

Toilet Learning Checklist

Toilet learning is much more successful once the child is truly ready to master this skill. To identify the readiness of your child, please answer the following questions.

My child:

Follows simple directions	Yes	No
Remains dry for at least 2 hours at a time during the day	Yes	No
Wakes up dry after nap time	Yes	No
Has regular and predictable bowel movements. *Some may have bowel movements daily and some may have them less frequently	Yes	No
Walks to and from the bathroom, pulls down own pants, and pulls them up again	Yes	No
Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers	Yes	No
Seems interested in the toilet	Yes	No
Has asked to wear grown-up underwear	Yes	No

Interpreting the Checklist

- If you answered “**No**” to most of the items:
It may be best to wait a few weeks or months before beginning toilet learning. Revisit this checklist periodically to reassess your child’s readiness.
- If you answered “**Yes**” to most of the items:
Your child is likely ready to begin toilet learning. This process should start at home. Once your child has acquired the foundational skills, the school or group care setting can provide additional support.

Next Steps for School Readiness

When your child is ready to begin wearing underwear at school as part of the toilet learning process, a conference must be scheduled between parents and classroom teachers. A strong partnership between home and school is key to ensuring a consistent and successful experience for your child.

To help us best support your family, please complete the following information:

1. What words or gestures does your family use for the following?

• Body parts: _____

• Urine: _____

• Bowel movements: _____

2. What strategies have been tried at home?

(Examples: reading books, aiming at Cheerios, trying on big kid underwear, sitting on the toilet) *Note: Our approach emphasizes simplicity and intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards.*

3. Does your child have any special needs or circumstances we should be aware of?

Helpful Hints for Supporting Your Child's Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is a developmental milestone that requires patience, encouragement, and consistency. The following tips can help make the process smooth and positive for both you and your child:

General Approach

- Stay calm and relaxed. A gentle, easygoing attitude works best.
- Reinforce each step. Toilet learning involves several small steps: *discussing, undressing, going, wiping, dressing, flushing, hand washing.* Celebrate your child's success at each stage.

Awareness and Practice

- Help your child recognize body signals. They need to be aware of when they're urinating or having a bowel movement before they can begin to take control.
- Model the process. Let your child observe older children who are trained (when appropriate) or practice steps such as sitting on the toilet fully clothed and flushing.
- Integrate learning into daily routines. Use books, songs, and games that reinforce toilet skills in a playful way.

Clothing and Timing

- Dress for success. Choose clothes that are easy for your child to remove and put back on independently.
- Use natural timing. Encourage toilet use after meals or snacks, when children are most likely to need to go.

Responding to Cues

- Act on readiness signals. If your child says they need to go or shows signs, assist them calmly with undressing and getting to the toilet.
- Avoid pressure. Sit with your child for a few minutes, but don't push for immediate results. Focus on the effort rather than the outcome.

What to Avoid

- Never force or punish. Don't make your child sit on the toilet against their will or for extended periods. This can create power struggles and negative associations.
- Accidents happen. Stay positive and reassuring. Clean up promptly and let your child know it's okay—they are learning.

Be Patient

- Let your child lead. When children feel in control, they tend to train more quickly.
- Expect setbacks. These are normal and not signs of failure. Temporary regression often supports long-term success.
- Nighttime dryness takes time. It may take an additional 6–12 months after daytime training.