



Are you thinking about potty training?

The key message is that there is no set age by which children will achieve this. Your child will show you signs when they are ready to start potty training – wanting to take their nappy off, sit on the potty, being dry between nappy changes. You will see when children stop dead in their tracks because they are doing a wee. If we see these signs or your child is actively seeking to use the potty or toilet at Little Explorers we will chat to you about it and see if you wish to consider potty training. We can only achieve this smoothly with your support and a consistent approach at home and at Little Explorers.

We do not allow 'Pull-ups' at Little Explorers as we are always right next to a potty/toilet to promote the use of pants. It is the use of pants which allows the child to feel when they are wet and therefore help with potty training, opposed to the use of a pull up which is made of an absorbent fibre and do not allow the child to feel when they have had an accident. This can be confusing whilst training.

Some Little Explorers tips:-

- Talk about potty training with your child.
- Let your children see you use the toilet if you are comfortable with this to promote how natural it is.
- Read stories about potty training, there are many lovely books about the subject – 'I want my potty' by Tony Ross. 'Nappy Duck and Potty Piggy' by Bernette Ford and Sam Williams. 'On my potty' by Leslie Patricelli
- Have the potty easily accessible – in the main living room/play area initially rather than the bathroom.
- If they stop in their tracks and wee say "I think you might be having a wee now – quick sit on the potty".

• Do not be cross if your child has accidents, just reassure them you will clean them up and it was an accident. Explain accidents are common at first. Ask if they would like a

reminder again if they lose confidence, this puts them back in control over the process.

- Wash children after each accident to prevent them being sore and prevent 'nappy' rash.
- Don't forget boys and girls sit on a potty different ways around to accommodate the direction of their wee. Boys need the high part at the front and need support to show them how to point their 'willy' down.
- Children need to be shown how to wipe their bottoms properly. Make sure girls wipe gently front to back to avoid urine track infections. Show children how to take two squares of toilet tissue and fold it to cover their hand and how to wipe. Children will need help to wipe their bottom after a 'poo' but again show them how to do this – it is difficult for them to get the angle right but can be praised for each attempt and then encouraged to bend right over for you to check and wipe yourself. This will prevent any faeces being left to dry and cause irritation. A wet wipe may still need to be used at times.
- Ensure your child learns to wash their hands after each potty use so that they learn about hygiene associated with toileting from the start.
- Make sure they see you washing the potty after each use and washing your hands. They will model (copy) your behaviour. Talk about being clean.
- Involve your child in shopping for their own new pants so they can be very proud of them. (Buy cheap ones so that extremely soiled pants can be thrown)
- Have lots of elasticated waist jogging bottoms rather than jeans. These are so easy for them to pull up and down quickly. No tights and dungarees.
- Plan when you are going to start, give yourself a few days where you aren't going out. Your child can then stay in pants continually without having to have a nappy 'popped on' because you are going out and you don't want any accidents.

- Being dry in the day will come first, followed by leaving nappies off at night further down the line. If your child has a day time sleep they may have accidents in their sleep so either have a nappy on for this at first or put down a waterproof sheet.
- We use a timer at Little Explorers to ensure children are reminded they may need a wee if everyone is engrossed in play. However, research says that if a child's bladder is not mature enough to stay dry for some time (at least 90 mins) they are not ready.
- It is helpful that a child has sufficient communication to express that they need the toilet through words, signs or pointing to a picture.
- Always suggest a wee at regular intervals, before a meal, after a meal, before going out to play, etc so they get into the routine of having a wee before a long time away from the toilet. Always encourage a wee before a bath or shower.
- Talk about the sensation of needing a wee. Children need to be relaxed to do a wee and if anxious about potty training will not be able to 'perform'. Sit your child on the potty with a book to look at and talk to them. Ask questions with a smile 'is your wee coming out yet?' to encourage them to feel the sensation to alert them.
- Have a tap running next to them to help them relax and do a wee, albeit involuntarily at first.
 - Remember the cold makes children have more accidents, as does being poorly, tired, drinking too much. If lots of accidents happen after a spell of being dry check out they do not have a urinary infection.
 - Sit a dolly or teddy on a toy potty next to them and role play have they done a wee/poo. Sneak a drop of water into the potty to pretend the dolly/teddy has done a wee and praise them.
 - Make it fun – lots of praise, clapping and telling everyone how clever they are.

- Put a favourite character sticker on a boring potty.
- Avoid ‘rewards’ for wee’s and poo’s on the potty, plenty of praise and support will give children the feeling of accomplishment as ‘rewarding’ children can put them under pressure to ‘perform’ and they may push themselves which could subsequently lead to a urine infection or failed attempt which may have a negative effect on their self-esteem and confidence for future potty attempts.
- Be brave, send them to Little Explorers in pants (put a towel on the car seat/buggy in case they have an accident), if not that brave (or a long journey to Little Explorers), tell us when you arrive and we can change your child immediately but children struggle with mixed messages and could go backwards in their progress if you do this too often.
 - Take their potty with you on journeys/outings/visits to friends.
- Provide plenty of spare pant’s/jogging bottoms/and don’t forget socks. Crocs are really good shoes to use during potty training as they can be wiped clean and disinfected easily.
- Keep us updated with how they are doing at home and we will let you know how they have done here. Do not talk too negatively about accidents in front of them.
- Don’t expect too much from the first few days. They may have no accidents at home but here at Little Explorers there are lots of distractions and as much as they are regularly asked, there is an awful lot going on and they are scared to miss something by going to the bathroom.
- Let us know what they are using at home i.e. Potty, toilet seat, toilet to continue with this at Little Explorers, if that helps. Some children prefer to miss out the potty stage and go straight onto the toilet.
- Let us know the words you use at home for different parts of the body as well as ‘wee’s or poos’. This helps the child communicate their needs to us.

Children often find ‘pooing’ in a potty/toilet much harder to do and this can take longer to get the hang of, they would rather ‘hold on’ causing tummy ache and in extreme cases constipation. If this is your child and they are doing brilliantly at controlling their bladder don’t let this knock their confidence. If (and you will know your child and be able to read the signs) you know they want to ‘poo’, propose popping a nappy back on. Once finished the nappy can be immediately removed and no harm done. As your child’s confidence grows they will very quickly get to grips with ‘pooing’ on the toilet as well.

For children of potty training age the faeces should be solid and easy to clean up – usually popping it out of pants/nappy into the toilet. Please monitor your child’s diet if this is not the case and if necessary speak to your Health Visitor/GP.

You will very quickly be able to tell if your child hasn’t got bladder/bowel control i.e. having an accident as soon as they get up from the toilet/potty or is not at all concerned if they have an accident; happy to continue playing in wet/soiled pants. In this scenario it is probably not worth persevering and everybody getting upset/ frustrated.

Return to nappies and try again a month later or sooner if they show an interest.

Good luck and remember we are always here to support you :)

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