

Potty Training – Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

Get Ready

If your child is near or has passed his first birthday, you can begin incorporating pre-potty training ideas into his life. They are simple things that will lay the groundwork for potty training and will make the process much easier when you're ready to begin.

- During diaper changes, narrate the process to teach your toddler the words and meanings for bathroom-related functions, such as pee-pee and poo-poo. Include descriptive words that you'll use during the process, such as wet, dry, wipe, and wash.
- If you're comfortable with it, bring your child with you when you use the toilet. Explain what you're doing. Tell him that when he gets bigger, he'll put his pee-pee and poo-poo in the toilet instead of in his diaper. Let him flush the toilet if he wants to.
- Help your toddler identify what's happening when she wets or fills her diaper. Tell her, "You're going poo-poo in your diaper." Have her watch you dump and flush.
- Start giving your child simple directions and help him to follow them. For example, ask him to get a toy from another room or to put the spoon in the dishwasher.
- Encourage your child to do things on her own: put on her socks, pull up her pants, carry a cup to the sink, or fetch a book.
- Have a daily sit-and-read time together.
- Take the readiness quiz again every month or two to see if you're ready to move on to active potty learning.

Get Set

- Buy a potty chair, a dozen pairs of training pants, four or more elastic-waist pants or shorts, and a supply of pull-up diapers or disposables with a feel-the-wetness sensation liner.
- Put the potty in the bathroom, and tell your child what it's for.
- Read books about going potty to your child.
- Let your child practice just sitting on the potty without expecting a deposit.

Go

- Begin dressing your child in training pants or pull-up diapers.
- Create a potty routine--have your child sit on the potty when she first wakes up, after meals, before getting in the car, and before bed.
- If your child looks like she needs to go--tell, don't ask! Say, "Let's go to the potty."
- Boys and girls both can learn sitting down. Teach your son to hold his penis down. He can learn to stand when he's tall enough to reach.
- Your child must relax to go: read a book, tell a story, sing, or talk about the day.

- Make hand washing a fun part of the routine. Keep a step stool by the sink, and have colorful, child-friendly soap available.
- Praise her when she goes!
- Expect accidents, and clean them up calmly.
- Matter-of-factly use diapers or pull-ups for naps and bedtime.
- Either cover the car seat or use pull-ups or diapers for car trips.
- Visit new bathrooms frequently when away from home.
- Be patient! It will take three to twelve months for your child to be an independent toileter.

Stop

- If your child has temper tantrums or sheds tears over potty training, or if you find yourself getting angry, then stop training. Review your training plan and then try again, using a slightly different approach if necessary, in a month or two.

This article is an excerpt from *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Child Say Good-Bye to Diapers* by Elizabeth Pantley. (McGraw-Hill, 2006)