

# My CHILD Isn't TOILET Trained...

## Am I Doing Something Wrong?

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A normal child may show interest in toilet training sometime between age 18 and 36 months. In the 1950's the average age toddlers became "diaper free" was 18 months. Today the average age is 36 months. Though slower, this is due to the child centered training approach most pediatricians now recommend.

Rushing a child into toilet training before they are ready can lead to chronic constipation and withholding of urine or stool. The child may become resentful. So most pediatricians encourage gentle guidance and positive reinforcement.

**The first step toward toilet training should always be taken by your child.** She needs to show she is uncomfortable in dirty diapers, knows when she is going, and feels the need to go in advance. She will need to understand what wet and dry mean, have words for urine and stool, have somewhat predictable bowel movements, and imitate bathroom behavior.

Once your child has started the process, you can join in. Buy a potty seat, preferably one that is mobile. Allow your child to get familiar with it, first fully dressed, later undressed. Have a set "potty time", a regular chance to sit on the potty and get comfortable (this should coincide with any predictable bowel movement). Always dump stool in the potty to establish that it has a rightful place. Give praise for each accomplishment, a smile or hug will do.

Though some children may know how, they still don't want to go in the proper place. These children either refuse to go without a diaper on, or go to a special hiding spot. Be patient, bring the potty to the child's special spot and allow her to sit on it or stand next to it with the diaper on. If your child has good control, put them in underwear or let them run naked. Don't be afraid of accidents, they will happen. Most children will prefer not to wet on themselves or "ruin" their new underwear.

Many parents today are frustrated as they try to enroll their toddler in daycare at an early age. If your daycare requires toilet training, find a backup plan. When parents push their child to be toilet trained, stress and frustration usually follow. Although most children in the 1950's were toilet trained earlier, we think today's children are better off.



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**Please Do:**

- Take one step at a time
- Expect setbacks and accidents
- Praise your child
- Consider your child's temperament

**Please Don't:**

- Rush or feel pressured to train your child
- Start when there are big changes in your life
- Force your child sit on the potty
- Make your child wear wet pants to punish

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