

Toilet Training



When should you start toilet training?

Before they can start training, your child needs to be given lots of opportunities for **learning**. Babies are born ready to learn new skills with our help and the best way for them to do so is through practice and repetition.

That's why it's important to think about potty or toilet training in the same way we support children to develop other skills such as brushing their teeth or using a spoon. Just like when helping them to walk and talk, you can start teaching your child to use a potty before they stop using nappies. This gives them all the time and practice they need to succeed with being independent from nappies when the time comes.

See potty training as a process rather than an event!

Shouldn't we wait for 'signs of readiness'?

No! Many children and particularly those with additional needs, will never give any signs that they are ready to potty or toilet train.

Very few children wake up one morning and announce they want to stop wearing a nappy! It's a bit like expecting a child to be able to run before they've had a chance to crawl.

You don't need to delay potty training and wait for signs of readiness. Prepare your child by teaching them the skills they need.

What is the best age for potty training?

Most children are ready to master potty independence and lead in many parts of the process from around 18 months. The majority of children will be capable of doing most things including wiping by themselves when they start school.

Research shows it is better for your child's bladder and bowel health to stop using nappies between 18 and 30 months.

The longer you leave it, the harder it can be for your child to learn this new skill and accept not having a nappy on anymore.

How to prepare for potty training

The getting ready stage for potty training needs to start early, take time and be a gradual journey you go on together. It can help to think of it as a '**potty learning process**' which will pay off in the long run.

Potty learning means helping your child use a potty or toilet as part of their overall learning. Most parents find a good time to start helping their child learn potty skills is from the time they can sit up, usually around 6 - 9 months.

By starting the process early and gently, when the time comes to stop wearing nappies, your child will already have some skills to make this transition easier and less daunting for you both.

It will be a lot less stressful for you both if you tackle potty training as a **gradual process**, rather than an event that can be completed in 3 days!

Why 'potty learning' helps

There are 40 different skills your baby needs to learn and put together to become potty trained. You don't need to wait for them to be able to do all these skills on their own before you start helping prepare them.

Your child has a lot to learn at each stage. This is why it makes sense to do some preparation and practice together before they stop wearing nappies.

Benefits of a potty learning approach include:

- You don't need to wait until your child is 'ready' and able to do everything on their own before they can start potty learning.
- There's no need to wait until your child decides or even tells you they no longer want to wear nappies. Language is one of the very last skills of communication that children develop.
- Your child will already have some of the key skills they need to make the move to pants and potty easier when you stop using nappies.
- Helping your child learn as they go along, according to what they are capable of at each stage of development, gives them a gentle learning process towards stopping using nappies.
- The more practice and help your child gets, the easier it will be when you decide to stop using nappies.

Supporting children with additional needs

Almost all children can learn to be clean and dry. Children with special needs such as delayed speech, autism or a physical disability may find the process more challenging.

Children with an additional need often need more support with learning to use a potty or toilet, but we recommend following the same 3 step process: preparation, practice and then stopping using nappies.

The longer they wear nappies, the harder it may be to introduce a new place for them to wee and poo. Therefore, it's important not to put off potty training for too long.

What equipment is needed for potty training?

- A potty (more than one ideally). Choose one that is low to the ground so your child can use it independently. You don't need to spend a lot of money on anything fancy, it has to do one job well: catch wee and poo!
- Some children may prefer to go straight to using the toilet. If this is your child, get a children's toilet seat and a step stool to help them to feel secure and relaxed. Having feet firmly on the floor or a stool is the ideal position for fully emptying the bladder and bowel.
- A travel potty can be helpful when you and your child go out.
- Reusable cloth potty training pants are handy if you are travelling or when your child is at nursery. These are like underwear but with an absorbent layer to help soak up accidents which can be washed and used again.
- Using a nappy cloth will help your child to understand their body signals. By putting a cloth into your disposable nappy, you can give your child the opportunity to connect to what their body is doing. Being aware that they have weed is the first step to being aware of when they will need to wee

To watch a helpful video and for further information on the three step approach of **Preparation, Practice** and **Stop using nappies please** follow the link to below.