

Toilet Training

Revised 2019

Early childhood educators' role in the toilet training process is vital, because they are often among the first to recognize when a child is developmentally ready to toilet train. Communication and education for parents helps to provide appropriate and continuous toilet training methods and messages.

What to expect:

- Toilet training should always be based on the child's developmental level rather than on the child's age.
- Begin toilet training when the child shows signs of interest and readiness.
- Look for readiness cues such as the child:
 - imitates family members' behaviors
 - demonstrates independence
 - expresses interest in toilet training
 - can sit down themselves or with physical assistance (if needed)
 - can communicate their need to use the toilet
 - is able to pull clothes up and down
- Don't forget that this is an individualized process and reflects the child's developmental level and temperament.
- Adults must realize that this is a multistep process and setbacks are common.

Keep in Mind:

Accidents will happen when the child

- is not feeling well
- has experienced a change in their life
- is busy playing

These setbacks are only temporary. For all involved, do remember, it is important to avoid getting upset or punishing for back sliding.

Teachers can support children by:

- Keeping the experience as positive, natural, and non-threatening as possible. While on the toilet, sing songs, read books, or tell stories.
- Integrating toilet training into curriculum practices.
- Reinforcing the child's success at each step: discussion, undressing, going, wiping, dressing, flushing, hand washing.
- Providing a nutritional diet of fiber-rich foods and discussing with families the child's eating habits at home.
- Talking with or singing to them during diaper changes.
- Increasing their professional understanding of toilet training by sharing their experiences with their peers, while simultaneously being sensitive to their children's privacy.

Working with Families, providers can:

- Share with families the program's approach to toilet training. Also, listen to the family's views and methods of toilet training at home. It is important to be consistent with family's cultural values or a child's special needs when planning toilet training strategies.
- Remind families that toilet training is best started when the child is not experiencing any other major change (e.g., moving, new sibling, new school).
- Remind families to dress their children in easy to remove clothing. Avoid belts and overalls.
- Welcome and encourage families to talk about concerns regarding toilet training.
- Inform parents of their child's progress, using records that their programs keep and communications their programs send out.

References:

Potty Training: Learning to Use the Toilet. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/266>