

POTTY TRAINING

At EC3, toilet training is planned on an individual basis. Staff members work with parents to ensure consistency between home and EC3. Below are excerpts from two great articles on potty training.

3 REASONS NOT TO PUSH TOILET TRAINING

1. It's unnecessary. Your child will learn to use the potty when they are ready. Why add potty training to the already overloaded parental job description?
2. It's risky. Toddlers have a developmentally appropriate need to resist parents, and if parents have an agenda around potty training, toddlers are inclined to push back, even if they might have been otherwise ready to being using the toilet. Additionally, children who are not physically, cognitively and emotionally ready to potty train are at a high risk of constipation and UTI's.
3. Kids deserve to own this accomplishment. There isn't a long list of accomplishments toddlers can achieve. But they can do this, so let them master the skill in their own time.

IS IT TIME?

Potty-training success hinges on physical and emotional readiness, **not** a specific age. Many kids show interest in potty training by age 2, but others might not be ready until age 2 1/2 or 3 — and there's no rush. If you start potty training too early, it might take longer to train your child.

Is your child ready? Ask yourself these questions:

- Does your child seem interested in the potty chair or toilet, or in wearing underwear?
- Can your child understand and follow basic directions?
- Does your child tell you through words, facial expressions or posture when he or she needs to go?
- Does your child stay dry for periods of two hours or longer during the day?
- Does your child complain about wet or dirty diapers?
- Can your child pull down his or her pants and pull them up again?

If you answered mostly yes, your child **might** be ready for potty training. If you answered mostly no, you should wait awhile — especially if your child has recently faced or is about to face a major change, such as a move or the arrival of a new sibling.

READY, SET, GO!

When **your child** decides it's time to begin potty training, set them up for success. Start by maintaining a sense of humor and a positive attitude — and recruiting all of your child's caregivers to do the same. Then follow these practical steps.

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Model toilet use

Children naturally wish to do what parents and older siblings do. Put a few potty training books in the bedtime story rotation.

Pull out the equipment

Place a potty chair in the bathroom. You may need to try different models and types until you find what works best for your family. Allow your child to sit on the potty chair — with or without a diaper — when they show interest. Help your child understand how to talk about the bathroom using simple, correct terms. After several weeks of successful potty breaks, your child might be ready to trade diapers for training pants or regular underwear. Offer the choice when you sense your child is ready, but always fully accept their choice to stay in diapers.

Get there — or not!

When you notice signs that your child might need to use the toilet — such as squirming, squatting or holding the genital area — ASK them matter-of-factly if they would like to use the potty. Calmly accept no for an answer. Your job is to help your child become familiar with these signals — not force them to do something they are not ready to do. Never force or coax children to use the potty. This sensitive and complex area of development needs to remain free and clear of power struggles.

Details

Teach girls to wipe carefully from front to back to prevent bringing germs from the rectum to the vagina or bladder. For boys, it's often best to master urination sitting down, and then move to standing up after bowel training is complete. When it's time to flush, let your child do the honors. Make sure your child washes his or her hands after using the toilet.

Accidents will happen

You might breathe easier once your child figures out how to use the toilet, but expect occasional accidents and near misses. If your child has an accident, don't add to the embarrassment by scolding or disciplining your child. You might say, "You forgot this time. Next time you'll get to the bathroom sooner." Be prepared. Keep a change of underwear and clothing handy, especially at school or in child care. If your child has frequent accidents, consider whether your child is really ready to be potty training.

Sleep soundly

Most children master daytime bladder control first. Nap and nighttime training might take months — or years — longer. In the meantime, use disposable training pants or plastic mattress covers when your child sleeps.

Know when to call it quits

If your child resists using the potty chair or toilet or isn't getting the hang of it within a week or so, take a break. Chances are he or she isn't ready yet. Try again in a two or three months.