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Potty Training

Building confidence and independence

Most children begin showing signs that they're ready for potty training around the age of two, but every child develops at their own pace. It's completely normal for children to be ready earlier or later than average — what matters most is following your child's cues

Before around 20 months, toddlers tend to empty their bladders frequently and may still find clothing difficult to manage. Because of this, many children simply aren't physically ready for full bladder control until a little later.

How to know your child is ready

Your child may be prepared to start potty or toilet training when they:

- Stay dry for a couple of hours at a time, with at least an hour between wet nappies.
- Show interest when others use the toilet.
- Have bowel movements at fairly regular times.
- Recognise when they have a wet or soiled nappy.
- Know when they are doing a wee.
- Can tell you in advance that they need a wee.

Potty training usually goes more smoothly when your child is at the final stage — knowing in advance that they need to go.

When it's best to wait

It can help to delay potty training during times of change or stress, such as:

- The arrival of a new baby.
- Starting a new childcare arrangement.
- Moving from a cot to a bed.
- Moving house.
- Family difficulties or relationship changes.
- A family member being deployed or unwell.

Giving your child stability makes it easier for them to succeed.

How to get started

- Introduce the potty casually — let your toddler explore it without pressure.
- Keep the potty somewhere visible and easy to access.
- Encourage your child to sit on it regularly, such as after meals or before bath time.
- Offer lots of praise, but avoid relying on rewards as this can cause issues later.
- Respond to accidents calmly and without fuss so your child doesn't feel anxious.

These early steps help your child learn what the potty is for and build positive feelings around using it.

Top tips for building confidence and independence

- Stay upbeat and encouraging — confidence grows from feeling supported.
- Be consistent; switching between nappies and pants can be confusing.
- Expect setbacks — they're a normal part of learning.
- Choose simple, easy-to-remove clothing.
- Avoid long car journeys during the early days of training.
- Carry plenty of spare clothes when you're out and about.
- Night-time dryness usually develops later, so don't worry if this takes more time.

These tips help create a calm, successful potty-training routine.

More information and support

For additional advice on potty training and children's bladder and bowel health, visit:

- The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity - https://eric.org.uk/

Need further support?
Visit **rafakidz.org.uk**