

17. Potty Training Policy

In the orchard day Nursery Kew, we help your child start to use the potty (or toilet) is a big and very exciting step for you both. If you stay positive and calm, your child will be more likely to settle into things. The secret is to wait for signs that your child is ready for toilet training.

Potty training basics

Potty training, like many other challenges on the road to parenting success, can seem like a very daunting process. This doesn't need to be the case and with the right approach, you'll have bots on pots before you know it. There are several tried and tested methods when it comes to tackling the issue of toilet training, the most important element in all of them are to remain calm and consistent in your approach.

Timing is key, if your child is ready, it will make the task a lot easier than if you were to try and force the issue too early. All children develop at their own pace and while one child may be dry before they're a year and a half old, the next may be three years old or more. For the majority of children, parents start to address potty training between the ages of two and three. If your child is starting to show signs that he or she is ready, then you can build on this using positive encouragement, allowing them to take things one step at a time with your guidance.

Many parents report that one day, their child 'just did it' and things move swiftly on from there. It only takes one or two successful attempts and your child will be eager to replicate the feelings of self-confidence gained through your praise and delight at their achievement.

Getting ready

Once your child has started to show an interest in going to the toilet, they may start to tell you when they've got a wet or dirty nappy, perhaps they're starting to show signs of

being uncomfortable in a nappy once it's been used or just in general. As soon as you start to notice that your child is showing an interest, encourage them by introducing the potty and perhaps explaining to your child that when you go to the toilet, they could do so too, go through the steps, explaining to your child what you're doing, how to wash hands, flush the toilet and so on. If you have not already bought a potty or training seat, you can involve your child in choosing the potty and then explain its use, using toys or dolls if your child is not eager to try it out at first. Select a potty that is suitable for your child's size and build, some children may need a larger or smaller potty depending on their physique. Follow the ten step process outlined below and you'll soon be well on your way to potty training success

Step 1

Before your child even starts to show an interest in potty training, you may wish to discuss it openly and talk about your child's nappies, distinguishing between wet and dirty nappies and that one day, they will be able to use the toilet like a big girl or boy and they will no longer need to have their nappies changed! By raising awareness early on, you are establishing the idea of using the potty. You could introduce some potty training story books that you could read to your child in the lead up to the start of potty training. Involve their favourite toys too; this will help to promote their willingness to do it themselves.

Step 2

Follow your child's lead. As soon as they start to show an interest in using the potty, make sure that you allow them to do so. If your child is able to follow simple instructions and shows a keen interest in his bowel and bladder movements, you can quite confidently start the process. Keep in mind that your child will move along at his or her own pace, your job is to continue to promote the use of the potty, the ritual of hand-washing and drying, getting dressed again and flushing the toilet. The rest will follow easily.

Step 3

Structure - Start introducing the use of the potty at certain key times of the day. First-thing in the morning when your child wakes up, again before or after meal times, before bath time and again before bed. This consistent, daily approach will help to teach your child about using the potty at appropriate times but ensure that you also ask your child throughout the day whether or not he or she needs to use the potty so that you can avoid accidents in the early training stage.

Step 4

Be prepared. If you have a larger home with more than one toilet or perhaps you feel it would take too long initially to get to the bathroom if your child suddenly had the urge to go, you may wish to dot a few potties around the house to ensure that you are prepared in the early stages and so that your child has options depending on where they're located in the home. If going out, it can be useful to have a portable potty or potty that you are happy to take out with you and keep in a bag for use in public toilets or where ever you need to use it.

Step 5

Timing - Although your child will indicate their readiness to potty train, experts advise that you should not attempt to start potty training during difficult or transitional phases. This could include taking family holidays, moving house, having visitors to stay, starting nursery or when your child is unwell. Wait for a reasonable period, allows your child to adjust back to normal life and start when you're all ready and able to commit your time and attention to the issue. Incorporate the potty training into your child's existing routine as far as possible, this will allow for minimal disruption and a more relaxed approach. You may also wish to consider whether your child can get to the potty at night if you wish them to be dry continuously. If your child is in a cot, you may wish to wait or alternatively, use night nappies until your child has moved to a bed that he or she can climb in and out of easily.

Step 6

Routine. - As discussed above, using your child's existing routine as a basis for the timings of going to the potty, will help to make the whole process more relaxed and easier to get to grips with. Before, trips out of the house, naps or bedtime, ensure that

your child has the opportunity to use the potty, whether or not they actually do anything while sitting there. You may decide to ask your child every hour and a half to two hours whether they need the potty, do keep it consistent and don't get angry or rush your child during the training process as this can create setbacks.

Step 7

Show your child how it's done. Encourage your child to remove their own trousers, shorts or skirts to promote independence and explain to your child that they'll need to sit on the potty for a few minutes, longer if they need to have a bowel movement. You may wish to sing songs, tell or read a story, discuss topical issues or simply enjoy each other's company. Distraction can be a great tool when you have to wait so think of some fun and interesting quiet activities that you can do with your child while you sit and wait together!

REMEMBER: Your child may seem ready but they will always do things at their own pace. Pushing your child too hard can result in more 'accidents' down the line. Slow and steady wins the race.

Step 8

Don't forget hygiene. It is just as important to teach your child about good bathroom hygiene as it is for them to master the skills of using the potty. You could make the process more fun by perhaps giving your child his or her own hand towel, buy some fun hand soap and a little step so that they can reach up to the taps and do as much of the hand washing process as possible, on their own. This will help to build their self-confidence as well as teaching them the importance of bathroom hygiene. Don't forget to teach your child about flushing the toilet (if using a potty, tip the contents into the toilet) but still involve your child in the flushing process to reinforce the steps. Equally, boys and girls should be taught about wiping from front to back to avoid possible infection and to ensure that they throw their toilet paper or wipes into the right place. Remember to praise your child after each step is completed.

Step 9

Be patient. Some children appear to have potty trained in a day or over a weekend. Parents happily go on their way expecting their child to have mastered their new skill to the full only to be disappointed when their child wets the bed or has an 'accident' at home or while out and about. Again, this goes back to whether or not your child is ready and to allowing them to adjust to using the potty or toilet at their own pace. Just because your child has used the potty successfully on three or four occasions does not mean that you're home and dry! Continue to ask your child if they need to use the potty, be patient and never get angry if they have an accident or don't use the potty after sitting for a while. Some children regress and that is OK. They will do it at their own pace but they will do it properly eventually.

Step 10

Reward - Using praise and reward can have a huge impact on your child's success. By using a star chart or reward system that your child can identify with, you are offering them something in return for their efforts. A jellybean or a sticker can be just the thing to get your little one interested in the idea of potty training. Praise your child regardless of whether they used the potty or not while sitting there, this helps them to feel good about the idea of using the potty and in no time, they will tell you when they need to go!

This policy was Adopted on	April 2023
Signed on behalf of the nursery	<i>Daniela Rosa</i>
Date of review	<i>October 2025</i>
Date of review	
Date of review	