

Patience Pays When Toilet Training

by A. Graeme Garscadden, MD
Pediatrician, Colorado Springs Health Partners, PC



A. Graeme Garscadden,
MD, FAAP
Pediatrician

CSHP East branch

6340 Barnes Road

596-2900

It seems that parents are forever encouraged to be patient in the care and raising of their children! Toilet training is no exception. Every child is different and so is their approach to behavior changes such as toilet training.

Beginning to toilet train.

Most children are ready to begin training some time between their second and third birthdays. Readiness skills include:

- Imitating older children or adults
- Regular bowel movements and long periods of dry diapers
- Being able to walk to the toilet and pull pants down
- Asking to use the toilet or potty chair or wear grown up underwear

The training process.

Children this age are desperately trying to take some control of their worlds-let them help choose the potty chair and when they want to try going at first. Consistency is also important, so be sure to alert daycare or other providers of the routine you have established.

- If your child is not comfortable with the regular toilet, consider getting a potty chair that belongs only to him or her.
- Take it slow, forcing your child to sit on the potty will most likely prolong the process
- Use positive reinforcement-give lots of praise and no criticism
- Know your child's behavioral cues that signal "it's time to go"
- Deal with potty training matter-of-factly, use simple terms and name body parts accurately
- Mistakes will happen-remember not to criticize
- Avoid beginning training during a stressful time like a new baby or a move
- Dress your child in loose fitting pants that are easy to pull down
- Be relaxed about the process and avoid a power struggle

Post training.

Regressing is fairly common; encourage your child to keep trying. Your child will probably stay dry all day for some time before he or she is dry all night. Accidents at night can continue to occur until age six for some children. Toilet training generally takes 3 to 6 months to take hold.

Patience and consistency, the true test for all parents, are the name of the game in toilet training too! For more information, visit www.aap.org or www.familydoctor.org