

Top Ten Toilet-Training Tips

Victoria B. Teague, M.D.

1. Around 18 to 24 months of age, most children start imitating their parent's actions, whether it be driving, cooking, or talking on the phone. **This is the time to start toilet-training!**
2. Set up a child's potty in your bathroom so your child may become familiar with it, play with it, even sit on it (while clothed) when you are using your toilet.
3. **Never force the child to sit on the potty.** However, talk about using the potty with enthusiasm, and **PRAISE** any positive interest shown.
4. Once he is comfortable playing with and sitting on the potty clothed, ask if your child wants to sit on the potty when unclothed before bath time, "like big boys/girls do."
5. Again, **PRAISE** any cooperation you receive.
6. At this point, just **CHILL** and most children will eventually "go" on one of these potty-sitting occasions. When that happens, **PRAISE, DANCE, and CHEER** for your child's accomplishment like it's the Super Bowl!!
7. Once he has been doing #6 for several weeks, begin asking if he would like to sit on the potty with his diaper off at various times during the day. Use **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT** (Candy works great...as in one M&M) each time your child is able to put pee-pee or poop into the potty. *Disclaimer: This is one of the rare times I advocate using candy to encourage a desired behavior, as it is highly motivational!*
8. Allow potty visits to be as brief or long as your child desires, voicing **PRAISE** for his cooperation and "big boy" behavior.
9. Have some special toys or books that your child is only allowed to play with when he's on the potty—another **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT!**
10. Lastly, and most importantly, if your child shows resistance or complete lack of interest in the potty, just put it away and try again in 2 or 3 months. During this time, do not talk about toilet-training to him, but make sure he continues to see how other family members and friends "go potty."

BE PATIENT!!