



POTTY TRAINING

GUIDE

A parent's guide to potty / toilet training and how staff at Little Plums

Nursery will support you and your child.

What Is Potty Training?

Do you find yourself constantly packing nappies, you find them in your handbag, stacked near the cot, stored under the bed and probably a few strategically placed in the glove compartment of your car, just in case. Not to mention the additional cost and trouble of buying them and ensuring you have enough stock at all times.

Nappies have become part of your life, day in, day out, for so long that it's hard to imagine not needing them anymore. It seems like the day when your child will walk into the bathroom, pee or poop, wipe, wash hands, and walk back out without you even knowing is a long way off.

And yet, that day is coming. Between now and then, there's a big project: potty training, or to use the grown-up term, toilet training. You may be ready to make the transition, but are you ready?

Potty training might seem like a daunting task, but if your child is truly ready, there's not much to worry about.

Nevertheless, most parents still have plenty of questions. One of the biggest: **When should you start potty training?** The answer varies for every child. Let this expert-approved advice serve as a guide. You may (happily) have noticed that you're changing fewer nappies lately, and your child is usually staying dry during nap time. These, along with other signs, indicate that it's time to seriously start thinking about potty training. The key to potty training success is patience and an awareness that all children reach this ever-important milestone at their own pace.

Different strategies work with different children, but these tips generally get the job done.

How will I know my child is ready to be potty trained?

If your child isn't developmentally ready for potty training, even the best toilet tactics will fall short. Wait for these key signs that your child is set to get started:

1. You're changing fewer nappies. Until they're around 20 months old, toddlers still pee frequently, but once they can stay dry for an hour or two, it's a sign that they're developing bladder control and are becoming physically ready for potty training.
2. Bowel movements become more regular. This makes it easier to pull out the potty in a pinch when it's time.
3. Your child is more vocal about going to the bathroom. When your child starts to broadcast peeing and pooping by verbalising or showing you through their facial expressions.
4. Your child notices (and doesn't like) dirty nappies. Your little one may suddenly decide they don't want to hang out in her dirty nappies because they're gross. Yay! Your child is turning their nose up at stinky nappies just like you do and is ready to use the potty instead.

Even if your child seems ready, experts say to avoid potty training during transitional or stressful times. If you're moving home, going on a holiday, expecting a new baby, or going through a separation, postpone the potty

training until about a month after the transitional time. Children trying to learn this new skill will do best if they're relaxed and on a routine.

How old should my child be when I start potty training?

Children are generally not ready to potty train before the age of 2, and some children may wait until 3 1/2. It's important to remember not to push your child before they are ready and it's important to be patient.

TIPS ON PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR POTTY TRAINING

Even if they are displaying all the signs that they're ready for potty training, don't donate your nappy stock just yet - there's still work for us to do.

These tips can help make a smooth transition to the active toilet-training phase:

- **Play up the pottying positives.**

Before your first nappy-free trial run, highlight the benefits of using the toilet. You might say, "Wearing underwear is fun!" or "Pretty soon you can flush, just like Mummy and Daddy!" But don't knock nappies or call your child's old habits babyish — that could provoke your child to be more resistant.

- **Establish standard bathroom talk.**

Some experts recommend using formal words (defecate, urinate) rather than slang so kids won't be embarrassed by babyish terms when they're older — but what's more important is to be consistent in your usage. And never refer to your child's nappy contents as "smelly" or "gross"; they will be much more comfortable with toileting if they view elimination as a natural, non- "yucky" process.

- **Commend grown-up behavior in general.**

Let your child know that you support their maturity by praising feats such as drinking from a cup without spilling and sharing toys with a friend. Don't demand too much sophistication, however — if they feel

pressured to perform, they may start yearning for the simpler days of babyhood (and act accordingly).

- **Dress for potty training success.**

Get in the habit of dressing your child in the right potty training clothes (pants that pull up and down without any fiddling — no overalls or tricky buttons), and then practice the all-important pull-down maneuver. Ask your toddler to pull down their pants before nappy changes and then pull them back up after.

- **Show your child how to use the potty.**

Toddlers love to mimic, and the toilet is no different. Sure, you could explain to your child how to squat, wipe, and flush, but it's much more effective — not to mention efficient — to bring them to the bathroom and demonstrate. Not all parents are comfortable parting with their modesty, though, so don't feel bad about skipping this step if it's not quite you.

- **Bridge the gap between nappies and the potty.**

If possible, change your child's nappies in the room where their potty is kept — this subtly reinforces the connection between the two.

After they have a soiled nappy, bring them to the bathroom so they can watch you flush the contents. If they are frightened of the flushing sound, dump and flush later.

- **Pick the right potty.**

Look for a durable model that won't tip over when your child jumps up to check their progress. (For an added dose of excitement, shop together for the potty and wrap it as a "gift.") Or opt for a potty seat.

Some children balk at the "baby" potty and demand to use the "grown-up" one instead. In that case, buy a potty seat that attaches to the toilet. Look for a stable fit — a shaky seat can spook a child back into nappies for weeks and a built-in footrest, which offers something to push against during bowel movements.

- **Switch to pull-ups.**

When your child is just starting on the potty, play it safe with the disposable variety. They can pull them down like underpants, but they absorb like nappies and can be ripped off rather than pulled over their feet in the event of an accident. Once your child has enjoyed a few successes on the potty, you can try switching to washable cotton training pants.

- **Let them bare their bottom.**

To boost your child's awareness of their body's signals, allow them to scamper about (in a private garden or room with a washable floor) with their lower half unclad. It's hard to ignore urine when there's no nappy to hold it in. Keep the potty close by so your child can act on their body's signals quickly.

- **Watch closely.**

At this point, you might be better at detecting their body's signals than they can. Look for tell-tale signs (like fidgeting or straining) and

gently ask when you suspect they have to go. Even if you're too late and they've already done the deed, have them sit on the potty anyway to reinforce the connection.

- **Keep them motivated.**

Remind them that using the potty means their growing up. In the beginning, a small, tangible incentive can help, too — for every success, try putting a sticker on the calendar or a penny in the piggy bank. As they becomes more comfortable using the potty, it's best to phase out the rewards and let their inner motivation take over.

- **Teach them to check for dryness.**

This offers them an added sense of control. If they are dry, give them a pat on the back (or a big hug), but don't criticise if it's wet.

- **Most importantly be patient.**

Even the most enthusiastic toddler can take several weeks to master potty training proficiency — often with as many steps backward as forward. If your expectations are unrealistic, you could diminish their

self-confidence. Don't scold, punish, or shame. No parent enjoys mopping up a puddle of pee, but try to stay cool. If you overreact, you might discourage your child's future attempts.

- **Cut the nagging.**

Keep it casual when reminding your child about using the potty — nagging will only provoke resistance. Similarly, don't force them to sit or stay on the potty — even if you know, they are about to go.

(You can lead your child to the potty, but ultimately they decide to use it.)

- **Don't deny drinks.**

Many parents reason that by rationing fluids, they'll cut their toddler's chances of having an accident. But this approach is unfair and unhealthy — not to mention ineffective. The better tactic is to step up your child's fluid intake to give them more opportunities to succeed.

- **Avoid a bathroom battle.**

Squabbling over going to the potty is sure to prolong the struggle. If your met with total resistance, it's best to throw in the towel (and the toilet paper!) for a few weeks. Be patient. As you wait for your child to come around, don't bring up the subject or compare them to peers who are already in underpants.

HOW TO START POTTY TRAINING

Once you figure out when to start potty training, it's important to introduce it properly. These tips can help ease the transition from nappies to toilets.

GRADUALLY INTRODUCE THE TOILET.

Start talking about potty training occasionally around your child's first birthday to pique interest. Keep a few children's books about potty training to read with your child. And bring up the subject of the potty in

conversation, saying things like, "I wonder if Elmo [or your child's favorite stuffed animal] needs to go potty" or "I have to go pee-pee. I'm headed to the potty." The idea is to raise awareness about going potty and make your child comfortable with the overall concept before they're ready to potty train.

FOLLOW A ROUTINE FOR POTTY TRAINING

Consider having your child sit on the potty every two hours, whether they have to go or not, including first thing in the morning, before you leave the house, and before naps and bedtime. Tell them to remove shorts or pants first, their underwear (or, if you're using them, training pants) next, and to sit on the toilet for a few minutes (allot more time, if you think they have to poop). Read a book or play a game, like 20 Questions, to make the time pass in a fun way.

Potty training doesn't usually come easily or without bumps, so don't underestimate the process. It's all about waiting for signs of readiness in your child, setting the stage, and diving in. While the prospect of ditching the nappies is exciting, getting there can try your parenting patience. But don't lose hope. Potty training your toddler might seem endless, but sooner or later, your little one will get the hang of it and outgrow nappies.

HOW LITTLE PLUMS NURSERY STAFF CAN SUPPORT YOU IN POTTY

TRAINING YOUR CHILD

As early years practitioners, our role is to support your child's development and ensure that they are school ready by the time they leave. Supporting them with Potty Training is a key part in this and our staff have a lot of experience.

How we work in partnership with you

1. There is no "right" age for a child to be potty trained. We recognise that every child is unique, some potty train very early, and some are just not ready. We will look out for signs alongside you and discuss when we believe that they may be ready for potty training. You may recognise the signs, so do come and speak to us.

2. We will check in with you more often, to find out what stage of potty training your child is at and how you are handling potty training at home.

3. Communicate to you about any signs that the child is ready for potty train. For instance, when other children start to potty train, they also want to wear big children undies and general curiosity about the process.

4. Being patient. We recognise that parents feel incredible pressure to have their toddlers and preschoolers potty trained, and that stress trickles down to the child. We can help relieve that stress by being patient and positive. Your child will have their timeline. Rushing a child who is not ready is not helpful.

5. We have picture books about potty training in our rooms for children to read with us or look through alone.

6. We expect accidents and we don't make a big fuss about them.

When we hand you the wet clothes in a bag, we make no fuss as its no big deal, the child is watching and listening to this exchange.

7. Have extra clothes on hand. If a child has just transitioned to underwear, make sure you have multiple changes of clothes for us to swap them into.

8. Ask children often if they would like to use the potty but never pressure them. Most toddlers will go to the bathroom about every 2 hours; preschoolers can usually stretch that out a little more.

9. Allow children to go to the bathroom with a potty trained friend (and a nursery practioner, of course) to see how this potty thing works.

10. Give them time to sit on the toilet even after they have peed, we don't hurry the child.

11. Our tip, if they are wearing pull ups have them still wear underpants underneath the pull ups, so that they still get the sensation of feeling wet without the mess it can make.

12. Praise all efforts, not just success. We share these with you at handover or via our parentzone app.

Potty training is a huge milestone and, for many parents and early years practitioner but one we are so proud once the child has mastered it.

Here is also short video story that you may wish to watch with your child.



<https://youtu.be/ZD0ZjAAJybg>



Found this eBook useful? Do Share

If you know of any other parents that maybe thinking about toilet training, please feel free to share this ebook with them.

Here at **Little Plums Nursery** we know how challenging this can be and this ebook was written with the intention to support all parents with children approaching this key milestone in their development.

