



Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. Because toilet training is a complex process, there are many issues staff and families must consider before and during the process of toilet training for it to be a successful experience for everyone. Use the checklist below to measure your toddler's progress toward readiness, and keep in mind that starting before your child is truly ready doesn't mean you'll finish sooner — it's more likely that the process will just end up taking longer.

You don't have to wait until you've checked off every item to start training. Just look for a general trend toward independence and an understanding of what it means to go to the bathroom like a grown-up.

### Physical signs

- Is coordinated enough to walk, and even run, steadily.
- Urinates a fair amount at one time.
- Has regular, well-formed bowel movements at relatively predictable times.
- Has "dry" periods of at least three or four hours, which shows that his bladder muscles are developed enough to hold urine.

### Behavioral signs

- Can sit down quietly in one position for two to five minutes.
- Can pull his pants up and down.
- Dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty diaper.
- Shows interest in others' bathroom habits (wants to watch you go to the bathroom or wear underwear).
- Gives a physical or verbal sign when he's having a bowel movement such as grunting, squatting, or telling you.
- Demonstrates a desire for independence.
- Takes pride in his accomplishments.
- Isn't resistant to learning to use the toilet.
- Is in a generally cooperative stage, not a negative or contrary one.

### Cognitive signs

- Can follow simple instructions, such as "go get the toy."
- Understands the value of putting things where they belong.
- Has words for urine and stool.
- Understands the physical signals that mean he has to go and can tell you before it happens or even hold it until he has time to get to the potty.