

TOILET TRAINING

By the time toilet training occurs, about 6,000 diapers will have been used. The child must have control of the sphincter muscles before he/she can be toilet trained. The sphincter muscles control the opening and closing of the bowels and bladder. These are the muscles used when they have to go to the bathroom and they have to wait for a few minutes. Sphincter muscle control occurs around age two. The child needs basic language skills to express him/herself concerning this matter.

Timing of training varies from toddler to toddler. The average age for completeness is 28 months. Forcing a child to be toilet trained before he/she is ready usually backfires on parents. One mother told herself that her son would be toilet trained by the time he was two. The son was not physically or emotionally ready to be toilet trained at this time. It was not until the boy was 4 1/2 years old that he was finally toilet trained. There was nothing that the parents could do, nothing doctors could do, and nothing therapists could do. The bad experiences this boy had with his mother trying to force him before he was ready caused the unfortunate situation. If parents place too much emphasis on this training, the child may learn to use his/her abilities to control his/her parents.

Toilet training is a slow process. Parents should not expect the child to be toilet trained at the first sign of success or readiness. Use diapers for nights and trips until the training is completed. Adults cannot do toilet training to or for the toddler.

Emotional readiness must occur at the same time the child is physically developed. Toddlers must see the need to use the potty. Some toddlers must overcome fears of the potty.

Providing a toilet training chair will make this process easier. Some critics of toilet chairs say that they cause another step to be taken in the training process. However, most children are less fearful of a potty chair.

Dress the child in easy to manage clothes. The child should be able to remove his/her own clothing in order to use the potty chair. Snaps, zippers, and buttons make this process difficult for the child.

Remind the child to use the potty, but remember that too much praise adds too much pressure to achieve the next time.

If a child is ill or under excessive stress, stop training until life returns to normal.

The use of training pants will lessen messes from accidents. Critics of training pants, such as pull-ups, say they make the child feel like they are in diapers. Still it makes it more comfortable for the child if they wet or have a bowel movement.

Most of all, accept success and failure as a matter of fact. Life, happiness, and fulfillment do not come from potty training. It is just one step in growing up. Parents need to remember that the age a child is toilet trained does not reflect on their parenting skills. This is a natural process that will occur as the child matures physically and emotionally.