



Excerpt from

PROMOTING A HEALTHY BLADDER AND BOWEL

Getting ready



Reviewed 2024

Created by



Contribution from

Paediatric Continence
Scotland



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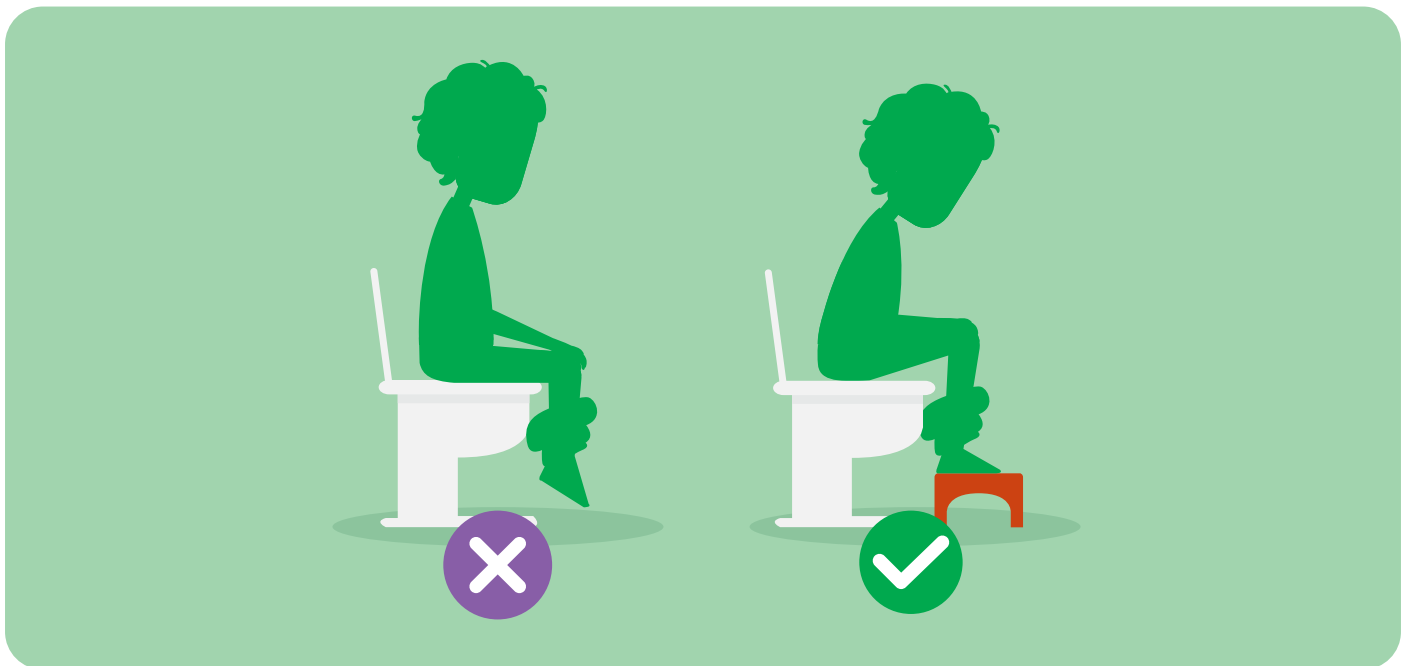


Getting ready

Ideally you would start to introduce the potty at about six months of age. If this has happened your child will be used to it. If the potty is new to your child take it slowly and let them gradually get used to it.

Something colourful with fun patterns can encourage your child to sit on the potty. Alternatively, you may want to go directly to the 'big toilet'.

Some children can manage well on a toilet but most children can find it quite fearful and feel unsteady on a toilet. There are several options to making it feel more secure. Toilet inserts need to be a snug fit and can be sufficient for some children but it's a good idea to give them something to hold onto and a step under their feet too. Having their feet dangling can feel scary and also prevents them relaxing their pelvic floor so a step, box or stool should be used. It should be high enough to allow their feet to be flat on a firm surface and their knees higher than their hips (see picture on right below). This, with their feet slightly apart, is the optimum position for toileting. The step may also help them access the toilet independently.



Toilet aid with step,
handles and insert

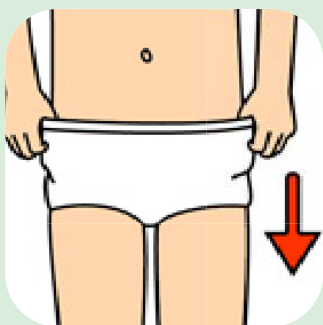


Toilet insert



Step

Talking through nappy changes helps your child to understand what wee and poo are. It is a really good idea to change nappies in the bathroom so that they learn that that's the right place for going to the toilet. Always remember to go through the toilet routine every time.



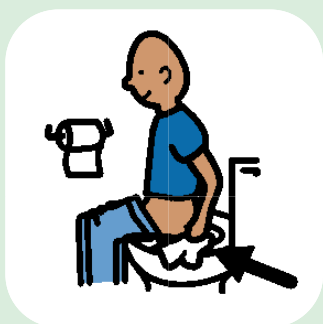
Pants down



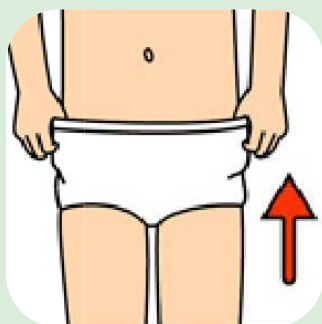
Sit on the toilet



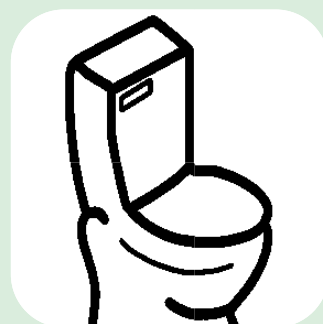
**Do a wee
and/or poo**



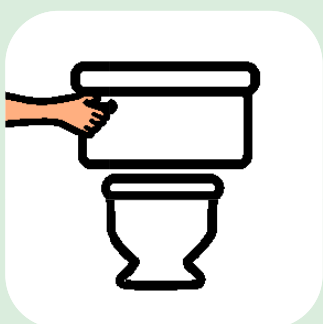
**Wipe bottom from
front to back**



Pants up



Lid down



Flush toilet



Wash hands



Dry hands

Leave a potty where your child can see it and explain what it's for. Many children learn by watching, copying and practicing. If you've got an older child, your younger child may see them using it, which will be a great help. It helps to let your child see you using the toilet and explain what you're doing. Using your child's toys to show what the potty is for can also help.

Other tips

- Encourage your child to sit on the potty or toilet when you are changing them and after waking from sleep, drinks and meals.
- If your child is able, have them stand up while you change them and then sit them on the toilet in between the change. Changing standing up is more age appropriate and helps them get more engaged in the process than when lying down.
- If you are using a potty rather than the toilet, leave a potty where your child can see it and talk about what it is for.
- You could see if your child is happy to sit on the potty for a moment, just to get used to it, when you're changing their nappy, especially when you're getting them dressed for the day or ready for bed at night.
- There are some fun books about using a potty/toilet. You could start reading some of these books to your child to increase their interest and awareness of using the toilet or potty. *Examples include: 'Pip and Posy the little puddle' by Axel Sheffler, 'Princess Polly's Potty' or 'Pirate Pete's Potty' by Andrea Pinnington.*
- There are also YouTube videos with fun songs about toileting.
- Don't ask you child if they need the toilet, they may not recognise this yet, take them regularly and use a consistent phrase such as 'toilet time'.
- Remember that learning the skills for toileting can take some time and don't be disheartened if it's not going how you wish. There may be lots of wet and soiled pants while they learn the skills required.
- If you have tried for a time without success, do not stop your toileting routines, but do speak to your healthcare professional. There may be an underlying problem, such as constipation, or it may be that some adjustments to the routine would help. Avoid going back to nappies once you have removed them in the day. Potty training may not be easier when your child gets older.





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