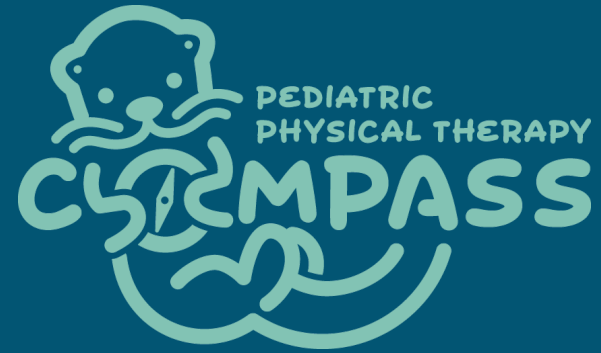


Potty Learning Guide

With



What's Involved in learning to use the potty and can I get it done without the stress?!

Short answer- Most children start learning to use the potty between ages 2 and 3. It usually takes a few months to fully switch from diapers to the toilet (not just a weekend). It is a motor milestone, just like learning to crawl or walk! There are many factors that can ease the process for you and your child; I've included a highlight of those in this guide!

Did you know...

- We are born without the urge sensation that alert us to go to the bathroom?! When we are younger, bowel and bladder control are completely involuntary. This sensation begins to develop for most children between the ages of 1-2 years, but we still do not yet have full control over holding or releasing strategies at this age.
- Most children begin to develop bowel and bladder control between 2-3 years old- which is why this is often the norm for successful potty learning!
- Of course, there are outliers to this, and it often depends on how other developmental skills are progressing.

One of the most complex activities we learn in our early years... is our ability to coordinate peeing and pooping! We use multiple body systems simultaneously including:

- Our **brain's** ability to recognize and **interpret signals** letting you know it's time to go
- **Muscle** strength and coordination to hold and release at the right times
- Our **fine & gross motor skills** to dress, undress and get on and off the potty
- The ability to sit comfortably and safely enough in order to relax our **pelvic floor muscles** (that's right, it's not all strength here!)
- The **motivation** to use the potty and the **self-regulation** to pause play to go!

If we set our child up with mastering the building blocks needed to be successful, they are much more likely to begin using the potty with less stress and mess!



How do I know if my child is ready for potty training? If you can answer ‘yes’ to most of the questions below, your little is likely ready to start!

- Has a regular pattern of wet and dry, and can stay dry for at least 2 hour stretches
- Regular, soft poops without straining to go
- Showing interest in the potty/bathroom
- Communicate when they need to go or have gone in their diaper (can tell wet versus dry)
- Are willing to interrupt activities or handle transitions away from an activity with support
- Are they able to tell you about their needs verbally or non-verbally
- Follow 2 step commands (for example, “Sit on the step and put on your shoes.”)
- Can pull their pants down independently
- Ability to balance well when sitting and can they climb up and down off a small step

Where should I start- The Preparation Phase!

- Start talking about using the potty as early as ages 1 to 2 to help make it feel normal and less scary. It can also get your child more interested and less resistant when it’s time to make the change from diapers.
- Begin by talking about body parts and how the body works. You can explain how we sometimes feel a “signal” or a funny feeling before we need to go to the bathroom. Helping your child notice these feelings is an important first step.
- You can also add potty time to your daily routine without any pressure. One easy time to try this is right before a bath.
- Let your child practice taking their clothes on and off by themselves. This helps them build the skills they’ll need to use the potty on their own.
- Make sure they can get on and off the potty easily. You can use a small potty that sits on the floor or add a stool to reach the toilet.

Things to Consider

- Once you decide to start potty training, stick with your plan. Stay calm when accidents happen (because they will—it’s a normal part of learning), and celebrate the little wins!
- Big life changes—like moving, starting a new school or daycare, or getting a new sibling—can sometimes cause kids to take a step back in their learning. Try to wait 4-6 weeks after any big changes before starting potty training, even if your child seems ready.
- If your child has trouble with big body movements (gross motor skills), the muscles in the lower part of the body, called the pelvic floor, will likely need more time to grow stronger before starting to use the potty
- Constipation can make potty training harder. Some kids may start holding in their poop, which can lead to medical problems. It’s a good idea to talk to your doctor and treat constipation before you begin potty training.

