

Childcare Connections

Potty Training

Potty training is a major developmental milestone that supports children's independence and confidence in managing their own hygiene. Success depends on a child's physical, emotional, and cognitive readiness within a supportive and encouraging environment. When children are truly ready, potty training becomes a positive learning experience.

Professional Development Opportunity: <https://alison.com/course/child-development-toilet-training>

Four stages of toilet learning by Kristi Hayward

[The Four Stages of Toilet Learning | Child Development and Family Center | Northern Illinois University](#)

Stage One: Toilet Play

Children begin to show interest in using the toilet, pretending to do so or observing others going to the toilet.

Stage Two: Toilet Practice

Children practice the steps required to use the toilet such as pulling pants up and down, getting on and off the toilet, practicing flushing and hand washing, and asking about the condition of their diaper.

Stage Three: Toilet Learning

During this stage children are able to hold urine for longer periods of time and are starting to have a desire to wear underwear.

Children are able to express when they need to be changed or when they need to go, and can feel the need to urinate. They have developed the skills needed to aid in the process such as pulling up and down their pants, standing and sitting independently, etc.



Stage Four: Independent Toileting

Tips for Teachers

- Teach children they have control over their own bodies and provide them with the tools needed to be successful. Ask them often if they would like to use the potty but never pressure or force them.
- Teach children about the steps needed to successfully use the bathroom. This can include reading picture books about potty training, and teaching children the appropriate skills such as pulling the pants down & up, sitting and standing, flushing the toilet, etc.
- Use other children to model toileting skills, pair potty training children with already trained children during your bathroom routines.
- Maintain regular communication with parents. Share observations about signs a child is ready to potty train, and encourage parents to dress their child in clothing that supports the process.
- Stay patient, positive and consistent throughout the process. Expect accidents as they are a normal part of learning, respond calmly and don't make a big fuss. Be sure to celebrate every effort with encouragement.

Further Reading: [Potty Training: Learning to the Use the Toilet | ZERO TO THREE](#) ; [How Teachers Can Support Potty Training at Preschool - No Time For Flash Cards](#)

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