

Ready Steady Toilet

Information and advice for children and their parents

Sandwell Children's Continence Service

Your child should be introduced to good toilet routines between the age of 18 months and 2 years.

New skills are learnt through age appropriate praise, practice and lots of encouragement.

Here are some ideas of how to introduce toilet training to your child:

- Make visiting the bathroom a part of your child's daily routine. Change your child's nappy in the bathroom, empty poo into the toilet, flush it away and practice hand washing together. Encourage your child to sit on the toilet/potty after meals or at times during the day when they usually do a poo.
- As a family use agreed words to refer to wee and poo and be open when speaking about toilet habits and when using the toilet.
- Share books and stories about using the bathroom.
- Let your child help to choose a potty or toilet seat. If using a toilet seat a small step or box will also be useful to help make your child more confident and provide them with a better position for opening their bowels more effectively.
- Chose pants with your child- you will need lots as accidents will happen. Do not use pull ups. When possible dress your child in clothes that are easy to pull up and down and can be washed and dried easily.
- Help your child practice sitting on the potty or toilet and give praise and encouragement for doing this rather than for doing a wee or a poo as this will promote confidence and help make the whole experience of toilet training more positive.
- Little boys should be encouraged to sit on the toilet or potty as this will encourage them to open their bowels and bladder more effectively.
- Take your child to the potty or toilet every couple of hours, at first they won't know if they need the toilet so just build it into your daily routine.
- If your child attends a childcare setting ask the staff what their routine is with toilet training and try to follow a similar routine.
- A selection of favourite toys can be kept especially for toilet time to help encourage your very busy toddler to sit on the potty or toilet for a few minutes.
- Even small progress is some progress so stay calm and be patient with your little one, this is still very new to them.
- If after trying, you realise your child is not quite ready for toilet training just have a break from it for a few weeks and plan when to start again.

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Food and Drinks for a Healthy Bladder and Bowel

Food

- Your child's diet should contain a mixture of foods from each of the basic food groups including:
 - Meat, fish, poultry, eggs
 - Milk, cheese and other dairy products
 - Fruit and vegetables
 - Cereals, potatoes, rice and pasta
- Your child should be encouraged to eat a balanced diet containing lots of different tastes and textures and at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Children should not be eating large amounts of high fibre food for example, bran cereals or unprocessed bran but should be encouraged to eat wholegrain cereals, pasta and rice as part of their diet.
- Do not add salt or sugar to your child's meals. Many foods already contain enough salt and sugar.

Drinks

- Your two year old should be drinking at least 900ml of fluids per day. This should ideally be water but can include very diluted fruit juice or squash. Milk can still be offered as a drink but in smaller amounts now as this can reduce appetite and can cause constipation if large amounts are consumed.
- Drinks to be avoided are tea, coffee and other drinks containing caffeine including fizzy drinks like cola.
- Do not limit your child's fluid intake- this will not help with toilet training as children need to drink enough fluids in order for their bladder to fill and empty properly. Children also need to drink enough fluids for their bowels to behave properly and prevent constipation. If you are concerned your child may be constipated and is eating a good balanced diet and drinking well please speak to your GP.

If you have any questions or are concerned about toilet training please contact your child's Health Visiting team who can provide additional support and advice.

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Further Information

ERIC The children's bowel & bladder charity. Available at: www.eric.org.uk (Accessed: 6 April 2021).

Bladder & bowel UK. Available at: <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/> (Accessed: 6 April 2021).

National Health Service (2018) Potty training and bedwetting. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/potty-training-and-bedwetting/> (Accessed: 6 April 2021).

National Health Service (2020) Soiling (child pooing their pants). Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/soiling-child-pooing-their-pants/> (Accessed: 6 April 2021).

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