

Parenting Revolution

Toddler Edition

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ACTIVITY SHEET



Learning to use the toilet can be unpredictable and messy. However, it signals a significant milestone in your child's growth, development and maturity. There are countless different 'toileting methods' and recommendations, each with their own merits. The challenge lies in finding a technique and process which works for your family and best suits your toddler. The tips and strategies covered in this session aim to help you to recognise when your child is ready to be toilet trained and how to get through the process with your sanity intact.



PROGRAM DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

This session is designed to help you:

- (a)** know when your toddler is ready to transition from nappy/diaper to potty
- (b)** know how best to allay fears
- (c)** troubleshoot when things don't quite go according to plan

Ready or Not?

Readiness for toilet training will vary from one toddler to the next. On average, toddlers are physically and emotionally ready to start toileting between the age of 18 months and three years (as a general rule, girls tend to be ready a few months earlier than boys). While some learn quickly, others need more time, parental patience and loving support. Premature toileting may lead to resistance or fear. If you rush in, you may just end up frustrating yourself and your child. The good news is that your toddler will let you know when they're ready. You just need to know the signals to look out for.



INDICATORS YOUR TODDLER IS READY

- Able to recognise bodily cues that indicate they 'need to go'
- Increased interest in watching others go to the toilet
- Dislike for wearing nappies/diapers (may try to pull it off when wet or soiled)
- Communicate to parent their nappy is full (even before it happens)
- Dry nappies for up to two hours at a time (indicating that they can hold their bladder)
- Can pull their own pants up and down
- Hiding when doing a wee or poo



INDICATORS YOUR TODDLER MAY NOT YET BE READY

- Lack interest in using the potty/toilet
- Not bothered if their diaper/nappy is wet or soiled
- Diaper/Nappy is constantly wet (indicating they're not yet able to hold their bladder)
- Express fear when seeing or hearing the toilet
- Refusal or resistance to training
- Chronic constipation (can make toilet training more difficult and should be dealt with first)

Engine Started: Racer Ready?

When your child exhibits signs of readiness, it's GO TIME! However, to help make the big leap from nappy/diaper to the big girl/boy toilet, many families choose to introduce the portable potty as a transitional step. Yet, even with the portable potty, things can go wrong. To minimise stress and maximise success, be sure to have a 'race plan' established in advance. Consider the following tips to help both you and your child get ready.

PRACTICAL PREPARATION

- Acquire a portable plastic potty
- Position the potty next to the toilet
- If out and about, take the potty with you
- Use pull up nappies/diapers instead of strap on
- Gift your child with new underpants (or training pants)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

- Talk to other parents for insights and tips
- As a couple, encourage one other
- Talk to your toddler and make toileting a team effort
- Consider obstacles and troubleshoot in advance
- Keep it fun and light-hearted - your enthusiasm will be contagious

PEE AND POO PREPARATION

- Teach your child words for going to the toilet (e.g. "wee", "poo", "I need to go", "potty")
- Show your child where the potty is and communicate what it's for.
- Put soiled nappies/diapers in the potty (before disposing) to show where pee/poo goes
- Let your child watch you on the toilet, and talk with them about what you are doing
- When needing 'to go', have a fun 'race' to the potty to see if they can make it in time.

Be Positive

Keep the toilet training process as fun and positive as possible. If you are enthusiastic about it, your toddler will be enthusiastic. However, if you are stressed or frustrated at every speed bump, your child is likely to become resistant and anxious (and may regress in their readiness). There are many tools you can use to keep the process fun and exciting. If your child is beginning to become disheartened or negative about the process, consider using a rewards chart to boost their motivation and confidence.



How can you get your toddler involved in every step of the toilet training process?

GAMES.

What creative games could you play to familiarise and model using the potty/toilet?

EXAMPLE: Time how long it takes to take dolly's clothes off and put her on the potty

SONGS.

What creative songs could you create, play or sing to make toileting more fun?

EXAMPLE: Create a funny rap or rhyme using family members names

STORYTIME.

Write/tell a fun toileting story. What creative illustrations/concepts could you use?

EXAMPLE: Incorporate craft; draw pictures and create potty models together with your child

PRAISE.

What creative rewards and incentives could you use to reinforce success?

EXAMPLE: Place a sticker reward chart on the back of the toilet door



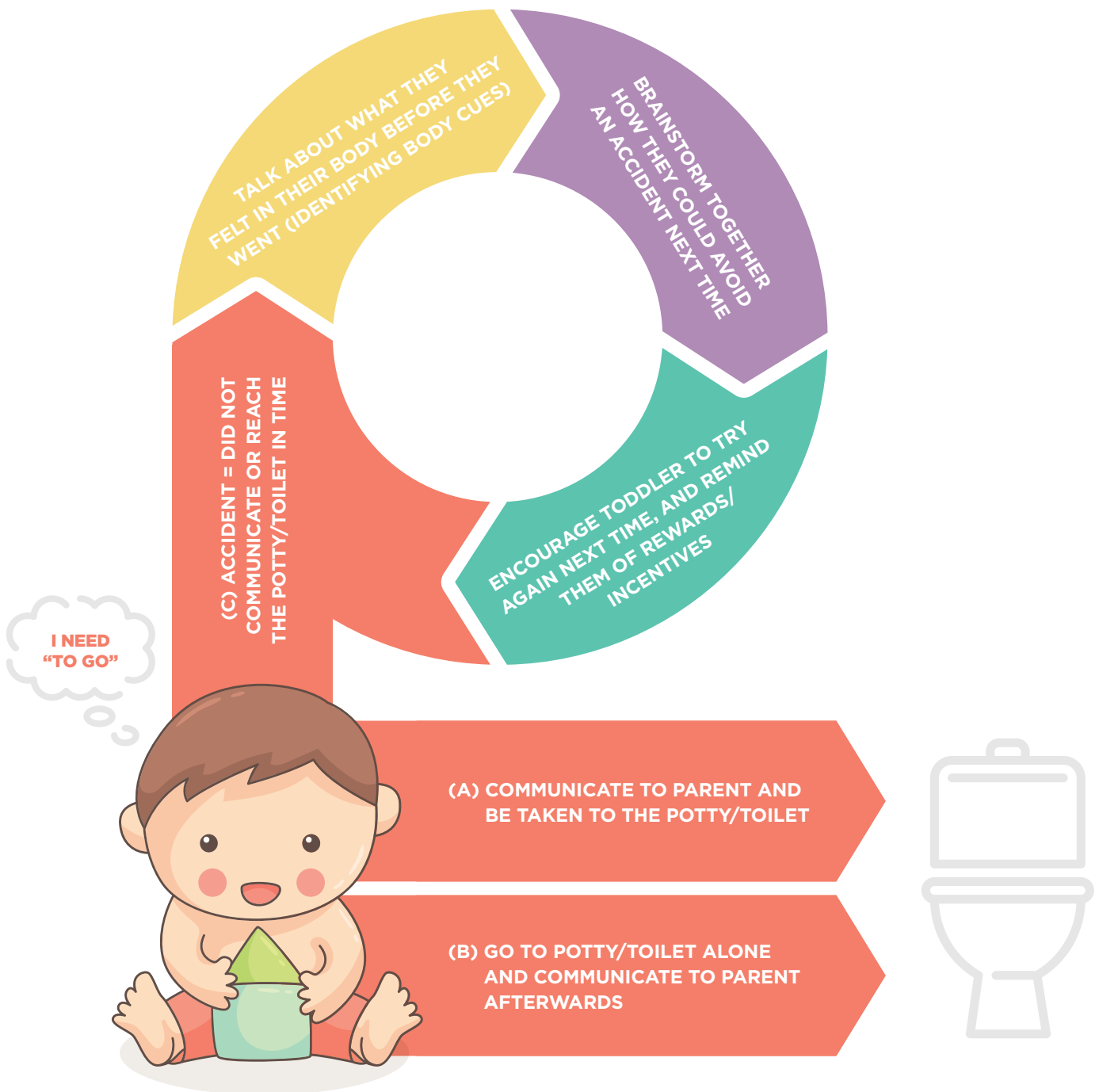
NOTE:

Use plenty of positive reinforcement when they succeed. However, if your child has an accident or is unsuccessful in their attempt to use the potty or toilet, swiftly move on and encourage them for next time. Never use negative reinforcement or punishment. Showing frustration or shaming your toddler when they have an "oops" moment may create negative associations and lead to greater resistance.

Accidents Happen: Now What?

Toilet training can be a long process with plenty of setbacks along the way. Do not despair, and do not give up! If your child has an accident, take a deep breath; clean up and carry on. Use accidents as a teachable moment. Some children will feel embarrassment or frustration after having an “oops” moment, so be sure to give them plenty of reassurance and encouragement. By showing patience and persistence, your toddler will learn to apply these same values.

When accidents happen, consider the following suggestions:



Consistency leads to resiliency

AS WITH LEARNING ANY NEW SKILL, CONSISTENCY IS KEY. TRY NOT TO CHOP AND CHANGE BETWEEN TECHNIQUES (UNLESS HAVING A GOOD REASON TO). AS A COUPLE, ENSURE YOU'RE ON THE SAME PAGE. CHANGING OR HAVING DIFFERENT TOILET TRAINING APPROACHES WILL LIKELY CONFUSE YOUR TODDLER AND POTENTIALLY DERAIL THE PROCESS. REMEMBER, TOILETING IS A SKILL THAT HAS TO BE LEARNED. IT OFTEN TAKES MANY, MANY, MANY REPETITIONS FOR THINGS TO...

...‘drop in place’.

Tackling the Toilet Monster

It is common for toddlers to feel mild anxiety over toileting, particularly if they've had a negative experience (e.g. being accidentally locked in a toilet stall, feeling overwhelmed in a public restroom, treated harshly or punished for accidents). For most toddlers, anxiety over toileting dissipates on its own. However, for some toddlers the anxiety can grow and can become quite distressing.

SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE ANXIOUS:

- Expressing worry or fear about going to the toilet or having accidents
- Avoiding going to the toilet
- Distress at the sound of the toilet flushing
- Fear that the toilet may swallow them up
- Becoming overly distressed if they have an accident

If your toddler is anxious about toilet training, they may simply not yet be ready. However, if they are exhibiting other readiness signs, consider the following strategies that help reduce anxiety:

ANXIETY BUSTERS:

- Talk to your toddler about how they are feeling in a calm way.
- Help your toddler to name the emotion and validate their feelings (consider using visual aids from Session 1).
- Have your child draw a picture of their feeling and have them explain it to you.
- Engage calming strategies and teach your child to self-soothe. Ideas include “candle breathing” (hold up your finger and pretend it’s a candle for your child to blow out).
- Play a game of “I spy”; while in the toilet, name the different things they can see.
- Take turns flushing down small pieces of toilet paper (getting used to the sound of rushing water).
- Employ a gradual exposure approach to face fears (as learned in Session 2).
- Reinforce brave behaviour: Praise your child for effort made and reward results.
- Always respond to accidents with kindness, understanding and grace.

Your Battle Plan

There are many behavioural techniques for successful toilet training. Remember, there is no 'one size fits all' model. Do a little research and decide in advance what might work best for your toddler and for your family. For example, some parents take a few days off work to help establish a routine. Some caregivers wait until the weather warms up. With fewer clothes to navigate, getting on and off the potty/toilet is easier. Whatever you decide, stick to the battle plan that you introduce from day one. Record your strategy below.

WHAT?	<i>Describe the strategy you have agreed on</i>
WHO?	<i>List the primary caregiver and helpers (spouse/grandparent) who'll use the same strategy</i>
WHEN?	<i>Detail your starting date and target duration</i>
SOLUTION?	<i>When things do go according to plan, brainstorm the best ways to respond</i>

REMEMBER:
No job is finished until
the paperwork is done

Be Positive. Be Persistent. Be consistent.