

**ST. ALBAN'S PRE-SCHOOL**  
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**TOILET - TEACHING**

1. According to a recent study, the average age for learning to use the potty or toilet reliably for bowel and bladder is 28 months. Although it is important to remember that each child is an individual and develops at his own rate, generally speaking you can expect a child to achieve daytime control sometime between the ages of two and three, and nighttime control between three and four and a half.
2. Toilet teaching is best started around the time the child becomes ready to learn and able to control his elimination. Most children do not have the physical ability to control their bowels before about eighteen months, and they do not achieve bladder control until sometime later. Beginning toilet teaching early simply causes frustration for the caregiver and puts unnecessary pressure on a young toddler. Too-early toilet teaching can actually delay progress rather than encourage it.
3. A toddler may show some - but not necessarily all - of the following signs as he becomes ready for learning: pausing and making sounds or grimaces while having a bowel movement; being regular in bowel movements; staying dry for an hour or two in the daytime; waking up early from a nap; complaining when wet or soiled; being aware that urine and feces come from his body; telling the caregiver when he has had or is having a bowel movement; generally liking to be neat and tidy; and wanting to imitate adults and be grown up.
4. Toddlers need to know what caregivers expect of them. You should not push or pressure the child, but do watch for signs of readiness, prepare him/her gradually by teaching him/her about toileting over a period of time, and communicate very clearly that you have confidence that he/she will learn to use the potty and toilet when he/she is ready.
5. In the course of your everyday activities point out when the child is having a bowel movement or is urinating; teach children that urine and feces come from their body; teach them the words you want them to use for bathroom functions; allow them to observe others using the toilet and explain what it is for; read them a children's book about toilet learning; mention the advantages of staying clean and dry; get a potty chair and introduce it as their own possession; let them practice using the potty and praise them for success; mention that when they are bigger they will start using the potty all the time and will wear underpants ``like a big girl/boy."
6. When a toddler is between the ages of two and three, has shown some signs of readiness, and has had an ample period of preparation; you can expect him/her to become interested in giving up diapers. Switch from diapers to pants for waking activities if he/she (1) occasionally asks to have his/her diaper removed to use the

potty; (2) tells you he/she wants underpants and doesn't want to wear diapers anymore; or (3) has shown clearly that he/she is physically able to control elimination.

7. Expect a child to have accidents for a while after beginning and be relaxed about them. Express no anger or disapproval; don't scold, shame, or punish the child. Clean up calmly, and reassure them that "next time they'll remember to use the potty." During the day, give gentle reminders to use the potty to help them be successful.
8. Regressions to wetting and/or soiling are not uncommon in toddlers and are usually a reaction to stress. Look for sources of pressure in the child's life - separation from a parent, a new baby, starting nursery school, moving, etc. - and try to ease tension by providing reassurance. Don't punish him/her for the loss of control. Staying patient, understanding and calm is the best way of dealing with regressions, which usually go away by themselves in a short time.
9. Staying dry while sleeping usually comes several months after daytime control is established, but some normal children, especially boys, take longer to achieve dry nights. The best way to handle night wetting is to be patient and wait for the child's bladder to mature. Punitive methods are definitely harmful: don't punish or shame a bed wetter. Instead, praise the child for any dry nights he may have; make no comment about wet beds; and express your confidence that he/she will be having more dry nights, as he/she grows older.
10. If a child has not achieved daytime control by three and a half to four or is not making progress in controlling night after age five, it is wise to consult your physician to rule out any physical causes, and then a child psychologist to help the child overcome the difficulties.
11. Psychologists say that parents whose children learn to use the toilet most easily are calm and patient and show matter-of-fact attitude toward toilet-teaching; communicate clearly what behavior is expected of the child; anticipate gradual, rather than instant, success; do not use negative tactics like punishment, scolding, or shaming; observe the child and try to wait until he/she expresses interest in toilet learning; encourage and praise the child for successes and are understanding about failures; switch from diapers to pants when the child is ready; send a clear message that they have confidence in their child's ability to learn.
12. We are here to assist parents in toilet training. Please let us know what methods you are using at home. We will not use any methods, which will conflict with licensing regulations set by the state.