

Assessment: Is Your Child Ready to Potty Train?

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In each table, read the statements on the left – which is closest to your child’s skill and knowledge is at this time? Circle the stage in right column. When done, look for the general pattern to assess what stage they’re at, and use the tips in the handout for what you can do to help them move to next level.

Self-Care Skills

Can’t walk to and sit on a chair.	Not Ready
Can’t undress themselves. Can walk to and sit on a chair.	Potty Awareness
Can help with getting their clothes off, can get on the potty with help.	Practicing
Can take their own clothes off and sit on the potty independently.	Potty Training
Can toilet independently (may need help wiping after BM) and can get clothes back on. Can wash hands independently.	Toileting Independently

Cognitive / Social Skills

Can’t do the things listed below...	Not Ready
Like to imitate others doing a wide variety of activities, understand that things have a proper place they belong	Potty Awareness
Can follow simple instructions. Shows discomfort with soiled diapers, and an interest in using potty.	Practicing
Shows desire to learn to control bladder and bowel function. Can remember how to do multi-step activities.	Potty Training
In a new environment, can learn where the potty is and remember to go to it when needed.	Toileting Independently

Awareness: When does your child notice they need to pee or poop?

They don’t even seem to notice or care that their diaper is wet or poopy.	Not Ready
After they pee or poop, they notice. (They tell you their diaper needs changed, or tug at their diaper, or squirm.)	Body Awareness
They notice that they need to go right now and they do. (May squat down to poop, or tell you they’re going pee-pee.)	Practicing
They’re aware before they need to pee or poop and can communicate that to you so you can move them toward the potty.	Potty Training
They know they will need to go soon, and they can hold it till they get to the potty and are undressed and sitting down.	Toileting Independently

Elimination Patterns

Pooping at unpredictable times, including overnight. Diaper often wet.	Not Ready
Has bowel movements at predictable times.	Body / Potty Awareness
Can hold urine (keep diaper dry) for one to three hours.	Practicing
Can keep diaper dry and clean for most of the day, IF you offer regular reminders to go potty.	Potty Training
Can stay dry all day, toileting independently as needed. MAY be able to stay dry overnight.	Toileting Independently