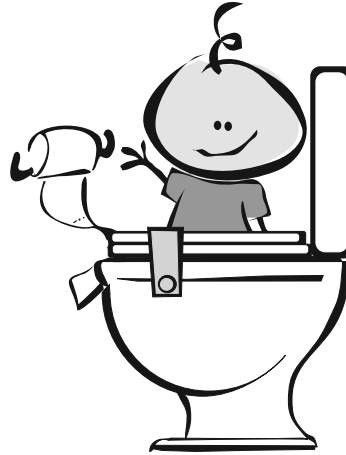


### *Teaching your child to use the toilet.*



#### **1 Readiness**

Not every child will be ready at the same age.  
Things to consider:

- Is my child dry for two or more hours at a time?
- Is my child aware if they are dry or wet, do they show any discomfort?
- Is my child aware of body signs that they are about to urinate or have a bowel movement?
- Is my child showing any interest in using the toilet? For example, do they want to copy me?
- Can my child help to undress and dress themselves?
- Does my child have a word, sign or picture to let me know they need to go to the bathroom?
- Can my child follow simple instructions?

#### **2 Getting Started**

- Start when your child is in a cooperative stage of development and there are no big changes going on in their life. For example, a new baby in the home.
- Gradually involve your child in awareness of the bathroom. Take them with you. Show them how you use the toilet. Change their diaper in the bathroom. When they have a bowel movement, flush it and let them watch. Let them sit on the toilet with their clothes on.
- Praise dry diapers, you are trying to teach your child an awareness of wet and dry.
- Start reading a child's storybook about toileting to your child. For example, *Everybody Poops* by Taro Gomi & Amanda Stinchecum
- Summer is often a good time to start, because children wear less clothing.
- Often daytime dryness occurs long before nighttime.

Continued →

### 3 The Toilet Teaching Process

- Ensure the teaching process is positive.
  - Praise your child's interests and attempts in toilet teaching, For example, if your child is interested in wearing training pants, praise them for this.
  - Consistency is important, try to have everybody that is involved in toilet teaching doing and saying the same thing.
  - When you are toilet teaching, it is a good idea to get rid of pull-ups and disposable diapers and use underwear or training pants.
  - Let your child choose the training pants they want to wear. For example, underwear or panties.
  - Dress your child in clothing that is easy to put on and take off.
  - Decide on the supplies you will be using, for example, a potty chair.
  - Establish a toileting routine. Sit your child on the toilet at these times. Often, you will know what the times are that your child will urinate or have a bowel movement. For example, in the morning, before or after meals, before naps, after being dry for 2 hours, after naps, and before bedtime.
  - Decide on words, signals, or pictures that you will use with your child throughout the toileting routine.
  - Give your child lots of water to drink to increase the likelihood of them needing to urinate.
  - Try to "catch your child in the act" and finish on the toilet.
- Your child may have their own preferences. For example, boys may want to stand or sit. If boys like to stand, you could put a Cheerio™ or a toilet paper square in the toilet to aim at.
  - Your child may want to sit on the toilet backwards.
  - Accidents will happen. It is important not to show disappointment or embarrassment. Never punish accidents.
  - If you have been trying for a while without success, take a break for a few months and then try again.

#### Remember

- This is not a quick process.
- It often takes months.
- If you are worried if something medical is going on, consult with your doctor.
- You are not alone.

#### Further Reading

- <http://www.capitalhealth.ca/nr/default.asp>
- <http://www.investinkids.ca>
- Gomi, Taro & Stinchecum, Amanda. (2006). *Everybody Poops*. Kane/miller Book Publishers.