

## TODDLERS: Getting Started with Toileting

### Toileting

Toilet training is the process of teaching a toddler to control the bowel and bladder and use the toilet or potty. Toileting your toddler may take time and patience. This is a developmental step and will not happen until they are ready.

A child is considered to be toilet trained when he or she initiates going to the bathroom and can adjust clothing according to their age and development.

Karitane respects each family has their own culture and parenting practices. This guide is an evidence based resource you may choose to use in your parenting. The following information aims to share information regarding when your toddler may be ready and willing to participate in toilet training. This guide provides some ideas on how to support them through this developmental stage.



### When is Toilet training Possible?

A toddler is usually physically ready from around 2 years of age onwards, however this can vary.

Daytime accidents can still occur and complete night time control may take up to 4 - 5 years of age or longer.

If your toddler has developed voluntary control of the muscles that controls the bladder (urethral sphincter) and the bowel (anal sphincter), then training will be possible.

Usually from the age of 2 years a toddler's bladder and bowel has matured enough, they have the ability to communicate with you and has to have developed the motor skills to attempt toilet training.

### Signs that your toddler may be ready include:

- Tells you or indicates they have wet their nappy
- Trying to remove wet/soiled nappies themselves
- Fewer wet nappies during the day
- The ability to remain dry for two (2) hours or more
- You may notice they are dry when they wake up from a nap
- Showing an interest using the potty and toilet

### Getting Started

There are several options for getting started. Your toddler will probably let you know which one they prefer. Using a potty or chair may enable them to feel more secure with their feet on the floor. Alternately, a small set of steps with a non-slip base placed in front of a regular toilet can be used with a child size toilet insert. Boys might prefer to stand in front of the toilet or sit to pass urine.

**Celebrate successes to encourage your toddler in a positive way.**



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### Encouraging Toileting Skills

- Use simple instructions, using words that you will be happy to continue using, even in public
- Praise them for trying. Learning to anticipate when they need to go to the toilet can take time

### Staying positive and calm is important

- Dress them in clothes that can be easily removed
- Sometimes waiting until warmer weather is a good idea because they wear fewer clothes
- Take them to the toilet every 2-3 hours during the day
- Encourage sitting on the toilet for short periods
- Don't force them to sit there if they don't want to be there
- If an accident occurs clean up with as little fuss as possible
- Always remember to help them wash their hands after going to the toilet
- Do not try toilet training if there is too much going on, e.g. a new sibling, moving house or illness
- Be patient and gently encouraging

### Fears Around Toileting

It is not uncommon for your toddler to fear sitting on the toilet

- Your toddler could have almost fallen into the toilet or fear that they may be flushed away
- Toddlers may have a fear of having their bowels open while sitting on the toilet and may wait until a nappy is put back on
- The size of the toilet in relation to their size may worry them
- Fear of not making it to the potty or toilet on time is a possible reason they might want to continue wearing a nappy
- Fear they will be in trouble if they don't learn toileting fast enough. They will outgrow these fears with calm and encouraging support. Sometimes you may need to wait several weeks or months
- Emptying poo's out of nappies into the toilet while your toddler is watching may help them to understand how a toilet flush works and alleviate their fear



### Need Help?

Don't hesitate to seek help from family, friends or the Karitane Careline  
**1300 CARING (1300 227 464)**

[www.karitane.com.au](http://www.karitane.com.au)

PO Box 241, Villawood NSW 2163  
Tel: 02 9794 2300 Fax: 02 9794 2323  
ABN 25 000 018 842 Charity No.: 12991

### For Parenting information:

[www.karitane.com.au](http://www.karitane.com.au)  
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Careline 1300 CARING (1300 227 464)