

Healthy and Happy Toileting

Toileting is a complex activity made up of multiple smaller tasks, such as identifying the need to go, finding a toilet, removing clothing, sitting on the toilet, passing urine/stool movement, wiping as appropriate, dressing, and washing hands. Typically, the majority of children are dry (most days) by the age of three. However, each child is different and may have unique needs and characteristics that may bring about additional challenges when toilet training. Looking out for critical signs of readiness are more useful than starting at a particular 'age'.

Are they ready?

Firstly, look for signs of critical readiness skills. These are:

COMMUNICATION:



Does your child have the ability to follow simple one step directions?

BLADDER AND BOWEL FUNCTION:



Does your child have the ability to withhold urine or stool, and do they have normal urine and stool (flow, consistency etc).

PHYSIOLOGY (Motor Skills):



Does your child have the ability to walk to and sit on the toilet unsupported?

If you answered yes to all three questions your child may be ready to start toilet training.

Research recommends the following strategies whilst toilet training:

Having a child in underwear all day (NOT pull-ups or nappies).



Increasing the amount of fluids - the more the child drinks – the more they need to use the toilet – the more learning happens.



Frequently offering toileting opportunities e.g. every 15 minutes.



*If your child is having difficulty with toileting, using a **urine alarm** may help, which helps a child pay attention to their body.*



Using positive reinforcement! Depending on your child's skills and their goals, you may reward your child for just sitting on the toilet, for staying dry or for weeing in the toilet. Rewards can be as simple as praise ("Well done, your underwear is still dry!"), favourite social activities (e.g., a high five) or something more tangible (e.g., stickers, preferred toys). What you use as a reward will depend on what your child is motivated by.



*When accidents do happen, support your child by taking them to the toilet and involve them in wiping and re-dressing. **Never punish a child for having an accident.***



If you have any concerns regarding your child's healthy and happy toileting, speak to your Child Health Nurse, GP or a health professional. Alternatively, you can contact the team at CliniKids on (08) 6319 1133 or clinkids@telethonkids.org.au