

Quick Facts About Potty Training

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

*Potty training can be natural, easy, and peaceful.
The first step is to know the facts.*



- The perfect age to begin potty training is different for every child. Your child's best starting age could be anywhere from eighteen to thirty-two months. Pre-potty training preparation can begin when a child is as young as ten months.

- You can begin training at any age, but your child's biology, skills, and readiness will determine when he can take over his own toileting.

- Teaching your child how to use the toilet can, and should, be as natural as teaching him to build a block tower or use a spoon.

- No matter the age that toilet training begins, most children become physically capable of independent toileting between ages two and a half and four.

- It takes three to twelve months from the start of training to daytime toilet independence. The more readiness skills that a child possesses, the quicker the process will be.

- The age that a child masters toileting has absolutely no correlation to future abilities or intelligence.

- There isn't only one right way to potty train—any approach you use can work—if you are pleasant, positive and patient.

- Nighttime dryness is achieved only when a child's physiology supports this—you can't rush it.

- A parent's readiness to train is just as important as a child's readiness to learn.

- Potty training need not be expensive. A potty chair, a dozen pairs of training pants and a relaxed and pleasant attitude are all that you really need. Anything else is truly optional.

- A child's diet will affect his toileting patterns. Adequate daily liquids, plus a healthy diet containing fruit, vegetables and whole grains, will make elimination easier – which in turn makes potty training easier.

- Ample daily exercise ensures that your child's stool is moved through her system easily. Lack of movement can cause constipation and potty training problems.

- Most toddlers urinate four to eight times each day, usually about every two hours or so.

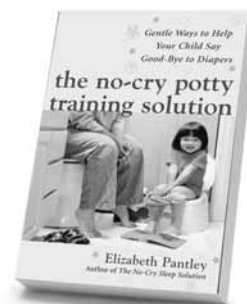
- Most toddlers have one or two bowel movements each day, some have three, and others skip a day or two in between movements. In general, each child has a regular pattern.

- Accidents are expected during training—it's a normal part of the learning process. These will decrease over time.

- More than 80 percent of children experience setbacks in toilet training. This means that what we call "setbacks" are really just the usual path to mastery of toileting.

- Ninety-eight percent of children are completely daytime independent by age four.

- Parents set the pace for toilet training. A positive attitude and kind patience can make potty training easy and fun!



The Potty Training Readiness Quiz

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

Potty training is easier and happens faster if your child is truly ready in all three areas: physical, cognitive and social. But the big question is: how do you know when your child is ready? If you have never traveled this road before, you likely don't even know what signs to look for. Take this quiz to find out where your child is on the readiness spectrum.



1. I can tell by watching that my child is wetting or filling his diaper:

- a. Never.
- b. Sometimes.
- c. Usually.

2. My toddler's diaper needs to be changed:

- a. Frequently, every hour or two.
- b. It varies.
- c. Every two to three hours—sometimes less frequently.

3. My child understands the meaning of wet, dry, clean, wash, sit, and go:

- a. No.
- b. Some of them.
- c. Yes.

4. When my child communicates her needs, she:

- a. Says or signs a few basic words and I guess the rest.
- b. Gets her essential points across to me.
- c. Has a good vocabulary and talks to me in sentences.

5. If I give my child a simple direction, such as, "put this in the toy box," she:

- a. Doesn't understand or doesn't follow directions.
- b. Will do it if I coach or help her.
- c. Understands me and does it.

6. My child can take his pants off and put them on:

- a. No.
- b. With help he can.
- c. Yes.

7. When I read a book to my child, he:

- a. Ignores me.
- b. Sometimes listens, sometimes wanders off.
- c. Sits, listens and enjoys the story.

8. My toddler wants to do things "all by myself":

- a. Never.
- b. Sometimes.
- c. All the time!

9. I think that it's the right time to begin potty training:

- a. No.
- b. I'm undecided.
- c. Yes.

Total the number of responses for each letter:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Most answers are a: Wait.

Your little one doesn't seem to be ready just yet. Test again in a month or two.

Most answers are b: Time for pre-potty training—get ready!

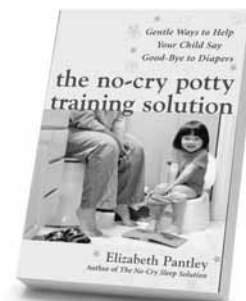
Your child is not quite ready for active training, but you can take many steps to prepare your toddler for the future. Gradual introduction of terms and ideas will make potty training easier when the time comes.

Most answers are c: Your toddler is ready to use the potty!

It's time to start your potty training adventure. Good luck, and have fun!

Are you between two scores?

Just like any parenting situation, there are choices to make. If your child is hovering between two categories, it's time to put your intuition to good use. Your knowledge of your own child can direct you toward the right plan of action.



Potty Training—Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

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Get Ready

If your child is near or has passed his first birthday, you can begin incorporating pre-potty training ideas into his life. They are simple things that will lay the groundwork for potty training and will make the process much easier when you're ready to begin.

- During diaper changes, narrate the process to teach your toddler the words and meanings for bathroom-related functions, such as pee-pee and poo-poo. Include descriptive words that you'll use during the process, such as wet, dry, wipe, and wash.
- If you're comfortable with it, bring your child with you when you use the toilet. Explain what you're doing. Tell him that when he gets bigger, he'll put his pee-pee and poo-poo in the toilet instead of in his diaper. Let him flush the toilet if he wants to.
- Help your toddler identify what's happening when she wets or fills her diaper. Tell her, "You're going poo-poo in your diaper." Have her watch you dump and flush.
- Start giving your child simple directions and help him to follow them. For example, ask him to get a toy from another room or to put the spoon in the dishwasher.
- Encourage your child to do things on her own: put on her socks, pull up her pants, carry a cup to the sink, or fetch a book.

- Have a daily sit-and-read time together.
- Take the readiness quiz again every month or two to see if you're ready to move on to active potty learning.

Get Set

- Buy a potty chair, a dozen pairs of training pants, four or more elastic-waist pants or shorts, and a supply of pull-up diapers or disposables with a feel-the-wetness sensation liner.
- Put the potty in the bathroom, and tell your child what it's for.
- Read books about going potty to your child.
- Let your child practice just sitting on the potty without expecting a deposit.

Go

- Begin dressing your child in training pants or pull-up diapers.
- Create a potty routine—have your child sit on the potty when she first wakes up, after meals, before getting in the car, and before bed.
- If your child looks like she needs to go—tell, don't ask! Say, "Let's go to the potty."
- Boys and girls both can learn sitting down. Teach your son to hold his penis down. He can learn to stand when he's tall enough to reach.
- Your child must relax to go: read a book, tell a story, sing, or talk about the day.

- Make hand washing a fun part of the routine. Keep a step stool by the sink, and have colorful, child-friendly soap available.
- Praise her when she goes!
- Expect accidents, and clean them up calmly.
- Matter-of-factly use diapers or pull-ups for naps and bedtime.
- Either cover the car seat or use pull-ups or diapers for car trips.
- Visit new bathrooms frequently when away from home.
- Be patient! It will take three to twelve months for your child to be an independent toiler.

Stop

- If your child has temper tantrums or sheds tears over potty training, or if you find yourself getting angry, then stop training. Review your training plan and then try again, using a slightly different approach if necessary, in a month or two.

