

Toilet Learning in Twinkle stars & Galaxies!

Toilet learning differs from Toilet training. Child toilet training is something that is adult directed; toilet learning is when the child is involved in their own learning. Toilet training may involve a time pressure on your child which seems to be a quick fix but may have consequences.

Toilet training involves an attitude of having to do it now because the adult chooses so. The difference between toilet learning and toilet training is the adult's attitude which can make a big difference for the child.

Toilet learning starts with readiness signs, and is not learned through a reward system. Toileting is a skill that needs to be learnt. It cannot be taught overnight. The key to toilet learning is teaching not training the child. Learning on their own is reward enough for them to be able to independently help themselves in remaining clean or not soiling themselves.

Allow the child to learn on their own with a bit of support and help from the adult with the use of toilet training pants and clothes they can independently put on themselves. Toilet learning is linked to the child's self-esteem, so genuine verbal praise is important. There are no 'accidents' during toilet learning, only lessons. Language also plays a big part in keeping a positive attitude with toilet learning.

Adult Attitude and Points to Consider in Toilet Learning

It is important to decide if you are ready to commit to the process and all it entails, this could include loads of washing, wet or soiled carpets and what people may think if your child is not toilet ready by a certain age. More often than not it requires months of learning for the child and it is important to have and maintain a positive attitude and avoid putting a time period or the age you wish your child to be toilet trained. It is possible that children will develop manipulative actions regarding toileting (e.g., wetting self on purpose) if they believe it will affect your behavior.

Every child is different and toilet ready at a different age, these are some tips to help the process and explain the rationale behind the method. However, it is up to you which toilet learning or toilet training approach you think suits you, your child and your lifestyle.

Clothing For Toilet Learning

We recommend that all clothing be two pieces set during this learning process. The bottoms should be elastic waist allowing the child to independently pull up their own trousers/skirt. Also, this allows the child to pull down cloths quickly if they need to use the toilet urgently. There are toilet training pants that can be bought that are made of thick fabrics, terry toweling so the moisture is absorbed but still lets the child feel the wetness.

Underwear needs to be cotton and elastic should not cut off any circulation, be sure to buy appropriate sized underwear to allow for ease of dressing the self.

Signs of Readiness Checklist:

Physical Readiness

- Child can stay dry for longer periods of time, or overnight
- Child knows the feelings that signal he/she needs to use the bathroom
- Child can pull down own pants, and pull them up
- Child can get him or herself to the toilet

Mental and Language Readiness

- Child can follow simple directions
- Child can point to wet or soiled clothes and ask to be changed
- Child pays attention to the physical signals even when she is doing something else (a challenge for many children, which is why accidents are so common)
- Child knows the words for using the toilet, and can tell an adult when he/she needs to go
- Child has asked to wear grown-up underwear

Emotional Readiness

- Child seeks privacy when going in diaper
- Child shows interest in using the toilet-may want to put paper in and flush it
- Child shows curiosity at other people's toilet habits
- Child has decided he/she wants to use the toilet
- Child is not afraid of the toilet

Bowel Movement Control

In toilet learning urination is often the focus; this is usually because it is a much harder skill to control liquids rather than mass. However, in many children bowel movement control occurs much later. There are many individual factors that can contribute to this including physical, emotional and mental readiness.

Bowel movement control often happens before urinary control. If they are regularly going to the toilet to urinate, chances are they may have a bowel movement while urinating. It is for this reason that boys should preferably sit instead of stand during the first stages of toilet learning until they have mastered bowel movements.

Every child is different in learning this skill; many children are aware of when they are having a BM but will often be shy in telling an adult or not know what to do. It is important to build up trust and reassure the child that everything is ok. Many children who are showing signs of readiness will want to ask questions and look at what is happening while you are changing their BM. It may be helpful to talk the child through what is happening in their bodies and include them in the process as much as possible.

Many children have Bowel Movements at the same time each day; this predictability can be used as a tool in helping the child succeed in BM control. Writing a chart of times, the child is likely to have a BM and looking for other signs (body posture and facial expression) can help signal that the child should sit on a potty or toilet. It also helps chart the frequency of the child's BMs, on occasion if the child is feeling anxious about passing BMs, they may hold them and become constipated.

Potty Learning in Galaxies:

Our proudest and biggest change from the Twinkle Stars room is that we are a NO DIAPERS room (this also refers to pull-ups)! Our growing galaxies are big kids now, rocking their underpants all day! Do accidents still occur, of course! However, we approach them with more self-responsibility than in our potty learning classrooms.

The “Golden Rule” of potty training which is waiting for signs of readiness, from both the child and the parent to start the potty learning process. From our experience, consistency was always the key to a smooth potty learning process. The parent’s readiness to start potty training is just as important as the child’s readiness! The signs to look for in a 2-year-olds to start the potty learning process were:

- Waking up dry from naptime for 4-5 days out of the week and staying dry in their diapers for 2-3 hours at a time. This shows that they have the muscle control to hold it until they can get to the potty.
- Going off by themselves to poop. This tells that they are aware of their bowel movements and know when they need to go.
- Showing interest in the potty. This is the best-case scenario!

We want your little one to be excited about becoming a big kid in the galaxy room! A great way to get your future galaxy excited about using the potty in the big kid classroom is:

- Letting them pick out their own underwear at the store. This gives them more incentive to keep them dry.
- Get rid of diapers (Picking out some nighttime specific pull-ups or giving them to a younger sibling or child). Having them help get rid of the diapers lets them know that they are no longer an option during the day!
- Send them every hour to go sit on the potty. This schedule is consistent with ours in the Galaxy room. Even if your child insists they do not have to go, explain to them that we should always try-just in case. In the Galaxy room, we explain to them that if they do have an accident the clean-up of that accident will take time away from their playtime!
- Reminders by the teachers every 30-45 minutes depending on where the class is on potty learning process.
- If they have accident, remind them to keep their underwear dry, and help with the clean-up process. This helps them learn to take responsibility for their accidents in a constructive way. In the Galaxy room, we do work on self-help skills to promote independence and confidence in the learning process.
- If they use the potty, even a little amount, give them lot and lots of praise! WE DO NOT use incentives like stickers, candy, or star charts because we want them to go potty because they need to go, not because they want an award. The praising has always been more than enough incentive.
- Absolutely no diapers/pull-ups during the daytime! When the child is still potty learning and is wearing a diaper or pull-up they WILL use it 9 times out of 10! It is VERY important to stay

consistent at home and at school!!! **By allowing them to use a diaper when it is convenient can confuse them and is a huge factor as to why potty learning can take so long!**

- **It is very IMPORTANT teach your child how to wipe their bottom while toilet learning. Introduce them to how to use right amount of toilet paper.** Talk to them about importance of proper wiping. Bottom wiping is as important as hand washing. Explain them about the germs that can spread down below and why they need to ensure they have clean bums! The teachers will help if needed but we encourage kids to be independent.
- Keeping track. This may seem a bit over the top, but by writing down their accidents helps to see if the students were improving or if they were showing any patterns when having accidents.
- We do not use ‘commando method potty training’ here at SMS.
- We recommend to send 4 -5 change of clothes including underpants, water shoes or crocs close toe shoes works best if there is a potty accident as these are easy to sanitize.
- A gallon size Ziplock box for sending your child’s soiled/wet clothes.
- The Galaxies don’t have daily sheets so check with your teacher on potty progress of your child and restock supplies as needed.

Toileting Routine

- Consistency is the key to Potty learning Parents and teachers work together as a team to make this a happy process for the child.
- Try not to plan a long trip/vacation when your child is under potty learning.
- Constantly ask the child to go the toilet if they need to.
- Sit them on the potty when they wake in the morning, before going anywhere outside of the home, before and after sleep time and after meals. Ask them nicely, if they refuse say “You need to go to the potty”.
- If they are comfortable with the potty, they may refuse less often. Remember if they wet themselves, it is okay. Just reinforce to them verbally that they need to urinate on the potty or toilet.
- If your child is dry for long periods of time and going to the potty on a frequent basis this can be time for you to move on the toilet learning process and fully get rid of the nappy/diaper.

Summary

There should be no pressure put on children to be toilet trained. Toilet learning is a natural process and should be done at a pace the child is comfortable with. Allowing children to become aware of their bodily functions from the sensitive period of development allows for less distress when the child is older and more physically able to control their toileting abilities. Please remember although the child is urinating in their underpants they are not ‘failing’ at toileting rather learning the sensation to need to go and the discomfort of having wet underpants. This is part of the learning process that is Toilet Learning. Above all things, please remember that there isn’t only one right way too potty train. Any approach you use can work if you are pleasant, positive, patient and consistent.

