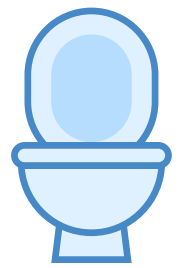


Transitioning your child onto a potty or toilet can be a big step for them and for you. Recognising your child's cues and what support they need may feel as daunting as the extra washing you are now anticipating but for many children this next stage in their toileting journey is a natural step that they will achieve when the time is right for them. If your child has delays in their development, it may be they are physically not ready to start toilet training at the age you might typically start it and that is okay. There is plenty you can do to start initiating the process and getting them used to the idea, your child is unique and will do it in their own time.

Before transitioning to the toilet there are many things you can do to support your child's understanding and awareness of this next stage. This could be reading books about toileting or even poo such as "What is Poo?" by Katie Daynes, talking about their toileting habits when you change them to build awareness and ways to communicate, singing a song to make nappy changes or bathroom time a happy and comfortable experience.



Having a potty readily available in your bathroom will give your child the initial exposure to understand that this change may not be too scary as the potty is something they have walked past or stood next to on many occasions before being asked to do anything with it. This may also be an early indicator your child is ready to start using a potty or the toilet as they may show increased interest in it or choose to sit on it whilst still clothed or in a nappy just to explore.

Other typical signs your child may be ready include:

- Change in behaviour when going for a wee or poo in their nappy (concentration, going to a private place)
- Your child may communicate they have used their nappy (Makaton, PECS, communication board, pointing and fidgeting)
- Their nappy is typically dry for over an hour
- They show lots of interest in others using the toilet or in reading books about potty training



Be mindful that if your child currently has any chronic health issues affecting their toileting such as constipation or regularly UTI's it is usually best to resolve these issues first, as they can create some barriers to becoming confident in using a potty or toilet. For children who may have sensory processing difficulties it is important to consider how these may affect your child before starting the transition, as this will allow you to be prepared with strategies to try and support your child so that they don't have a negative experience.

If your child struggles with:

- **Loud noises** - the flush could be overwhelming. Try ear defenders
- **Smells** - various toilet smells could be uncomfortable. Try a scented pouch of lavender, peppermint or other scents your child enjoys
- **Spatial awareness** - dangling feet or a lack of stability may feel challenging. Make sure there is a stool, frame or yourself to hold on to as they become familiar with the process
- **Textures** - the change from nappy to pants may feel strange. Have options of different shapes, colours, fabric and fit if you feel your child may find this change challenging

When you feel your child is ready and you have considered any items you may need to accommodate your child, it is time to start! Remember toileting will come with time and some children will take longer than others and that is okay. Where possible, once you start try not to quit however if you feel you have made no progress after a period of time you may wish to speak to a doctor or other professional in your life who may be able to give you more tailored advice to you and your child.

Top Ten Tips

1. Make sure everyone in the child's life knows this transition is happening
2. Encourage your child to choose their own pants
3. Choose toilet or potty so that it is always the same
4. Encourage use of the toilet or potty hourly, especially at times you know they would usually poo or wee
5. Have communication strategies available to help. Makaton signs, pictures or photographs of the toilet, a roll of toilet paper – whichever supports your child to recognise that it's toilet time
6. Try singing a song together, challenging your child to stay on the toilet or potty for the length of the song
7. Read a short book together whilst sitting on the toilet or potty
8. Get teddy or other favourite toy involved with sitting on the toilet or potty
9. Be consistent, especially with routine and the steps from play to toilet
10. Have plenty of clothing changes ready and a sense of humour!