



Toilet Learning

Outline

Physical Readiness

Emotional Readiness

Methods

Role of the Adult

Recommended Reading

Is my child
ready?





Physical Readiness

- Indicates a soiled diaper with gestures or words
- Goes to a particular place to urinate or defecate in diaper
- Able to pull pants up and push them down independently
- Child walks independently/ myelination is complete
- May wake up dry from nap or nighttime sleep consistently

Emotional Readiness

- Child has a level of independence with undressing and dressing which has developed in them a sense of ***confidence***
- No major life changes occurring
- Supportive adults providing an environment prepared for toilet learning



Methods

- Elimination Communication
- Montessori
- Traditional



Toilet Learning Methods

Montessori

- Uses only cloth diapers and training underwear
- Uses observation of ***elimination communication*** cues from the child to initiate from birth (***child led***)
- Follows child's natural development ***and internal motivation***
- Does not use rewards or punishments

Traditional

- May use single use diapers and pull up exclusively or in conjunction with cloth
- Often ***adult led*** in preparation for school/daycare requirements (***external motivation***)
- May use a “boot camp” method to complete the process as quickly as possible
- May use rewards or punishments: sticker charts, toys, treats, host potty parties

Role of the Adults

- From birth observe your child and their elimination communication cues
- From birth explain what is happening at each diaper change, using correct terminology and avoiding shameful comments (remember your child is a sponge absorbing everything you say and do)
- Work with your child on undressing and dressing as soon as they are able
- Prepare a place for toilet learning in the bathroom
- Once your child can stand, change their diapers in the bathroom and offer the opportunity to sit on the toilet/potty chair
- Be prepared for lots of laundry and messes
- Stay positive

Should I Be Concerned?

- If you observe your child starting to withhold urine or bowel movements contact their pediatrician
- If your child is consistently dry and then suddenly starts having multiple accidents this may be due to illness, change in routine, sleep issues, a growth spurt, or their desire to test the limits of their control over their body
- Nighttime toileting may come much later

Recommended Reading

- Toilet Awareness by Sarah Moudry
- Diaper Free Before Three by Jill M. Lekovic, M.D.

