

Ealing early years toilet training key message

Introduction

The toilet training key messages are a collaboration between

- early start health visiting, primary schools, PVI settings,
- ELP, school readiness
- occupational therapy, SEND and inclusion team,
- nursery schools, children's centres,
- speech and language therapy, school nursing, family link workers,
- paediatric continence specialist nurse - Ealing community partners.

The key messages for toilet training are largely based on the 'Let's Go Potty' approach from ERIC the children's bowel and bladder charity.

We recommend that all early years professionals carry out the 'Let's Go Potty' online training for early years practitioners or for health professionals.

One of the keys to successful toilet training is lots and lots of practice when the child is young. Therefore, it is important to begin the conversation with parents at the **earliest possible point** so that toilet learning can start as early as possible, this will help to avoid the stress and frustration of rushing a child out of nappies before they have had time to practice and build up the necessary skills.

We don't need to delay toilet learning while waiting for the signs of readiness. As in other areas of early learning, children can be prepared by being taught the skills that they need.

Most importantly parents need to be calm, relaxed and give plenty of positive encouragement to their child. You can help parents with this by giving them positive encouragement and feedback throughout the process too.

Consistency is very important for young children, and everyone involved with the toilet training process must be doing the same thing. If the educational setting works and communicates well with parents and carers this will help to make the toilet training process a happier and easier process for all. The toilet training poster will hopefully be a useful reminder to parents of the three stage process that they can use as a guide following on from your conversations with them.

Online resources

[Let's go potty](#) -

[Training for early years practitioners](#) -

[Potty training policy template](#) -

Step one – preparation

About this step:

Ensure a healthy [bladder](#) and [bowel](#) and that the child is passing a soft poo everyday. Drinking plenty of water-base drinks (6-8 cups a day/1litre) ideally, not sipping from bottles but drinking a full cup at a time.

What to do:

- Try to change nappy as soon as the child is wet/soiled and if possible, use the bathroom/toilet area.
- Talk to your child while changing them about where wee and poo goes and about how their body feels (e.g., feeling more comfortable afterwards).
- Once the child can stand, do nappy changes stood up near the toilet and involve them in cleaning up and flushing poo down the toilet.
- Allow regular short times without wearing a nappy so that the child gets used to how they feel without it (e.g., immediately after they have done a wee or a poo).

Top tips:

- ✓ Gather equipment to prepare for step 2, (i.e., potty, toilet seat, step and visuals,
- ✓ basic equipment can be sourced at a reasonable price and does not need to be expensive).

Step two – practice

About this step:

Children will still be wearing nappies for most of the time but they can begin to practice the skills of sitting on a toilet or potty. The child can do this fully clothed initially to get them used to it and build confidence.

You can use a potty or a toilet but if using a toilet, you will need a toilet seat and perhaps a step so that the child feels safe and comfortable.

What to do:

Firstly, from the time a child can sit safely by themselves they can start sitting on a potty with the support of an adult (e.g., shortly after they wake up and after mealtimes).

Then continue and teach:

- Words, signs or visuals to help them communicate their needs.
- How to push their pants down and pull them up again afterwards, (dress in clothes they can easily manage).
- Good personal hygiene (e.g., wiping front to back, hand washing and drying).

Top tips to practice:

- ✓ Use positive and consistent language about the poo and wee the child passes and how the bladder feels, e.g., *“My tummy feels heavy, I need to wee”*.
- ✓ Read stories and look at picture books together about how things work.
- ✓ Stay calm and don't put pressure on yourself or the child.
- ✓ Do what is manageable. You can pause practice if your child is ill.

Children's stories

Suzie's Toilet Time by Charlotte Olson

No More Nappies – board book by Campbell Books

'It's Ok Said Bed' by Catherine Longland

Amy Gets Eaten by Adam Kay and Henry Paker

What is Poo? by Katie Daynes and Marta Alvarez Miguens

Why do we need a potty? Katie Daynes and Marta Alvarez Miguens

Potty Superstar by Fiona Munro and Richard Merritt

I Really Need a Wee by Karl Newson and Duncan Beedie

I Really Need a Poo by Karl Newson and Duncan Beedie

Step three - stop using nappies

About this step:

The first step when taking nappies off is to do it during the daytime only. Once the child has stopped using nappies during the daytime, it is time to think about nap times and following that during the night.

Stopping using nappies is a big change for the child. Choose a suitable time to make this change (avoid times when other changes or disruptions to family routine are happening e.g., starting a new nursery).

Continue with helpful practices already established (e.g., staying hydrated, wearing easy to manage clothes, encourage boys to sit down for a wee and poo).

What to do:

- When you first stop using nappies, choose a time when you can stay at home for a few days.
- When you are ready, tell the child it is time to stop using nappies. Explain that from now on, they will do all their wee and poo in the potty or toilet, remember you could also use visuals and signs to help with this.
- Some children learn best when they can be at home naked from the waist down. Others may find it best to wear loose fitting trousers without pants.
- If you see any signs the child needs a wee or poo (e.g., they say, fidget and go quiet or hide, or they crouch and strain), gently direct them to the potty.

Top tips to stop using nappies:

- ✓ Support and encourage the child to be as independent as possible is a good way to motivate them. Praise their efforts.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with what is typical for your child and try to avoid prompting or asking too often. Instead, wait until you think they need to go and then direct them gently.
- ✓ Try to stay calm when accidents happen and don't make a big fuss (pack spare clothes for when out and about).
- ✓ Be consistent and avoid putting the child back in nappies during the day (e.g., for outings).
- ✓ Share your plans with setting staff or other caregivers so they are ready to support.
- ✓ There is no evidence to suggest that there are any additional benefits to using pull ups it could support learning for children to experience the feeling of being wet or soiled.

Additional needs

- Follow the same three step process.
- Some children may find it more challenging and require a bit more time and support with their learning (e.g., visuals may be beneficial).
- However, the longer a child remains in nappies, the harder it may be to introduce a new place for wee and poo. Therefore, it is important not to put it off for too long.
- If your child has specific physical needs then follow the advice of your health visitor, occupational therapist or physiotherapist.