

POTTY TRAINING GUIDELINES

In this modern day we have attractive, disposable diapers that keep our children dry and comfortable, therefore hindering their potty training. As a result, we will have children potty trained closer to age three and over.

Feeling Wet:

- For potty training to be effective, the child needs to feel wet. With modern diapers, children are kept from feeling wet.
- Cotton diapers and cotton pants allow the child to feel wet.
- From the time they can sit up, when the process of myelination has taken place around the sphincter, children have the ability to control their bladder.
- Children who are allowed to feel both wet and dry (by wearing cotton pants/diapers) learn that the preferred condition is to be dry. Therefore they start to hold their bladder and bowels for longer periods.

Present the Child With The Reality Of The Situation:

- At home, or when appropriate, if the child has an “accident”, show the child their soiled pair of pants/diaper, showing them where their excretions *should* go (in the toilet). Often when adults change children, it is all done so quickly that the child is not even aware of their bodily function. Taking the time to show them is necessary and they should never be rushed. With patience, they will quickly begin to associate and understand the process.
- If your child is getting diaper rashes, this is a great opportunity to talk about how the underwear will eliminate the problem.
- Be sure your child has the opportunity to see other family members, especially of the same gender, use the bathroom. Let them sit with you when you are going.
- Buy a toilet ring and provide a step stool, as opposed to a little potty, to get them accustomed to using “adult-sized” toilets outside the home.
- When your child has to sit for a long period of time to have a bowel movement, a good “trick” to keep them seated on the toilet longer, is to read a short story or hang out and talk. This attention to your child will be helpful to give up the diaper and they may look forward to having a bowel movement. After your child masters having a bowel movement, you can slowly wean them off of the extra attention.

Involve Child In The Process:

- After the child is shown the appropriate place to put their excretions and soiled pants and diaper, the child should assist in getting and putting on clean pants/diaper. This gives the child some sense of power or control in this area; “I can do it, I can master my own body.”
- Let your child have the fun of flushing the toilet and watching “it” go down!

“Help me to help myself.”

We should bear in mind the following points as we help to raise children in our modern day world:

- Present the child with the reality of the situation.
- Give control to the child on a level he or she can understand.
- “Help me to help myself.”

This is what Montessorians can give to a child when assisting them in this developmental process. No one should control or manipulate any developmental process of a child, especially in the areas of sleeping, eating and toileting.

We must note that these guidelines are for children who have no medical or sensitive developmental needs. In such cases we should adapt our approach, in light of the medical advice and psychological guidance which has been provided.

BCMS Potty Training Policy

When children start at BCMS in diapers, we will only begin to potty train when your child seems ready. The teachers will inform you if your child seems ready to potty train, or you may inform us.

While potty training, your child should come to school in underwear. After the first accident, your child will be changed into clean underwear. If your child has a second accident, they will be changed into a diaper and then the process will start over the following school day. If after two weeks your child is still having regular accidents at school, we will stop the potty training process and try again at a later time. This doesn't mean that you should stop potty training at home with your child.

The child's environment plays a role, too. Often children will choose to wear underwear at home, but may not be quite ready to wear them at school, or vice versa. If the child is allowed to choose, they generally give up the diaper in a few weeks or months and have fewer accidents along the way.

We will never force your child to wear diapers when they prefer underwear, but please be sure you provide enough changes of underwear, clothes, shoes and socks in order for us to be able to keep your child dry and comfortable.

If you want your child in pull-ups, you must provide them. If your child outgrows our diapers, you must provide them.

Although we take the children to the restroom approximately every two hours, please encourage your child to tell a teacher as soon as they feel the urge to go, to allow sufficient time to get to the toilet, to avoid an accident.

We have to remember that potty training is a process that the child must go through and every child has their own way of getting there. We have to be supportive and give the child room to feel they are in control. When a child wants to get out of diapers, they usually do so, within a matter of days. If they are hesitant, they will still struggle with the idea of giving up the diaper and will take longer, needing our patience.

The teachers want more than anything for your child to have a "dry" day and they have a great deal of experience potty training. My father, Robert Tideman, who co-founded BCMS and also raised ten children, had encouraging words for frustrated parents: "They will potty train before they become adults."