

A guide to

Potty Training



Storal

When should we start?



There is no one-size-fits-all approach to potty training. Some children may show clear signs they are ready, while others may need adults to gently introduce the idea through stories, routines and practice. The most important thing is that your child feels supported, never rushed or shamed.

Most children begin learning potty or toilet skills from around 18 months onwards, but every child is different. The NHS says potty training takes time, practice and patience.

Families do not need to wait for a perfect moment, but it helps to choose a calm time when routines are fairly settled.

Children with SEND or additional needs can still learn toileting skills, but they may need more time, extra support, visual prompts or adapted equipment.

Basic skills children need

- ☐ Recognising body signs, such as wriggling, hiding, pausing or holding themselves
- ☐ Knowing where the potty or toilet is
- ☐ Pulling trousers/leggings/skirts or dresses up and down
- ☐ Pulling underwear up and down
- ☐ Sitting safely on a potty or toilet seat
- ☐ Understanding simple words like "wee", "poo", "potty", "toilet" and "wash hands"
- ☐ Telling an adult they need help
- ☐ Wiping, with adult support where needed
- ☐ Flushing the toilet
- ☐ Washing and drying hands



Top tips from our team



Tips from our nursery managers:

- Let your nursery know when you're thinking of starting.
- Share the words you use at home for wee, poo, potty or toilet.
- Pack plenty of spare clothes.
- Try not to compare your child with others.
- Celebrate effort, not just success.

Advice from our educators:

Children often respond well to simple routines. Try offering the potty at natural points in the day, such as after breakfast, before going outside, before bath time or before leaving the house.

The biggest thing we always say to families is keep talking to us. Potty training works best when home and nursery are doing the same thing, using the same words and celebrating the same little wins. Accidents are part of learning, not a step backwards.

Step by step approach



1. Talk about it

Use everyday language around toileting.

"You've done a wee"

"Mummy/Daddy is going to the toilet."



2. Read books & play

Introduce potty training through stories, role play and toys. The NHS suggests reading books together and using dolls or toys to show how to use the potty.



3. Practise sitting

Let your child sit on the potty or toilet for short, relaxed moments.

No pressure, no long waits, just practice.



4. Build a routine

Offer the potty at predictable times, such as after meals, before leaving the house, before nap time and before bath time.



5. Use positive encouragement

"Well done for trying."

"You listened to your body."

"You sat on the potty, that's brilliant."



6. Work together with nursery

Share what's working at home and ask what's working at nursery. Consistency really helps.

Using books

Books can be a brilliant way to introduce potty training before you begin. They help children understand what the potty or toilet is for, what might happen next and how other children or characters learn too.



Stories can make potty training feel normal, fun and less scary. They also give children the words they need to talk about wees, poos, pants, flushing and washing hands. Reading the same book regularly can help children feel familiar with the routine before they are expected to try it themselves.



Read books before you start

Introduce potty-themed books early to help your child become familiar with the idea.



Keep books near the potty

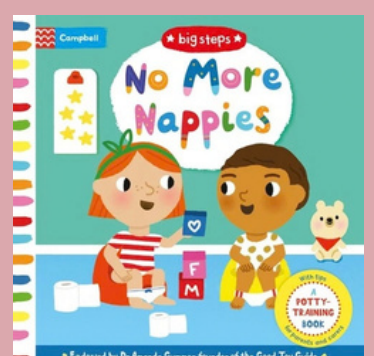
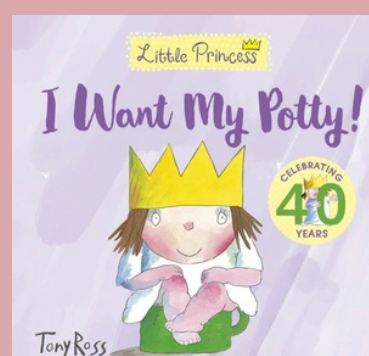
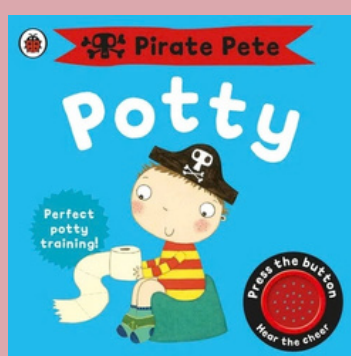
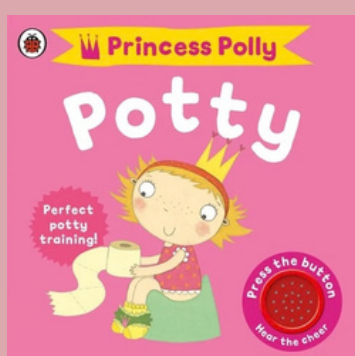
Having a favourite book nearby can help children feel relaxed and comfortable.



Use stories for reassurance

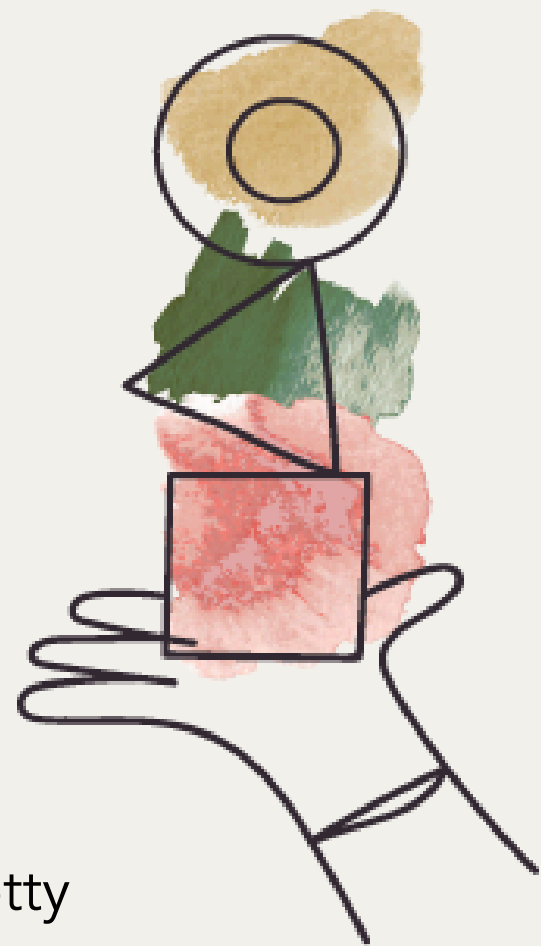
Choose positive books that show accidents are normal and learning takes time.

We recommend



Useful items

- ☐ Potty or toilet training seat
- ☐ Step stool (to help getting on/off the toilet)
- ☐ Easy-to-pull-down clothing
- ☐ Plenty of spare underwear
- ☐ Spare trousers/leggings, socks and shoes
- ☐ Wipes and nappy bags for outings
- ☐ Travel potty or foldable toilet seat
- ☐ Handwashing visual prompt
- ☐ Sticker chart and reward stickers
- ☐ Bubbles
- ☐ Childrens books about using the potty
- ☐ Timer or visual routine card



My reward chart



Start

