



TOILET TRAINING

Below is an extracted from "Supernanny: How to get the most from your child" written by Jo Frost (p. 108-113):

How to toilet-train

Prepare your child for training by taking any hint of shame or disgust out of what is simply a natural fact of life. Don't disappear behind a closed door when you go to the toilet. Keep the door open. Bring her into the toilet with you. Explain what's happening, what the toilet paper is for and show her how you wash your hands afterwards. If you prepare her in the right way, you can teach two things at once: toilet training and hygiene.

Equip yourself with a potty and a travel potty. I think potties should be kept plain and simple. Don't make them a big deal. They're not thrones, toys or seats, they're just accessible, portable toilets.

In the same way, I'm not a fan of pull-ups, which some people use as a halfway stage between nappies and pants. It's either nappies or pants as far as I'm concerned. Anything else only confuses the issue. The only situation in which I would use pull-ups is where a child has learned how to take off his nappy at night.

While potties should be simple and plain, you can go to town with pants and knickers. Here's an obvious reward for successful toilet training. Kids are usually thrilled to bits when they move into pants. Motif pants featuring favourite film or cartoon characters are even more exciting.

When toilet training coincides with warm weather, you can let your child run around bare-bottomed provided you encourage her to keep using the potty. But that can sometimes be counterproductive. If a child doesn't learn what it feels like to be wet, she'll have less incentive for control. If she wets her pants, doesn't rush her out of them straight away. Let her learn that it's uncomfortable and it's something she should try to avoid.

Training Tips:

- Learn to spot the signs when he needs to go. Clutching his crotch is an obvious one.
- During the toilet-training period keep clothing uncomplicated. Trousers with elasticated waists that can be pulled down quickly are better than dungarees with buttons, straps or zips.
- Make a mental note of how much fluid you give your child throughout the day.
- Explain what it feels like to want to go. 'Do you feel it in your tummy?' Press your belly low down and show her what you're talking about. You don't have to go into graphic detail. It's not an anatomy lesson. Just try to get her to understand the connection between the feeling and what happens next.
- When he's done a wee or a poo, praise him. Toilet training is entirely based around praise and approval. It requires constant positive reinforcement.
- 'Do you need to do wee wee?' Repeat yourself over and over and over. A million times a day if necessary.
- Keep the potty close at hand. But don't put it in front of the TV. If it stays in front of the telly, it becomes a seat and your child will lose his concentration and the message. Once he's starting to get the hang of it, keep the potty in the bathroom where it belongs.
- Encourage your child by going to the toilet together.
- Bear in mind that some kids are shy and like to go into a corner to use the potty. If your child wants privacy, give it to her.
- As soon as toilet training starts, expose your child to different situations. Don't become housebound for the week or two weeks that it takes. Let him experience what it's like to go out into the cold. Go on outings to the park. Take him for a drive in the car. Don't put a nappy on him for these excursions. Take the travel potty and he prepared for a quick roadside stop. Keep it short and sweet.
- Before you go out, take the initiative and tell your child to have a wee.
- Be consistent. This is absolutely key. Your inconvenience is secondary. If you are going to your parents' house for the weekend, don't put your child back in nappies to avoid the hassle. If pants are okay one minute and nappies are okay the next, she won't get the message.
- Be calm and confident. Don't overload the situation with anxiety or blame, or try to rush things.
- Don't be intrusive. When I sit a child on a toilet in a public place and have to steady her by holding on to her hands or her knees, I always look away so she can concentrate.

My top ten rules:

To sum up, here's how my top ten rules apply to toilet training:

1. Praise and Reward

Give plenty of praise and encouragement every step of the way. Motif pants are great incentive.

2. Consistency

Once you start toilet training, don't stop for any reason. Keep it up, even if its going to cause you inconvenience. Don't use pull-ups as a halfway stage – it confuses the issue.

3. Routine

Don't rush things. Allow time for kids to go to the toilet before you go out and remind them at every opportunity.

4. Boundaries

Have realistic expectation of toilet training. Don't be tempted to start too early or the whole process will drag on for months. Learn to spot the signs of readiness. Keep potties in the bathroom where they belong. Don't leave off the night-time nappy to soon.

5. Discipline

Positive reinforcement is the key to toilet training. Never discipline a child for accidents. Limit the chances of bedwetting by putting your child on the potty or the toilet last thing at night before you go to bed.

6. Warnings

During the toilet-training, keep asking your child over and over again if she needs to go to the toilet. Even after she's trained, keep asking her at key times of the day. Small children can't wait very long when they need to go.

7. Explanations

Teach your child what it feels like to need to go. Show and tell her what happens in the bathroom – let her watch you go to the toilet and wash your hands afterwards. Take the opportunity to teach her about hygiene.

8. Restraint

Don't make a big deal of accidents or occasional bedwetting. Allow children their privacy if they ask for it.

9. Responsibility

Encourage your child to wash her hands and wipe herself correctly as soon as she is able.

10. Relaxation

Approach toilet training in an open and relaxed way. It's a natural part of life.