







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/>**

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.



13 Children’s Research Center
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
E-mail: iel@illinois.edu
<http://illinoisearlylearning.org>

Illinois State
Board of Education