

Toilet training you child



KARITANE.COM.AU

The time has come for your toddler to learn how to go to 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 fully toilet trained when they initiate going to the toilet and can manage to adjust clothing before and after toilet use without soiling or wetting their clothes or their surroundings.

Karitane respects each family has their own culture and parenting practices. This guide is an evidence- based resource you may choose to use for knowing how to support your child through this developmental stage.

WHEN IS TOILET TRAINING POSSIBLE?

- Around 2 years of age, your toddler's development for bladder and bowel control starts to appear, however, this can vary from child to child.
- 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.
- It is not uncommon that your child may not have full control at night and may have some accidents some days, this is typical until about 5-7 years old.

SIGNS OF READINESS

As toilet training is a developmental stage, it is helpful to look for your child's ability to manage the following points. It is helpful to note that a child's signs of readiness include a combination of physical, developmental and behavioural signs rather than just their age.

- By 18-24 months toddlers are usually able to verbally tell you whether they have passed urine or opened their bowels (have done a wee or a poo)
- Are able to manage their clothing (pull pants down and up as needed)
- Show interest in others toileting and what the 'potty' is for
- You notice them start to wiggle around, or touch their body parts, cant concentrate on the task they are doing, indicating they want to wee or poo.
- Are staying dry from a day nap.
- Commonly from around 2 to 3 years of age, your child is aware of the need to go to the toilet and will say they need to do a poo or wee before it has happened.
- By 4 years of age most young children can go to the toilet by themselves.



GETTING STARTED

There are several options for getting started. Your toddler will probably let you know which one they prefer.

- Decide on the words your family will use for bodily fluids and using them consistently makes it easier for your child to recognise the words. Use actual names of body parts is recommended.
- Purchasing a potty, as usually potties are easier for toddlers to use when starting off, as their feet can be more secure on the floor. Your child can help pick the potty, decorate it, this will help them take ownership of their own potty.
- Teach your child about the potty by practising how to get on and off fully dressed. You could try reading a book to them while they are sitting on the potty to keep them sitting for a few minutes. This is practice before they actually start their toilet training.
- You can help your child learn by placing the soiled nappy in the potty then disposing it, this may help them start to make the connections for the use of the potty.
- If they are comfortable sitting on the potty try it with pants down, encouraging a surprise 'wee' or seeing if they can do a wee in the potty like mummy or daddy.
- When you can notice your child showing signs of needing to go to the toilet, it can be helpful to take them to the potty and try and see if a wee or poo happens.
- Keep the potty clean, some children don't like using already used potty's or unflushed toilets.

ENCOURAGING GOOD PRACTICES

Toileting is a new skill that toddlers are learning. Learning new skills and changing to a new way of doing things can be tricky and can take time. Staying positive, calm and responsive to your child's needs can make it easier.

- It is helpful to consider 'when is the best time to start toilet training' by paying attention to what else is happening for the child that may add to their emotional pressure or stress. Such as are they adjusting to arrival of a sibling, moving to a new home, change in school or carers, are they unwell? If there are changes happening, it can be helpful to wait a few weeks, until things settle down before trying again.
- Dress your child in clothes that can be easily removed, buttons and zippers can be hard when you are in a hurry!
- If your child does not want to sit on the toilet, that's ok, try another time shortly after.
- Try to avoid over-reminding your child to go to the potty, they are still learning and will take time.
- Look for signs they may want to go to the toilet and support them to try.
- If an accident occurs, clean it up with as little fuss as possible, even consider asking them to help clean it up.
- Offer quiet enthusiasm, and specific praise for their efforts, such as trying to get to the potty on time, "good trying", attempting to get their pants off in time, "look, you tried hard to get your pants down" or "aren't you clever, you got your pants down in time". If they do a poo or a wee, "ooh look at that you did a wee in the potty" (with a smile, soft clap for example).
- Good hygiene like washing hands after using the toilet will help them learn good habits, they may need reminders and a little help while handwashing.
- Ensure a healthy diet full of dietary fibre and water for drinks.
- Support your child with any fears or worries they show when learning toileting behaviours. It is a new set of skills to learn and change can be stressful and scary. They need gentle encouragement and adjustments to how you go about helping them, as they progress through developmental milestone.
- Expect accidents in the early weeks or months before they master this task.
- It may take approximately 6 months for daytime urinary continence and around 6-7 months for stool continence to be fully toilet trained.
- If there is too much pressure or stress or they feel shamed it can make success much harder to achieve and it may take longer for them to fully develop the task of toileting effectively. You may need to stop for 2 to 3 months, then try again taking a gentler approach.
- Nighttime and nap training can take some time and might be helpful to start when your child is consistently dry during the day. Full nighttime bladder control may not happen for some children until 5-7 years old.
- Once your child is comfortable with using the potty, they may be ready for transitioning to a regular toilet with an over-the-toilet seat and step stool some young children like to go straight to the 'big toilet' but may need a step stool to reach the toilet easily.