







# No More Diapers: Is Your Child Ready?



*“No more diapers!” Sounds great, but how do you get ready for toilet training? Here are some tips.*

-  **Be sure you are ready!** Helping your child learn to use the toilet takes time and patience. Have a potty chair, a child-sized seat that fits the toilet, and a sturdy stepstool on hand. Training can take 3 months or more.
-  **Get your child interested!**
  - Let her get to know her potty chair or portable toilet seat. Let her sit on it fully clothed, if she wants.
  - Check out children’s books about using the potty and read them with your child [e.g., *It’s Potty Time* by Chris Sharp (2009) and *Once Upon a Potty* by Alona Frankel (2007)].
  - Let him observe you or other children (if they are willing) using the toilet.
  - Show him how the toilet works. Let him flush it if he wants.
  - Never leave a toddler alone in a bathroom.
-  **Teach the right words.** Use the terms you want your child to use. You might say in a friendly voice, “I’m changing your diaper because you peed in it.” “You pooped in your diaper, so I’m putting on a clean one.” Use terms that other people will understand.
-  **Watch for signs that your child is ready.** Most children learn to use the toilet between 2 and 3 years of age. Girls show signs of readiness an average of 3 months before boys. Your child may be ready to start toilet training if she shows any of the following signs:
  - Knows the diaper is wet or dirty and wants a clean one
  - Has bowel movements at regular times
  - Stays dry for 2 hours at a time
  - Uses facial expressions, sounds, or words to show she is ready to urinate or have a bowel movement
  - Understands the terms you use for bladder and bowel functions
  - Follows simple directions and likes to put things in the right place
-  **Be aware of signs that your child is not ready.** You may need to wait a little longer if he simply doesn’t want to sit on the toilet or if he is going through any of the following:
  - An illness
  - A phase of irritability or power struggles with you
  - Major life changes such as the birth of a new baby or moving to a new home
-  **For related Web resources, see “No More Diapers: Is Your Child Ready?” at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/>**

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Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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