



Strategies for Toilet Training Success

Toilet training can be stressful for children and adults. Becoming toilet trained is a milestone that opens doors for children, reduces work for adults, saves families money, and makes children more independent. This article includes strategies for making the toilet training experience more successful and less stressful. Before starting a toilet training program, make sure children are ready to learn the skill and discuss toilet training with their doctor.

1. Schedule – When first practicing toilet training, children should have many opportunities to use the bathroom. A schedule that takes children to the bathroom every 30 minutes or so allows them to practice their toilet training routine. Although it may feel wasteful to go more frequently than a child actually needs to use the toilet, this is a way to collect data to establish times when a child actually uses the bathroom. After a schedule is established, have them go to the restroom at natural times rather than every 30 minutes.

2. Encourage Waiting – Waiting on the toilet can be difficult for children and often adults do not know how long is appropriate for a child to wait. You want to wait long enough for a child to go if they have to, but you do not want to waste time if the child does not have to go. Three to five minutes usually is appropriate. Make waiting more enjoyable with video clips, songs, or books. Use a footrest or child sized seat to make children comfortable while waiting.

3. Reward Success – When children use the bathroom, reward them! Fun games, a big hug, a high five, blowing bubbles, stickers on a chart, time on a trampoline or any other truly motivating reward should be in place for when a child uses the toilet. Letting children pick their reward can be a way to give more options and flexibility in a reward. If something isn't working, try other rewards until you find a good fit.



Choice screen from *iCan Toilet Training Program* app

4. Communicate through Visual and Audio Cues – Provide a method for children to communicate they need to use the bathroom to encourage initiating. For children who respond well to visuals give them illustrations or pictures indicating the steps needed to use the bathroom successfully or what to do if they have an accident. Providing visual and audio support is important for children to understand expectations.

5. Be Patient and Positive – Toilet training is a difficult skill for many children to learn. Patience is important. Programs can take weeks or months and children often have periods of regression. Use a plan that can consistently and easily be implemented again if a child regresses. In addition to patience, attitude matters. Being positive is contagious. If you are enthusiastic about potty training, your child is more likely to want to become trained.

6. Create an Environment for Success – Children need clothing and a setting that makes getting to and using the bathroom easy. Children should wear loose fitting clothing that is easy to manipulate. If training at home, consider having children just wear underwear. Remain close to a bathroom especially at the beginning of training so children do not have far to go.

To learn about our new toilet training app, *iCan Toilet Training Program* go to:
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ican-toilet-training-program/id603542793?mt=8&uo=4>