

Guide to Potty Training

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You're here! Awesome job looking into resources to help you and your little one with potty training! This is a great opportunity to give your toddler a sense of independence while you watch them learn and grow.

We're so excited to offer this guide in conjunction with our Ms. Rachel Potty Training Special to help get you on your way! (with takeaways inspired by our song lyrics!)

While potty training can feel intimidating, know that you and your child can do this! You can do hard things!

THE BIG TAKEAWAY: 🎵 *I Listen to My Body!* 🎵

As we dive in, remember that **the big goal of potty training is for your child to learn how to listen to their body and to connect those signals to the action of going to the potty.** Keeping this goal in mind will help make potty training clear and simple as you move forward!

Talk to your child about how they listen to their body when they are hungry and ask for a snack, and when they are thirsty and ask for a drink! Our body tells us things! Their body will also tell them when they need to pee or poop.

GAME IDEA!

Pretend to be body detectives! Yawn, stretch and act tired. Have your child figure out what your body is telling you! ("Yes! I'm sleepy and need a nap!") Say your tummy is rumbling and feels empty. What is your body telling you now? ("Yes! I'm hungry and I need to eat!") Ask your little one what their body is telling them, and connect it to how their body tells them they need to use the potty!



Here's How to Get Started:

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Every kid is different, but most little ones are ready to start potty training **somewhere between 2 and 3 years old**. Some are ready earlier, some later (and that's okay!)—**trust your gut!** It's best to wait until your child is ready.

If you're feeling the pressure, remember that one day when your child is 25 and in a job interview, they will NOT be asked when they were potty trained, or how long it took. It doesn't matter when your friend's child was potty trained or when a family member says it needs to happen! **It's going to happen** and this phase will not last forever. It's your family and your choice! And it's not a race.



If your little one is showing some of these signs, it might be time to start potty training:



- Staying dry for longer stretches (about 2 hours)
- Noticing (and announcing!) when they're wet or dirty
- Showing interest in the potty or toilet and wanting to go

♪ *My Grown-up Said, Today Is the Day!* ♪

TAKEAWAY: Get Excited!

Before you start, talk about potty training and share your enthusiasm.

If you're comfortable with it, have your little one watch you and your potty process (and how you listen to your body by pausing to go to the bathroom) and take the time to narrate it as you do it. We want to get your child very familiar with the potty process so it doesn't feel intimidating.

"Everybody pees and everybody poops!"

Make sure your child knows that we don't need our poop and pee! You can even explain that when we eat and drink, our body takes what it needs. What we don't need turns into pee and poop! Be careful not to talk about poop as "yucky" as it might make your child upset about it.

**"Potty training is exciting!
I'm excited!"**





SUGGESTED POTTY TRAINING SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Training potty or potty training toilet seat attachment
- “Sleeping Underwear” (aka pull-on nighttime diapers)
- Big kid underwear with characters or colors your toddler loves
- A step stool for handwashing
- Fun activities like playdough, blocks, puzzles and bubbles
- Paper towels and spray for accidents
- An old blanket or waterproof cover to help absorb accidents that may happen on the couch or chairs



When you get the potty, set it out. If your child wants to sit on their new potty with clothes on, that's fine! We just want them to get used to it. Don't worry if they don't want to sit on it just yet, it's better to not put pressure on them.

Plan for success! Even though we saw potty training “click” for Bean Bear in the potty special, kids usually need **3 to 7 days**. Pick a time when you can stay home, maybe a long weekend or summer break – whatever works best for your family!

Do your best to avoid scheduling potty training at the same time as another big transition such as moving or the addition of a new sibling.

A NOTE FROM MS. RACHEL: Growing up with an amazing single mom, I know that every family has different levels of support and ability to be home for days at a time. While I think this method is really helpful, I know it's not possible for everyone. You can do this process with these same tips and ideas in your own way if you are not able to do the few days at home. You could try a few hours a day or even 5 times a day sitting on the potty to start. Many daycares and preschools can also help and support this journey and you can work together!



TAKEAWAY: Ditch the Diapers!

On day one, let your child go **bottomless** and say, "Today, you are going to put your pee and poop in the potty! I'm here to help you *listen to your body*, and I'm so excited!"

Why *bottomless*? When your little one has nothing there it's easy for you to see when they start to go and move them to the potty. It also helps them be aware of the act—if the pee and poop just goes into a comfy warm diaper, they might not notice!

Keep your child close! Spend the day watching for cues (*wiggling, grabbing, squatting, blank stare, holding genitals, doing a little dance*) and move them to the potty quickly. Keep it fun and positive!

Read books, use toys to play-pretend potty training (like Ms. Rachel did with the Bean Bear toy in the special—but you can use any toy!), and watch potty-themed episodes with their favorite characters. Children learn so well through play!



TIP: Fill a little basket with a few books and toys near the potty to make using the potty exciting! If your child is hesitant to sit on the potty, something special like listening to a potty song or holding a little toy might be helpful!



It might seem hard at first to catch them before they pee. Keep trying and you'll start to pick up on their subtle signs!

TIP: *This can be exhausting* so make sure to plan ahead and ask for help from your village with any other children and chores. If you have a partner, take turns swapping out on 'potty watch'.

TIP: Offering slightly more fluids—like ice pops or water—will give your child more chances to practice peeing. Remember to have them eat some foods that have fiber—like fruit—so your child won't be constipated! Get creative and keep it fun!

TAKEAWAY: Accidents happen when we learn new things!

Stay calm when your toddler doesn't pee or poop in the potty. Instead, calmly identify what happened, mention the goal, and remind them that they can do it! Ms. Rachel models a great example when Bean Bear pees on the floor:



"Bean, you're starting to pee right now. Let's walk to the potty."



Don't shame or yell if there are accidents. Accidents will happen but they will get better. Your child is learning a new skill. Imagine if you were learning how to knit- it'd take time and you'd make mistakes- but it's how you learn. When you look at accidents in a positive way, you'll see that practice does make progress! That's the growth mindset in action!

♪ *My Grown-up Said, "This Whole Thing Is New - But You Are Amazing, We Believe In You!"* ♪

TAKEAWAY: Your attitude matters!



TIP: As you potty train, especially if your child doesn't have any other kids in their life who are recently potty trained, you can use Bean Bear as a role model!

- "Bean had to wait for the pee to come—just like you."
- "Bean peed on the floor, and then he went to the potty."
- "Bean got poop in the potty, and you can too!"



***♪ I am Ready to Be Oh-so Free,
I Am Ready, Hooray for Me! ♪***

TAKEAWAY: Celebrate the wins!

Offer your child positive reinforcement to celebrate when they pee or poop in the potty. A big high-five, a dance party, a hug, or a thumbs-up with a “Good job” might be all your child needs.



TIP: A fun way to celebrate your child trying to use the potty (or learning any skill!) is to tell their stuffed animals how proud you are of them and what they are doing! Example: “Wow, Bunny! I’m so proud of how Alex tried to pee in the potty!”

For kids who resist going on the potty, you may not want to make a huge deal of it when they finally do it. Loud clapping and celebrating can backfire as it may make them think that they’ve lost control. A relaxed “You did it” might be better than a full on potty party.

On the other hand, some children love celebrating! You know your child best, and if this is the case, you can sing along with Bean’s potty song,

***♪ “You went to the potty, sing it loud!
You went to the potty, you’re so proud!” ♪***

Try to potty train without rewards first, but some children may need that extra boost. Children with disabilities or autism may respond well if they’re struggling without them. It’s okay if you need to do rewards! You’re a wonderful parent and you can do what’s best for your family.

**Your kid is awesome—just the way they are,
as Mr. Rogers would say!**



TAKEAWAY: Make a going-to-the-potty routine.

Now that you've got the basics down, it's time to establish a regular potty routine! Bring your child to the potty or toilet every few hours. Don't ask—tell. *"It's potty time!" "After you go to the bathroom, we'll head to the playground."*

After a few days, put your child in loose-fitting underwear and pants, and take a few small outings together. Absorbent training underwear (especially ones that hold in the pee but allow your kiddo to feel the wetness) can be very useful for these first outings. Bring a travel potty and several extra sets of clothes (including socks!).



TIP: In this guide we watch for signs and help our child get to the potty. If this isn't working, your child may benefit from a potty timer! (Try having them sit on the potty every 15 minutes for one hour to practice). Never force them to sit on the potty! Make it fun! Maybe they get to blow bubbles on the potty!

🎵 *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star!* 🎵

TAKEAWAY: Don't stress about naps and nights!

Most kids aren't ready to stay dry overnight right away. Like Ms. Rachel did in the potty special, you can use pull-on diapers and call them "sleeping underwear." Calling them something other than diapers helps keep your child from getting confused.

Every child approaches the nighttime potty process differently. Over time, their body will develop the ability to stay dry—so, no rush.

Here's how to keep going:

Over time, your child will go from using the potty while bottomless (with reminders) to going fully dressed (with underwear!), in different places, and eventually, on their own—but this can take *months*, and that's completely normal!

Remember that your pediatrician is there if you run into difficulties with the process.



SOME MORE HELPFUL POTTY TIPS:

TIP: It is recommended to use the proper terms for private parts (penis, vulva/vagina). For pee and poop terms, decide in advance with anyone who is helping with potty training what terms you want to use so it doesn't get confusing!



TIP: If you're potty training a boy, start with having him sit down to pee, but if he really wants to pee standing up, feel free to try!

TIP: Public bathrooms can be a lot for some toddlers (especially ones with sensory sensitivities) due to loud flushing and hand dryers. Prepare your child by letting them know that these bathrooms can be noisy, but that you'll be with them the whole time. Some kids get startled when public bathroom toilets flush automatically, so try covering the sensor with a sticky note. Headphones can also help children who are distressed by loud sounds in public bathrooms. Alternatively, you can bring a travel potty for your little one to use when you're out and about.



TIP: If your child only wants to poop in their diaper, have them put their poop in the toilet after they're done going in their diaper. Doing so will help them start to make the connection between pooping and the potty.

TIP: Wiping takes coordination. Don't worry about teaching your child how to wipe right away unless your child really wants to try.





A Final Note From Ms. Rachel:

Potty training is a journey, and there will be bumps along the way. It takes time. Remember to be patient with yourself and your child and stay connected to other caregivers who can relate. Be kind to yourself. You can always step away and breathe if you need to.

Try to stay calm, positive, and expect success! Your child will feel your confidence, and it will make a difference! You got this!

Love,
Ms. Rachel
♥



Be sure to check out “Potty Time with Bean” for more potty time learning and fun!

