

Toilet Training: Tips and Tricks

2/15/2022



By: Shelby Hagedorn, COTA/L

Not sure if your child is ready for toilet training or are unsure where to start? Here are 5 tips that can give you direction on when and how to start. Many occupational therapists are trained in ways to help your child with toilet training.

1. Pay attention to when the child starts to have an interest or is ready for toilet training.
 - a. Cues include visiting the bathroom, interacting with toilet paper, flushing the toilet, identifying or increased discomfort with soiled diapers.
 - b. According to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), this can happen between 18 months and 3 years of age.
2. Establish a routine of going to the bathroom
 - a. The AOTA, recommends starting with wake up time, before mealtime, before leaving the house, and before bedtime.
 - b. Pulling pants down, then sitting on the toilet and/or standing by the toilet whenever you change your child.
 - c. If you see the child wiggling, squirming in their seat, or grabbing their clothes you can ask if they need to go to the bathroom. It is important for a child to recognize how their body feels when they need to go.
3. Make sure the clothes the child is wearing are easy for them to remove. Use elastic waist bands.
4. Use a comfortable environment, explain the different sounds they may hear, tell them what they can expect while in the bathroom, and make sure they can reach the toilet paper and sink. You can use a preferred book or toy they can play with while sitting.
5. Be patient and encourage positive behavior.

The American Occupational Therapy Association has written a tip sheet for Establishing Toilet Routines for Children. Check out the link here:

<https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Youth/Establishing-Toileting-Routines-for-Children-Tip-Sheet.pdf>

If you have more questions about your child and toilet training, contact your pediatrician or give us a call at 952-223-2506.