

Toilet Training Issues

Q: How do I toilet train my child as he keeps wetting himself?

Answer:

Before you start to toilet train, it is important to make sure that your child is comfortable in the bathroom. If your child is not comfortable, make the bathroom a fun place! You can do this in many ways, either read a book with your child in the bathroom with them, play their favorite music and have a dance party with them, etc. Also, before starting it is very helpful to make sure that your child is constantly drinking fluids, as that will ensure that there is more times for you and your child to practice using the toilet appropriately. Another helpful thing to use, is a chart to show your child's progress. You can include the date, time, accidents, successful uses of the toilet, and successful initiations by your child.

Once your child is comfortable, then it's time to set up a routine. Toilet training takes time and patience. Set a kitchen timer at regular intervals, anywhere from 10-20 minutes. When the timer goes off, show your child either a photograph of the toilet or take them to the toilet and say, "I need to go potty", or something along those lines. If your child is nonverbal, have a picture of a toilet and say "potty" while pointing at the photo. This helps your child hear the correct words that will let you know that they need to go to the bathroom.

Then, sit your child on the toilet for a few minutes, if your child does use the toilet, give them verbal praise and a special treat that is reserved for potty time only. Like a cookie, marshmallow, or a cool sticker on their potty chart. If your child does not use the toilet, just pull up your child's underwear, and resume whatever you were doing before, with a new timer set.

Once your child is accident free for 2-3 days, increase the interval 5-10 minutes. From there, you can increase the interval ever 2-3 days until they are on schedule of every hour, or they are using the toilet correctly by telling you that they need the restroom. Once your child is at the hour interval, stop bringing them to the toilet. They should be able to correctly ask, but if you notice they're not asking and you see your child showing signs of having to go to the bathroom, stop reinforcing them using the toilet, instead reinforce them asking for it by bringing them either towards the bathroom, or showing them the picture of the toilet. When your child sees the reminder and says "I need to go potty", give immediate

praise and possible small treat for them telling you that need to go. If you decided to use the chart to help you and your child track the progress, it will also help you see when it is a good time to raise the intervals.

As you're going through the intervals, set up a dry pants check. Around halfway through the timer, ask your child if their pants are dry. You can teach them how to check their pants with their hand and if it is dry, you can give them praise and reinforce the toilet training by saying "Good job! We potty in the toilet!" if your child does have an accident, try and keep it positive. "Good try, you almost made it!" and take your child to the toilet while reminding them where they use the restroom.

For more helpful tips, please visit Car Autism Roadmap website. I found that it has many helpful tips to aid you in toilet training.

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/toilet-training/>

The website How to ABA, also has a very nice layout that should help you.

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/toilet-training/>

Q: What do I do when my child was success in using the toilet, then he has a relapse and wets himself?

Answer:

Mark Wolraich, M.D., Chief of the Section of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and the Director of the Child Study Center suggest to “Try and identify the reasons for regression, as addressing them will help the child return to where (they) (where).”

There could be a few reasons for the regression. One reason could be that the child wasn't actually toilet trained. A toilet trained child would be one that should want to use the toilet, if your child is having an accident every day, you might need to start the whole process of toilet training over again.

Another reason could be stress, or they get distracted easily. If it is stress, either from a new routine, a new school, or a new sibling, once your child gets into the new routine, they should fall right back into their training. If they are getting distracted easily, they might not notice when they have to use the restroom. Go back to the toilet training of using a timer with a set interval, and having your child sit on the toilet for a certain time period. If they correctly use it, give them verbal praise. If they don't, stay positive with them and say something along the lines of “that's okay! We can try again later.” And go back to whatever you were doing before the timer went off, and repeat with each interval.

Another reason could be health issues. Make sure your child is drinking plenty of fluids and eating plenty of fiber if they are constipated. If you are still concerned, consult your pediatrician.

If your child is going through a regression, never punish your child for their accident. If they do have an accident, acknowledge that they had an accident, and have them sit on the toilet for a few minutes and let them know that this is where they pee and if they need to go, let you know.

Another way to help with the regression is to give them gentle reminders. You can do this through the timer and when it goes off, say “lets go potty!”. If they do use

it, immediate praise and possibly a treat depending upon your system. If they don't, let them know that it is alright and that they can try again later.

One website that can offer help is Parents.

<https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/potty-training/problems/how-to-deal-with-potty-training-regression/>

Q: When is my child ready for toilet training?

Answer:

One important thing to remember when thinking about toilet training is that there is no right age to start at. Toilet training requires a lot of different complex skills that your child will have to master, and as you know your child best, you will have the sense that the time is right.

There are some signs that will give you the hint that your child is ready to start potty training. One might be that your child can pull down their own diaper or underpants. Another would be your child asking questions about the bathroom when seeing another family member go in there. If your child can understand or verbally let you know when their diaper is wet or tell you that they need to go pee, that is another indication. Also, if they can keep their diaper dry for two hours at a time during the day, they could possibly be ready to start toilet training.

There are some things that you can do to prepare your child for potty training. You can get a potty chair and keep it in a specific spot in your house, and let your child get familiar with it. If possible, let your child pick out their own so that they feel like a part of the process from the start. Once you have their training toilet, have your child sit on it and get comfortable. If you get them used to the new toilet before they have to use it, it should not feel as foreign to them when they do start using it for its intended use. Start getting your child familiar with the language and as you're changing their diaper or if you have them on the toilet you can say things like "pee pee" and "poop" that way they can start to associate the language that they'll use.

Pampers is a wonderful website to use to help better understand when your child is toilet training.

<https://www.pampers.com/en-us/toddler/potty-training/article/when-to-start-potty-training-signs-your-child-is-ready>

Sleeping Should Be Easy is a great website in helping prepare your child for potty training.

<https://sleepingshouldbeeasy.com/potty-training-prep/>

Q: My child that has been potty trained for years still wetting the bed at night. What do I do?

Answer:

According to the Cleveland Clinic, about 15% of children ages 5 or older actually stop wetting the bed each year. So it's still perfectly normal for a child to wet the bed up until the age of 7. It is often just a stage in their development. And while girls can and do wet the bed, it is 2 times more likely for a boy to wet the bed.

There are a few things that can cause bedwetting. Dr. Charles Kwon is a pediatric nephrologist, says that the underlying issue is usually a bladder that's not matured yet. Other possible causes can be a hormone imbalance, constipation, the child is having a lot of stress and anxiety, they have ADHD, they have a small bladder, or there is a family history of childhood bedwetting. Bed wetting in some cases could also be a sign of sleep apnea if your child snores a lot or shows other signs of sleep apnea, a UTI (urinary tract infections), or even diabetes. Talking with your child's doctor is always suggested, just in case.

There are a few suggestions on how to stop bedwetting from doctors. You can shift times for drinking, have your child increase their liquid intake earlier in the day and after dinner, stop their fluid intake. Another thing you can do is schedule bathroom breaks for your child, every few hours, and then again right before bedtime. Also, always be encouraging and positive, constantly reward their success and don't be negative. Instead of getting angry that they wet the bed again, say something along the lines of "that's okay, we'll just have more potty breaks today and try again tonight." Never punish them for wetting the bed. You also don't want to wake up your child to urinate, because that will only lead to more sleeplessness and frustration for you and your child.

Sometimes, an earlier bedtime is the answer. Often, a child is a deep sleeper because they just aren't getting enough sleep. Another suggestion is eliminate bladder irritants such as caffeine (chocolate milk and cocoa), and if that doesn't work, cut out citrus juices, artificial flavorings, dyes, and sweeteners as those can all irritate bladders. Try and avoid thirst overload, one way you can do this by seeing if your child's school allows them water bottles that way they can drink throughout the day and avoid gulping down water after school. They also have a

device that you can clip onto your child's underwear or place on the bed that detects moisture and the alarm goes off, and pediatric urologist Dr Audrey Rhee, MD, suggest that one might be helpful but only if your child is motivated to stop the issue. "If they're still sneaking drinks late at night and eating what they shouldn't, then it doesn't make sense to invest in an expensive bedwetting alarm. So, I directly ask a child if bedwetting bothers them, to find out if it's the parents' frustration that brought the child to the appointment or their own," Dr. Rhee says. If there not motivated yet to stop, then possibly as they get older the opportunities to go to slumber parties and weekend trips with family and friends could likely motivate your child to stop.

Cleveland Clinic is a wonderful website with advice on this topic.

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-help-your-child-stop-wetting-the-bed-2/>

Bedwetting TheraPee is another great website to not only learn more about bedwetting, but also to purchase a bedwetting alarm if you choose to do so.

<https://www.bedwettingtherapy.com/all-about-bedwetting/>

Family doctor is another great website that is loaded with a lot of information that can be helpful.

<https://familydoctor.org/enuresis-bed-wetting/>

Picky Eaters

Q: My child is a picky eater; how do I get her to eat more variety of food?

Answer:

Sometimes, for the child, it's not about the food itself that they are being picky over, it's about having a sense of control. There are different ways to help your child feel like they have some control over their food.

One way to try to help a child that is a picky eater is to set realistic expectations. If you want them to get used to a new food, it can take up to twelve exposures to the new food to start to like it. It doesn't mean that they have to eat twelve times, they just have to either see it, help prepare it, or listen to someone talk about it. They also might just need to smell or touch new foods, to try and get a better understanding of it. You can help encourage your child by talking about the food's color, smell, and texture, but don't discuss with them if it tastes good or not.

Another way to help your child get over the habit is to give them options that you want them to eat, and don't make special meals just for them. They eat what you eat, but they can have options. If you don't want your child eating butter and noodles for every meal, don't make it an option. For example, for a snack after school you can put out apples, grapes, and carrots, and that way even if they don't eat the eat one or two of the snacks, they're still making a healthy choice and they feel like they have a say in what they eat as well.

You can also have your child be a part of the meal prep, to help give them a sense of control over their food. You can have them pick between two or three veggies for dinner, have them help set the table, or have them help you pick out groceries at the grocery store. Another great piece of advice is to relax and enjoy mealtimes. Make eating a positive experience, and realize that not every meal is going to be a perfect meal, because even the healthiest person alive will have a meal or two that is not perfectly balanced and that is perfectly fine.

A wonderful website that can offer some help is the Mayo Clinic website, the link is below.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/childrens-health/art-20044948>

Another wonderful website to use for helpful tips is NBC News.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/childrens-health/art-20044948>

Q: My child has a hard time drinking from the bottle, what can I do?

There are a few things that you can do if your child has a hard time drinking from a bottle, one thing would be to try and give the your child the bottle as soon as they wake up, wither that be when they wake up in the morning or after a nap. Their instinct typically takes over when they're still sleepy. Be cautious that if you let your child get overly hungry in between feedings, that can cause the child to get fussy and make it harder for them to be fed.

Another thing that can help your child take a bottle would be to create a relaxing environment each time you offer the bottle, for example, play soft calming music, sit somewhere you can gently rock your child as you feed them. If you can have a quiet dark room it will help relax child and you. Children feed off the energy of the adults that they are surrounded by.

You can also try and give your child a different type of bottle or nipple. Sometimes the solution is that easy, you just have to experiment with both the bottle and the nipple of the bottle. There are nipples levels based upon age, but every child is different so the nipple level that it says they should be at does not mean that's what your child wants or likes. While there is a countless number of combinations out there and it seems daunting, your lactation specialist or child's doctor could help you figure it out.

One more thing that can help is to experiment with the bottle feeding position that you are using. Your child might just like to eat while sitting or lying down a certain way. You could try cradling them at a 45-degree angle while keeping their head and neck aligned, sitting upright so that their back is against their stomach, or while sitting or lying down, bend your legs and position your baby so they face you with their head resting against your knees, their back against your thighs and their feet on your stomach.

If these tips don't work, you should call your child's doctor, because there might be another reason that they are not taking the bottle.

Health Partners is a great website to help check out some more helpful tips.

<https://www.healthpartners.com/blog/baby-wont-take-bottle-help/>

Lacted is another website with some helpful tips on how to get your child to take a bottle.

<https://lacted.org/iable-breastfeeding-education-handouts/bottle-refusal/>

Behavior

Q: My child is acting out more lately, what can I do to help stop this from happening?

Answer:

It is perfectly normal for a child to have a rough day, they are tiny humans after all. If it is just one day that they are acting out, it could be because they're tired, hungry, or frustrated and they don't understand how to get out the words for the feelings that they have inside of them. We aren't born with a knowledge of how to express our feelings and emotions, and if a child never learns how to identify and resolve the negative emotions, it can cause a pattern of behaviors that are problematic and sometimes destructive.

First, what is acting out? We typically use that term when we're describing behaviors that we think are disruptive to our typically day to day. But we cannot forget that because children don't typically know how to express themselves, they use acting out as a way to communicate their thoughts and feelings. So essentially children act out to reach a goal or have a need met but do so without even realizing it most times.

What to do if your child is not listening? A lot of times, people jump to conclusion that they're child isn't listening as they are told to turn off the ipad, or turn off the tv and clean up. But, as Shefali Tsabary Ph.D and author of *The Awakened Family* points out, they are often just distracted or having too much fun and cannot pull their attention away from what they are doing. One suggestion would be let them see the benefit in listening. Kids are told what to do all day long, and no one likes that. So try offering them choices after showing them the benefit of listening. For example, "hey we can't have ice cream until the dishes from dinner are washed. We don't have anything to put them in! So do you want to rinse them or load them into the dishwasher?"

If you think that your child is just acting wild, remember what Lise Eliot, Ph.D., associate professor of neuroscience at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, in North Chicago, Illinois says, that young kids have energy to burn yet lack the ability to inhibit their body. So try to give your

child plenty of time for physically activities and if there isn't space or its not an appropriate place for them to run around, try and give them a task to do, like, if they're big enough, pushing the shopping cart, or help bagging the groceries at the grocery store.

If your child is talking back or throwing a tantrum, try not to take it personally. If they get angry and call you a stupid head, just take a calming breath and remind them that your family doesn't use language like that, and that you can see that they are mad. Suggest taking some time to calm down, that way you can go back to doing whatever task you were doing in the moment. Some families use a certain chair and call it their thinking chair, so its not a time out chair. It's a chair for your child to go and calm down, and think about why they are feeling that way. A thinking chair, or even just having a safe space (example, bedroom) for your child to get out their emotions when they're having a tantrum is a great way for them to get their feelings and emotions out. Remember, they don't have the capability to express themselves verbally, so let them get their emotions out, and let them know they can come and talk to you after and receive advice, hugs, a kiss, whatever they need, after they are done. Compassion will help your child see that having "bad" feelings is okay, and having them separate from everyone while letting them out will help teach them that you shouldn't act that way in public.

The online website Parents has some more helpful ideas, I would highly suggest checking it out.

<https://www.parents.com/kids/discipline/strategies/is-your-child-acting-out-or-just-acting-his-age/>

