

Toilet Training

A STEP BY STEP PLAN

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ 3 sizes of treats
- ☐ A timer
- ☐ A chart (optional)

BEFORE YOU START

Start having the child sit on the toilet at natural toileting times. Examples may be in the morning before getting dressed and at night before changing into pajamas. Do this for as long as needed. This should be a positive experience.

THE FOUR PHASES

Each phase works the same way. Only the length of the timer changes. Move to the next phase once your child has been dry for two days in a row.

Phase 1

15 MINUTES

Wake up, sit on the potty and put on underwear. If the child sits without complaining, he or she receives a small treat.

Set a timer for 15 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child check his or her own pants to see if they are dry. If they are dry, give a small treat and verbally reinforce. Set the timer for 15 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child sit on the toilet.

Continue this schedule until the child is dry for 2 days in a row.

Phase 2

30 MINUTES

Wake up, sit on the potty and put on underwear. If the child sits without complaining, he or she receives a small treat.

Set a timer for 30 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child check his or her own pants to see if they are dry. If they are dry, give a small treat and verbally reinforce. Set the timer for 30 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child sit on the toilet. Next timer, just check for dry pants. Repeat until bedtime.

Continue this schedule until the child is dry for 2 days in a row.

Phase 3

45 MINUTES

Wake up, sit on the potty and put on underwear. If the child sits without complaining, he or she receives a small treat.

Set a timer for 45 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child check his or her own pants to see if they are dry. If they are dry, give a small treat and verbally reinforce. Set the timer for 45 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child sit on the toilet. Reset the timer and repeat this schedule until bedtime.

Continue this schedule until the child is dry for 2 days in a row.

Phase 4

60 MINUTES

Wake up, sit on the potty and put on underwear. If the child sits without complaining, he or she receives a small treat.

Set a timer for 60 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child check his or her own pants to see if they are dry. If they are dry, give a small treat and verbally reinforce. Set the timer for 60 minutes.

When the timer goes off, have the child sit on the toilet. Reset the timer and repeat this schedule until bedtime.

Continue this schedule until the child is dry for 2 days in a row.

Keep increasing the time until your child is on a natural toileting schedule for your family life.

THE DAILY RHYTHM, AT A GLANCE

1. Wake up: sit on potty, set timer
2. First timer: check only, no need to sit unless he or she wants to
3. Timer: sit on potty
4. Timer: check for dry
5. Timer: sit on potty

Repeat until bedtime.

What's normal along the way

At this point, it's normal to wear a diaper to bed. It is also normal for the child to hold all day and then go as soon as the diaper is on. Just stay positive. Remind him or her they get a treat if they use the toilet. And if appropriate, require the child to help clean themselves up, such as taking diapers to the trash and washing their hands. Finding something for him or her to do to make it more desirable to use the toilet is the idea.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- **Match the treat to the win.** Use the different size treats for different levels of progression. Small treats are for being dry and sitting on the toilet without complaining. Medium treats are for having a success in the toilet when the timer goes off and it's time to sit. Big treats are for telling someone he or she needs to use the toilet, going in the potty, or whatever you think is a big deal.
- **Keep the treats special.** Choose treats the child only gets for toilet training. Keep them hidden or out of reach. Also tell other family members not to use these treats for anything except toilet training.
- **Try day of the week underwear.** Some kids who can read do really well with it. Knowing they only have one pair of "Monday" underwear motivates them to keep it clean all day.
- **Pair it with a privilege.** This can motivate kids on an intrinsic level. For example, kids who want a sleepover at grandma's need to be potty trained, or to attend a special camp, or go on an outing where a bathroom is too far away.
- **Ask for help, and don't quit.** This program can be intense for the first few weeks. Don't hesitate to ask for support from family and neighbors. Just don't quit, even if it seems like your child isn't getting it.

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