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Children's & Young People's Occupational Therapy Service

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## **Toileting Awareness Programme**

### **Information leaflet for parents/carers**

#### **Getting Use to the Environment and Routines**

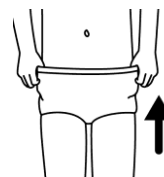
1. All nappy/pad changes should take place in toilet or bathroom.
2. Ensure that the toilet area is a fun, pleasant environment e.g. singing songs 🎵, blowing bubbles, distraction toys
3. If your child is physically able encourage them to stand when changing the nappy/pad. If needed use a rail to help them support themselves
4. If your child poos in their nappy flush it down the toilet with them so that they understand where it goes
5. Encourage your child to put some toilet paper down the toilet and pull the flush to help them get used to the sound of the toilet flushing.
6. When you have finished changing your child's nappy or using potty encourage your child to wash their hands.
7. When possible, take your child with you when you're using the toilet so they understand where 'poo' and 'wee' goes. This helps them understand the routines.
8. Support your child with getting used to and becoming familiar with the toilet environment such as encouraging them to sit on the toilet with the lid down to wash hands/face etc.
9. Prepare your child for the sensory challenges in their environment e.g. smells, hand dryers.

#### **Preparation for Toileting Skills**

- A child requires sensory awareness, sitting balance, and the ability to sit comfortably on the toilet for at least 2-3 minutes before you begin toilet training.
- If your child does not feel balanced and secure when sitting on the toilet, they may feel very anxious. If they are concentrating really hard on being able to maintain their sitting position on the toilet they will find it difficult to concentrate on actually passing 'wee' and 'poo'
- Play bubble blowing games to relax tummy muscles
- You can work on developing good balance through a variety of activities such as sitting on a beach ball and reaching from side to side, lifting one leg and then the other, 'or row row the boat' is fun too.
- Ensure the child has all they need in the bathroom; supportive seating/potty, toilet paper, flushable wet wipes (as an alternative to toilet paper to help the child wipe themselves), non-slip step, hand rail (if necessary), trainer pants and a change of clothes. Some children may need more supportive/specialist equipment to enable them to sit comfortably on the toilet.



- Start to practice pulling up and pulling down trousers and pants.



### **What To Do Next**

Complete the attached toileting chart over a two week period looking at patterns of going to the toilet and length of time spent dry, taking into consideration what your child is eating and drinking (Make sure they are drinking plenty throughout the day). Try to look at your child's nappy/pad every hour. Folding a piece of kitchen roll into the nappy will help you keep a record of wet and dry times. This will also help with developing the sensory connection between "weeing" with feeling wet. Feeling wet is an important part of the toilet training process.

### **Helpful hints for knowing if your child is ready for toilet training**

1. No medical concerns or constipation
2. Can sit comfortably on a potty or toilet for at least a couple of minutes
3. Can stay dry for at least 60 minutes
4. Shows some awareness of being wet or soiled
5. Willing to cooperate and may be able to communicate ( not essential )

### **Things To Do Before You Get Started**

- Ensure that everyone involved with your child is following the same procedure using the same words and equipment – Nursery, Home, Grandparents all need to be on board.
- Read children's books or social stories about toileting with pictures to outline the sequence.
- Useful IPAD apps:
  - Potty Time Lite
  - S Toilet
  - My Life Skills
  - Potty Training
  - The Potty Book
  - Too Noisy Pro
  - Pictello
  - Zones of Regulation
  - Autism Timer
- Role -play the toileting sequence with dolls, giving dolls lots of praise for trying.
- Try and build your child's attention skills through games and activities as this will help them to stay sitting on the toilet for a few minutes



### **If you think your child is ready**

**STEP 1** – If you find there is not a regular pattern with bowel and bladder movements then consider regular food intakes and increasing fluids throughout the day.

Revisit the readiness checklist and if they are not achieving most of the signs then stay at the awareness programme for longer and then revisit.

**STEP 2-** Once pattern established (use chart) and your child can stay dry for at least an hour ..... “Go for it!”

Goodbye nappies, hello pants! Don't substitute nappies for pull ups, this can confuse the child, and give them mixed messages.” Dry like me pads” and waterproof pants over normal pants can be useful in the earlier stages, when more accidents are likely to happen. Products such as a “Brolly Sheet” will help protect the car seat and sofa. Do not switch between nappy and pants.

- Get a routine established, by taking your child to the toilet just before the times you think they may go (look back at your chart), or at least every hour to begin with. Sitting on the toilet 30 minutes after a meal is always a good time to go, as they will be more likely to open their bowels too.
- Do not yet rely on your child requesting to go. This will come later.
- Have fun distraction toys at the ready to help them stay sitting for 2-3 minutes.
- Use the Ipad stories to support the task.
- Encourage your child to lean forward slightly to pop/blow bubbles will help to get in a good position.
- Give praise for sitting, hand washing and flushing .Keep rewards quick and simple, build up the skill gradually.

**STEP 3-** You may want to find a picture, symbol or object to help you and your child communicate to each other that it is” potty time”. It could be a piece of tissue, photograph or symbol.

**STEP 4-** Staying dry at night and learning to wipe your bottom are skills that will develop later.

If the above advice has **not** helped your child to move on to toilet training then you can refer back to your Health visitor or Occupational Therapist (only if your child is known to Occupational Therapy) and they can suggest the most appropriate person to offer specific advice.

Please read the additional booklets from ERIC “A guide to potty training”, and “A guide to children's bowel problems” on [www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)

Additional information on continence at [www.promocon.co.uk](http://www.promocon.co.uk)

Toileting Chart

Child's Name.....

DOB.....

Nappy

**W**= wet

Beginning Date.....

**S**= Soiled

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Time	Nappy	Nappy	Nappy	Nappy	Nappy	Nappy	Nappy
6.00							
7.00							
8.00							
9.00							
10.00							
11.00							
12.00							
13.00							
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