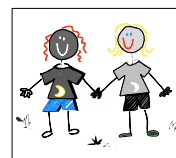


## Information and advice from:



**Early Development and  
Inclusion Team**  
Supporting Inclusion at the  
Early Years Foundation Stage

# Toilet Training Programme

## Issues.

It can be helpful to remember that, from the child's point of view, there is no pressing need to learn to use the toilet. Young children acquire this skill in order to please adults/their parents and a child with SEND may not be naturally as driven by this motivating factor as other children her age. She may not want to be taken away from the activity she is busy with to move to the bathroom. There may be aspects of nappy-changing/toileting which are unpleasant or frightening to her, such as cold wet-wipes or noisy hand-driers. She may not be able to read the signs her body is giving her that she needs to go.

## Ways Forward.

The adult's role is to break the task of independently using the toilet down into small manageable steps. Expect this to take time; the child has formed the habit of using nappies over a period of years.

## Establish a routine.

1. Initially the child is taken to the toilet after an agreed number of minutes throughout the day, for example every 30 minutes. This can be increased in quarter-hour intervals when it is felt that she is able to be dry and clean for longer periods. Keeping a record can help you see progress over time when little seems to be being made on a daily basis. Eg,

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Time	Wet or dry? 'Catch' a wee or poo?	Wet or dry? 'Catch' a wee or poo?	Wet or dry? 'Catch' a wee or poo?	Wet or dry? 'Catch' a wee or poo?	Wet or dry? 'Catch' a wee or poo?
9.30am					
10.15am					
11am					

2. Use a picture – a photograph or a picture symbol of the toilet – to cue the child in to what is about to happen. Take it to her at whatever she is doing. If a visual timetable for the day is being used, place toilet pictures on it at regular intervals. Use consistent language every time. Discuss with parents the vocabulary used at home so that there is consistency in both settings. **Tell** the child, don't ask her: "Time to use the toilet" or "Toilet time!", rather than "Do you want to ...?" If the child is

reluctant to come, offer two pictures with verbal reinforcement using first/next: “Toilet **first**. Playing/painting/outside etc **next**”.

3. It may be difficult for the child to know what is expected of her in the bathroom and to organise and sequence the relevant information to carry out the task successfully. Verbal instructions may be sufficient, but a picture schedule showing the order in which the task is completed could be shown to support her understanding if you feel she needs this, eg,  
Pull trousers down  
Pull pants down  
Sit on toilet  
Wipe with toilet tissue  
Stand up  
Pull clothes up  
Flush  
Wash hands

### Practical considerations.

Try pants under pull-ups or plastic pants. This may allow the child to feel wet/minor discomfort and allow her to learn from this.

1. If pants are dry, use simple language and an enthusiastic tone to praise – “Good girl. Dry pants!”  
If wet/soiled, use a neutral tone to remind of the desired behaviour – “No wet pants. ... does wees/poos in the toilet.”
2. Encourage the child to sit on the toilet for three minutes. Provide a book or try singing to help her stay seated. Use a sand-timer as a visual indicator as to when time is up.
3. Use praise and a motivating reward if the child uses the toilet successfully – stickers, one chocolate button, a favourite toy, etc. If unsuccessful simply end the activity with a phrase such as “Toilet-time finished”.
4. Encourage the child to do as much for herself in the dressing/undressing process as possible. Use the phrase “... do it”.

**At a much later stage** the child will need support in learning a way to ask for the toilet. (Ready access to the picture symbol she will, by then, be familiar with can help with this). However, for now the most important thing is to establish the routine and habit of using the toilet instead of a nappy.

Try to maintain a sense of humour! Good luck 😊