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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Toilet Training¹

Suzanna Smith²

When is a child ready to be potty trained? Most children are ready sometime between the ages of two and three, although all children are not ready at the same time. A child will be ready when she or he is developmentally ready—when her or his body has matured enough. Children who are ready show certain signs, including an interest in wearing underpants instead of diapers, the ability to stay dry for at least two hours at a time, an interest in being clean and dry, and the ability to undress and dress themselves, as well as a sense of independence. They may also show an interest in a potty if it's presented to them. Avoid pressuring your child into toilet training before he or she is ready. Child development experts offer several suggestions to make toilet training easier for you and your child. For example:

Let the child choose some of the needed equipment, such as underpants, a potty seat, and a book or video about toilet training.

Put the potty in a place your child can get to easily.

Be aware of times when your child may need to go and encourage him or her to try to use the potty.

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2. Suzanna Smith, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida, and Executive Producer, Family Album Radio, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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You can expect toilet training to take several weeks for the child who is ready. If it is taking longer, your child may not be ready, so just try again in a few weeks.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/tt.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/tt.wav

Resources

For more information about toilet training and other child development topics:

EDIS Cooperative Extension resources:

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Babies

The American Academy of Pediatrics:

<http://www.aap.org>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children:

<http://www.naeyc.org>

References

Ferrer, M. (2000). Toilet training (FSC2152). Gainesville: Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Retrieved March 23, 2005, from

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE367>

Administration on Children and Families. (2006). Surviving toilet training. Retrieved March 22, 2005, from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/supporting/resources/toilettraining.cfm>