

because of its greater regularity and predictability. The sensation for defecation is stronger than that for urination and easier for children to recognize. A well-balanced diet that includes dietary fiber helps keep stool soft and supports the development and maintenance of regular bowel movements.

A number of techniques are helpful when initiating training, and cultural differences should be considered (see [Cultural Considerations box](#)). In the United States, some of the options recommended by practitioners include the Brazelton child-oriented approach, the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines (which are similar to the Brazelton method), Dr. Spock's training method, and the intensive "toilet-training-in-a-day" (operant conditioning) approach by Azrin and Foxx ([Wu, 2010](#)). A systematic review by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in 2006 concluded that the child-oriented method and the Azrin and Foxx methods were effective at toilet training healthy children ([Kiddoo, 2012](#)). The following discussion of toilet training methods includes suggestions from the child-oriented approach.

Cultural Considerations

Toilet Training

Cultural practices influence the timing, method, and significance of toilet training. For many families in China, the timing is liberal, the method is distinct, and the significance is low. Children are diapered during infancy. Once they are walking, they wear loose pants with a long slit between the legs, and they eliminate on the ground. This practice may continue until the child is 5 years old. In cold weather, a piece of cloth, like a "curtain," may be inserted. However, the Chinese have a concept that the buttocks are not susceptible to cold, so this is not a common practice.

Parents should begin the readiness phase of toilet training by teaching the child about how the body functions in relation to voiding and having a stool. Parents can talk about how adults and animals perform such functions on a routine basis. Toilet training should be as easy and simple as possible. Important considerations are the selection of the child's clothing and the potty chair or use of