

# Toilet Training

Are you wondering; “Why won’t my child pee in the toilet?” or “What do I have to do to convince my child to pee in the toilet?”. We have steps to get you started, and positive strategies to help you toilet train your child. Toilet training is hard as it is one of the few things a child can fully control. Your child might need motivation and positive reinforcement to pee in the toilet. They need something that is better than holding it, peeing on the floor or peeing in a diaper.

## Is your child ready?

- Can your child sit on the toilet for five to 10 minutes?
- Is your child pulling off their diaper or telling you they are wet?
- Is your child’s behaviour at low rates (e.g. child is not having numerous tantrums a day)?
- Can your child follow one-step instructions (e.g. “Come sit.”, or “Pick up the book.”)?
- Can your child hold their urine for one to two hours at a time?

## Are you ready?

- Are you ready to clean up multiple messes?
- Are you able to dedicate two or more hours a day to toilet training?
- Will all members of the household follow the steps to help your child be successful?
- Will there be any changes in your home coming up?
- Will your child care provider implement the steps for toilet training?



**If you suspect your child is not yet toilet trained due to a medical issue, speak to your doctor before beginning the training process.**

## Skills to teach your child to get ready for toilet training:

We recommend using a toilet rather than a potty when toilet training your child. When you begin teaching your child on a potty, it adds one more step for your child to learn in the teaching process. Some children find it very difficult to transition from a small potty to a large toilet and this could potentially cause problems down the road.

- Entering the washroom - If your child is afraid to walk into the washroom, you will need to slowly teach them that the washroom is a safe place to be.
- Pulling down/pulling up pants and underwear - If your child is unable to undress and dress independently, you will need to teach this skill.
- Climbing on/off the toilet - If your child is unable to get on/off the toilet, you will need to teach this skill.
- Sitting on the toilet - If your child is unable to sit on the toilet and remain there for a period of time, you will have to teach this skill.



## Materials needed for successful toilet training:

- Small potty seat that fits over the main toilet seat.
- Foot stool
- Timer
- Data on urination (taken week before)
- Multiple pairs of underwear, pants and socks.
- Loose fitting clothing.
- Favorite drinks and snacks.
- Rewards, rewards, rewards!

## How can I help my child be more motivated to void in the toilet?

- Use positive reinforcement!
- What are your child's favourite items/activities? Choose a few and keep them in a special box for your child to use only while toilet training.
- Limit access to preferred foods/toys outside of toilet time to increase motivation.
- Start with powerful rewards and change them with your child's interests.
- Rewards will be delivered frequently in the beginning stages.
- Rewards will be gradually decreased as your child is successful.



## Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is giving an item or an activity to your child immediately after they do something. It helps to increase the likelihood that same behaviour will happen again in the future.

For example:



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If your child receives a cookie after peeing in the toilet, peeing in the toilet is likely to happen again in the future in order to get another cookie.

## Why should I use reinforcement?



- Increases the likelihood that the behaviour will occur again in the future.
- Rewards are fun!

## When should I use reinforcement?



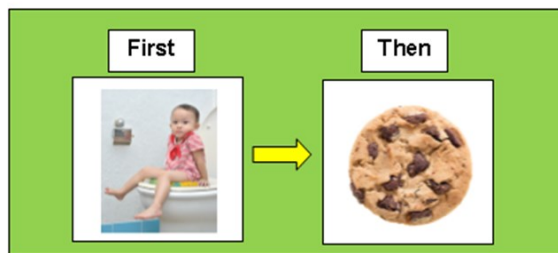
**Every time** your child successfully completes a step closer to voiding in the toilet.

## Visual supports

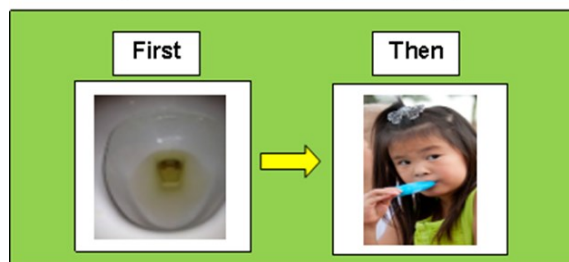
Using visual supports can help to ensure consistency, keep organized, reduce the need to repeat instructions and promote your child's growing independence. Visuals are easily referred back to.

First/Then Boards are effective in reminding your child what they will get from completing the task they have been given. The board shows a picture of what the behaviour expectation is and a picture of what your child chose to get once they have completed the task. The picture you use under the "First" column would represent what your child needs to do. This picture would change depending on your teaching step. The picture you use under the "Then" column would represent what your child has chosen to receive once they have completed the "First" task. This picture would change depending on your child's interests. It is important to use pictures of real items/activities, not cartoons. This helps make it easier for your child to understand.

**FIRST** sit on toilet → **THEN** cookie



**FIRST** pee in toilet → **THEN** popsicle



or

## Teaching Stories:

Teaching stories are visually represented stories that describe social situations and socially appropriate responses or behaviours to help children acquire and use appropriate social skills. These stories can be used to help teach your child the appropriate steps in the toilet training process.

## Where do I start?

- Collect information on your child's current void times for at least five days. Set a timer for 30 minutes. When the timer beeps, check to see if your child's diaper is wet or dry. Tell your child to feel the outside of their diaper and say: "You are wet/dry." Keep your voice tone neutral. Keep track of the information by writing it down. Repeat the check every 30 minutes throughout the day during your child's waking hours only.
- Look for patterns in the times that your child voids. If you see there are consistent void times, these are the times of day that your child will have the most success voiding in the toilet.
- Create your child's sit schedule. Have them sit on the toilet 10 to 15 minutes before their usual void time so you don't miss it. For example, if they usually void around 3 p.m., sit them on the toilet at 2:45 p.m.
- Allow your child to engage in some fun activities while they are sitting. Make the sit time fun and not stressful.
- Have your child sit for up to five minutes if they will tolerate that amount of time.
- Once they void, be sure to celebrate their success, and allow access to their favourite item/activity.
- If they do not void, try to sit for a void again in 15 minutes.
- Once you are ready to commit to the full toilet training process, remove their diaper for all waking hours. It's okay to put it on for sleep times. Remove it as soon as they wake up.

## Provide a comfortable and inviting environment

- Have a potty insert in the toilet or ready to go.
- Provide play items to use while sitting on the toilet, or have something fun for your child to do (e.g. favourite book or puzzle).
- Make sure your child is comfortable and you have a foot stool so your child's legs are at a 90 degree angle (this allows muscles to engage to push out bowel movements).
- Toileting accidents do occur; refrain from reprimanding your child. Have your child help clean up any mess, and change their clothing if items are soiled.



## Create your own First/Then Board or Teaching Story by visiting [connectability.ca](http://connectability.ca)

### Checklist

- Is my child ready?
- Am I ready?
- Do I have a good amount of strong motivators/reinforcers?
- Do I have the environment ready?
- Do I have a First/Then Board made?
- Do I have a Teaching Story?

### Establishing a positive routine is key!

- Teach toileting as an entire routine and include hand washing.
- Be aware of your child's eating and drinking habits. The more they eat/drink, the more they will void.
- Create a schedule and stick to it.
- Stop using diapers during waking hours while training.
- Use positive reinforcement to motivate your child to want to void in the toilet.
- If your child does not have success on the toilet, praise their attempts and tell them they can try again later.
- Take them to the toilet every 60 minutes. If they urinate, allow access to the preferred item (e.g., cookie); if they do not urinate they can return to play. Try again at the next sit time.

### Tips and effective strategies

- Training is done during the day time; night time training is done later.
- Offer liquids to your child throughout the day.
- Individualize your plan for the most success.
- Many children do not go on their own, that will come with time. Focus on schedule training.
- Increase independence. Allow your child to wear clothes that can easily be removed.
- Involve your child in changing out of wet clothes into dry clothes in the bathroom.
- Be aware that urine training usually comes first. Once successful, bowel training can start.
- Use visual supports (pictures) to help your child communicate that they have to go pee.
- When you are toilet training, ensure there are no other major life changes for the child (e.g. beginning school, moving, sleep training, new baby arriving, etc.).
- Purchase several pairs of underwear with your child's favourite character on them.



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