This toolkit is intended to support Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) through Third Grade programs to serve all children.

Special thanks to Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez, Administrator, UPK Implementation Support Office, Early Education Division (EED), and external consultant, Dr. Beth Meloy.

Thanks are also extended to the following California Department of Education (CDE) staff members for their contributions: Mary Nicely, Chief Deputy; Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of the Opportunities for All Branch (OFAB); Stephen Propheter, Division Director of the EED; Valentina Ware, Child Development Consultant, UPK Implementation and Support Office in the EED; and staff from the Expanded Learning Division and Special Education Division within the Opportunities for All Branch.

Thanks are further extended to our partners who contributed their generous review and helpful feedback, including members of the CDE's Local Implementation and Promising Practices Constellation Group; members of the CCEE and CDE's Expanded Learning Opportunities Program Tiger Team; representatives from labor organizations including the California State Employees Association (CSEA), the California Federation of Teachers, and others; and representatives from school districts who have implemented best practices in support of toileting independence.

Table of Contents

Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Practices Toolkit.....1

Acknowledgements....1
Introduction....4
P-3 Schools Must Be Ready for All Children....4
P-3 Schools Partner with Families and Communities....5
Why is Toileting a P-3 Issue?....5
Key Considerations for the Development of Toileting Policies and Practices....7
Best Practices for Supporting Toileting Independence....7
Ensuring Health and Safety....7
Supporting a Positive Social-Emotional Climate....8
Providing Opportunities for Toileting Independence....9
Providing Direct Instruction on and Support for Toileting Practices....9
Partnering with Families....10
Supporting Children with Disabilities or Special Medical Needs....11
Avoiding Exclusion....11
Supporting Staff Through Leadership Buy-in....11
How to Develop and Implement Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Policies and Practices....12
Step 1: Assess current policies and practices and identify improvement goals....13
Step 2: Identify strategies to overcome potential challenges....13
Step 3: Identity implementation partners and timeline....14
Step 4: Implement policies and procedures....14
Step 5: Evaluate and improve....14
Conclusion....14
Toileting Independence Tools and Templates....15
Sample Communication to Families....16
Sample Communication to Teachers....18
Toileting Policies and Practices Self-Assessment Tool....20
Policies and Procedures to Support Families and the Home-School Connection....20
Policies and Procedures to Support Staff in Addressing Toileting Needs at School [in the Program]....21
Policies and Procedures to Support [School/Program] Environment and Materials....22
Sample Family Meeting Form....24

Toileting Independence Book List for Children, Educators, and Caregivers 27
Children's Books for Use at Home and in the Classroom 27
Books for Parents and Educators.....28
Sample Toileting Visual Chart.....29
Additional Resources.....30
Example Communication to Staff 30
Example Guidance to Teachers 30
Example Communication Resources to Families 30
Example Toileting Procedure Resources.....30
Other Resources.....31
Appendix A: Long Descriptions 32

Introduction

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide guidance and information to local educational agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) on best practices for supporting California's youngest learners as they develop and master toileting independence. This resource is intended to support district and community-based leaders and educators in understanding why supporting toileting independence in developmentally appropriate ways is critical both to supporting equitable access to UPK programs across settings, and to ensuring children's full engagement in preschool through third grade (P-3) learning opportunities.

This resource offers information for LEAs and CBOs to consider as they review and potentially revise their toileting policies and practices to accommodate the inclusion of younger learners, and learners with varied developmental needs, in their programs, including through intentional partnerships with families. This toolkit also offers a series of steps that LEAs and CBOs can consider taking to review and revise their policies and practices, provides templates, and shares resources from programs across California that are implementing developmentally appropriate toileting supports in ways that meet the needs of their learning communities.

P-3 Schools Must Be Ready for All Children

In CDE's Transition to Elementary School Toolkit,[1] a definition of school readiness was explored, and multiple dimensions including Ready Schools, Ready Children (supported by Ready Families), and Ready Communities were discussed. This conception of school readiness has important implications for understanding the role of both schools and families, and their partnerships with each other, in supporting children's toileting independence across PreKindergarten, including Transitional Kindergarten (TK), and into the early elementary years. All UPK Providers and P-3 Schools must be ready, willing, and able to support all children's needs. Having toileting practices and policies in place, before children enter the classroom, is essential to ensuring staff feel equipped to support all children.

P-3 schools should be culturally affirming and actively work to create a welcoming and positive school climate that promotes a sense of belonging for all children and families and inspires joy and the love of learning. P-3 schools understand, acknowledge, and take action to support children who come to them with a variety of cultural, linguistic,

[1] Note: The link to CDE's Transition to Elementary School Toolkit requires a free account on California Educators Together. You can sign up for an account at: https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/#

and other assets, as well as areas for growth.[2] P-3 schools should be committed to the success of every child as well as every teacher and every adult who interacts with children during the school day, including as they help children progress along their journey to toileting independence.

P-3 Schools Partner with Families and Communities

UPK providers and P-3 schools do not have to support toileting independence alone. In fact, partnering with families is essential to supporting children to achieve and sustain toileting independence. Having practices in place to support conversations with parents early and often about toilet learning and where children are on their toileting journey will help ensure open communication, and consistency for the child at school and home. By proactively partnering with families around their children's toileting journey, providers and schools have the opportunity to normalize the toileting independence journey, including delays and regressions, and remove the potential burden of shame associated with toileting challenges.

Communities also have incredible value and a wealth of information to offer UPK providers and P-3 schools as they prepare to support younger learners. Community partnerships can help inform providers and schools about community and cultural factors that may influence children's toileting journeys as well as families' ability to partner with schools. UPK providers and elementary schools have a responsibility to intentionally reach out and welcome input and collaboration from community members, and utilize any insights they have to offer related to children and families' context and culture. In communities where Tribal nations are present, schools and districts must be intentional about enhancing the well-being of American Indian and Alaskan Native children and families by embracing core values of respect for Tribal sovereignty, integrity, and transparency.

Why is Toileting a P-3 Issue?

When you think about toilet learning, you may imagine a three-year-old in a pull-up, happily singing a potty song. The reality of toilet learning and the age at which children reach toileting independence is highly variable. Some children achieve toileting independence early and with ease, while other children may need greater support to acquire the skills necessary to master this foundational component of self-care. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recognizes that toilet learning is a process that

[2] California Department of Education. (2022). Equitable Learning Environments for Young Boys of Color: Disrupting Disproportionate Outcomes, Sacramento, CA: Author.

involves a child's body and mind, and identifies the following skills children need to achieve toilet independence:[3]

1. Children need to be aware of their own body's signals and have bladder and bowel muscle control;

2. Children need to have the fine motor ability to pull down and up their pants and underpants;

3. Children need to understand and be able to follow multi-step instructions on how to use the toilet; and

4. Children need to be willing and motivated to use the toilet.

In the United States, toilet learning typically begins between two and three years of age, and most children are largely independent by four years of age.[4] Many factors can influence when toilet learning begins and whether children have achieved toileting independence by the age of four. Research shows that there is significant variation in parents' expectations about when toilet learning should begin.[5] These expectations can impact the age at which children achieve toileting independence. Likewise, childhood trauma and early childhood mental health can influence children's toileting independence.[6]

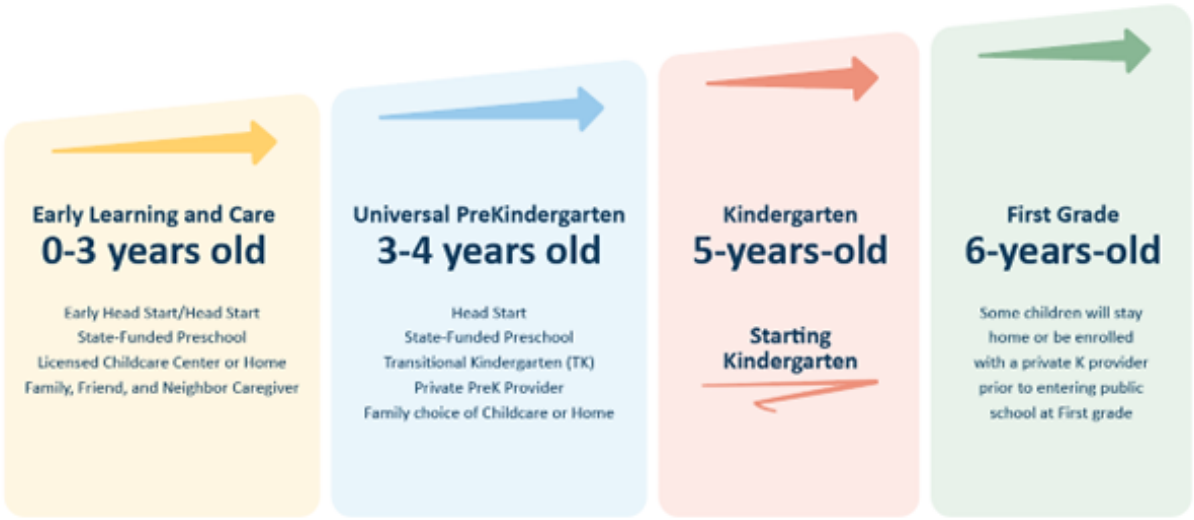
Furthermore, children may still occasionally need assistance with the tasks of toileting and may have toileting accidents or regressions even after they have generally achieved toilet independence. Setbacks during the toilet learning process tend to occur or escalate when a child experiences a significant, stressful family or life event (for example, welcoming a new sibling or attending a new school). As such, the transition into elementary school may itself trigger a toileting regression. Children also sense their parents' stress and may display their worries through regressive behaviors like temper tantrums or toileting accidents.[7] Finally, children in California can take very different paths into elementary school, as was acknowledged in the CDE's Transition to Elementary School Toolkit (See Figure 1). Whether children have experienced out-of-home settings prior to entering elementary school may influence how close they are to toileting independence when they enter elementary school and impact how familiar they

[3] Wolraich, M., & Tippins, S. (2003). *American Academy of Pediatrics guide to toilet training*. Bantam.
[4] Ibid
[5] Horn, I. B., Brenner, R., Rao, M., & Cheng, T. L. (2006). Beliefs about the appropriate age for initiating toilet training: are there racial and socioeconomic differences? The journal of pediatrics, 149(2), 165-168.
[6] Hussong, J., Greiner, M., Schiedermaier, U., Mattheus, H., & von Gontard, A. (2022). Anxiety disorders, depression and incontinence in preschool children—A population-based study. Neurourology and Urodynamics, 41(8), 1800-1808.
[7] Imran N, Zeshan M, Pervaiz Z. Mental health considerations for children & adolescents in COVID-19 Pandemic. Pak J Med Sci.: S67-S72. doi: 10.12669/pjms.36.COVID19-S4.2759. PMID: 32582317; PMCID: PMC7306970.

are with toileting schedules in school-based settings, and whether they experience a regression upon entering a new school setting.

Regressions will happen and are a normal part of the toilet learning process. UPK programs and elementary schools will need to work with educators and staff to support flexibility in their approaches to toileting, especially as programs are asked to serve younger children. When a regression occurs, parents, caregivers and educators should avoid expressing shame or anxiety toward or exerting pressure on the child, as this can reinforce and prolong the regression. Consistency, positivity, and transparency are key to working together, with parents, to support every child on their journey to toileting independence.

Pathways into Elementary School



Long Description: Figure 1: Pathways into Elementary School

Key Considerations for the Development of Toileting Policies and Practices

Best Practices for Supporting Toileting Independence

Ensuring Health and Safety

Health and safety is always a fundamental concern, whenever children are left in the care of adults outside of their families. Partnering with families to ensure they

understand what health and safety precautions are in place and are able to provide input on health and safety practices that will be utilized with their children is essential.

Key to ensuring health and safety is ensuring children are supervised at all times. This will require programs and schools to have a plan for how staff in any program or classroom will support supervision of children in bathrooms and classrooms simultaneously. One way to support regular supervision is to plan regular toileting times into the daily schedule to reduce the frequency of incidental trips. When possible, bathrooms for young children can be designed to support staff supervision by having low walls or stalls, and stalls with low doors or without doors.

In addition to appropriate supervision, it is essential to ensure all children remain clean throughout the day and are assisted, as needed, with soiled garments. Sometimes, this can be done by instructing children on how to clean themselves and change their garments. At other times, staff may need to have a more active role in assisting a child. Programs can also consider providing flushable wet wipes, as necessary, to children who may need extra assistance fully cleaning themselves. Programs and schools should support staff by developing guides or step-by-step procedures for toileting, including information about universal precautions. Such guides should include instructions for how adults protect students' personal rights. For example, having two adults present if a child needs assistance with changing clothing or cleaning themselves may be helpful if program or school staffing allows. Programs and schools should consider utilizing available staff such as a school nurse, health aid, and administrative or office staff, as applicable. Programs and schools should ensure that all staff are trained and have all the supplies they need to effectively support children.

Supporting a Positive Social-Emotional Climate

A critical characteristic of effective and developmentally appropriate learning environments is the extent to which children feel safe, nurtured and loved. Supporting safe and healthy environments for all children, especially by ensuring their social-emotional well-being, is also key to supporting children’s toileting independence. Preschool age children are beginning to develop stronger peer relationships and their social-emotional well-being can be impacted by their perceptions of approval and disapproval, not only from their teachers, caregivers, and parents, but also from their peers.

Normalizing toileting, removing the stigma from talking about natural bodily functions, and supporting children to understand that toileting accidents can happen to anyone will help them be prepared to support their peers and navigate their own emotions in the face of a toileting accident. One effective way to normalize bodily functions and the toileting process is to read books in the classroom about these topics.

How educators prepare children for the inevitability of toileting accidents, and how they handle individual incidents can have a significant impact on how children react when they themselves, or their peers, experience a challenge with toileting. Normalizing toileting, removing the stigma from talking about natural bodily functions, and supporting children to understand that toileting accidents can happen to anyone will help them be prepared to support their peers and navigate their own emotions in the face of a toileting accident. One effective way to normalize bodily functions and the toileting process is to read books in the classroom about these topics.

Providing Opportunities for Toileting Independence

Whether children come to a school or program in pull-ups or underpants, staff and educators should always assume that children can be supported to make progress towards learning new toileting skills and routines. The key to supporting all children to achieve toileting independence is giving children ample opportunities to exercise their independence and practice toileting skills. Adults can support children by implementing and maintaining consistent toileting routines, utilizing timers to support children who may need additional toileting cues, and encouraging children to take the time they need when given the opportunity to use the toilet (for example, five to ten minutes).

Visuals can be utilized to reinforce each step in the toileting routine. This includes when opportunities to use the toilet happen in the daily schedule as well as the steps to complete a trip to the toilet successfully. Children's intrinsic motivation can be effectively supported through positive descriptive acknowledgements (for example, "Wow, you pulled up your pants all on your own!"). In addition, reinforcers (for example, stickers) may help some children maintain motivation to persist in learning toileting skills.

Providing Direct Instruction on and Support for Toileting Practices

UPK programs, schools, and expanded learning programs should also support educators to use direct instruction on healthy toileting expectations in the classroom. Educators can teach children about the behaviors that are expected and practice and reinforce the behaviors with all children. Reading books about toileting, watching developmentally and age-appropriate videos about toileting, or engaging in activities designed to practice toileting skills (for instance, whole class bathroom visits after major transitions) during regular classroom time can help support overall understanding of key

toileting skills and contribute to the normalization of the toileting process for all children. Keep in mind that there are cultural differences in how children are supported on their journey towards toileting independence. It is important that UPK programs, expanded learning programs, and elementary schools provide training opportunities to support educators and other staff in building their knowledge and understanding of these cultural differences.

Partnering with Families

Families play an essential role in supporting children's toileting independence. Schools and programs should work with families to understand each child's context and history as it relates to their toileting journey. Families will have invaluable insights into what routines have looked like for a child in the past and what strategies have been most successful. If possible, schools and programs should work with families to create a home and school plan that acknowledges the goals and desires of all parties regarding each child's individual progress towards independent toileting. The plan should include family preferences and options available related to direct staff assistance in the event of toileting accidents. Some families may prefer to limit direct support from school or program staff, while other families may welcome it.

Family handbooks can be a helpful tool for communicating with families about standard policies and practices and sharing opportunities for families to support success in the classroom through their actions at home. Toileting conversations can also be built into back to school nights, or orientation opportunities for children. Specifically, communication with parents and families about how to ensure the clothes children wear to school are accessible can be helpful. For example, pull-on pants with elastic waistbands are easy for children to pull up and pull down themselves. It is also helpful to communicate with families about having a change of clothes on hand or in the child's backpack, and it is recommended that schools and programs have options to support provision and storage of extra clothing as needed.

Finally, just like in the classroom, providing a reading list, which can include parent-facing books to support toilet learning as well as books that can be used with the child in one-on-one story reading at home can be helpful.

Family handbooks can be a helpful tool for communicating with families about standard policies and practices and sharing opportunities for families to support success in the classroom through their actions at home. Toileting conversations can also be built into back to school nights, or orientation opportunities for children.

Supporting Children with Disabilities or Special Medical Needs

Although most children are on a journey towards toileting independence, some children's destinations will look different. It is critical to ensure that all children with disabilities are fully supported. If children have disabilities that impact their toileting needs, accommodations should be enumerated through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). For example, some children may have accommodations for extra reminders, or for staff to use specific strategies (for instance, lowering to eye level and making eye contact before providing a verbal prompt) when transitions, including toileting transitions, occur. For children who are struggling with toileting independence but are not eligible for IEPs, it is important for program and school staff to communicate with families about establishing whether medical needs or physical limitations may be impacting the child's toileting independence. If there are medical needs, program and school staff should work with the family using an individual health plan to support the child and possibly developing a 504 plan, if indicated. Toileting-related supports for children with disabilities or special medical needs should also be provided in before and after school programs.

Avoiding Exclusion

It is best practice to avoid excluding children from a UPK, expanded learning, or elementary school program based on their toileting status. It is important to understand that exclusion can be explicit or implicit.

Explicit exclusion takes place when programs, districts, or schools have policies in place that prohibit children who are not yet toilet trained from attending. Implicit exclusion can take place when programs, districts, or schools use language designed to discourage families from enrolling in a program. Language like "it is the expectation that all children are toilet trained," may be intended to convey a preference or hope that children will be toilet trained, but can ultimately have the effect of deterring families, who misinterpret these policies to mean that their child will not be welcomed or supported in the program.

Rather than setting policies that explicitly or implicitly exclude children, programs, schools, and districts should focus on inclusive practices by communicating clearly and transparently with families about the programs' obligation to support children who are not yet toilet trained and the partnership they will engage families in to support children until they ultimately master this critical skill.

Supporting Staff Through Leadership Buy-in

Ensuring genuine access to early learning experiences for all children requires adults in the system to buy in to the importance of supporting toileting practices. It can be helpful to frame toileting supports as "just like any other learning opportunity in the classroom."

Once educators and leaders understand the potential negative impacts of excluding children based on their toileting status, and view toilet learning as an opportunity to support children's access to other learning opportunities, the logistics of deciding who will support toileting become easier to navigate.

District and regional leaders play a critical role in setting the expectation that all children's needs, including their toileting needs, will be met. Supporting all staff, including teachers, assistant teachers, paraeducators, and before and after school program staff, to understand the importance of supporting toileting and their role in guiding children towards toileting independence is key. All adults should understand the important role they play, and how their behaviors can support children's progress.

Ensuring genuine access to early learning experiences for all children requires adults in the system to buy in to the importance of supporting toileting practices. It can be helpful to frame toileting supports as just like any other learning opportunity in the classroom.

Districts, schools, and programs may also need to analyze current duty statements for teachers and staff and engage in bargaining with union representatives about which jobs will include direct toileting support activities such as assisting a child with changing clothing or cleaning themselves. Some bargaining agreements will already specify that certain positions are assigned to assisting children with these direct toileting needs or explicitly exclude positions from these duties. Navigating these issues at a local level will be critical to providing all staff with the resources they need to successfully guide children towards toileting independence.

How to Develop and Implement Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Policies and Practices

As a district, school, or UPK or expanded learning program, it is important to follow a series of steps to develop and implement developmentally appropriate policies and practices. Doing so leverages the deep knowledge of teachers, staff, and families within your learning community, ensures acknowledgement of the barriers you face, and supports alignment of new and existing strategies with the needs of the children and families you serve. Processes like these are helpful across many policy and practice areas. Below, you will find suggested steps for establishing developmentally appropriate policies and practices to support children along their journey to toilet independence.

Step 1: Assess current policies and practices and identify improvement goals

In this step, you will assess your current toileting support policies and practices to identify any bright spots or gaps. Compare your current policies and practices against the best practices outlined above for supporting children's toileting independence.

During this step, it is critical to talk to and collect information from families, your staff (including your student services and special education staff), leaders, and partners (or potential partners) within your community. This information gathering may take place during one-on-one conversations, focus groups, or through surveys that include staff and families. As part of this process, you should determine what your current policies and practices are and what impacts they may be having on children, families, and staff. Consider how your policies and practices can be improved. Ask yourself what your goals for children are and how you can best support your staff to achieve those goals.

It is critical to consider how to collect information from across your community to inform your work. It may be helpful to reach out to community members, ECE providers, local Tribes, district partners, families, and educators in this information gathering process. Think critically about your current policies and whether your perspective is influenced by biases related to race, socio-economic status, or culture. It is important to challenge our biases in order to make decisions that benefit all children and families. Utilize the information you gather to prioritize improvement goals linked to changes you want to make to your policies and practices.

Step 2: Identify strategies to overcome potential challenges

Identify the strategies that will be most effective for your program, school, or district at this time, while acknowledging any challenges you face. For example, the number of children in your program or school who you anticipate will need toileting support may impact the strategies you identify. You should also consider the role of labor organizations and engage representatives in discussions about how their members can be supported to implement best practices that will ensure all children have access to high-quality learning experiences. Ensure your selection of strategies is supported by robust community engagement with attention to the needs of all children.

Once key strategies are determined, you will need to identify related funding needs, opportunities, and any gaps. In many cases, the activities may not require additional funding. Activities may sometimes require a shift in how existing funding is leveraged or in a program's schedule or routine. More substantial changes, such as facility renovations to support easier access to toilets and support for adult supervision during toileting, however, will likely require more substantial funding.

Step 3: Identity implementation partners and timeline

Implementation partners should include the staff who will be implementing the policies and practices (principals, directors, teachers, staff) and should include their labor union representatives. Consider whether county or regional organizations are positioned to support your implementation plan as facilitators or partners. A timeline of activities can be developed with a small group of partners representing the various interest-holder groups. The timeline should be clear, attainable, and complementary of the work individuals are already conducting.

Step 4: Implement policies and procedures

Based on the timeline outlined in Step 3, key partners will need to formalize policies and procedures to support agreed upon strategies. A clear vision and consistent communication strategy about the agreed upon strategies, policies, and practices is critical.

Step 5: Evaluate and improve

Using formal and informal feedback from families, staff, and other interest-holders, such as community organizations and union representatives, is critical. It is important to regularly collect and review this information to inform continuous improvement. This process may include:

- Conducting focus groups of parents, staff, and community partners;
- Disseminating periodic surveys to families, staff, and community partners and analyzing the results; and
- Developing and implementing an improvement plan annually.

Conclusion

All children deserve access to high-quality early learning experiences regardless of their toileting status. This means all programs must be ready, willing, and able to support all children's needs. Having developmentally appropriate toileting practices and policies in place is critical. This toolkit shares best practices for supporting California's youngest learners as they develop and master toileting independence. This resource also offers a process for LEAs and CBOs to consider as they review and potentially revise their toileting policies and practices.

Below, you will find templates to support this process and resources from programs across California that are implementing developmentally appropriate toileting supports in ways that meet the needs of their own learning communities.

Toileting Independence Tools and Templates

Within this section, you will find resources such as tools and sample templates to support your planning and implementation of key strategies. The CDE has prepared templates for some activities that can be used by districts, schools, UPK programs, and their partners. We encourage you to utilize and customize any and all of these resources to meet the needs of your school, program, and community. Tools in this section include:

- Sample Communication to Families
- Sample Communication to Teachers
- Sample Toileting Policies and Practices Self-Assessment Tool
- Sample Toileting Guidance
- Toileting Independence Book List for Children, Educators, and Caregivers
- Sample Toileting Visual Chart

Sample Communication to Families

Dear Families,

Welcome to another great school year! We are looking forward to welcoming your children into our classrooms! For children who are entering our school for the first time, we are hoping to connect with families about toilet learning. All children are welcomed into our [*program/schoo*l] regardless of their toileting status.

We understand children may need different levels of support, depending on how far along they are towards full toileting independence. For example, some children may still need direct toileting support such as assistance in the restroom or changing a pull-up, while other children will need assistance with the occasional accident (for example, changing soiled clothing, and putting clean clothing on), while other children will need assistance or additional instruction in wiping or cleaning themselves or handwashing.

For children who have not yet reached full toileting independence, our [*program/schoo*l] takes the following steps:

(1) Families will be offered an opportunity to meet with their classroom teacher and before and afterschool program staff (if applicable) to create a toileting or accident plan in the event that your child is in need of assistance. During this meeting you can expect to discuss:

- Your child's current toileting skill level
- Toileting routines at home and how they may translate to the school environment
- Parental preference on addressing accidents
- Resources to support toilet learning as well as how to handle a toileting regression

(2) *[Add other steps you will take (for example, back to school night orientations, family handbook guidelines your school or program may have, loaner clothing programs, and so forth)]*

We believe strong partnerships with families are essential to every child's success, and we look forward to working together to support your child's journey towards toileting independence at school and at home. If you have any questions or concerns about

these steps or have not yet been offered a meeting please reach out to your child's teacher, or [insert title], [insert name]

In partnership,

Administration Team

Sample Communication to Teachers

Dear Teachers and Staff,

Welcome back to another great school year! We are excited to share we have new policies and procedures to help you address the ever-changing needs of your students. As you know, we are [welcoming younger children/continuing to serve young children] in our [program/school] this year, and we recognize many children will need occasional (and in some cases frequent) assistance with toileting. For example, some children who enter your classroom will need assistance or additional instruction in wiping or cleaning themselves and handwashing, while a few children may still need assistance with the occasional accident (for instance, changing soiled clothing, and putting clean clothing on) or even direct toileting support such as assistance in the restroom or changing a pull-up.

We have taken steps to prepare you to meet these needs and to provide you with resources you may need to support children with toileting activities. To assist you in meeting the needs of children who have not yet reached full toileting independence, we are asking you to take the following steps:

- Offer families an opportunity to meet with you (if you are a classroom teacher) to create a toileting or accident plan if a child is in need of assistance. During this meeting, you should discuss:
    - The child's current toileting skill level
    - Toileting routines at home and how they may translate to the school environment
    - Parental preference on addressing accidents
    - Resources to support toilet learning as well as how to handle toileting regression
- Identify children who have an active IEP or a potential need for an IEP in your classroom and explore whether there are accommodations in place for these children related to their toileting needs.

Note some children may have needs that indicate a 504 plan is needed. We are asking all educators to consider the intersectionality of children's developmental delays and

their progress towards toileting independence to inform your approach to supporting toileting in your classroom.

[Add other steps you are asking staff to take]

We have also developed resources that describe best practices to support toileting independence and share how to address toileting needs in your classroom as well as incorporate relevant toileting skills into your classroom practices:

[Add resources you want to share with your staff, these could include book lists, videos, a note about supplies that are available and where they are kept, opportunities for trainings, and so forth]

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your [insert title], [insert name]

In partnership,

Administration Team

Toileting Policies and Practices Self-Assessment Tool

This tool will help programs, schools, and districts evaluate their current policies and practices and identify priority strategies to incorporate into the toileting policies and practices used in your program.

Policies and Procedures to Support Families and the Home-School Connection

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Communication (for instance, email, back to school night) to families about your program's toileting practices and procedures.	☐	☐
Communication (for instance, email, back to school night) that shares opportunities for families of children who are not fully toilet independent to meet one-on-one with relevant staff.	☐	☐
Individualized toileting assistance plans for children who are not yet toilet independent, including family preferences for staff engagement in toileting assistance.	☐	☐
Regular communication with families of children who have not yet mastered toileting independence about children's progress.	☐	☐
Families are offered resources around best practices to support toileting skill development at home.	☐	☐

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Families are offered parent education activities, including parent events to share and discuss best practices to support toileting skill development at home.	☐	☐
Children are not sent home due to an accident or multiple accidents, unless they are related to an underlying illness.	☐	☐
Children are not suspended or disenrolled and families are not encouraged to un-enroll or delay enrollment due to toileting status.	☐	☐

Policies and Procedures to Support Staff in Addressing Toileting Needs at School [in the Program].

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Communication from administrators to staff regarding current toileting practices.	☐	☐
Training for all relevant staff (including teachers, assistant teachers, paraeducators, before and afterschool program staff, and other staff that may interact with young children) on how to support toilet learning best practices, including how to address and handle all toileting accidents.	☐	☐
Guidance for staff on how to store, dispose of, and sanitize materials that are soiled by bodily fluids.	☐	☐
Staff are encouraged or required to embed regular restroom breaks into classroom routines and schedules.	☐	☐

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Staff are trained or provided guidance on how to react to all toileting incidents in a non-judgmental manner and support children's social-emotional well-being while addressing toileting needs.	☐	☐
All staff know who is available in the [school/program] to support toileting needs and address toileting accidents.	☐	☐
Written stepwise procedures are available to staff for guiding children who are able to change themselves after a toileting accident.	☐	☐
Written stepwise procedures are available to staff for assisting children who are unable to change themselves after a toileting accident.	☐	☐
Expanded learning program (before and after school) staff are invited to parent meetings around toileting topics as well as one-on-one family meetings that discuss the child's toileting plan.	☐	☐
Classroom staff, including before and afterschool program staff, meet with the IEP team to develop a plan of implementation for toileting accommodations in children's IEPs.	☐	☐

Policies and Procedures to Support [School/Program] Environment and Materials

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Visuals are posted in all restrooms to support toileting learning steps.	☐	☐

Policy or Practice	Currently Implementing	Priority for Implementation
Supplies are available to all classrooms to address toileting accidents, including gloves, wipes, bags, sanitizing cleaning products, changing mat, extra clothes (including socks, shoes, and underpants when possible), mop, and so forth.	☐	☐
Restroom supplies are made available to assist children who may have difficulty fully cleaning themselves (for instance, flushable wet wipes).	☐	☐
Books that support toilet learning skills are available to all relevant staff for use with children.	☐	☐
Other activity: _____	☐	☐

Sample Family Meeting Form

Note: As children transition into elementary school settings, schools and programs should consider completing this form with families in conjunction with the CA Great Start Transition to Elementary School Toolkit Family Information Questionnaire.

School Site:	Educator:
Child Name:	Parent/Caregiver Name:

Educators will provide individualized toileting assistance to children, as needed, based on their current toileting skill level.

Step 1: The parent/caregiver and educator will have a formal one-on-one parent meeting to discuss the child's current development with toileting independence skills.

Parent/Caregiver Notes: *(for example: biological rhythm, what language is used, and so forth)*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Step 2: The educator will discuss the list of requests below with the parent/caregiver and will indicate the parent/caregiver's ability to honor these requests and/or indicate their concerns given their child's toileting status: *(mark all that apply)*

- ☐ Parent/caregiver will bring extra set(s) of clothing including socks and underpants (*Note: Share availability of school-provided extra clothing if needed*)
- ☐ Parent/caregiver will bring an extra pair of shoes (*Note: Share availability of school-provided extra shoes if needed*)
- ☐ Parent/caregiver will dress their child in clothing that is easy for their child to manipulate *(no difficult buckles such as belts or overalls)*
- ☐ Parent/caregiver will bring their child to school in underwear (or pullups if applicable)
- ☐ Parent/caregiver will encourage their child to use the restroom upon arriving at school

Parent/Caregiver Concerns:

_____
_____

_____
_____

Step 3: The educator will share strategies they can implement at school and the parent/caregiver will indicate the strategies in use at home, and which strategies they believe are necessary and will be most effective to support the progression of their child's toileting independence skills:

- ☐ Educator will introduce the child to the restroom *(this may be in small groups as to not single out the child)*
- ☐ Educator will teach toileting steps through language and visuals (wipe, flush, wash hands)
- ☐ Educator will post toileting visuals in the restroom after teaching the steps to refer to as needed
- ☐ Educator will build frequent restroom breaks into the classroom routine.
- ☐ Educator will provide books related to toileting skills in the classroom environment.
- ☐ Educator will teach the child a word or signal for when they need to use the restroom or when they have had an accident.
- ☐ Educator will ensure that the classroom has necessary supplies to support toileting assistance *(extra clothes, gloves, wipes, cleaning materials)*
- ☐ Educator will communicate the child's individual plan with all classroom staff for consistency in reinforcing skills.
- ☐ Educator will provide positive reinforcement and provide positive descriptive acknowledgement *("You used the potty!" "You wiped yourself without help!" "You changed your own clothes!")*
- ☐ Parent/caregiver and educator will maintain frequent communication about any changes in toileting independence skills including progression and regression *(preferred method of communication below in additional notes).*

Other:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Step 4: The educator will discuss the procedures for assisting children when they have a toileting accident, and will solicit the parent's/caregiver's preference for how to handle incidents for which a child needs direct assistance: *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Designated staff will assist my child by providing clean clothing and talking my child through the steps to clean themselves and change their clothes.

- ☐ If my child needs to change their clothes after a toileting accident, call the number on file and I will come to the school/program to assist them.
- ☐ If needed, designated staff may assist my child with cleaning urine or feces from their body.
- ☐ If my child needs assistance cleaning urine or feces from their body after a toileting accident, call the number on file and I will come to the school/program to assist them.

Additional Notes from Parent/Caregiver:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Resources Provided to Family (book lists, family handbook, and so forth): *(list below)*

_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional Notes:

Preferred method of communication for toileting skill updates:

- ☐ Phone call or text *(circle one or both)*
  - Phone Number: _____
- ☐ Email
  - Email Address: _____
- ☐ Parent communication application two-way chat *(e.g. Learning Genie, Class Dojo, ParentSquare, TeacherEase, or others)*
- ☐ Informally at arrival/dismissal
- ☐ Notes sent home

Toileting Independence Book List for Children, Educators, and Caregivers

Children's Books for Use at Home and in the Classroom

- *Potty Bacinica*, Leslie Patricelli
- *Everyone Poops*, Taro Gomi
- *Diapers are Not Forever/Los Panales No son para Siempre* (English and Spanish edition), Elizabeth Verdick
- *A Potty for Me!*, Karen Katz
- *Pottysaurus*, Brooke Vitale
- *I'm A Potty Superhero*, Mabel Forsyth
- *Potty Time with Pete the Kitty*, Kimberly and James Dean
- *The Potty Story: Girl's Edition*, Agnes Green
- *The Potty Story: Boy's Edition*, Agnes Green
- *Superstar Potty Training Book for Girls*, Violet Giannone
- *Superstar Potty Training Book for Boys*, Violet Giannone
- *Unicorn Potty: Learn to Potty with Unicorn*, Laura Gates Galvin
- *Once Upon a Potty*, Alona Frankel
- *Daniel Goes to the Potty*, adapted by Maggie Testa
- *Daniel's Potty Time*, adapted by Alexandra Cassel Schwartz
- *Fiona's Little Accident*, Rosemary Wells
- *Clayton Parker Really Really has to Pee*, Cinco Paul
- *Raj's Rule (For the Bathroom at School)*, Lana Button
- *Potty Train your Dragon: How to Potty Train Your Dragon Who is Scared to Poop*, Steve Herman
- *Dash's Belly Ache, a book for children who can't or won't poop*, Wendy Hayden
- *P is for Potty*, PI Kids

- *Super Pooper and Whizz Kid: Potty Power!*, Eunice Moyle and Sabrina Moyle
- *Big Girl Panties*, Fran Manushkin
- *Time to PEE!*, Mo Willems
- *Even Firefighters go to the Potty*, Wendy and Naomi Wax
- *My Thomas Potty Book*, Random House
- *I Want my Potty*, Tony Ross
- *Poop! There it is!*, Xavier Finkley
- *Potty Patrol*, Random House
- *The Potty Book for Girls*, Alyssa Satin Capucilli
- *The Potty Book for Boys*, Alyssa Satin Capucilli

Books for Parents and Educators

- *Oh Crap! Potty Training: Everything Modern Parents Need to Know to Do It Once and Do It Right*, Jamie Glowacki
- *The First-Time Parent's Guide to Potty Training: How to Ditch Diapers Fast (and for Good!)*, Jazmine McCoy
- *Success with Potty Training: No Potty Training Seat, No Pull-Ups, No Training Underwear*, Beth Allen
- T*oilet Training in Less Than a Day*, Nathan H. Azrin, Ph.D. and Richard M. Foxx, Ph.D.
- *Ready, Set, Potty! Toilet Training for Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disorders*, Brenda Batts
- *Stress-Free Potty Training*, Sara AU & Peter L. Stavinoha, PH.D.
- *Potty Mastery, A Child-Centered Approach to Toileting*, Joan Morgenstern with Dr. Becky Bailey

Sample Toileting Visual Chart

[Long Description: Sample Toileting Visual Chart]

Additional Resources

These resources can be repurposed for your use or can serve as models for developing additional resources, with your specific program or school's context in mind. For example, resources may reference strategies or approaches to toileting that are not perfectly aligned with your school or program's resources and your community's needs. In these cases, you may want to develop your own resource, rather than repurposing the resources provided below.

Example Communication to Staff

Sample Toileting Memo to District - Early Learning & Elementary Schools, Long Beach Unified School District
Sample memo that went out to elementary schools in Long Beach Unified School District.

Example Guidance to Teachers

Transitional Kindergarten Toileting Guidance - Madera Unified School District
Transitional Kindergarten toileting guidance including, understanding possible causes of daytime toileting accidents, what staff can do to help prevent toileting accidents, procedures for when a student has a toileting accident at school and necessary steps to follow, and procedures for cleaning soiled areas.

Example Communication Resources to Families

Toilet Teaching & Learning Parent Workshop (English/Spanish) - Anaheim Elementary School District , Early Childhood Education
Bilingual (English/Spanish) PowerPoint for parents and caregivers workshop on how toilet learning is best defined and how to identify the signs of when a child is ready to potty train. The workshop includes tips and tools for success and visuals that can be used for supporting a child's toilet learning journey.

Example Toileting Procedure Resources

Toileting Skills Strategies, Tulare County Office of Education
Part of the presentation, "Re-Imagine Early Learning: Strategies for Inclusion in Preschool Setting" with Kati Kochevar: School Psychologist and Imari Smith: School Psychologist, BCBA on October 7, 2023 at Tulare County Office of Education. This part of the presentation focuses on toileting skills strategies used in the classroom, a sample schedule and sample visuals.
Best Practices for Supporting Toileting Independence in Young Children - Orange County Department of Education

A list of tips for families, educators and children to be successful in toilet teaching and learning at school and at home (available in both English and Spanish).

Staff Training Videos & Toileting Procedures Training Acknowledgement, to Support Staff with Toileting Procedures, Long Beach Unified School District
These videos were developed by Long Beach Unified School District to share their policies and procedures related to the following toileting scenarios to their staff. These videos can serve as a model for how to communicate your own policies and procedures to your staff.

- Toileting Procedures - Bathroom Guided Adult Support Video

  A six-minute staff training video on procedures for how staff can support children with toileting when they only need guided adult support.

- Toileting Procedures - Classroom Direct Adult Support Video

  A seven-minute staff training video on procedures for how staff can provide direct support for children when changing disposable underwear.

- Toileting Procedures - Direct Support in the Classroom & Bathroom While Standing Video

  A six-minute staff training video on procedures for how staff can provide support for changing a child while the child is standing.

- Training videos Acknowledgement Form

  Sample form for staff to complete once they have completed all of the toilet training videos.

Changing Soiled Clothing - Virtual Lab School

A six-step guide on how to change soiled clothing when a child has an accident at school, including steps to prepare prior to beginning the process to maintain healthy environments for all children and adults

Other Resources

Supporting Toilet Learning: Training in Transitional Kindergarten Programs - Center for District and Innovation Leadership

Requirements for serving age-eligible children as school districts prepare implementation of UPK. Strategies for supporting children with toilet learning in preschool and transitional kindergarten programs.

Appendix A: Long Descriptions

Pathways into Elementary School

From left to right are four progressive steps to elementary school with arrows pointing to the next step to the right. The first step is titled “Early Learning and Care 0-3 years old” and lists different options for Early Learning and Care: Early Head Start/Head Start, State-funded Preschool, Licensed Childcare Center or Home, Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregiver. The second step is titled “Universal PreKindergarten 3-4 years old” and lists different PK options: Head Start, State-Funded Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten (TK), Private PreK Provider, and Family choice of Childcare or Home. The third step is titled “Kindergarten 5-years-old” and beneath is the text: “Starting Kindergarten. The Fourth step is titled “First Grade 6-years-old” and beneath is the text “Some children will stay home or be enrolled with a private K provider prior to entering public school at First grade.”

Sample Toileting Visual Chart

The visual chart shows nine steps in toileting. Step One is titled “I have to go potty!” and shows a child raising their hand and telling an adult they need to use the restroom. Step two is titled “Pull down pants” and shows a child pulling down their pants with a downward arrow. Step three is titled “Use the toilet” and shows a child sitting on the toilet. Step four is titled “Wipe yourself” and shows a hand reaching for toilet paper. Step five is titled, “Pull up pants” and shows a child pulling up their pants with an upward arrow. Step six is titled, “Flush the toilet” and shows a hand pushing down on the handle to flush the toilet. Step seven is titled, “Wash your hands” and shows a child at the sink washing their hands. Step eight is titled, “Dry your hands” and shows a child using a towel to dry their hands. Step nine is titled, “You used the toilet” and shows a child smiling proudly.