

## Toilet Training Tips

One of the biggest challenges faced by parents with young children is toilet training toddlers. The most effective time to begin toilet training is between 24 to 32 months of age. Keep in mind that all children develop differently and progress at different speeds. Below are some tip and strategies that may be useful when you are beginning to toilet train your child.

### **Establish a familiar routine:**

Establish a familiar and consistent routine with regular opportunities to practice sitting on the toilet.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Move all nappy changing facilities to the toilet or bathroom.
- Follow the routine sequence at every toileting time.
- Sitting on the toilet should only last about 2-5 minutes.
- Keep the toileting experience positive and fun e.g. tell a story, play music, blow bubbles, etc.
- Establish good hygiene habits as part of the routine e.g. washing hands after sitting on the toilet.

### **Facilitate awareness of wet and dry:**

An important learning process of toilet training is your child being aware when they are wet or dirty and to recognise sensations of fullness or a 'need to go to the toilet'.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Use less absorbent nappy options, put underpants under the nappy or use toilet training pants.
- In warm weather, allow time outside with only underpants or no pants.
- Clean your child as soon as they are wet or dirty and highlight the feeling of being clean and dry.
- Be a close observer of your child's signs of a 'need to go'.
- Use consistent language to talk about 'wees' and 'poos' and a 'need to go'.
- Involve your child in checking for dry pants between toilet times.

### **Encourage voluntary release:**

Initially sitting on the toilet with no result and frequent wetting and soiling accidents are very common while your child is developing muscle control and understanding of voluntary release.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Voluntary release is most likely to occur in a relaxed atmosphere, when your child has a full bladder or bowel and when toileting is part of a regular routine.
- Take your child to the toilet 20-30 minutes after a drink or a meal.
- Avoid rushing toilet times or pressuring your child, adopt a calm and relaxed manner.
- Encourage daily exercise, adequate dietary fibre and adequate dally fluid intake.

### **Managing Accidents**

Accidents can be expected, particularly in the early stages of toilet training. They can also occur when a child is over-tired, excited, cold, very involved in a play activity, or when changes occur in their daily life.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Be calm and accepting.
- Clean your child as soon as they are wet or dirty with minimal fuss and attention.
- Let your child look at their wet/soiled pants and acknowledge that 'wee' and 'poo' go in the toilet.
- Involve your child in removing the wet garments. Bowel motions can be placed in the toilet and flushed with your child's help.
- Avoid negative emotions and use of punishment, however rewards or positive attention should not be given.

### **Use Common Terminology**

Try to use common terminology for 'wee' and 'poo' and other body parts. This ensures that your child is likely to be understood by people that are unfamiliar to them.