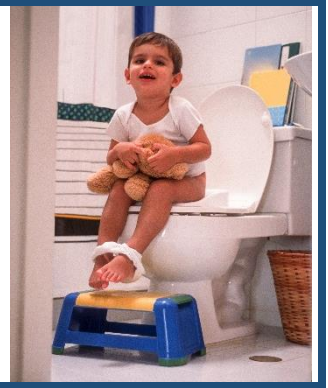


Toilet Learning

Toilet Training, Potty Training, Toilet Teaching



Toilet learning is a new skill and a big milestone for your child. You can help make it a positive experience. As a parent, it is your job to be patient and follow your child's cues.

Some children may be ready for toilet learning as young as eighteen months but most start between two and four years of age. Visit the [Canadian Pediatric Society](#) website to learn about their recommendations to Plan, Practice, Praise and Be Patient.

How long will it take to learn?

It generally takes a child about six months to learn to stay dry during the day. Children usually learn to control their bowels before or at the same time. Staying dry at night may take longer, even months to years later.

How you can help:

- Decide which words will you use, e.g. toilet, potty, bathroom
- Decide which words you will use for the body functions, e.g. pee, poop
- Ensure the potty is in a location that is easy for your child to reach
- If a regular toilet is used, use a seat adapter and a sturdy footstool

Do not pressure your child to use the toilet. Rushing the process may make it more difficult and frustrating for both of you. Be patient – your child is learning a new skill.

Never punish a child for setbacks

Is my child ready to learn?

Toilet learning is the child learning to:

- recognize when they are about to urinate or have a bowel movement
- communicate what is about to happen and ask you for help if necessary
- control the urge until they get seated on the toilet

To start toilet learning, a child should be able to:

- Walk to the toilet
- Sit up on the toilet
- Stay dry for several hours or wake up dry after a nap
- Pull clothes up and down
- Follow simple directions, such as hand washing instructions
- Tell you they need to go to the toilet
- Show interest in toilet learning
- Show a desire to please
- Copy what adults and older children do

Toilet learning can be challenging

The most common problems that occur include:

Accidents

It is completely normal for a child to have accidents. Remind your child to slow down and take a toilet break:

- when playing
- after meals
- before a car trip
- before going to bed

Even after being completely toilet trained, changes in the child's daily routine can lead to accidents

Bedwetting

Bedwetting is a common problem. Most children will outgrow bedwetting over time.

If your child is not making progress with toilet learning and is between two and four years old, it is reasonable to take a break for two to three months. If your child is over four years of age, is healthy, and is not toilet trained after several months of trying, talk with your child's health care provider.

Refusing to use the toilet

Some children are willing to use the toilet to urinate, but will not use it for bowel movements. If this happens you can;

- Talk about toilet learning with your child.
- Stop toilet learning for a few weeks or months. Do not even remind your child to use the toilet. Let them have complete control over the process.
- Encourage your child to copy you by inviting the child into the bathroom to watch.
- Treat hard stools or constipation if needed. Having painful or difficult bowel movements can lead to toilet learning setbacks.

For more information or assistance:



You can speak with:

- Your Community Health Nurse
- Your Physician/Nurse Practitioner



Or Visit:

EasternHealth.ca/YourHealthAtoZ

Or call the HealthLine:

- 811 / TTY 1-888-709-3555

