

# POTTY TRAINING THE NATURAL WAY

By



# WHAT IS POTTY TRAINED?

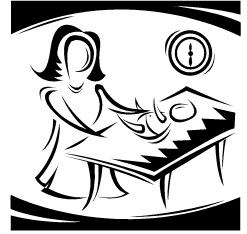
- ❖ The child is aware of a full bladder/colon
- ❖ The child responds to the feeling by going to the potty herself
- ❖ The child voids in the potty
- ❖ The child knows that she is done and gets up
- ❖ The child stays dry between potty visits by using her muscles to 'hold it'







# THE NATURAL PROCESS



- In the old days, cloth diapers felt cold to the baby when he wet it.
- This made the baby cry and mommy or daddy would change him and make him comfortable.
- The baby would cry earlier and earlier in the chain until, eventually, the baby could indicate that he needed to urinate or defecate before he voided in the diaper.
- Nowadays, toilet training is more difficult because disposable diapers keep the baby comfortable and happy!
- We don't need to go back to cloth, as long as we understand how to teach the child to respond to his own body---

# WHY DOES THE CHILD DO IT?

1. Comfort
2. Social Pressure
3. Compliance



# Where's the Motivation?

- Many children with special needs do not experience wet/soiled diapers as uncomfortable. Some are not aware and some enjoy the feeling.
- Many children with special needs are not motivated by social pressure. Due to deficits in reading and understanding social cues, many children do not feel the impact of derision or disapproval.
- Many children with special needs are more motivated by momentary impulses than pleasing parents. Even when motivated to comply, performance of the task proves too difficult.

# DECISIONS, DECISIONS!

- Potty vs. Toilet?
- Diapers, Pull-ups, Underwear?
- Standing Up or Sitting Down?
- Bottomless Trials (don't 'try' underpants)

Train multiples together or separately?

- Transportable Potty





## WHEN IS MY CHILD READY?

- You have to be ready first! You can't go back and forth...
- Does my child wake up dry?
- Does my child stay dry for about 2 hours at a time?
- Does my child follow simple one-step directions?
- Show awareness of body states, such as hunger, cold, pain?

# YOU CAN START BEFORE YOUR CHILD CAN...

- Dress herself
- Talk
- Show interest in the potty

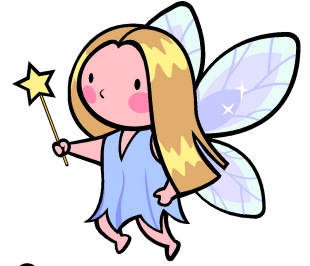


# MULTIPLES: THE BENEFITS

- How to multi-task
- Using peer suggestion as an incentive
- Using peer modeling
- Keep your sense of humor!



# I. GETTING STARTED



- **The Potty Fairy:** put prizes on the lid of the toilet for your child to find with NO expectation to sit on the potty. Do this a few times a week. This makes the potty a desirable place.
- **Naked Test:** confine your child with no bottom clothing to a room with you; put a potty chair in the room. Give lots of fluids and encourage your child to use the potty.
- If your child shows signs of awareness that he/she has to pee/poop by holding back or looking down, he/she is ready to start the training. If your child pees on the floor and pays no attention to the urine coming out, he/she may not be ready due to a lack of awareness. It may take more time to teach the awareness.



## II. PROMPTED SITTING

1. Encourage your child to sit on the potty when he has a full bladder or colon.
2. The schedule for sitting on the potty must be related to the child's need to void, not the clock! This is the natural way to teach independent toileting.
3. Increase fluid intake and watch for signs that the child needs to void.
4. Point out to your child that he is dry. Pair up fun and approval with dry pants.
5. Never interrupt a fun activity or TV to take your child to the potty. Interrupt a non-preferred or neutral task---that way going to the potty acts as a natural reward, not an interruption of fun.
6. If your child does void on the potty, provide loads of immediate praise, fun, and rewards! He should still be sitting on the potty when you reward him.

# III. DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT

- Reward sitting on the potty with praise and approval—but do not praise sitting for long. As soon as the child sits successfully for one minute, no longer praise just sitting.
- Do not give a phone or iPad to get your child to sit on the potty. Give it right **AFTER** he/she actually voids on the potty.
- Reward voiding on the potty *more* with immediate praise, fun, treats, 'moments of joy'
- Follow voiding on the potty with a fun activity.
- Dry Pants Checks



# WHAT IF HE NEVER VOIDS ON THE POTTY?

- Jump start the process by taking several days to focus on potty training.
- Set aside a location to use as the 'stage' for training.
- Let your child be bottomless—there is no harm in moving back and forth from nude to underpants, but there *is* harm in trying underpants and returning to diapers or pull-ups.
- Push fluids to increase your child's need to void and practice getting to the potty.
- Praise and reward dry pants or if bottomless, staying dry.
- Differentiate consequences for using the potty:
  - a) fun and treats for using the potty
  - b) shut down the fun, practice and clean-up following accidents

# INTENSIVE TRAINING: STEP BY STEP PROCESS

- In order to put your child in underpants, you must directly teach your child to use the potty when he/she needs to void and to stay dry between.
- Set up an area outside the bathroom for intensive training. Your child must be able to see the open toilet.
- Divide activities into highly preferred, neutral, and not preferred.
- Put your child in underpants. No going back now!
- Push fluids. When your child shows signs of needing to void you may nudge him toward the toilet. If he takes a step in that direction, help him onto the potty.
- If he voids, reward him right on the potty.
- Follow up with the highly preferred items for about 15 minutes or until he either has an accident or self-initiates whichever comes first (if he self-initiates—continue the highly preferred fun).
- If he doesn't, release him after 5 minutes and try again later, pushing more fluids and playing with the neutral items.
- When he has an accident in the underwear, follow the accident procedure outlined in an upcoming slide.













## ACCIDENT ROUTINE: THE KEY TO SELF-INITIATION

1. Shut down the fun. Cover/take away toys/items
2. Practice running back and forth to potty (5-10 times)
3. Do NOT let your child finish peeing on the potty
4. After practice, direct and help clean up
5. Clean up is the key to self-initiation: the process must be prolonged, effortful, boring (bummer!)
6. Change to dry pants
7. Present work tasks/non-preferred tasks or time out (depends on child)
8. Stay near bathroom so child is likely to self-initiate to the potty







## IV. CONTINGENCIES/DRY PANTS CHECKS

- Once your child voids successfully on the potty, it is time to hold her responsible for this behavior.
- The child should be expected to 'stay dry' to gain access to fun activities.
- **Check for dry pants** before your child watches movies, goes on the computer, eats/drinks, plays, etc.
- If she is dry, say, "you are dry! Let's put the movie on (or play)."
- If she is wet, shut down the activity, practice running to the potty, then have her clean up the area and wash her pants. This should be done in a neutral manner—it's just something that needs to be done, like wiping up a spill.
- Wait until she has a success in the potty before going back to movies or computer.



# ACCIDENT PROCEDURE: REVIEW

- Shut down the fun.
- Practice running to the potty
- Clean up
- Wash underwear
- Follow accident with neutral activities or time out facing the bathroom
- NEVER SIT THE CHILD ON THE POTTY FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT!



## V. SELF INITIATION



- Once your child has gone to the potty all by himself, or has indicated to you a need to go to the potty from DRY PANTS, he is a self-initiator!
- You can't go back—no more prompting!
- If you continue to take your child to the potty or over-remind him to go to the potty, you will be undermining his own ability to listen and respond to his own body.
- Prompting after your child is self-initiating leads to your child giving up---more accidents and lowered self-esteem.
- You should continue to reward DRY PANTS. Instead of prompting to go to the potty, do a dry pants check.





## VI. MAINTENANCE

- Continue to reward your child once in a while for remembering to use the potty and **staying dry in-between**.
- Reward those challenging times, such as when your child interrupts play or a movie to run to the potty, or when she stays dry on a long car ride.
- When out in the community, show your child **where the bathroom is** without insisting that he use the toilet.
- Bring a transportable potty with you in the car!

# FREQUENT ACCIDENTS: TROUBLESHOOTING

The main reasons for frequent accidents following successful training are:

1. **Constipation:** we recommend the guided use of suppositories within a bowel training protocol (contact us for consultation)
2. **Prompting:** a normal part of learning includes some days of regression; caregivers tend to panic and start reminding and prompting. The child stops paying attention to her inner signals and relies on the adults' prompts as the cue.
3. **Drift:** the child gets 'bored' and 'apathetic' with the process. She gets distracted with play and waits too long to get to the bathroom.

# HOW IS OUR METHOD DIFFERENT?

1. Start the process as soon as your child stays dry for a few hours at a time.
2. Use the Potty Fairy to condition the potty.
3. Prompt to sit on the potty based on a full bladder, not a timed schedule.
4. Make sure you prompt to the potty from a non-preferred event.
5. Do frequent DRY PANTS CHECKS
6. More sitting is detrimental. Sit less, but match sitting with the full bladder/colon.
7. Don't go back and forth between underwear and diapers, but DO practice the potty bottomless.
8. Use natural events to encourage motivation to get to the potty.
9. Reinforce by using immediate moments of joy.
10. Use shut down as a key consequence to accidents.
11. Do not have your child sit on the potty after an accident
12. Stop prompting once your child self-initiates.