

# Potty Training Overview

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Stage	What child knows / can do that shows s/he's ready	What you can do to help them learn
Body Awareness	Has words for body parts Has words for urine and bowel movement (pee & poop) Aware <b>after</b> : they know they HAVE peed or pooped	Teach language, in a matter-of-fact way. Do not use negative language or imply that body parts/products are gross or bad Help them notice when they are / have eliminated Consider using cloth diapers that feel wet after they pee
Potty Awareness	Wants to imitate others in a variety of daily activities Understands that things have a proper place that they belong AND understands poop goes in potty Shows interest in the potty and in trying the potty	We role model all the things we want them to learn (inc. using the toilet) Help them put away toys and clothes Show them how you dump poop from diaper into toilet Buy a potty – let them explore it
Practicing	Have the motor skills to take clothes off and get on potty with help from caregivers Can hold urine (keep diaper dry) for two hours Poop at predictable times each day  Aware <b>during</b> : they know they ARE peeing or pooping	Sit on the potty with their clothes on Sit on the potty with their clothes off, but no expectation they'll pee or poop Put them on potty first thing in the morning when they're likely to pee Look for poop opportunities... when you think they are about to poop, or they are pooping, take them to the potty Go pants-free (and socks free...) with a potty nearby so if they start peeing, they can go sit on potty. (Works best outdoors in the summertime) Respond to any success with enthusiasm, but no scolding if nothing happens in the potty and no scolding for using diaper
Mostly Potty Trained	Can take clothes off and use potty w/ minimal assistance Can keep dry and clean for a longer time, with regular reminders to use the potty Aware <b>before</b> : they know they need to go soon	Help them learn how to undress and how to use potty Help them notice their cues and remind them to take action Respond to accidents calmly – just clean up (or ask them to help you clean up). No punishment or shaming.
Completely Trained	Aware <b>before and know what to do</b> : Know to go to the bathroom, can hold pee or poop till they're there Can put their clothes back on independently Can toilet independently in the daytime (may need help wiping after a BM till age 5) Can stay dry overnight	Transitioning from diapers to pull-ups can be gradual, or can be a "Big Day" approach  Respond to set-backs calmly. Ask them for help with finding solution (e.g. "we tried big boy underwear overnight. That didn't work out last night. What should we do now?")

Note: the age at which children reach each stage can range a great deal. It depends on gender, child's temperament, parent's temperament, cultural expectations, and other external influences. Some children can be "completely" potty trained as young as 15 months, but not most! Approximate ages: Body and Potty Awareness sometime between 16 – 24 months. Many children may be ready for Practicing from 20 – 30 months. Average age for "Mostly" is ~30 months for girls, ~32 months for boys, with the majority of girls there by 36 months and majority of boys by 39 months. (Note: about 1 in 5 children will be "completely potty trained" in terms of urine, but still *choosing* to poop in diaper rather than using the potty for much longer than that.) Most are "completely" potty trained by age 5, though 10% of kids have issues with night-time urine control up to age 7 or 8, and 3% of boys continue to bed-wet until age 12.

How long does it take to potty train (go from "practicing" to "completely")? A few weeks to several months. Generally, the younger you start, the longer it takes.

More info at: [www.gooddayswithkids.com](http://www.gooddayswithkids.com); [www.aafp.org/afp/2008/1101/p1059.html](http://www.aafp.org/afp/2008/1101/p1059.html); [http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/103/Supplement\\_3/1359.full](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/103/Supplement_3/1359.full)