This webinar will begin shortly.

Thank you for your patience.

Supporting Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Practices: A Critical Strategy to Strengthen P-3 Alignment

January 30, 2024

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

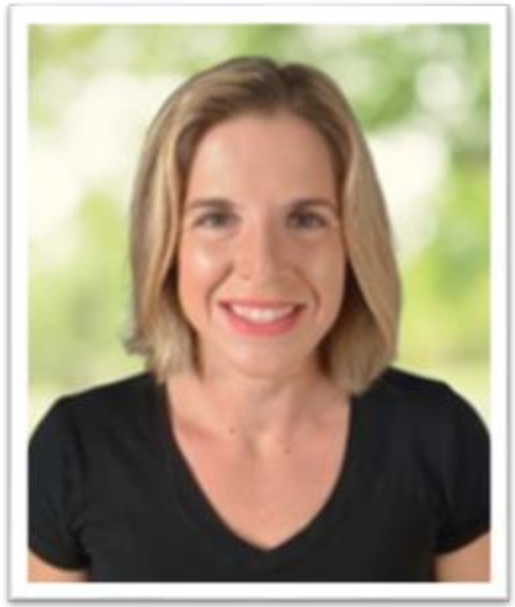
Welcome and Introductions (1)

Sarah Neville-Morgan
Deputy Superintendent
Opportunities for All Branch

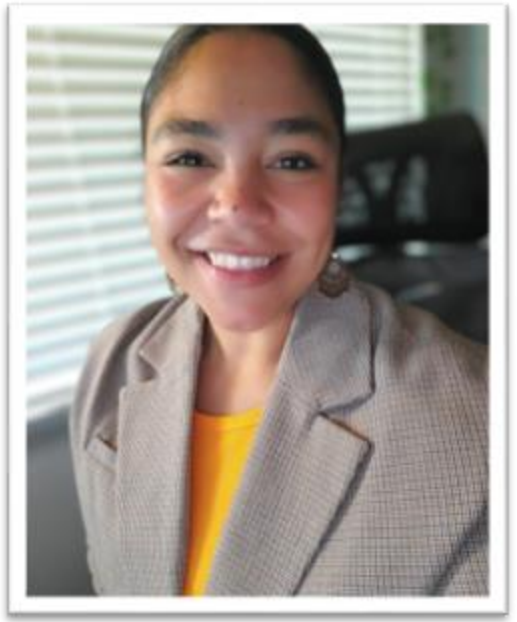
Stephen Propheter
Director
Early Education Division

Welcome and Introductions (2)

Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez,
Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Implementation and Support Office Administrator



Beth Meloy
Independent Early Childhood Policy Consultant



Valentina Ware
Child Development Consultant
UPK Implementation and Support Office, Early Education Division

Preschool to Third Grade Schools Must Be Ready for All Children

Having developmentally appropriate toileting practices and policies in place, before children enter the classroom, is essential to ensuring staff feel equipped to support all children.

Why Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Practices Matter

Partnerships with Families

- Schools and families partnering together in supporting children's toileting independence is essential across the Preschool through 3rd grade continuum.

P-3 Issue

- Toilet learning and the age at which children reach toileting independence is highly variable.

Pathways to Elementary School

- Regressions will happen and are a normal part of the toilet learning process

Introduction of Guest Speaker

Joan Morgenstern
Director of Parent Education and Community Outreach
Senders Pediatrics *
Cleveland, Ohio

My Mission

Potty champion with a capital **Pee**

My Why

Looking Backward to Go Forward

How Did We Get Here?

What Can We Do About It?

Today's Agenda:

1. Misconceptions around children's toileting
   - ➢ This occurs at the onset of independent toileting: also known as (aka) – "potty training"
2. 21st century living
3. Toileting is seen separate from teaching
4. Untapped Opportunities – what you can do

Number One:

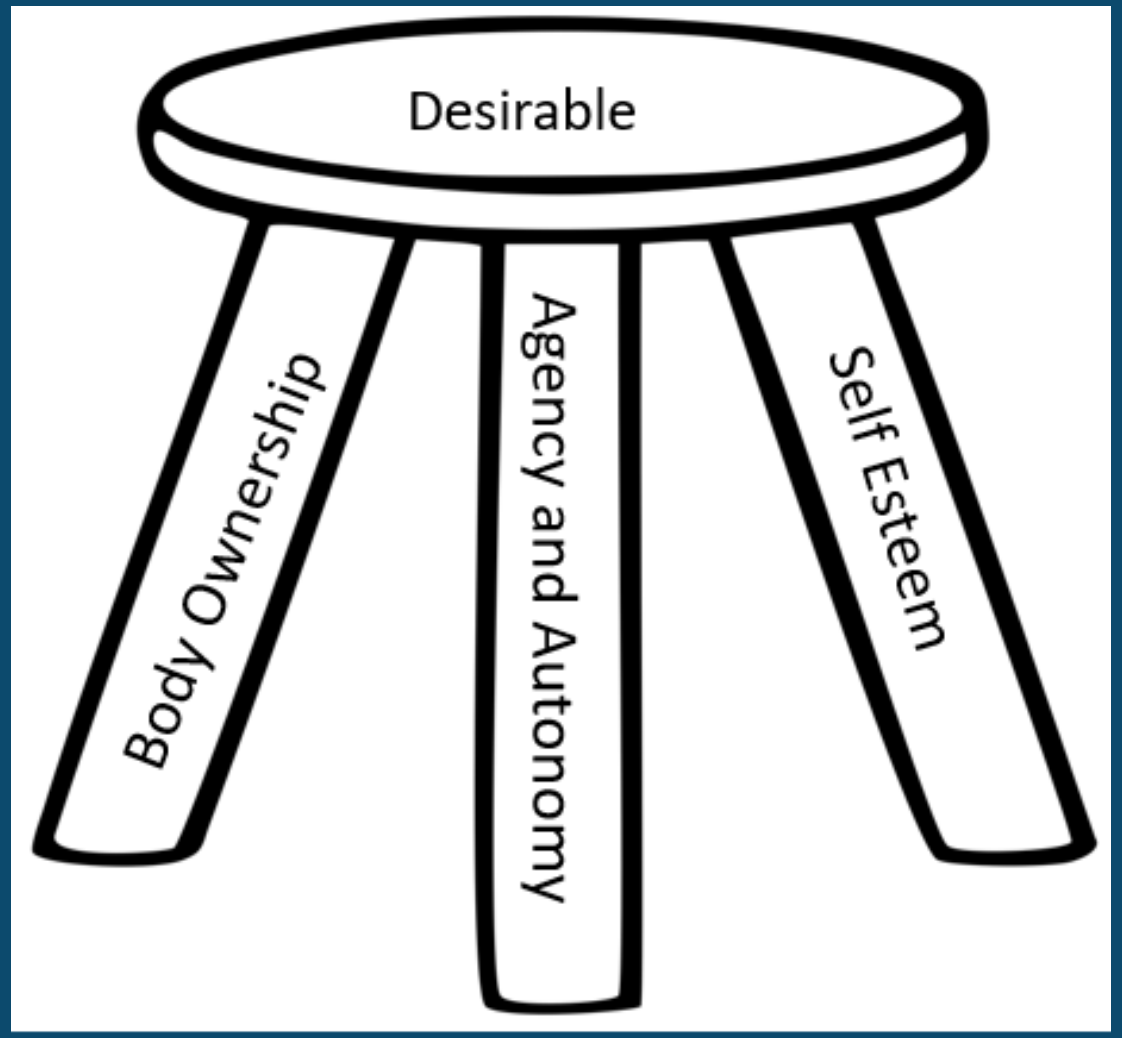
Misconceptions around children's toileting:

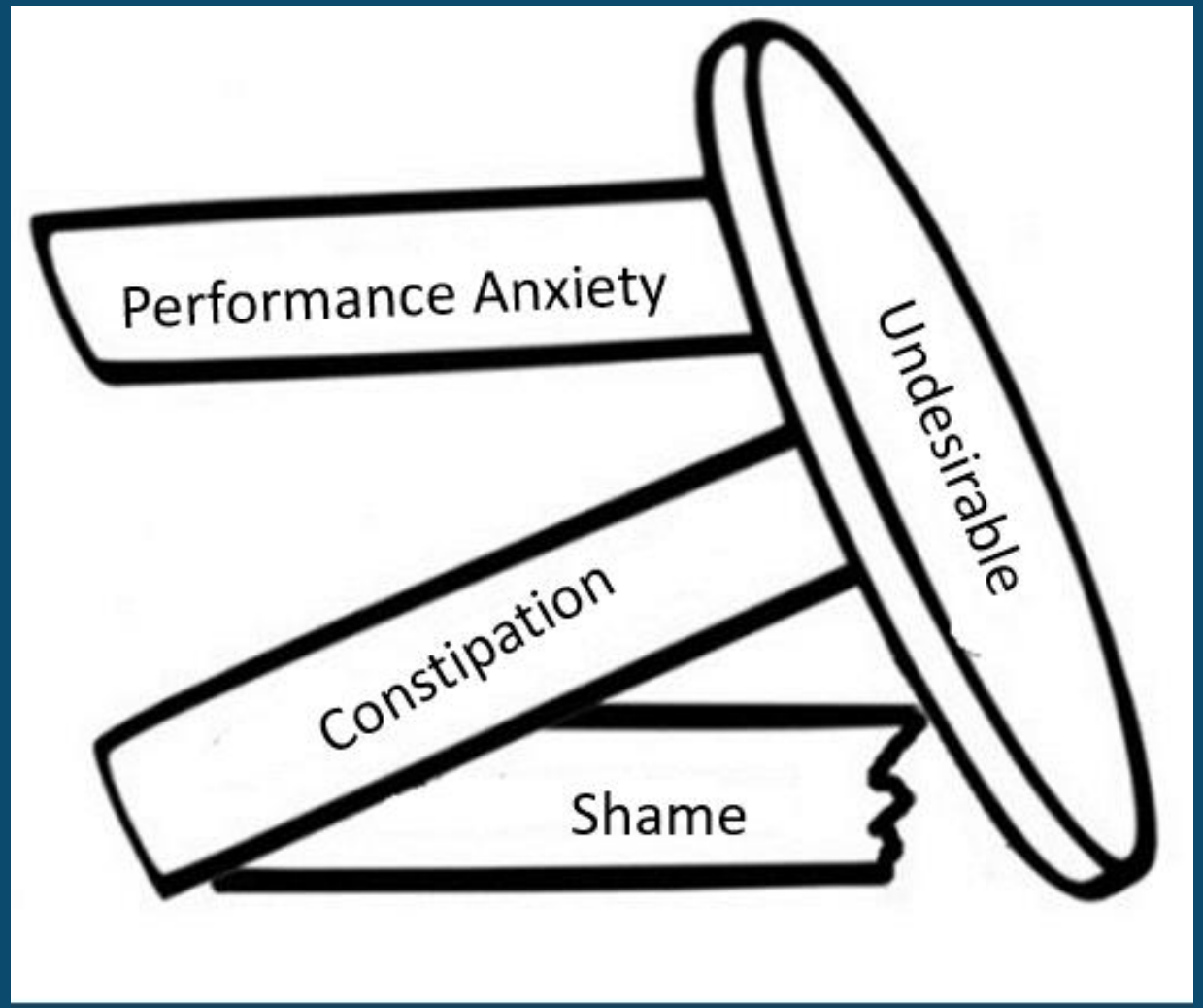
This occurs at the onset of independent toileting – aka: "Potty Training!"

1. We Don’t Train Children To Use the Potty

Training	Mastery
Something we do to another person with the goal of achieving a specific outcome	The process of acquiring a new skill that develops over time and with patience
A skill that will get drilled	A skill that will get learned
Adult’s intention: “I need you to…”	Adult’s intention: “You’ll be learning how to…”
Ownership: Adult	Ownership: Child

Toilet Learning Outcomes:





Children are Traversing a New Road: Stay in the Left Hand Lane

Potty Learning Informs Potty Mastery

- Potty learning informs potty mastery
- I authored a book in partnership with Conscious Discipline with a focus on a child-centered approach to supporting children's independent toileting

Photo Credit: LaVera Williams
Early Learning Center, Fresno, CA

Number Two:

Different challenges and pressures associated with 21st century living

21st Century Living

- Cultural Norms
- Busy Lifestyles
- Information Overload
- Disposable Diapers
- Early Learning and Care Settings
- COVID-19

Parental Pressures

- Parental Expectations
- Comparison with Others
- Confuse Messy and Unpleasant with Dangerous
- Pressure to Meet School Milestones
- Child’s Resistance or Fear

Number Three:

Toileting is seen as separate from teaching

An Analogy

- Toileting is more than just a societal norm of using the potty:
  - It plays a crucial role in supporting digestive health
  - It influences brain development and contributes to overall well-being

Toileting has Negative Connotations:

- We attribute the term “potty mouth”, not only to toileting words, but also to profanity
- It can be difficult to think about potty conversations as being important, or beneficial, because they are perceived as being inappropriate
- Adults default response to hearing “potty talk”
  - “Stop that right now!”
  - “What did you say!”
  - “Say that again and you’ll be in big trouble”
  - “If you say that one more time … (threat)”
  - “Watch your mouth!”
  - “Do you want your mouth washed out with soap?”

Toileting is Taboo

Belief:

- Toileting interferes with, or impedes, learning

Toileting Conversations:

- Focus on the rules associated with bathroom usage

Adult Toileting Needs:

- Often become suppressed while teachers are at school

Number Four:

Untapped Opportunities

From:

- Potty Problems &
  Potty Pressures

To:

- Potty Prowess &
  Potty Empowerment

A Mindset Shift Can…

- Expand your perspective
- Reduce Stress
- Makes room for new possibilities
- Enhance your problem solving skills
- Increase your motivation
- Support greater adaptability

Understand Toileting Accidents

Possible Reasons:

- Loss of rectal tone – due to constipation
- Bladder spasms – due to constipation
- Fear – schema around toileting
- Position – does not squat to defecate
- Trauma

"You should know better!"

"Didn't I just ask you if you needed to use the bathroom?"

"Why did you pee in your pants?"

"Another accident!"

"Send (child) home from school; it's their third accident today!"

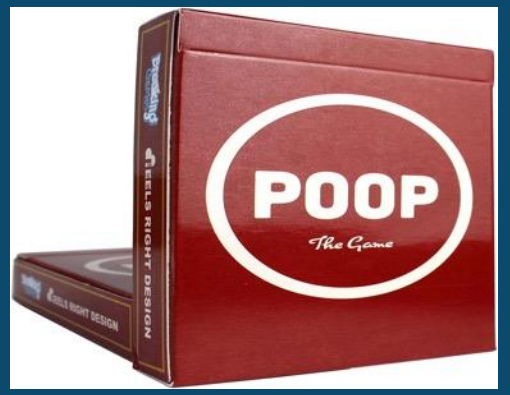
"I didn't sign up to clean poopy underpants!"

"It's your job to clean-up!" (said with attitude).

Discussing Digestion and Elimination with Young Children

- Nutrition
- Body Signals
- Stress Management
- Physical Exercise
- Lead By Example

Add Fun and Games



Improve the Physical Environment

- Appearance
- Odor
- Privacy
- Comfort
- Accessibility
- Sound
- Time

Photo Credit: Chelmsford Elementary School Chelmsford, ON

Conclusion

“The road to health is paved with good intestines.”

~Sherry A Rogers

Email: Joan@ParentStride.com

Instagram: Parentstride

Best Practices: Ensure Health and Safety

- Partner with families to ensure they understand what health and safety precautions are in place and can provide input on health and safety practices that will be utilized with their children.
- Appropriate supervision of children must be always happening, to ensure the health and safety of everyone.
  - Direct role with changing soiled clothing versus indirect role and by instructing a child how to change soiled clothing

Photo Credit: Kidango

Best Practices: Positive Social and Emotional Climate

Normalizing Toileting:

- By 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.

Photo Credit: Breed St. Elementary, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program, Los Angeles, CA

Best Practices: Providing Opportunities for Toileting Independence

- The key to supporting all children to achieve toileting independence is giving them many opportunities to exercise their independence and practice toileting skills.
  - Visuals that support toileting can be utilized to reinforce the steps in their toileting routine.
  - Intrinsic motivation can be effective through positive descriptive acknowledgement, "You pulled your pants up on your own, you are learning!"

Photo credit: Kidango

Best Practices: Providing Direct Instruction on and Support for Toileting Practices

- Educators can teach children about the behaviors that are expected and practice and reinforce the behaviors with all children.
- There will be some cultural differences in how children are supported on their journey towards toileting independence.
  - It is important that UPK programs provide training opportunities to support educators and other staff in building their knowledge and understanding of these cultural differences.

Best Practices: Partnering with Families

- 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.

Best Practices: Supporting Children with Disabilities or Special Medical Needs

- It is critical to ensure that all children with disabilities or special medical needs are fully supported. Accommodations should be enumerated through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 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.

Best Practices: Avoiding Exclusion

Our goal is that no child should be excluded from a UPK or elementary school program based on their toileting status

Photo Credit: Gates Early Education Center (Preschool Dual Language Learning), Los Angeles, CA

Best Practices: 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 just as any other learning opportunity in the classroom.

Photo Credit: Tree of Life International Charter School, TK, Anderson, CA

How to Develop and Implement Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Policies and Practices

Five steps to develop and implement 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

Assess your current toileting support policies and practices

- Identify bright spots or gaps
- Compare your current policies and practices against research-based best practices for supporting children's toileting independence

Collect informational data from families, staff, student services, special education staff, leaders, teachers, partners and community.

- Ask yourself what your goals for children are and how you can best support your staff to achieve those goals.

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.

- 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.

- Many times, the activities may not require additional funding, but instead require a shift in how existing funding is leveraged or in a programs schedule or routine.

Step 3: Identify Implementation Partners and Timeline

Implementation Partners

- Implementation partners should include the staff who will be implementing the policies and practices such as principals, directors, teachers, staff, and should include their labor union representatives.

Timeline

- 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 in Step 3:

- Key partners will need to formalize policies and procedures with a clear vision and consistent communication strategies about how to support the agreed upon strategies.

Step 5: Evaluate and Improve

Collect Regular Data:

- Using formal and informal feedback from families, staff and other interest holders such as community organizations and union representatives.

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
- Developing and implementing an improvement plan annually

Toileting Independence Tools and Templates

The CDE has prepared templates for some activities that can be used by districts, schools, UPK programs, and their partners.

Some tools and templates included are:

- "Sample Toileting Visual Schedule"
- A non-exhaustive list of, "Toileting Independence Book List for Children, Educators, and Caregivers"

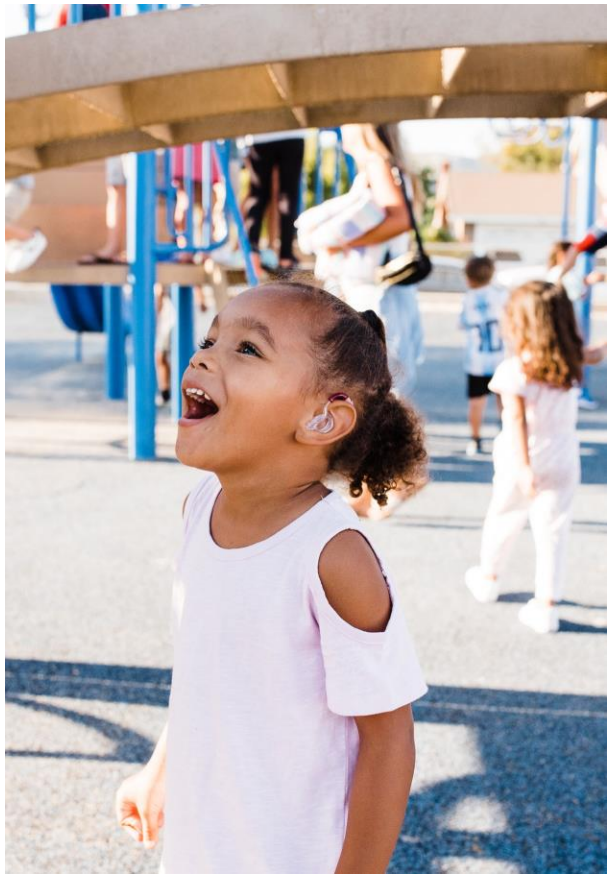


Photo Credit: University Preparation Charter School, Preschool Camarillo, CA

Sample Toileting Visual Chart

Visual support that can be used with children to support toileting independence.

Steps with images included:

1. "I have to go potty."
2. Pull pants down.
3. Use the toilet.
4. Wipe yourself.
5. Pull pants up.
6. Flush the toilet.
7. Wash your hands.
8. Dry your hands.
9. You used the toilet!

Link to Long Description: Sample Toileting Visual Chart

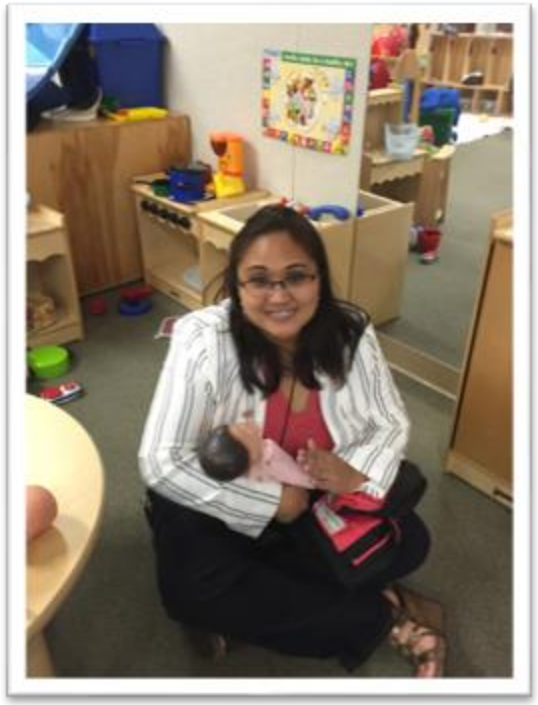
Additional Resources

Additional resources included 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.

- **Some included examples are:**
  - Example toileting procedures
  - Example staff training videos and toileting procedures training acknowledgment and so fourth

Panel Discussion

Moderator



Jennifer Osalbo
Education Programs Consultant
UPK Implementation and Support Office
Early Education Division
California Department of Education

Panelists (1)

Rhiana Thornton
Early Childhood Education Specialist
Madera Unified School District

Sarah Forrester
Director of Early Learning Child Development Centers
Long Beach Unified School District

Panelists (2)

Armando Dueñas
Principal
Long Beach Unified School District

Gloria Lee
California State Preschool Teacher
UCLA, Early Care & Education

Jennifer Jimenez
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher
Madera Unified School District

Panel Discussion Questions (1)

1. How has your program supported the unique toileting needs of your students? How have you addressed any constraints?
2. What are some ways that your programs provide training opportunities to support educators and other staff in building their knowledge and understanding that may come with toileting so that they may create authentic partnerships with families?

Panel Discussion Questions (2)

3. Regression can be a normal part of toileting, especially when transitioning to a new environment; how have your programs handled toileting regression with flexibility while remaining positive and keeping consistent open communication with families?
4. If you could give other programs one piece of advice or strategy that has been invaluable to your support of children, families, and staff to addressing varied toileting needs at your site(s), what would it be?

Reflections and Closing

"The path of development is a journey of discovery that is clear only in retrospect, and it's rarely a straight line."

- Eileen Kennedy-Moore

Photo Credit: Hayward Unified School District; Hayward, CA

Long Description: Slide 45, Sample Toileting Visual Chart

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.

Link to Slide 45