

# Montessori Academy's Tips for Potty Training

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There are many, many potty training books available. These tips summarize many training books and are intended to help you have success when potty training your child. Good luck!

## Preparation

- Use words to express the act of using the toilet ("pee," "poop," and "potty").
- Ask your child to let you know when a diaper is wet or soiled.
- Identify behaviors ("Are you going poop?") so that your child can learn to recognize the physical feelings for "peeing" and "pooping." The physical feelings are different for each. As adults, we think of them as the same, but your child will need to learn to identify each feeling.
- Get a **potty chair**. Don't try to potty train on an adult size toilet – that requires extra coordination so they don't fall in. Let the "big potty" be a later milestone.
- Pick up a few books for you to read to your child about going potty. They also have potty training videos.
- Buy "**Training Pants**" for your child (NOT Pullups). These are cotton/polyester underwear that have some padding; the purpose is that your child will feel wet if he/she goes potty in them, but they are padded/quilted to absorb some of the potty to minimize the mess.
- Why shouldn't you use diapers and pullups during this phase? Diapers are so efficient, that toddlers never FEEL wet, so they can be completely unaware of what is happening physically when they "pee" or "poop" because there is little or no discomfort when they go potty in diapers.

## Potty Training Guidelines

Set aside **an entire week** to dedicate to potty training; this may seem like a long time, but just think how much work this will save you in the long run. Don't schedule playdates, or other activities; you should remain at home and keep to a rigid schedule.

- Above all, be sure to **praise** all attempts to use the toilet, even if nothing happens. And remember that accidents will happen. It's important not to punish potty-training children for "accidents" or show disappointment when they wet or soil themselves or the bed. Instead, tell your child that it was an accident and offer your support. Reassure your child that he or she is well on the way to using the potty like a big kid.
- Make sure your child is dressed in simple clothes; he or she should be able to undress and dress easily.
- Don't make your child sit on the toilet against his or her will.
  - Going to the bathroom requires **relaxation**. Think about what is required for you to go.
  - You don't want this to be a battle of wills because children are able to NOT go potty for a very long time, which can lead to health problems like bladder infections and constipation. Your child has a lot of control here, so make Potty Training seem great so that your child will willingly participate.
- Show your child how you sit on the toilet and explain what you're doing (because your child learns by watching you). You can also have your child sit on the potty seat and watch while you - or one of his or her siblings - use the toilet.
- If you have a doll that can "pee," have your child feed the doll water and then put the doll on the potty to mimic what you want your child to do.

**Check with your pediatrician before starting potty training, and have him/her go over your potty training plan to ensure it is right for your child.**

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## Potty Training Week

1. On the day you are going to start, bring the following into a common area:
  - Potty chair – you won't always have the Potty Chair in the family room, but for potty training, have it in a location where your child isn't isolated; you want it to seem fun.
  - Books to read to your child
  - Lots of your child's favorite drink
  - Dress your child in the Training Pants (NOT Pullups)
2. Offer lots of fluids.
3. Set a timer. After about 30 – 45 minutes, have your child sit on the potty and try to go. Reset the timer. Keep checking every 30-45 minutes and keep drinking fluids.
  - If your child has an "accident," don't react negatively. Just say something like "No problem. That was an accident." Change your child into a dry pair of Training Pants and continue.
  - If your child "poops" in the Training Pants, remove it and put it in the toilet. Say something like "poop goes in the potty."
4. When your timing works, and your child "pees" or "poops" in the potty, give lots of praise, encouragement, clapping. If a parent is at work, call and have your child tell Mommy or Daddy what they accomplished. If your child has a favorite relative, do the same. Or, make arrangements with a friend so that your child can call "Superman" or another character that your child would be proud to tell about his/her accomplishment. Offer small rewards, such as stickers or time reading with Mommy, every time your child goes in the potty.
5. Keep working on it every 30-45 minutes each day, all day. Your child will begin to correlate the physical feelings, and he/she will have more successes as the week progresses.
6. After your child appears to be mastering potty training, let him or her pick out a few new pairs of big-kid underwear to wear.
7. There may be times when your child regresses or moves back a step; this is a typical part of the process. Remain positive.

## Times when you are likely to have a success

- After waking with a dry diaper.
- 45 minutes to an hour after drinking lots of fluid.
- Within 15 to 30 minutes after meals to take advantage of the body's natural tendency to have a bowel movement after eating (this is called the gastro-colic reflex).
- Watch for signs that your child needs to "poop." Their faces turn red, and they may grunt, squat, or hide. Many kids have a regular time of day they tend to have a bowel movement.
- Visit the potty routinely: wake up, before/after nap, before bath, before car, etc.

## Nighttime Potty Training

Pull ups/diapers at night are okay months or even years after daytime dryness. Waking up to use the bathroom is a more difficult skill.

- Visit the potty right before bed each night.
- Avoid drinks right before bed.
- When dry in the morning for 2+ weeks, try underwear at night.

## Potty Training Help

**There are Nannies you can temporarily hire to get your child potty trained and ready for school.**

Check Nanny Websites such as:

<http://www.sittercity.com/child-care.html>.

1. On the sittercity.com site, enter your **zip code**, then click **Search for Free**.
2. Scroll way down to **Other Services Offered**, then click **More...**
3. Click **Potty Training**, to see a list of people who will potty train children.
4. Then, under "**Background Checks**" click the option you want.
5. You will need to sign up to contact specific Nannies. (Click **Parents Get Started**). It's Free to join.

**As with any person you bring into your home, check references!**

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