



## Beginning Toilet Training

### How to know when your child is ready

Most children become physically and emotionally ready between the ages of 22 months and 3 years (girls are sometimes ready earlier than boys). When your child is ready, they will show you the following signs:

- Ability to follow simple instructions
- Tendency to stay dry for at least two hours
- Tendency to be dry after naps
- Regular and predictable bowel movements
- Curiosity about bathroom activities, potty, etc.
- Discomfort with dirty diapers
- Ability to understand necessary bathroom and body part words

### Once you begin toilet training:

- Stay calm, relaxed, and patient; don't allow toilet training to become a power struggle.
- Buy a potty chair or a child toilet seat and model toilet activities. Let your child sit on their own potty (with or without clothes) while you sit on (and use) yours.
- Teach your child the words you want him to use for body parts and for using the toilet.
- Help your child learn to recognize when they need to urinate or have a bowel movement. They need to learn to be aware of these sensations and to associate them with toilet use.
- Ask your child to let you know when they need to use the potty.
- Read books with your child about using the toilet.
- Give your child time to sit on the toilet when they wake up, after they eat, and after they nap. Congratulate your child for their effort, not the outcome.
- Give your child up to five minutes on the toilet before suggesting they try again another time. Don't be upset if they go to the bathroom in their diaper just after getting off the potty.
- Make sure that all caregivers are on board with your toilet training plan.

**Potty training plans:** Each plan has the same result, and all of the above tips work regardless of the plan, so pick one that works best for you and your child.

- *On their own time.* This approach allows your child to warm up to the idea, by playing with their own potty and watching you model bathroom activities.
- *Organized practice.* This approach is more structured. Your child is asked (not forced) to follow a routine for when they sit on the potty or toilet. When parents or caregivers see cues that their child needs to use the bathroom, they help get them there immediately.
- *One shot method.* Parents who use this intensive approach set aside 3 days for training that includes constant supervision, and praise for correct behavior.
- *The reward system.* Parents motivate children with small tokens immediately after successful potty use. Tokens can also be used in all plans.