

Occupational Therapy Advice Sheet

Toileting and Toilet Training



The factors involved in toileting and the process of toilet training can be difficult for both carer and child with additional needs. See below for some tips for toilet training:

Increasing Toilet Awareness:

- Place all dirty nappies in a bucket near the toilet so that the child starts to have an awareness of what the toilet is meant for.
- Use less absorbent nappies to increase the child's awareness of a being wet.
- Allow the child to watch whilst other members of the family use the toilet so that it increases the child's awareness of what the toilet is for.
- Reward your child for sitting on the toilet by rewarding them i.e. with something that they like such as a sweet or sticker.

Toileting Tips:

- When changing child talk about 'going on the potty', 'wee-wee', 'doo-doo' or whatever words you choose to use. **USE THE SAME WORD OR WORDS EACH TIME.** Encourage the family to use the same word you are teaching the child. When the child uses the words, immediately praise them and take them to the bathroom.
- Let the child watch the family use the toilet. Let them listen to and look at the result. Use those words when the child watches you go.
- Stay with the child and praise them for sitting on the potty. Get them used to it by telling them a story or nursery rhyme while sitting on the toilet (even with the lid down).
- Record the child's toileting habits throughout the day noting the specific times and noting whether a pattern exists (see below observation chart example).
- Choose 2 times when there is a likelihood that the child will urinate. Seat them on the toilet. Stay with them. Praise the child if they do go on the potty.

Make it fun!

- Make this time enjoyable and pleasant for the child to encourage them to stay on the seat. This is an initial step in toilet training. Do not require the child to sit for longer than 5 minutes at a time.
- Use training pants instead of nappies during the day.

Praise success and ignore accidents.

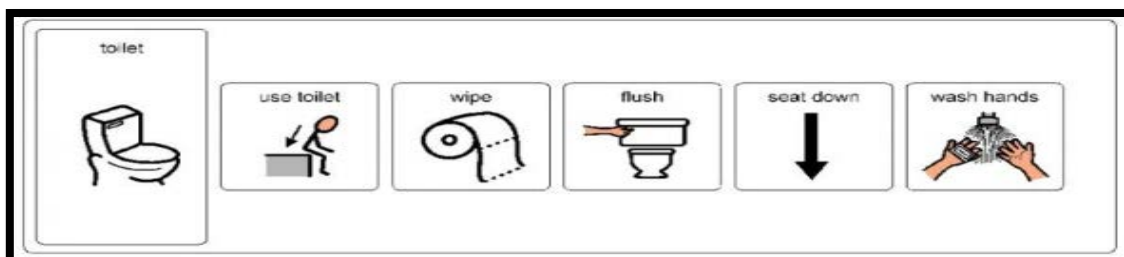
- Avoid pressure, anger or fuss over accidents/refusal and praise success.
- Ignore accidents by not changing the child immediately and by encouraging the child to do much of the job of changing clothing themselves.
- Watch for gestures (pulling self, fidgeting) which might mean they have to go. Praise the child, say the word associated with toileting and take the child to the bathroom. Avoid restrictive or hard to manage clothes.
- Watch the time carefully and ask the child if they need to use the bathroom.
- Remind periodically and praise generously when they ask to use the bathroom.
- If the process of sitting on the toilet upsets the child, stop for a few days and then try again.
- Encourage and praise if child is successful in their toileting attempts-let them flush as reward.
- Give the child a drink of orange juice 10 minutes before they are encouraged to use the toilet.
- Running water in the sink or placing the child's hand in warm water may help to increase the likelihood of urination.

Bathroom Environment:

- Play music in the bathroom, make the music fun, happy and sing along.
- Use essential oils or nice fragrance to create a welcome environment to encourage toileting independence.
- Bring your child's favourite toys into the toilet and allow the child to play with toy whilst sitting on the toilet.
- Stick posters, pictures on the wall which you can discuss with your child whilst they use the toilet.

Time to practice:

- Holidays or time from school is a good time to begin toilet training, as the child can remove the nappy and accidents can occur freely at home.
- Having worn nappies for so long children can be unaware of where the urine comes from. It is important to allow the child to make the connection of going to the toilet. See sample visual schedule- see online link.



(Source: www.livingwellwithautism.com)

