

# Health for Under 5s

[www.healthforunder5s.co.uk](http://www.healthforunder5s.co.uk)



You can text a Healthy Together public health nurse for confidential advice about parenting, your child's behaviour, child development, emotional health and wellbeing, or just for general queries about your child's health.

**In Leicester text: 07520 615381**

**In Leicestershire and Rutland text: 07520 615382**

**For urgent medical attention you should contact your GP,  
call 111 or 999.**

If you  
need help to  
understand this  
leaflet or would like it  
in a different language  
or format such as large  
print, Braille or audio,  
please ask a  
member of  
staff.

Date implemented: November 2016  
Last reviewed: October 2017  
Review date: October 2019  
Leaflet No. 401 - Edition 2



## Toilet training



A guide for  
parents and carers  
Contact your Public  
Health Nurse (Health Visitor):

[www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

Email: [feedback@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@leicspart.nhs.uk)

## How will I know when my child is ready?

Remember all children are different - just like learning to walk or talk, all children toilet train at different ages. There is no right age, just a right time.

However we do know that physically children are ready from the age of 2 years. This may be different for children with additional needs but if they are able to sit with support and recognise the feeling of being wet or dirty then they are ready to try.

Pick a time to start which suits you. Once you have bought all you need and have spoken to your child about what is going to happen, decide which day you will begin.

Start in the morning after you have taken off the night nappy.

### Before you start:

Using a potty or toilet will be new to your child so get them used to the idea!

- Start to change your child's nappy in the bathroom/toilet area when you are at home. Talk to your child about it as you change them so they start to understand what poo and wee means and the difference between a wet nappy or dirty nappy and a clean nappy.
- Get them to watch you tip the poo in the toilet and allow them to flush, making sure they wash their hands afterwards.
- Allow the child to watch others using the toilet so they learn this is where people go and what the toilet is there for.



## Children with additional needs

The principles of potty training are the same - it might be the timing is a little different. Some children become clean and dry by being toilet timed. This means the child is taken to the toilet rather than asking to go or taking themselves. If you would like advice please contact your Public Health Nurse (Health Visitor).

### Possible steps

All children go through a range of steps when toilet training - your child may start at any of these steps but can also go back a step. Remember that all steps are positive and should be praised!

Your child might:

- sit on the potty/toilet with their nappy on
- act out toilet training with their toys
- sit on the potty/toilet without a nappy
- wet/soil their pants at first - this is normal
- use the potty/toilet with help
- ask for the potty/toilet after the event
- ask for the potty/toilet just before they need it
- use the potty/toilet on their own.

Putting your child in pull-ups will slow down success. Children won't feel wet or dirty and not learn what happens when they do not get to the potty/toilet on time.

Accidents will happen and these are part of the learning process. They are as important as the successes. Children will often sit on the potty without doing a wee and then five minutes later are wet. This is quite normal and improves in time. Deal with accidents without commenting. Lots of pants may be needed.

**Please do not hesitate to contact your Public Health Nurse (Health Visitor) if you need further advice or support.**



## The first day

- When your child wakes in the morning take their nappy off - sit them on the toilet or potty for 1-5 minutes and sit with them.
- Read a book, sing a song and make it fun!
- Encourage them by telling them how well they are doing sitting on the potty - get siblings to praise them as well.
- Put on their pants.
- Wash hands afterwards.

### **NEVER force your child to sit on the potty because one bad experience can undo all they have learnt!**

Try again about 20 minutes after main meals as this is the most likely time for your child to have a success.

Remember your child will need plenty of clear drinks so their bladder learns to work properly. Aim for 7-8 cups of 150mls (5fl oz) each.

Encourage your child to try every 2-3 hours during the day or if you think your child may need to go. When taking them use language like 'it's time to go' rather than asking them 'Do you want to go'.

## Keep going!

Don't be disappointed or show your child you are getting frustrated if nothing happens straightaway.

Learning to sit on the potty/toilet is the first step of learning - praise them for it. Practise makes perfect!

Be aware your child might be fearful of things such as falling down the toilet or the sound of it flushing.

The first time your child successfully uses the potty, praise, praise, praise!

Give them a hug and a sticker to show them how proud you are and tell everyone that wants to hear!

- Talk to your child about toilet training and share a book- some examples are:

- "On Your Potty" by Virginia Miller
- "Potty Time" by Fiona Watt
- "I Want My Potty" by Tony Ross

- Let your friends and family know you will be toilet training so they can help- it will be easier for your child to understand if everybody uses the same words and/or signs.

## How do I know my child is ready?

- Your child might wake with a dry/almost dry nappy after a nap.
- Your child might try to let you know when their nappy needs changing. They may tug at their nappy, change their facial expression or fidget and jiggle.
- Your child might know when they need to fill their nappy and go somewhere quiet to do so.
- Your child might actually tell you they have had a poo or wee.
- If your child poos at roughly the same time every day, you can chart when this is and try toileting around these times.
- Some children may experience constipation – difficulty in doing a poo. The poo is usually hard and looks like pebbles or can be very runny and looks like diarrhoea. Constipation can affect toilet training – please contact your Public Health Nurse for advice.

**Don't feel pressurised into starting if you don't think your child is ready.**

## What will I need?

To get started, you will need:

- loose clothing
- pants (at least eight pairs)
- toilet seat or potty
- disinfectant
- toilet roll or wipes
- a stool or step so your child sits on the toilet with feet flat. This will help your child feel safe and relaxed so it is easier to do a wee and poo. The stool also comes in useful for washing hands after!

Items of clothing to avoid:

- vests with poppers
- dungarees
- trousers with buttons/braces or a belt

## Make it fun!

When you go shopping allow your child to choose:

- the potty or toilet seat
- pants - their favourite colour or character
- a book or toy to sit with on the potty/toilet - make sure it can be cleaned.

## Use rewards

Star charts work well - one for each attempt! You may like to use the one opposite.



## Potty training chart

Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Sat on potty
Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Wee'd in potty
Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Poo'd in potty
Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Pulled pants up and/or down
Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Flushed toilet
Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Star	Washed hands