

When Should We Potty Train?

Potty training can be natural, easy, and peaceful. The perfect age to begin potty training is different for every child, and can range from 18 months – 3 years old. You can begin training at any age, but your child's biology, skills, and readiness will determine when he/she can take over their own toileting. No matter the age that toilet training begins, most children become physically capable of independent toileting between ages 2 ½ - 4. It takes about three to twelve months from the start of training to daytime toilet independence, and the more readiness skills that a child possesses, the quicker the process will be. Most children urinate four to eight times each day - usually about every 1 ½ - 2 hours or so - and have one or two bowel movements each day (some have three, and others skip a day or two in between). In general, each child has a regular pattern. Lastly, a parent's readiness to train is just as important as a child's readiness to learn – if you're not ready to make that leap (and commitment), then wait until you are. The good news is that 98% of children are completely daytime independent by age four.

Potty training is easier and happens faster if your child is truly ready in all three areas: physical, cognitive and social. But the big question is: how do you know when your child is ready? Sometimes parents feel that if their child is able to actually pee when placed on the potty at home, that this is a sign of training readiness. If you have never traveled this road before, you likely don't even know what signs to look for:

1. Stays dry for 2 hours at a time and occasionally wakes up dry
2. Bowel movements are predictable
3. Shows signals or broadcasts in advance of bodily functions (pee pee dance, hiding for privacy, holding themselves, grunting or straining, etc.)
4. Shows discomfort in wet or soiled diapers
5. Able to dress, undress, and walk to bathroom on his/her own
6. Understands bathroom lingo (pee, poop, or any preferable words)
7. Interested in what others are doing in the bathroom
8. Follows simple 2-step directions

When your child shows a number of these signs, and you (the parents/ guardians) are ready to begin the potty training process at home, we will support you at school. The most important thing is consistency at home and school. Unless we are all on the same page, potty training will take A VERY LONG TIME and will be extremely frustrating for everyone involved – especially your child. If children are expected to wear underwear at school, but then wear pull-ups or diapers at home (or vice versa), this would be very confusing and counter-productive. Additionally, parents and teachers must have an open communication about potty training efforts, successes, and failures. Every child is different, and we all need to be on the same team for a productive and painless potty training process. If your child is interested or showing a few signs, a good start would be to start with letting them pull up/down their pants, inviting them sit on the potty after taking off a dirty diaper, and reading them books about this subject.

Committed To Potty Training:

What they will need at school:

- 6 - 12 pairs of training underwear (not big kid underwear)
- Package of Pull Ups for nap time
- 6 pairs of pants/shorts w/elastic waist (no buttons, overalls, or tights)
- Extra pair of easily washable shoes

Steps for potty training success:

1. Two weeks before moving to underwear, do a "Count Down To Underwear", and talk about it at every diaper change. Keep teachers aware of when the countdown begins.
2. Reserve a weekend for a 2-3 day intense potty training extravaganza. Talk about this weekend with your child(ren) and count down the days until that special potty training weekend.
3. Maintain a consistent routine. Take your child(ren) to the bathroom at key times during the day:
 - a. In the morning immediately after waking up
 - b. 20 minutes before and after meals and snacks
 - c. Before and after nap
 - d. Before bed
 - e. Any time your child(ren) ask to go, or show signs that they need to go.
4. Do not **ask** if your child(ren) have to go potty, **inform** them that it is time to go.
5. Have your child(ren) do as much as possible BY THEMSELVES! This means dressing themselves, pulling down pants/underwear, wiping, pulling up pants/underwear, and washing hands. If there is an accident, let them take their own wet clothes off, and re-dress themselves. Of course you will need to assist with wiping (especially with bowel movements) and hand washing.
6. Talk with your teachers every day – successes, failures, what you tried at home, and what worked/didn't work. Your teachers will do the same, and keep you informed on your child(ren)'s daily sheet.
7. Incentives work! Find something that motivates your child (hugs, praises, stickers, special snacks) and give it to them ONLY when they pee/poop on the potty.
8. Accidents happen – stay calm, stay positive, and remember that it is a learning process.

Things we WILL do at school concerning potty training:

1. Remind regularly to use the potty.
2. Assist children in any way necessary for success.
3. Praise and motivate children with potty success.
4. Encourage children when accidents occur, and talk about what to do next time.
5. Work with parents to mimic what they do/say at home for consistency.

Things we will NOT do at school concerning potty training:

1. Clean underwear. We will bag up urine-soaked and soiled underwear, but we will need to bag up clothes as is. DCFS prohibits us from rinsing soiled underwear/clothes.
2. Use food as rewards.
3. Reprimand or ridicule children for accidents.