

TOILET TRAINING ADVICE FOR AUTISM



DESCRIPTION

Many children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) find it difficult to achieve independence in toileting. They can find it hard to adapt to the change in expectations and tend to want to hold on to learned and familiar routines. Certain sensory aspects of toileting such as the sound of the flushing and a fear of dirtying their hands may also be a challenge.

HELPFUL HINTS

Indications that a child is ready to attempt toilet training include:

- The ability to remain dry/clean for 2 hours
- That he/she is aware when performing
- That there are signs of interest in the toilet
- There is a regular pattern to wetting/soiling.

Developing toileting skills can take some time. Consistency helps to support learning.

Stop toilet training if your child is becoming overly anxious or distressed. You may need to try a number of times before your child is ready.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

PREPARATION:

- Observe your child carefully to establish usual times between eating and drinking and emptying bowels/bladder. Complete a toileting chart/ diary.
- Identify if your child is recognising the sensations of needing the toilet. They may be able to tell you, or demonstrate behaviours which indicate this awareness.
- Encourage tactile/messy play to help with cleaning themselves as they progress.
- To help your child understand what is required try verbal explanations, social stories with pictures, observation of others, role play with dolls or picture timetables

You may need to change routines gradually for example:

- Support your child with getting used to and familiar with the toilet environment such as encouraging them to sit on the toilet with the lid down to wash hands/face etc or changing their nappy in the toilet area.
- Begin to encourage the child to sit on the toilet immediately following a nappy being put on, wearing their outer clothes as well.
- Remove lower clothing so that your child is sitting on the toilet with only a nappy in place.
- The nappy size could be gradually reduced and/or a hole cut into it to allow urine/faeces to go into the toilet if required. This can then be shown to the child to reinforce the desired performance.
- Your child may be able to tolerate changing straight into wearing pants. Often the sensation of wetting/soiling when out of nappies begins to heighten awareness and encourage control of the bowel/bladder.

TOILET TRAINING:

- Sit your child on the toilet/potty at regular intervals, at times you have decided they are most likely to perform e.g. after meals/drinks or a sleep.
- Practice blowing activities such as blowing bubbles when sitting on the toilet.
- Give the child lots of praise when they are successful. You may like to consider rewards such as stickers, star charts or a favourite activity.
- Avoid making a fuss if accidents occur. Instead, give encouragement and reassurance that this is ok and they can try again.
- Ensure that everyone involved with your child is following the same procedure using the same terminology and equipment, if necessary.
- Your child may need help to indicate their needs as they learn toileting skills. They may find symbols helpful.
- Discourage undesired ritualistic behaviours that children sometimes want when going to the toilet. Going along with these may make life more difficult later.

ROUTINE TOILET TRAINING:

Some children are not able to feel the sensation of needing the toilet. Your child may be able to develop their toileting skills by practicing toilet training through routine.

Some children follow a pattern of when they have a drink, which indicates when they need the toilet. Complete a toilet diary to identify if your child follows a predictable routine. Sit your child on the toilet 5/ 10 minutes before you expect that they may need to use it.

This type of toilet training can be difficult to master and be inconsistent at times.