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Toilet Training - Is there A Hurry?

There is no rush to toilet train your child. Some parents feel that if their child is trained early, this has some significance. In fact, placing expectations on your child before he/she is developmentally ready, can cause more problems.

Your child should be developmentally ready to begin to toilet train as he/she approaches two years of age. This new experience should be started slowly and not forced upon your child. Your child will give you signs of being ready. Look for the early signs, like grabbing at the diaper, hiding under the table while having a bowel movement in the diaper, or running to the bathroom to climb on the potty. These are all good signs.

It is helpful to teach your child to associate certain toilet words of your choice with normal elimination functions (pee-pee or poo-pee). Remember, whatever words you teach, will be repeated at school and at friend's homes- do not embarrass yourself by teaching inappropriate words.

You can use a potty seat that fits on a regular toilet seat or a separate potty unit. If you teach your child to use a separate potty chair, it may be necessary to also teach the use of the seat on the toilet for times when the potty seat is not available. Using a potty seat that has a step which rests on the floor will help your child climb on and off the potty seat. The step will provide support for your child's feet when having a bowel movement. Be careful of your child falling off the step while learning to use the potty.

In the beginning, there should only be praise for going in the toilet. Try placing your child on the potty after meals or at times just before you would change a diaper. You may get lucky. Remember to reward your child with kisses, hugs, cheers, and lots of praise. Make it an enjoyable learning experience.

NEVER get angry or show your frustration, even in fun. Children want to please their parents. Your anger and frustration will upset your child and delay toilet-training. There will be times when you take your child to the potty because you recognize one of your child's signs of having to go, only to find a bowel movement in the diaper. This is actually a positive sign. It shows your child is learning to relate the feeling of having a bowel movement with going to the potty. Like walking, toilet-training is a developmental stage your child will achieve when ready. Have patience, your day of no diapers will come soon enough.

Some children like to flush the toilet, while others become frightened by the noise. If flushing the toilet upsets your child, wait until your child leaves the room.

Keeping your child in just a diaper around the house will make it easier for your child to use the potty. Use shorts or pants with elastic waists to make it easier for your older child to quickly undress to use

the potty.

Your little boy will get a kick out of trying to sink targets placed in the toilet. Try coloring on toilet paper and placing in the toilet. It is a great way of teaching him to pee into the toilet.

When is your child ready to go through the night without a diaper? Once your child is consistently dry when waking in the morning, it is time to stop using diapers.

Regression of toilet training is common. Do not get frustrated or angry. Try using pull-ups to make your life easier. Do not use pull-ups or diapers as a punishment. Tell your child you are going to use pull-ups to make it easier on him/her. If your child feels you are trying to help, the problem will resolve sooner. Any change or new stress in your child's daily routine can cause a regression. These may include an illness (urinary tract infection), new sibling, marital problems, or other family stresses.

The following suggestions may help your child achieve dryness sooner:

- Limit all fluids from dinner until bedtime.
- Take your child to the bathroom several times between dinner and bedtime.
- Wake your child before you go to bed and take him/her to the bathroom.
- Potty alarms (over 6 years of age) can be used at night to help wake your child up at the first drop of urine. Potty alarms are very successful in teaching your child to stay dry through the night.
- DDAVP is a new nasal spray that can be used to help decrease night wetting. DDAVP is a hormone, produced by the kidneys, that helps to decrease urine production at night. It has been shown that the level of DDAVP is lower in children who bed-wet. Many children who are helped by DDAVP will resume wetting after the nasal spray is stopped.

Several books can be found at any bookstore to help you with toilet-training. Toddler's Potty Book by A. Allison is one I can recommend for easy reading.

If you are having any problems conquering toilet-training, please ask for suggestions.

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.