

Let's talk about Potty Training



Research

1980's:

- most children with Down syndrome stayed dry day and night by age 4 / 5.

Mid1990's:

- only 35% of children with Down syndrome were daytime trained by age 4,
- and that by age 11, 1 in 3 was still having urinary accidents during the day

To compare:

1950's

- most typical children were potty trained by 24 months, with girls training +/- 2.5 months earlier than boys

Now:

- typical children are now usually daytime potty trained by 36-39 months old.



Results:

Most studies focused on children with Down syndrome show;

- Children with Down syndrome follow a typical developmental and gendered pattern (with girls potty training slightly earlier),
 - the only difference is that they train on a delayed timetable

Is My child Ready?

NB! Every child with Down syndrome is an individual.

Each child may show different signs to show they are ready, could be in different orders, key signs to look out for:

- ✓ Shows interest in personal hygiene eg. washing hands, brushing teeth
- ✓ Shows interest in others' toileting behavior
- ✓ Completely empties bladder and stays dry for at least an hour to two hours keep an eye for a solid stream of urine
 - it is sign that your child has *some* muscular control over emptying their bladder
- ✓ Has bowel movements that follow a regular and predictable pattern
- ✓ Takes notice when nappy or clothing is wet or soiled
- ✓ Communicates the need to go to bathroom through facial expressions, gestures, visual aids, or words

S/he does not need to show all signs, what you are looking for is them showing an interest in:

- Using the toilet
- Consistent toilet routine
- Being aware of the need to go



Preparing your child

The following are ways you can prepare your child for when you start:

- ✓ Start with putting your child on the potty – start with their clothes on to get used to the idea and then with clothes off.
- ✓ Start with 1-2 times a day
- ✓ Move on to coordinating with routines such as bath time
- ✓ Start for short periods 1-2 min
- ✓ This time should be stress free so give them a book or something to keep them occupied
- ✓ Children who show signs of readiness should be changed in the bathroom
- ✓ Reinforce the idea that pee and poop belong in the bathroom

Modeling behavior is common with Children with Down syndrome, show them when you go, it will be easier for your child to grasp the concept.



Toilet training Readiness datasheet

Keeping track of your childs toilet routine will help you to determine whether they have a consistent routine

Code:



= Indicated need

D= Dry

U=Urinated

BM= Bowel Movement

U/BM= If both

Hour	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
6:00am							
6:30am							
7:00am							
7:30am							
8:00am							
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8:00pm							
8:30pm							

Are you Ready?

It is important that you and your partner are fully prepared and on the same page :

- ✓ You will need time to do this
- ✓ There will be accidents
- ✓ Setbacks can happen
- ✓ Some tears – your child's, yours
- ✓ Messy times
- ✓ Not being on time for a while
- ✓ Lots of washing



**The pressure that you feel
in potty training...
your child
definitely feels, too.**

There can be stumbling blocks

Be aware that there may be challenges along the way, take it in your stride and do not give up.

- ✓ Hypotonia can be a challenge – can be difficult for children with Down syndrome to hold in the urine or bowel movements and this can contribute to frequent accidents.
- ✓ Regression can occur if there has been a big change, if the child becomes anxious or ill – once the reason is addressed, the child should continue back on track

Use this trick to help understand bowel movements:

Make a fist, pretend your hand is a mouth that eats some play dough. Let your child help you use your 'belly muscles' to push the play dough out of your hand into the toilet

Be kind to yourself, be patient with yourself – this is a complex skill you are teaching your child with Down syndrome, it will take time, BUT, s/he will master it, when they are ready to do so!



How do you start?

Make it fun :

- ✓ An area should be set up just outside the bathroom , keep toys they enjoy playing with nearby.
- ✓ Allow minimal disruption of home as possible as well as keep the child close to the bathroom without having to stay in the bathroom the entire time.
- ✓ Inside the bathroom there should be:
 - ✓ Lots of favorite toys and activities
 - ✓ Reinforcers
 - ✓ Extra underwear
 - ✓ Make it as comfortable as possible
 - ✓ Timer



Visual Schedules

Use visual schedules to help reinforce the instructions you are giving.



Set up...What now?

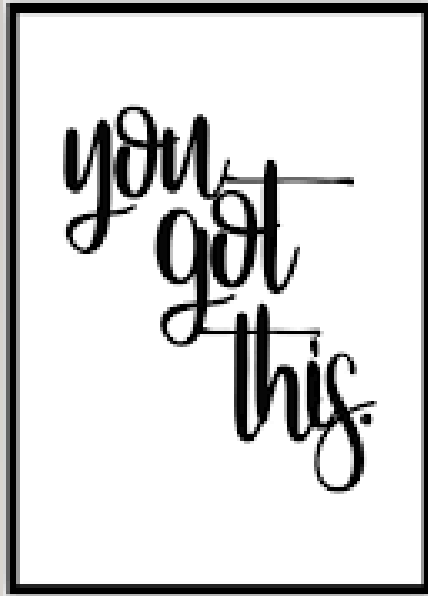
Using the toilet is an abstract concept, not easily understood and not always easy to put the different skills needed to be successful, together as quickly as one would like.

When starting with potty training have your child sit on the potty for 10 min at a time if possible; to keep them on the potty try the following:

- Give them a book to read;
- Toy to play with;
- Read them a story;
- Talk to them.



Let's get going..



- When the child sits on the potty and does their business the child will **IMMEDIATELY** (while in the act of peeing if possible) receive lots of behavior specific praise.
- If using something to reinforce successful potty training, you can give them this as well;
- The reinforcer being used should not be used to reinforce any other behavior (compliance, requesting, motor imitation, etc.) and the child should not have free access to the item if it is a toy.
- Encourage your child to stand up independently and pull up their pants and then wash hands.

Let's get going..

Potty Training Chart

Steps	I said "need to use the potty"			I Sat on the Potty by myself!			I Used the Potty by myself!			I stayed dry all day long!		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Monday												
Tuesday												
Wednesday												
Thursday												
Friday												
Saturday												
Sunday												

The "1" means we need to work harder, "2" is getting better but still needs some work, and "3" means good job!

"I Can Do It" → "I Will Do It" → "I Did It"

- You will need to keep a record of when your child goes through the toilet training
- This tells us:
 - How long your child is capable of holding it
 - How many accidents/ successes
 - If requesting is occurring.

Tips to establish routine

There are common times to teach your child to go because it's time to go, and not just because they feel the urge to go. These include:

- When they wake up
- Before/after car rides
- Before/after meals
- Before going somewhere where bathrooms are difficult to get to (such as a playground)
- Right before bedtime

Tips

- Every time you take your child to the toilet to sit, s/he should be prompted to sign potty before sitting.
- Praise the child for correct imitation.
- If the child requests to go potty, s/he should immediately be taken.
- Dress them in easy to take off and put on clothes during training



Underwear

When and how long?

- Put underwear on your child once they are dry for at least 2 hours and uses the potty
- When s/he is dry for 50% of the time, they are ready to wear underwear all the time
- Remember, accidents are part of the process
- Punishments do not generally work for potty training

Tip

- Pushing the big boy/girl concept might be more of a hindrance than have a positive impact



Bowel Movement Continence

This does not always come with urinary continence:

- Some children have more difficulty with bowel movement continence.
- Make sure your child is not constipated prior to toilet training and make sure this is not a health issue.
- Provide a more powerful reward for bm than for urination.
- Try to capture it when you see your child's signs remind them the potty is for pooping as well as peeing.



Nighttime Contenance

- Nighttime continence is a different behavior than daytime.
- The child needs to feel it and wake up from sleep.
- Restrict fluids after dinner
- Go to the bathroom before bedtime
- Make it easy to get to the bathroom
- It's okay to use pull ups
- Give morning reward for dry nappy.



Do's

- Ensure you have a routine when starting
- Stay home for the first weekend to encourage success
- Stay positive, believe your child will get there



Dont's

- Stop the routine;
- Put nappies on once you have started;
- Give up!



Toilet Refusal

- Developmental stages of ; emotional readiness vs shame and doubt as well as pre-operational thinking
- Can be a frustration for parents and children
- Step by step process can be helpful
- Desensitization is at times necessary if child has a fear of using the toilet.



Toilet Training is about teaching your child with Down syndrome a series of steps and repeating those steps over and over.

They can and will get there!