

# First Steps

## PREPARATION FOR TOILET TRAINING

When supporting a child with any aspect of learning to use the toilet, it is always helpful to agree an action plan to support a step-by-step approach and consider the next goal.

There are various factors that may need to be considered and not everything may be relevant to every child

**Toilet team** -everyone who needs to be involved, Family, Friends, school.

All follow the agreed plan, use the same words, objects, cues, and routines as agreed. Regular reviews. Team may need help to develop their understanding of either autism or toilet training

**Toilet talk** – words, symbols, signs, objects of reference or pictures.

Clear and consistent communication is essential for helping and supporting children to understand what they are being asked. Choose and agree words that are going to be used for all aspects of learning toilet skills

**Toilet Awareness**-of being wet and soiled –

nappy liner/kitchen roll ,pants inside nappy, going time without nappy. start to wear pants for short time in the day and gradually increase

**Toilet Territory** -Learning what toilets are for-

change nappy in the toilet/bathroom. This can help a child to learn that a toilet activity takes place there. Keep everything needed for dealing with wee and poo in the bathroom to give consistent messages. Show the child how poo is emptied from nappy into the toilet. Flushing the toilet or waving goodbye. Open door on the bathroom so child can see other people using the toilet

**Toilet Techniques**-Clothing and nappies, -teach a child to be as independent as their abilities allow.

Think about clothing what will be easy for the child to take on and off. Some children need to be taught undressing and dressing skills. Start hand over hand, backwards chaining. This involves breaking down the steps of a task and teaching them in reverse.

**Toilet Technicalities**-seating, rails, stools, timers...

Check bathroom environment and consider if any additional equipment, products, activities, or rewards are needed. Interventions can include reducing lighting, clutter, smell.

Footstool, toilet seat and visual aids. Tight pants or shorts, to provide the child with firm pressure if they have a need for sensory input

**Toilet teaching** -Learning to sit on the toilet-*Good practice would be ...*

Establish 6-8 practice times a day -plan this with everyone involved and put into the daily timetable (many children will have a visual timetable)  
Timetabling this will give it the priority it needs alongside other activities. Link the practice times to cues in the child's daytime routine, for example playtime or mealtimes.

Choose a small reward or motivator to maintain their interest

Sit the child on the toilet, using a visual timer to indicate when to get off. The first few sessions may be just a few seconds long and this can be gradually increased as the child learns to achieve this skill.

Remember the aim of this session is about getting the child used to sitting on the toilet and to be comfortable and relaxed .it is not yet about getting them to poo or wee in the toilet. If they do happen to poo and wee in the toilet during a practice session, then the session should be ended and an additional reward or praise for achievement given.

**Toilet Timetabling**– Learning to manage change -Toilet training often involves a change in routine for the child. Preparation may involve getting the child used to changes.

Good practice would be =Make life as consistent and predictable as possible for child to reduce their level of anxiety. Gradually introduce small changes into their routine, with reassuring message that other things will still take place.

Develop a social story about why things are going to be different. A social story will help develop social understanding.

**Toilet tensions**-impact of stress on learning new skills -Some children may fear the toilet. They may have heard stories of germ monsters or seen adverts for cleaning products. The initial starting point is to reduce the child's level of stress and anxiety.

Reduce confrontation, provide reassurance, communicate clearly using fewer words, create structure-give child consistent routine, consider sensory needs.