Start Potty Training
By Carol Cline
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INTRODUCTION

It was our first evening out for my husband and I in a long while. Two of my nieces had offered to babysit our baby daughter for three hours. After the concert, we arrived home to find the younger babysitter and her charge sound asleep, with soft toys, open storybooks, and washed dishes the only clues to the fun. So far so good. Later as we prepared for bed we noticed the mattress a bit damp. It couldn’t have been the baby as she was still in diapers. The next day we had a good laugh when one of the babysitters admitted it was she who had wet the bed.

I come from a large extended family who considered potty-training a natural part of child-caring, like learning to drink from a cup, or learning how to blow one’s nose. No one was queasy about it. Even when disposable diapers were invented, ours stuck to the cloth variety. When we had our first child, I was so excited that I bought a few dozen birdseye cotton diapers in advance. In my zeal to keep my daughter clean and fresh, I used up three dozen in one day, spending the most part laundering and changing. My husband had it easier when it was his turn to stay home. He just hung out soiled diapers to dry without bothering to wash them! This made me think of resorting to the seemingly-convenient disposables. But there seemed to be no end to the large packs of diapers that my friends had to lug around for their children at every outing, and I didn’t want that.

So I had to re-educate myself and gather the best practices from experienced mothers in our family, and from others who successfully potty-trained their children, and combine them with the facilities available to us. Amazingly, both my children learned to use the potty without much ceremony, and soon my friends were also applying their variations of the process which is now this book.

There would be no need to share this method if the majority of children today knew how to use the potty in the same way they learned how to walk. However I’ve noticed that more children are in diapers for a longer period now than before. I used to think it was unavoidable now that we parents juggle several jobs a day, but I found that many mothers are now unaware that children can learn to use the potty before they are enrolled in daycare or nursery.

Potty training is usually a topic that makes new parents groan. They worry about the mess, the unending pile of laundry, the lovely sofa that will turn unusable afterwards. How long will it take? Will they diminish a lot from their child if they don’t do it at the right age or in the right way?
Many questions arise when a potty-training method is proposed. On one end is the “leave-them-alone-they-learn-eventually” crowd. Most likely they are convinced they don’t have to ask any questions. But for those who know there must be some sense to learning what was good for our parents and grandparents, the queries are usually, “When is the right age to start?” “What if my child is so stubborn?” “…shows he’s really not interested?” “What if I’ve already tried several methods but failed?” “What if I don’t have the time, can someone else in my family substitute?” “My child has autism, will this apply at all?” “Will it be any use to train my child who is much older than 2 years?” “Can I skip the other parts of this book right to the step-by-step method to get it over with?”

The answer is yes, the potty-training method can be learned by children regardless of age, and no, you might miss some essential insights if you skip straight to the method without at least browsing the insights shared in preceding chapters.

So most likely you are in this phase:

- Your son or daughter is less than 2 years old and you want to get a head-start on potty training. You want to be proactive to make sure you do things right;
- Your son or daughter is between 2-3 years of age. They might be showing readiness signs for potty training. You want to get some advice to help your child move along the process and keep them on course;
- Your son or daughter is closer to 4 years of age or older. They might be starting daycare, or kindergarten or preschool and you’re worried they might not be accepted. You are anxious that teachers will think your child is behind. You are in a panic and need immediate help to prepare;
- You have just about given up. Everything you try simply just does not work. Your son or daughter fights you about nearly everything. They simply refuse to cooperate with you and scream at the very thought of going to the potty.

Potty training doesn’t have to be a dread or a drudge. This phase is as much, if not more, of a growing time for us as parents, as it is for our children. The method outlined in this book is not a “slap-on-voila formula.” Nothing in life ever is. But it will make you aware of factors you probably never thought much of before, orient you through every step, not limiting you to a fixed set of rules, but giving you breathing space to consider what’s consistent with your parenting style, recognize your own child’s signals, appreciate the value of mistakes, and discover for yourself how to best implement this method that has worked for my children and hundreds of others of various ages and backgrounds.
The only guarantee is that you will both smile and laugh after probably some tears (or more).

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Why bother potty-training? Doesn’t it come naturally?

You would think it is a no-brainer for everyone that the earlier a child is exposed to the routine of potty training, the sooner they will achieve self-toileting ability than the child who starts later. But it is not so. Many people think that older children (4 years +) potty-train faster than those who are trained at a younger age (2 years or less). Common assumptions in the medical profession, contemporary child care, or in the community are:

- Children cannot achieve independent toileting until the “myelisation of the sphincters” takes place – and attempts to toilet train before this time will be futile;
• That “All children end up getting toilet trained anyway - did you ever see an adult who is not toilet trained?”
• “Children toilet-train themselves eventually by the time they are four years old;”
• “No one graduates from high school in diapers...”

It’s true there are children who “train themselves.” These are usually children who grew up in a home environment where parents involved them by example and made available potty or toilet facilities to their children from birth, while not consciously calling it “training.”

But for the growing majority of 3 ½ and 4-year-olds who are not potty-trained, this is not so. Parents who are forced by either circumstance or social pressure are unable to take an active role in helping their child, even after they learn to speak what they need.

Potty training is a basic skill to adjust our bodies to use the benefits of what is often called man’s greatest invention ever – indoor plumbing/sanitation. Learning how to relieve ourselves is one of the fundamental prerequisites for lifelong health. The functions in our body come naturally, but like all muscular skill, and functions where body meets machinery, basic training is needed. We get excited about our baby’s first word, his first tooth, first steps (tears of joy!), but cringe at the thought of cleaning up messes to help our child learn self-cleanliness. Diapers, pull-ups, padded trainer pants, and similar materials keep urine (pee/pee) and bowel movement (poop) out of sight for the longest time. Plus, with our 24-7 schedules, we don’t have to deal with any of it, and miss this important phase.

But if we give potty-training a second look, we’ll find it’s not only a means to a necessary end, but also a time to bond with our child, its benefits extending to other areas beyond the potty.

**Potty training around the world**

While we parents struggle to balance work and parenting, to the point that we resist talking about the potty training of children, the topic is squirmed as embarrassing and unpleasant. But this is not the case with our neighbors elsewhere in the world, even today.

Most mothers outside the US and Canada might be puzzled what all the fuss is around potty-training. They seem to know instinctively when to potty-train, because they hold their babies close to their bodies most of the time. “When you’re wearing your baby, these are symptoms that are impossible to miss. If they are five metres away on a rug, it is
a lot harder.” African and Asian women carry their babies all day so they instinctively know when it is time to hold their infants away from them so they can relieve themselves.

In most of Europe parents say the babies give cues that tell you when they need to go, so they don’t use diapers all day. In Germany the potty is made available but children are allowed to go at their own pace. In France, no child starts school in diapers, they aren’t even allowed at playgroup in diapers at 2.5 years.

In China and India, parents start the potty training process very early. When babies are a few months old (6 months on average) their parents regularly hold them over the potty after the main meal, and make a suggestive “shhh-shee” for peeing, or “uh, uh to help a baby poop. This takes some time, but once they form the habit, a baby does both every time. In China, small children often wear special kind of pants with a split in the back panel through which they can easily relieve themselves. Such influences are being adapted by various methods today.

In cultures where parents have their very young children close to them, it is the parents who are being trained to read their baby’s cues. The child definitely learns, but the main person who is trained is the parent. Parents who try diaper-free methods from birth are dedicated to follow through, and it is something all parents can do if they want to.

In Japan, a discussion of bowel movements is closely-connected with health and well-being, so discussion of potty training is common. They even have cartoons and children’s books to educate both parents and children about the benefits of learning to use the potty.

A common theme among all these mothers is that they are used to starting earlier than later. This is mainly because they use terrycloth or birdseye cotton diapers more than the super-absorbent disposables. The child shows discomfort with soiled cloth diapers much quicker and this in itself serves as a signal to start training.

**Potty training in olden days**

It turns out that diaper material has always been a controlling factor in the potty-training scene. The desire to get children out of diapers was top priority when diapers were still cut out of linen or cotton flannel. If you too were a pioneer mother who had endless piles of laundry and wet diapers to dry (often without washing), there was no debate about when to start potty-training. It would be a major priority to teach a child to go in the chamber pot as soon as possible. This sometimes led to extreme measures using enemas and suppositories to force
regular elimination.

Washing machines helped ease the burden in the 1950’s. But mothers still used cloth diapers so they were still watchful of their children’s schedules and signals, and would place them on the potty when the child needed to go. The child would then start to make the connection between the feeling that comes before pooping and the place where they should relieve themselves. Most children were trained at the average age of 18 months.

In the 1980’s disposable diapers were much more affordable. Parents could choose either cloth diapers or disposables. As a result, parents were no longer as highly motivated to potty train their children at an early age.

This was just about the time that pediatrician Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and the American Academy of Pediatrics advocated a potty-training approach which was a response to the rather harsh routines used earlier in the century. Instead of hurrying, parents were encouraged to wait until the child was ready, and could communicate his needs. Slowly the emphasis moved from the parents’ needs and wants, to respecting the child’s needs.

Today, the pendulum has swung from one end to the other. Disposable diapers are not the alternative but the mainstream. With more mothers working outside the home, and diapers more affordable, we are no longer motivated to potty-train our children to reduce the workload. Potty-training is no longer a priority, but something we even have to scrape time in our schedule for! Today we see nothing wrong with children being in diapers with no seeming end.

In less than one generation the systematic potty training of infants and toddlers has been abandoned in western societies like Australia, the US, UK, and Europe. The more favored view is that it is OK to delay potty training until over 3 years old.

However, late potty training results in slower development of a child’s other learning abilities. The constant advice of modern child care advisers to “wait until the child is ready” is self-defeating because in the first place most parents do not have the skills to identify when the child is ready.

Many parents resort to negotiation instead of actively teaching children to be independent in using the potty. This may work for many, but often leads to strained, excessive bargaining between parent and child, especially those who have learned to express their
defiance with words, or refusal to comply when rewards are no longer given. And in the case of disinterested children, bargaining is totally ineffective.

Others go along on guesswork, with no structure and little attention to the child’s signals. The downside is that this has the appearance of training, but will take much longer time than needed as both parent and child get frustrated why there doesn’t seem to be any lasting breakthrough with this approach.

Then there are those who skip over the learning of skills, and resort to products to address potty needs. Who wouldn’t find it easier to put a disposable diaper on a child than to exert the effort to train him?

If there is someone who hasn’t missed the cue in all this, it’s the diaper manufacturers. They have succeeded in prolonging diaper use, creating extra-large size diapers for children up to four and five years old, so the average potty training age in America has now moved to 30 months (but can go as high as 60 months)!

There is also less incentive not only for parents, but also for children, because disposables keep moisture away from the skin, so babies and toddlers no longer know what it feels like to be wet.

According to available data, about 90% of American children wear disposables, and only about 10% are potty trained by 18 months. Whereas before, 95% of babies were potty trained by 18 months, even without the harsh potty training methods of the early 1900s.

**At what age are children today potty trained?**

Worldwide, 50% of children are potty trained by 12 months of age, many by 6 months of age. Most of the world’s children are potty trained by age 2. In the U.S., most children are not potty trained until age 35 to 39 months of age.

This worrisome trend has not gone unnoticed, and specialists in child health have recently published extensive reports and proposals about how to reverse this. But, just as they begin to address the problem in affluent first world countries, the abandonment of traditional potty training among the emerging middle-classes of China and other newly developing countries has commenced in full-force. In Hong Kong, people still try to avoid diapers. In China they still have a desire to avoid diapers, because they’re still very expensive there. But now that Chinese people are getting richer, they want to use more diapers.
Instead of people finding it strange that a school-age child is not yet potty-trained, they now frown on parents who train their child earlier than 2 years old. One mother who commenced potty training her son before he was 24 months reported that people were very critical of her for doing so, saying it was “too early.”

Control of bodily elimination is a crucial aspect of human interaction. Once, it was the earliest form of self-control learned by small children. Today, some children learn to use complex electronic devices before they achieve continence.

**Potty-training for today’s needs**

Without getting stuck in any extreme, (not too method-centered to be unbending, not too child-centered to be chaotic), we can benefit from years of sound experience and common sense to apply a method that actually works for good.

The first ingredient for an effective potty-training method is a whole lot of love. This is what separates the harsh from the healthy.

The best methods are those that encourage, not enforce, yet are firm enough to make a mark in a child’s muscle memory.

In a way, we will take time to rediscover what mothers in our family and around the world have known all along, and adapt the best of it with the best of what we can give our child.

**Motivations for early potty training**

*Consideration of fellow human beings*

In Japan, parents are motivated to potty-train their children early to lessen inconvenience to others, whether playmates, teachers, or daycare providers. So if more children come to school in diapers, the quality of education suffers. Preschool teachers who have untrained 4-year olds in class lose much time changing diapers instead of teaching. This is oppressive, especially for teachers who come from countries where children cannot start nursery or preschool unless they are potty trained. One teacher stated, “I think it’s child abuse to make no effort to get a child out of diapers by four years old.”

On the other hand, children who have had basic potty training at home serve as helpful copycat models for classmates who might still be a bit unsure how to help themselves. Two/three/four-year-olds pick it up really quickly when they see others using the potty or toilet. The fact that they all go regularly and at the same time helps.
Clean and hygienic

Commonsense parents who start potty training around 2 years of age find it cleaner, cheaper, and more supportive of the independence and autonomous development of the child. They didn’t have to think hard about it. They just began potty-training without stress or fuss when they perceived the child was ready. They didn’t begin by dreading that it would be difficult task, but instead took the lead in initiating and supporting the child.

They consider the investment of time as well-rewarded when they no longer need to keep cleaning up after their children. These parents feel that society has taken a backward step by confining western children in diapers. They recognize that a child needs constant close contact and communication, so that hygienic potty training can take place without the use of diapers. Have no doubts. It is cleaner and more comfortable for a child to train early.

Good for the environment

There’s no question about which is better for the environment — getting your child out of diapers earlier avoids a lot of waste. The environmental degradation associated with cloth is much less than that of disposables. An average baby is changed six to eight times a day. That’s about 3000 disposable diapers for each child a year!

Disposable diapers not only create a problem of waste volume, but because they are thrown in domestic recycling bins, their waste content contaminates post-consumer paper and container streams, rendering them unfit to recycle. Disposable diapers are also a litter problem on beaches, and in public areas where there are few or no public rubbish bins.

Less expensive, less strain on the budget

Parents who can afford disposables usually prefer potty training to begin later, while budget-conscious parents train much earlier. So even if motivated by financial necessity, parents who train early receive the added bonus of a clean, continent child much earlier than those who just let diapers handle it.

“From a financial point of view it was an incentive to stop diapers. We used to buy them in bulk -- packets of 60 -- and go through them quickly. At one point it would have been maybe $30 a week on diapers.”

"We saved on diapers and stopped the dreadful waste. I was spared the horror of changing what looked like adult-size soiled diapers."

"I work in a very disadvantaged area and in ten years working in school I have never come across a child who wasn’t potty trained, except for one who had special needs."
More parental attention to child

Potty training time has a wonderful way of making parents give their children a higher level of attention and support in order to grow away from diapers. While full-time stay-at-home mothers are in the most favorable position to train, working mothers who reduce full-time working hours to part-time have the same opportunity as non-working mothers to devote the needed attention and support, while still working. Part-time working mothers who choose to potty train earlier enjoy the benefits that flow from this decision. They who do not attempt to toilet train earlier do not enjoy the benefits.

This training is a chance to build communication with your child, a must which is now an endangered value. And we see its tragic effects in the breakdown of family relationships.

Encourages a child’s autonomy and independence

Although many parents are concerned about the intellectual development of their children and less concerned about the child still being in diapers, many mothers have observed the connection of continence learning with the overall healthy development of their child.

“I was keen to get them out of diapers as soon as possible. I think it’s good for their independence. And also from my observations, once they start using the potty, it has a knock-on effect on other aspects of their development.”

“They felt more dignified about this personal experience very early before it became a psychological turmoil which I know it can become when kids are close to 3.”

“My kids were all the more happy for their toilet independence.”

Lessens future health problems

There are many other potential advantages in reversing the trend towards ever-later potty training. This includes reducing incidence of lower urinary tract infection and dysfunctional bladder, and chronic constipation and colon problems.

What happens for those who don’t potty-train early

Unnecessary embarrassment

As more children are being sent to school without a clue how to use the potty, it is very sad to see children struggling to do something so basic when everyone else in their class can do it easily. They suffer unnecessary humiliation. And all because some parents feel they don’t need to spend time training their children and feel it is the school’s job to do it. And children, in return, don’t mind soiling themselves.
The school rules that were changed so that a child with a disability or learning difficulty could attend school in diapers has been mistakenly extended to all children, so parents think it’s normal for school-age children not to be potty-trained. The children’s development hasn’t changed, the parents attitudes have.

**No idea about when to stop using diapers**

When children as old as seven years are still getting around in dirty diapers because their mothers didn’t bother about potty training them, it is no joke. When you find kids who run around in filthy diapers, playing and joking as though absolutely nothing is wrong, it’s time to restore some sense.

When young parents think nothing about piling soiled diapers in their rubbish bins from week to week, and children aren’t aware that the filthy diapers are something that should be shunned, it’s time to put a stop to ignorance.

**Decline in parenting skills, despite high investment in child development**

We may think we can avoid potty training because we are “too busy” with jobs and the demands of modern family life. Full-time working mothers are the least likely to begin potty training before the child reached 2 years old.

Clearly, in our desire to provide material comforts, we have declined in parenting skills even in relation to potty-training. We lack even the most basic awareness of the procedures, preparations, and factors associated with it.

Dr. DuBose Ravenel wrote, “Parents in general are not aware that it is desirable or good or even possible, to train children early, and the reason is that they have been taught… a complete myth that psychological damage will occur if they train early.”

**Health problems**

Urinary dysfunction is often associated with an inability to completely empty the bladder, resulting in residues which can become infected. Primary treatment is in the form of long-term antibiotic use, with all of the negative health impacts on the individual as well as the broader environment. The abandonment of right potty training might be causing the rise in dysfunctional bladder.

**Struggle to potty-train at a later age**

Some parents begin potty-training later than 2 years old, about the time their children are old enough to choose what they want to wear. But instead of being more agreeable, they find their child is old enough to defy them or use the potty to get their own way. Clearly
in these cases there is a battle of wills going on, which is warned against if potty-training begins too late, after the child has learnt the word “no.” The risk of problem behaviours increases, like an attachment or insistence on diapers or refusing the potty and the toilet.

According to The Restraint Project Australia: 2010, “Problems frequently associated with potty training at age two or later stem from the fact that considerable maladaptive learning has already taken place. In a special sense, by age two the child has long since passed through an important state of readiness for training… a child that eliminates in a diaper for two or three years does not feel comfortable on the pot, but wants a diaper.”

**A healthy method**

What we’re aiming for is a healthy method which takes into consideration all the conditions needed for right potty training. Training for parents, responding to the child’s needs, preparation of body and mind, and observation of natural signals need to be work together.

What is needed now is a campaign to raise awareness among parents that it is desirable to start potty training between 18-24 months, where this is usually a smooth and uneventful process, unlike training at the “terrible twos” age, when children are trying to assert their identity and use potty training as a focus of defiance against their parents’ will.

There will have to be a reskilling of parents. These are not complex skills, and much falls within the category of awareness and observation.

**Effectiveness of the 3-Day Method**

Potty-training in a short period of time works for many parents, and isn’t a recent trend. The 3-Day Method outlined in this book has worked for my children and many others, in making that all-important breakthrough from diapers to real underwear. It has also helped many parents look closer and get to know their children in a way that our daily to-and-fro workload prevents us from doing.

Using this or other quick-training methods doesn’t mean that your child will be perfectly potty trained in three days. Instead, in three days your child will be using the potty rather than diapers. But there may still be accidents and you’ll need to follow-through with a consistent potty routine – helping your child become fully comfortable using the potty independently, teaching steps such as how to pull his pants down and back up,
empty the potty, and wash his hands – until one day, sooner rather than later, he’s accident-free!

Learning to use the potty in 3 days may sound too good to be true, but it really takes children aged 18-24 months just 3 days to get the basics of potty-training. Some children get it quicker than that, especially those who are in constant company of their parents before the actual “3 Days.” Potty-training is more than just removing diapers and offering some directions to the child.

But soon you will enjoy that sweet smell of success.
CHAPTER 2: TOO YOUNG? TOO OLD?

Recommended age for potty training
At least 18 months, but not more than 24 months.

Potty training is an important milestone for children. Most children are ready to begin potty training between the ages of 18 months and 2 years of age. However, some children will show signs of readiness before or after the average age. All children are different and will have different experiences.

Contrary to the impression that a child isn’t capable of controlling his water and waste elimination until much later, current knowledge shows that the sphincter muscles which control bladder and bowel moments start developing while the baby is in utero and reach their FULL maturity between 12 – 24 months with 18 as the average. This is when toileting should be COMPLETED, not started. When parents start potty training AFTER
these muscles reach full maturity, the muscles have become limp from not having the opportunity of practicing eliminating. It is our job as parents to provide these practice opportunities and respond to these cues as soon as possible.

You may start noticing readiness signs at that age, “where a lot of toddlers start to show an interest in the potty or toilet.” Pediatricians agree that most children have a “window” when training is most easily completed. For girls, this is usually between 2 and 2½ years of age, and for boys, between 2½ and 3, after which children can become attached to diapers, develop problem behaviours, or at least reject potty training.

New parents may have the impression that the earlier a child is introduced to the potty, the longer the actual training, but this is not so. The best results are for those who start training from 19 months to 24 months. On average, these children are out of diapers by 25 months.

Among the parents who waited until their child was between two and three, some trained quickly and others took much longer than those in the 19- to 24-month group because the training period coincided with the “terrible twos.”

If you see that a child is clearly not ready to start potty training, then don’t force him to. There may be other conditions present that are causing stress and resistance. As soon as the first sign of emotional distress shows up in the child, it is time to stop for at least a month, then try to approach potty training in a different way. But as long as the child is cooperative and parents are willing to make an effort, it will be successful.

**No such thing as a specific age to begin potty training**

The transition from diapers to underwear will be much smoother if you react to a child’s awareness, rather than be fixed on a specific age. Potty-training success hinges on physical and emotional readiness. It’s up to us parents to recognize this, and not to pressure a child to do something he is not ready for yet.
CHAPTER 3: HOW TO KNOW THE RIGHT TIME TO START

Remember how exciting it was to finally learn how to ride a bicycle for the first time, and move up from the 3- or 4-wheeled version? That’s a bit of how it feels to move from diapers to using the potty. It may seem out reach for a while, then a bit wobbly, then a wonder when it finally happens.

Each child shows readiness at different periods than others, within that window of time most conducive to potty training. Younger siblings may take to it quicker when they want to imitate their older brother or sister, or slower if the time of training happens to coincide with a stressful period in the family. But the important thing is for us parents to be able to recognize when a child is READY.
Many parents repeatedly acknowledge they do not know how to detect the signs of child readiness. Here are several of the usual signs that your child is ready for potty-training:

**Seems interested in the potty chair or toilet**
- Is becoming interested in watching others go to the toilet (this can be awkward or make you uncomfortable at first, but is a good way to introduce things)
- This can include watching you potty, asking questions regarding the toilet or sitting on the potty
- Showing an interest in the toilet when someone else is using it.

**Global readiness skills, even when not yet interested in the toilet**
- Able to walk and sit down on his own for short periods of time
- Can sit on and rise from a potty chair
- Can stabilize himself with his feet so he can push when he’s having a bowel movement

**Imitates his parents around the house**
- Begins to show a desire to please parents or carers

**Can put things back in their place**
- Shows understanding about things having their place around the home.
- Is becoming generally more independent when it comes to completing tasks
- Desire to be autonomous

**Has dry diapers for up to two hours**
- This shows he’s able to store pee in his bladder (which automatically empties in younger babies or newborns)

**Must be able to go to bed without bottle or cup**

**Has regular, soft, formed bowel movements**
- Even if bowel cycle is not yet regular
Able to communicate his or her wants

- Not even through words yet, but through bodily movements, looks, facial expressions, hand gestures
- Can understand and follow basic directions, such as ‘Give the ball to daddy’
- Understands words used for elimination
- Tells you (or shows obvious signs) when he does a poo or pee in his diaper, or about to.

So it’s important for parents to learn how the child communicates. It may begin with physical discomfort, which turns into wriggles and squirms, then small sounds and words, which is communication, pre-language.

Uncomfortable with wet or soiled diapers

- Complains about wet or dirty diapers, or does actions like pulling off diaper and peeing on the floor
- Signals that his or her diaper is wet or soiled. A child needs to be wet and feel wet and uncomfortable to realize they need to go to the potty and tell you when they need to go
- May even ask to be changed when diaper is soiled, or try to scoop out poo from his diaper
- Starts to be conscious that a diaper is about to be wet, looking down at it before he pees
- Sometimes even asking to wear underwear or refusing to put on a diaper
- May even be able to pull down his or her pants and pull them up again with little or no assistance

Not all these signs need to be present when your child is ready. Most children show even just one or two of these signs. A general trend will let you know it’s time to start.

Again, if your child has recently faced or is about to face a major change, such as moving house or the arrival of a new sibling, it is best to wait awhile before actual training. A toddler who opposes potty training today will be more willing after a month.

Don’t feel pressured to start before your child signals readiness. And don’t be pressured by anyone, whether parents, in-laws, friends, siblings, coworkers, etc. If your child is not ready to potty train, it simply will not happen. Partial success only prolongs the process,
making it frustrating instead of rewarding. Even as grownups we know that our digestion and waste-elimination varies with our emotions and thoughts. The same is true for a child. When the time is right, and the environment is supportive, you may teach him via the 3-day method, and he will learn to pee and poo in the potty with ease.
CHAPTER 4: PREPARING YOURSELF

Gardening and cooking shows on television have a way of encouraging the idea that whatever they do we could do just as well. The colors look so appetizing, everyone is pink-cheeked and healthy, at ease with the chef or gardener. The motions are so smooth, in just one sweep the chef picks up the baby, feed him the carrot smoothie, the baby claps and smiles! How easy it looks. We want the same garden, and we want to serve the same healthy food. Why we could grow those same vegetables and whip up those recipes in no time at all! So we go to the store, pick out the equipment and begin digging our kitchen garden. But soon we realize the work was not as easy as it looked. At the first sign of peeds, we get discouraged and lose interest.

Most parents eagerly look forward to potty training as a sort of D-day in their child’s development. The end to changing diapers is in sight! But many daddies and mommies don’t want to think of the effort it will take. Besides, who wants to think about that? But anything done without thoughtful and considerate effort is responded to without pleasure. We need to both to lay down the basic training, and to follow up the basics with practice. Yes, some children get it within a few days. Some take several months. We need to be
prepared for how long it can take. Promise, it will be worth all the effort, and not as long as we think.

Here’s one way not to do it, and yet how we often do: A new baby is on the way. Our family and friends get so excited they travel long distances to surround us with love and concern, each one shooting their own arrows of advice at us. The fact that their own children are just regular rebels and not the cherubs they make them out to be seems like a minor detail. When our baby is born, we marvel at every wonder, take in every moment. Then we wait for that perfect hour. We’re armed and ready with equipment. We visualize just how it’s going to be, a potty-training storyboard with maybe a bit of drama, a lot of humor, and a definite happy ending. Then on the appointed day, we bring out the potty, expecting him to clap and smile. But when they don’t, we crumple inwardly. They don’t like it, push it away, cry at the sight of it. What did I do wrong?

After the dust has settled, and we get over our disappointment that we failed even if we prepared everything, we suddenly remember that we overlooked the first, most important sign to consider: our child’s readiness to learn.

Potty-training is not just a chore we slot into the calendar, like three days of camping, or repainting the kitchen, or redoing chores that we asked someone else to do. Once we decide on the three days we are to potty-train, the first one really being trained is us—parents. We learn to read the signs of our child about when they are going to eliminate or pass water.

We may potty-train for just 3 days. But we prepare ourselves for longer than that. Potty-training embodies the commitment we made to caring for and nurturing the human being we bring into the world.

“My boys were all around two years old when I would let them run around the backyard with no nappies on. They got very good at reading their own bodies and were able to make connections about what happened. We rarely had accidents inside the house and they were well-pleased to ditch nappies in favour of their little jocks. Of course, when they are really engrossed in what they are doing, you will get the odd puddle!”

When we approach potty-training as a vital part of good health, just like eating, believe it or not, you can actually relax. You can take a relaxed approach to teaching. You won’t
have to worry. Being relaxed is one of the things you can do to make your child’s transition from diapers to the potty a stress-free experience. You can relax once you:

• let go of expectations
• let go of comparing the present potty-trainee with other children, even our own other children
• know how your child’s body and mind work
• recognize signs of readiness
• decide when and how to start potty-training
• know how to talk about potty training with your child
• determine how to adapt the 3-day method in a manner that’s best for your child and your family
• know what problems and setbacks to expect
• consider how you were potty-trained

Be involved in all areas of your child's learning

Before introducing the potty, it helps a lot if you have an established daily routine with your child in other learning activities. This way, the new method of using the potty can be introduced into your normal routine without being a strange sudden phase that could frighten instead of interest them.

Children still need to know what is expected of them. If done in a considerate and interactive way, you do your child much good by providing direction and expectations, while also considering their readiness. Some children really are ready to be trained early, so you are not ‘pushing’ if you are meeting no resistance. Their resistance could be one of your cues. Children really do love learning from the way grown-ups do things, so don’t deny them their opportunity if it fits their readiness.

Start potty training only when you and your child are ready

Your child may be ready, but what about you? Do you have more than you can handle in your job? Have you just given birth to another baby? When you perceive your child is ready, you must also examine if you are willing to devote the three full days for helping
your child through the process of learning to use the potty. You need to be ready as your child is to find the right fit for the 3-day method.

**Prepare to give up all your regular activities for 3 days in a row**

Don’t schedule potty-training during a time where your attention is taken up by large demands, such as moving to a new house, or expecting a new baby. It’s best to wait until things have settled down a bit, or resumed a regular routine, so both you and your child can have the time and good humor to deal with setbacks and surprises.

Arrange for stand-ins, substitute help/cooperation for daily chores/activities during those three days. But inform the people who come to help you, or other family members that you won’t be able to chat and converse like as usual, because you will need to focus on the child being trained. It’s very important that nothing diverts your attention, so that are able to catch EACH time your child needs to pee or poo.

Choose three days where you have no obligations, or cancel any obligations you do have. A long weekend is ideal. If you have other children, find babysitters for them if you can, or plan to occupy them with TV for most of the day. Make meals ahead of time for those 3 days or budget money for eating out.

**Decide on the vocabulary**

Make sure everyone in the family, then eventually daycare workers or teachers, follow the same routine and use the same names for body parts and bathroom acts. Let them know how you’re handling the issue and ask that they use the same approaches so your child won’t become confused.

**Prepare to dedicate your time and energy to the child**

You are ready to potty train when you can devote the time and energy necessary to encourage your child on a daily basis. Remember that you may have to approach this child differently from your other children, depending on how you read the signals and movements. Girls are definitely different from boys. And even one daughter takes to the training in a different way than another. If it clicks faster with one, but takes longer with another, that’s just the way it is.

**Don’t go back to diapers when the going gets rough**

Potty training is messy and a kid wetting themselves is something
they’ll get over. You just have to plough on through with using regular underwear and not resort to trainer pants or pull-ups because then it can become confusing for the child. As long as they take interest in the process, you can always wipe up a pee puddle or patches of poo and know that it will click with them eventually.

**Learn how a child signals their need to pee or poo**

When you notice signs that your child might need to use the potty — such as a change in facial expression, squirming, squatting or holding the genital area – respond quickly. Help your child become familiar with these signals, stop what he or she is doing and head to the potty. Praise your child for telling you when he or she has to go. When it’s time to flush, let your child do the honors. Make sure your child washes his or her hands after using the potty.

Some parents try the method of putting the child on the potty chair, even if they have not signalled a need to go. Or you might notice that your child uses her bowels at a certain time of the day, so you would probably try putting her on the potty at this time. This doesn’t work for all children, and I personally don’t recommend it – true potty training begins when the child is aware of the sensation of doing a pee or poo and connects this with getting to the potty in time. So it is much better to wait till the actual moment of needing to pee or poo to go to the potty.

**If possible don’t involve multiple people in actual potty training**

If husband or grandma helps, make sure you both use the same words and terms for things so it doesn’t confuse the child. But still it is more ideal for the parent who has seen the readiness signs and has established constant rapport with the child to be the one to do the training.

Nursing mothers can still potty-train another child, if you have reached a regular routine with the new baby. The potty-trainee will be glad to help you with the baby. Then if he needs to go, stop nursing the baby and respond to the needs of the child being potty-trained.

During moments that try your patience, remember motivating reasons for potty-training, such as: “A few days of frustration and cleaning up constant accidents is far better than a few more months of changing dirty, smelly diapers”
CHAPTER 5 : PREPARING THE CHILD

In addition to understanding the bodily sensations, getting to the bathroom and getting clothes off, a child must first constrict sphincter muscles to achieve control, and then relax them to eliminate.Obviously there is a lot to learn. Gaining bowel and bladder control is a skill and fortunately children usually like to learn new skills.

The usual sequence for these skills are: First comes bowel regularity, followed by bowel control. Daytime bladder control often comes next but for many children this can happen simultaneously, and finally later comes nighttime bladder control.

**Start to teach potty-training words**
When you decide that it is time to begin potty training, there are some things you can do to make the transition from diapers to underwear smoother. Teach your child some words
associated with going to the potty – for example, you might want to teach her words like ‘pee’, ‘poo’ and ‘I need to go’. Before actual potty training, start responding to child’s bowel movements with words that express “how yucky it is to poop in the diaper.” Be definite about this. Talk them through (pulling down pants, sitting, pooping, peeing, flushing, washing hands) over and over. Make it ‘normal.’

**Begin to make diaper-changing tedious**

Once the child begins to show discomfort with a soiled diaper, try to make changing their diaper just as much of a chore for them as it is for you, so that using the potty will seem easier in comparison. Begin to show your child what regular child underwear (not padded version) looks like. If using cloth diapers, this isn’t necessary, as the child understands the feeling of wetness or soiling much earlier.

A child won’t learn to be dry if kept in disposable diapers, as it doesn’t let a child feel wet. Once the child stops wearing disposables and starts with underwear, it takes a while for him to understand and dislike the feeling of wetting and how to recognise those feelings before they pee on the floor.

**Familiarize your child with the bathroom/toilet**

A couple of weeks before actual 3-day potty training, allow your child to be present when you go to the bathroom so that your child will feel comfortable in the bathroom. Introduce an activity like reading a fun potty-training book or having a special toy to use while sitting on the potty chair or. Stay with your child when he or she is in the bathroom. Even if your child simply sits there, offer praise even for trying.

Allow your child to watch others who are using the toilet, and talk about what they’re doing.

Have them bunch up the toilet paper and use a new piece of bunched up toilet paper for each wipe.

When you’re done with the toilet, have them flush the toilet for you, waving bye-bye to the poop. Allow your child to see urine and bowel movements in the toilet. Let your child practice flushing the toilet.

**Introduce the potty chair**

It’s good to make the potty chair available early on, because once you start the actual 3-day training, he already knows what the potty is for.
And if follow-up training extends into the first stages of being verbal and coordinated, it can be easier, rather than if that’s the time you start.

It is ideal to put a child’s potty chair in the bathroom, and not in just any other place or playing area in the house, such as the nursery, living room, or out in the garden. In a multi-storey house, put a potty in the bathrooms that your child will normally use.

You might want to try a potty chair model with a removable top that can be placed directly on the toilet later when your child is ready. Encourage your child to sit on the potty chair — with or without a diaper. Make sure your child’s feet rest firmly on the floor or a stool. Help your child understand how to talk about the bathroom using simple, correct terms. You might dump the contents of a dirty diaper into the potty chair to show its purpose.

**Make your child’s potty a comfortable and welcoming place**

One week before the actual 3-day potty training process, place the potty chair in a well-lit bathroom that is easily accessible for your child. A potty place should be a happy place. Allow your child to observe, touch and become familiar with the potty chair. Tell your child that the potty chair is his or her own chair. Introduce and explain the potty, allowing your child to try it out for size and get familiar with it.

Encourage your child to use his potty whenever he feels the urge to go. Reassure him that he can tell you too, if he needs to go, and that you’ll take him to the bathroom whenever he wants you to.

If your child is hesitant or reluctant to use the potty, don’t force it. Perhaps you planned when to do potty-training, but some stressful things suddenly come up, spoiling your initial plans. So that instead of being relaxed and natural, potty-training becomes tense and hurried. If this happens, reschedule the 3-day period, and your child will regain interest when conditions are no longer stressful.

**Schedule potty breaks**

During the two weeks before actual 3-day potty training, sit your child on the potty only when you feel he is going to pee or have a bowel movement. There may be patterns like 30 minutes after eating or after having a bath, but these should only be guides, don’t take him to the potty if he isn’t showing signs of needing to go.

It may help to show your child where his bowel movements go, even while still in diapers, shortly before the actual 3-day potty-training. Show your child how the potty chair is used. The next time he goes in his diaper, take him to his potty, sit him down, and
empty the diaper beneath him into the potty. This will help him make the connection between sitting and producing. And help him understand the purpose of the potty chair. After you’ve emptied his potty into the big toilet, let him flush it if he wants to (but don’t make him do it if he’s scared) so he can see where it goes. Not advisable to have child sit fully-clothed on the potty chair, so that they will understand the connection.

For boys, it’s normal if they start urinating sitting down, and then move to standing up after bowel training is complete, or when they want to imitate their dad or older brothers.

Experience has proven that it doesn’t do much good to sit a child on the potty when he doesn’t need to go. It’s best not to make your child sit on the potty for long periods of time, because this will feel like punishment and not relief.

Install a low step/stool by the sink so the child can reach a low faucet.

Teach your child how to wash her hands after using the toilet. Make it a habit to ask if he has washed his hands and guide him using water and soap as you talk them through. This can be a fun activity that your child enjoys as part of the routine.
CHAPTER 6: POTTY-TRAINING CALENDAR

Designate 3 days in a row

Mark them on your calendar. Remember that the three days must not be sandwiched during big transitions, or events that demand a great deal of attention or work.

This means one of those three-day weekends if you can’t get any time off from work (Labor Day, Memorial Day, etc). During these three days do not plan to go anywhere. You want to give yourself a chance to be consistent with this because consistency is the key to succeeding with potty training.

Plan ahead for how usual chores can be done during those days. If your child is in daycare, arrange for a rescheduling.

Prepare a variety of activities you and your child can do together

Even out in the yard at time, if you can manage to run to the potty at all times. Otherwise it’s much better to be indoors during those three days. Inside the house, carry on most activities in an area with easy-to-clean flooring. Prepare an assortment of books, crayons, markers, play dough, puzzles, blocks, and helpful television shows. You want to keep
your child busy and happy during this 3 day process, and three days with a toddler inside the house takes a lot of creativity.

**Have laundry done before starting**

Ensure clean sheets and extra pajamas or loose trousers in case they have accidents once training starts.

**Introduce high fiber foods to your child’s diet**

High-fiber foods help control constipation by keeping fluids in the stools, keeping them soft and easily passable.

- Offer a high-fiber, easy-to-eat cereal as part of your toddler’s daily diet. Most toddlers will happily eat O’s type of cereals that are high in fiber.

- Serve yogurts that have added fiber in them with meals. Toddlers usually love yogurt. Yogurts with added fiber are just as tasty and creamy as regular yogurt.

- Make sandwiches with high-fiber wheat bread. Try serving your toddler peanut butter and jelly made on high-fiber wheat bread or whole grain white bread. While whole grain white bread offers less fiber than 100 percent wheat bread, it definitely provides more fiber than traditional white bread.

- Make high-fiber vegetables like broccoli, sweet potatoes, spinach and cabbage an appealing part of your toddler’s diet. You can serve sweet potatoes with a little butter and brown sugar, or add small amounts of spinach and shredded cabbage to a turkey sandwich. Vegetables like beans, sweet potatoes, peas, tomatoes and corn are all higher in fiber. Cook a sweet potato in the microwave for 5-7 minutes. Peel, then slice into cookie-shaped circles and serve. Serve steamed green beans or cauliflower with ranch dressing for dipping. Frozen peas right out of the freezer are a nice, cool treat on a summer day.

- Offer high-fiber fruits such as apples, pears, and prunes to your toddler daily. Fruits are a painless way to add fiber to your toddler’s diet. Feed fruits with a peel, since the peel has a higher fiber content. Prunes and apricots have a pro-laxative effect, in addition to being rich in fiber. Slice grapes or cherry tomatoes in half and serve with whole grain crackers. Core an apple, then spread a thin layer of peanut butter onto round slices. Avocados are very high in fiber, and a soft, tasty treat for younger toddlers. For variety you may want to serve a variety of small slices of fruit on a colorful plate or even in an ice cube tray.
- Serve your toddler whole grain pasta and brown rice, instead of their highly refined white counterparts.

Nutritionists recommend reducing cheese and other dairy products during the potty training period, since they can have a constipating effect. Instead, offer plenty of water, which will ease any constipation and fill that bladder up, giving plenty of opportunity to practice!

A fiber-rich diet will make potty training easier for you and your toddler, but it’s also a great way to introduce healthy foods and build a foundation of good nutrition for life at a very early age.
CHAPTER 7: EQUIPMENT ARSENAL

Have all supplies ready before you start the actual 3-days of learning to use the potty.

**High-fiber food supplies and liquids**
More than they normally drink in a day. Water is best. And a variety of other fruit liquids.

**Potty chair**
Bring the child along and let them choose the potty they like.

There are many advantages to using a potty chair before shifting to the kind of trainer seat that fits securely inside the existing toilet seat. You can take the potty chair anywhere, even on the road, and can become a familiar presence, and some children find it friendlier than a toilet. Try to find out your child’s preference and go with that. Eventually the child will learn to use both the potty and the toilet.
Take your child to the store with you, sit on different potties, pick the potty the child wants. If he can manage, let him carry it out of the store, to the car and set it up themselves in the bathroom.

**Real underwear**

Have 20 to 30 pairs on hand. Bring your child along to pick out big kid underpants. AVOID the padded version of trainer pants or pull-ups.

As part of building up the excitement, go on a small shopping trip on the week before the actual 3-days, allow your child to choose a few packs of big kid underwear. Often a child who has idea what underwear is will get excited about seeing big boy/big girl cotton pieces with their favorite cartoon character on them.

This 3-day method of potty training shifts from diapers straight to real underwear, no pull-ups or trainer pants as a potty-training aid, as pull-ups just encourage children to pee in them.

Disposable training pants are marketed as a soft-intro to real underwear, but it’s just not as effective. Training pants may seem convenient at first, prevent messes from getting on floors, couches, precious surfaces but they confuse children and make them think it is okay to use them like diapers. But training pants only slows down the potty-training process.

Pull-ups are also another type of product that cause more delay. They have long been derided on the grounds that they prevent the child from sensing moisture from accidents, thereby delaying potty-training. What’s worse is that they are often marketed as underwear for 3-4 year olds who are not yet potty-trained, postponing body skills even further.

“I never used pull-ups during the day once he was potty-trained, because I find them counter-productive. In pull-ups, they can’t feel when they are wet -- I would rather he had the sensation of being wet.”

“I had exactly the same experience with my oldest son, who was still wetting at night until over six, and would refuse to be woken and angry if I tried. I had him in pull ups until after six, then took him to a specialist because we were worried about his progress. I decided to stop using pull ups and he had an accident every night for a few weeks and suddenly stopped.”

“I felt that pull ups were the easy, lazy option.”
“A big thing that many people don’t realise is that pull ups don’t help. We prefer the cold turkey approach, and it worked for us.”

“When I was toilet training, I started using pull ups, but my daughter was using them just like nappies. They were no different than nappies to her. After a few weeks of this I realised I was going to have to get rid of the pull ups. I don’t think pull ups work at all. And they always leak -- around the bottom area. They’re not as absorbent as a diaper, so what’s the point?”

In fact, there was not one survey participant who spoke positively about pull-ups. Not only were they derided for delaying toilet training and confusing children, as sanitary products they were criticised because they are less absorbent than nappies.

**Easy-wear clothing**

Make sure your child’s wardrobe is adaptable to potty training. In other words, avoid overalls and shirts with several snaps or fasteners. Simple clothes are a must at this stage and kids who are potty training need to be able to undress themselves easily.

**Moist bathroom wipes**

You can have them in the bathroom for a couple of days so your child knows those are big people wipes.

Moist wipes offers a cleaner, easier and more gentle clean than dry toilet paper. However, most baby wipes and bathroom wipes are made of non-biodegradable material and cannot be flushed down the toilet, and do not decompose. There are alternative **flushable moist wipes** available, but they still contain ingredients found in household soap, which may cause irritation when it comes in contact with the eyes.

There are also healthier alternatives to commercially-produced moist wipes. Many mothers regularly convert a roll of paper towels into **2 rolls of moist wipes** by soaking the material in a mixture of water, baby wash, and baby oil/ almond oil. They then store the moist paper wipes in an airtight container, a roll usually lasts about 4 - 8 weeks, and also stay moist. When you calculate the cost, it’s very economical and you can customize the scent.

Other make their own **homemade cloth baby wipes**, which are reusable. Though the idea can sound strange to those accustomed to disposable wipes, it certainly saves money and has the least environmental impact. Making cloth baby wipes out of the best
available material will cost less than $60 for a set of 24 that will last you from birth to potty training. Traditional wipes run about $4 for a pack of 80, but may last only a week, running up an expense of around $208 per year!

People choose to make their own baby wipes so they know exactly what is in the solution and what is touching their baby’s bottom. Instead of alcohol, perfume and chlorine commonly found in traditional moist wipes, homemade wipes are soaked in the same natural substances as the moist paper wipes, and are the most nurturing, and the least irritating to your child’s skin.

**Snacks, treats, rewards**

Devise a reward system that matches your parenting style, and doesn’t clash with what your child is used to from you.

For example, you may purchase a gift bag with your child’s favorite cartoon character and fill it with ‘pee’ prizes or ‘poo’ prizes. Coloring books, small toys, and single Hershey’s Kisses are examples of some of the items. When your child goes poo, she gets to pick a prize. If she gets to pee, you could use stickers and fruit snacks.

For many potty-training Mini M&M’s helps a lot. The system could be, each time your kid goes potty, he gets two or three, but if he wipes himself (which is a huge achievement) then he gets four or five. This helps a child overcome that difficult part where he doesn’t want to poo because the part about learning how to wipe is kind of yucky.

If your child responds to stickers or stars on a chart, you could use that as well. A reward chart can be a helpful tool to use in which the child can see a visual reminder of how good they are doing. Some parents choose to reward their child with a special book, toy or other item when the child has stayed dry or used the potty for a certain amount of time.

For others, trips to the park or extra bedtime stories are effective. Experiment to find what works best for your child. Reinforce your child’s effort with verbal praise, such as, “This is great! You’re learning to use the potty just like big kids do!” Even if your child doesn’t do a complete routine successfully, give praise about any part of the process that he is able to do.
Cleaning supplies

You’ll also want to have supplies for cleaning up accidents, such as rags, cleaning solution, and a plastic bucket.
CHAPTER 8: Three-Day Potty Training Method

Principles that make the 3-Day Method effective

Every child is different. Even among siblings, each will show readiness signs, respond to training, achieve mastery in his or her own unique way, which then makes for wonderful storytelling. But just because things don’t seem to be working at the beginning in the way we expect doesn’t mean “the method doesn’t work” and toss out the method. That’s why it helps to read this book several times BEFORE applying the 3-day method, and not while in the middle of it. After letting it simmer in your mind for several weeks while observing your child’s responses and temperament, by the time you actually begin the 3-day training, you kind of know it “by heart” and not just “by the book.”

You will by then have some idea how to innovate within the guiding principles of the 3-Day method. You will be able to determine where to apply variation and where to be firm
and unchanging. For example, you may innovate about what kind of rewards to give, and how, but you have to be firm about using real underwear (and not pull-ups) after throwing out diapers.

At the very foundation of what’s fixed and what’s varied, are principles that make the 3-Day method of potty training effective. These apply to each child, regardless of temperament. Be prepared never to run out of:

**Persistence**

Potty training is a time when a child learns to make several connections between his own body sensations and functions and the use of brand new equipment. It takes time. So even if our child seems to gravitate between success and regression, or may suddenly seem disinterested, or may even seem to already get it, these are the times when we don’t give up. There’s a process going on and your child’s mind and muscles are taking it all in, one at a time. We need to keep up success on our side of the training area, and eventually it will click. And it will be great.

**Consistency**

Sometimes we might be tempted to take shortcuts with the intent of reaching the goal faster. When that happens, stop. Take a deep breath. Resume with the same energy, responding to each pee and poo with the same actions. Consistency means being able to do it the same way all the time, without any action being loaded with any recrimination or frustration.

The pending process and potty schedule should not be interrupted. Don’t even think of going back to diapers or pull-ups once your child has begun wearing underwear, even if he cries and asks for it or refuses to poop unless you put a diaper on him. If you give in, this will only confuse your child and weaken his body’s resolve.

Consistency in the 3-Day potty training method applies to all, whether with boys or girls, older children, children with autism, Asperger’s, Down’s, OCD, or any diagnosed disorder. It’s about the parent being on top of the situation, working with the responses of the child. Most girls train faster than boys. But sometimes there are boys who get it quicker. Whatever the pace, we parents need to implement actions in the same way. Using this method, we don’t sit back and say, “They’ll just go when they are ready.” There are many things we have to introduce and help our child connect with. Otherwise, how are they going to know? Just like everything else, we teach them.
**Patience**

Whether it’s learning to play the violin, or whipping up a great souffle, or making a blog video, everything takes patience to do well. Potty training in three days doesn’t mean it is going to be easy, it just means it will take three days for a child’s body to absorb the basics. There will be accidents to clean up depending on how much effort you put into observing your children, sticking to the potty schedule, and managing beverage consumption. Bed wetting and other issues may be encountered, and unless there is a medical reason behind such issues, which can be the case with bed wetting, being patient in your efforts gives you the results you are looking for. Focus with patience on what you are aiming for with your child.

**Positivity**

Everything about potty-training is good. Even the accidents have no negative side-effects. Things can only get better, It will work out in the end,

When you decide it’s time to begin potty training, set your child up for success. Maintain a good sense of humor and a positive attitude — and encourage the whole family to be the same.

**Love**

Of course love is why we’re making the effort to help our child use the potty, but it can get tricky what is the most loving thing to do when he poops in another fresh change of new underwear. Often it just helps to break down laughing and remember how round his eyes get when he knows he missed, or how great it is that he is even willing to try. For potty training, just like learning any new skill, we need to give our children and ourselves some breathing space and cut ourselves some slack so we can rebound with a smile every time.

**No punishment, reprimands or negative behavior correction techniques**

Accidents are going to happen so be prepared for them. Even children who have used the potty successfully for months occasionally have accidents. Don’t make them feel bad for having an accident. Scolding will mean more months of potty training rather than fewer. Remember this when you feel frustrated.

Instead, remind them to tell you when they need to potty so you can take them to the potty right away. Remember that positive reinforcement goes further, so always praise your child for a job well done or for trying.
There are several instances when a child who won’t go in the potty will go the moment diapers are put back on. Don’t be put off. No matter how tempting it is to revert to diapers or pull-ups, stick to underwear, even during nighttime training. It will be worth it in the end. The preparation period will help as you introduce your child to the potty a few weeks ahead of the three days.

If you are a disabled parent, by all means you can be actively involved with the teaching, playing, and non-physical aspects of potty-training.

Day 1

The first day may be the hardest, especially for working mothers who may not be used to staying at home. It’s not easier for stay-at-home moms, but on the whole the joys will far outweigh the pains for any parent who is prepared.

This takes a lot of patience and diligence. You will have to watch your child constantly for signs that they need to go to the potty. In the beginning, you may not pick up on their need to go until they are already going. As soon as you see them going place them on the potty where they can and will finish going. As they go, talk to them about the feeling of needing to go. Say, “Did you feel that you were about to pee? When you feel like that it means it’s time to get on the potty.” Be calm and reassuring. If they go in the potty at all, even just a little, give them a reward.

The potty should already be in the bathroom

It is better in the long run for the potty chair to be in the bathroom, than in any other location such as the garden or in front of the TV, so your child will learn to associate the potty with needing to pee or poo. Make sure your child’s feet rest firmly on a floor mat or a stool while he is sitting on the potty. Help your child understand how to talk about the bathroom using simple, correct terms you decide on beforehand.

You and your child should eat breakfast

Lots of high-fiber food, cereal, fruit, and healthy liquids, juice more than milk (which only tightens stools)

Set the training tone for the day

When you take off your child’s diaper upon waking, talk to them while cleaning them up. Tell them a bit of a story about how that is the last diaper they will be
wearing.

Dress your child in clothes that are easy to take off – for example, loose trousers with elastic waistbands, rather than full body jumpsuits. In warmer weather, you might like to dress them in t-shirt and underwear, as you need to catch the moment when accidents occur. Many parents resort to the bare-butt approach, but again it is better for the child to get used to wearing underwear AND feeling the need to go. While putting on fresh underwear, explain to your child “You’re a big boy/big girl now…”

**Make an event of throwing out the diapers**

Let the child throw away every unused diaper in the house. Celebrate this transition. You may even call your parents or close friends and let your child spread the news. Once your child is wearing regular underwear, avoid overalls, belts, leotards or other clothing that could hinder quick undressing.

This is a big move for your child. If you celebrate it, the transition will be easier. Talk about how grown-up she is and how proud of her you are.

You may even treat it as a “Big Kid Potty Party” attaching balloons to the trash can as your child tosses out his old diapers. Then introduce the ‘big kid’ underwear (which he or she picked out beforehand) as a gift.

When you throw out the diapers, really take it out to the trashbin. Don’t keep a few extras in storage.

Don’t go back to nappies/diapers/training pants at all during the training process

Trading diapers for real underwear is more than just a change of outfit for your son or daughter. The diaper is the ONE thing that has remained a constant in their life so far. Children wearing cloth diapers will feel more discomfort earlier than those clad in disposables.

But for those who have been used to disposables, leaving the comfort of super-absorbent layers is as if they are going through their “last stand.” Siblings may grow up, favorite childhood items like pillows, blankets, and toys may change, and favorite food tastes alter from infancy. It will probably be hardest to give up a diaper. But once you take the diaper off, don’t hesitate about it, or even think of reverting back when the going gets tough. You may be training a second child and may find the potty-training period to be either a rerun of your eldest, or a totally different scene. You may either use some or all of the pieces of new underwear you prepared at the start of the day. This is normal. During the
whole 1st day of training so you will be able to observe certain patterns from your child to help you adjust for the following day.

**If they cry gently explain they are big boy/big girl now**

Weaning your toddler out of diapers depends on whether a consistent approach is taken. So if after the 3 days of potty-training, if she’s at daycare or with a minder, nanny, or relatives, everyone needs to know what approach you use, so they can do the same, and prevent your toddler from becoming confused.

The more time your child spends out of diapers, the faster she’ll learn. Children are more likely to understand how to use the potty if they’re no longer wearing an absorbent receptacle, as the diaper is really a portable toilet.

**Fifteen minutes after throwing out the diapers, go to bathroom, explain to your child what the potty is for, and what his goal is**

Review how it is used, and give them a practice run to start off the day. Make sure it’s very clear that this is the only place where they should go to pee and poo!

It helps to designate only one potty where they need to go to relieve themselves. Parents may feel it convenient to let boys especially, pee out in the garden, but they could associate this with peeing in any open space, whether in preschool or in the park, as has often happened with my nephews. So it would be good to designate the potty as the only place to run when they need to go.

Some child may dislike sitting on the potty at first. You don’t need to force them, but the next time they start going, set them down on the potty again. Eventually they will begin to see the potty as a welcoming place.

**Have the mop, bucket, cleaning liquid nearby, but not within range of your child**

Because messes are definitely going to happen, and it’s probably not going to be in the potty the first time, arm yourself with all the appropriate cleaning materials and get ready for battle.

You might wish to spread a large tarpaulin mat in the play area, if your floors are carpeted or polished.

**Ask child at regular intervals if underwear is dry**

Give positive reinforcement and praise each time.
Most children have a bowel movement once a day, usually within an hour after eating. Most children urinate within an hour after having a large drink.

**Instruct child, “Let mommy know when you have to go pee or poo, ok?”**

Repetition is necessary as children have short attention spans. Only gentle reminders – it’s best if your child doesn’t feel pressured. If you’re sure your child hasn’t done a poo or pee in a while, ask him again, especially while he is doing something – he might get so caught up in what he’s doing that he doesn’t realise he needs to go until it’s too late. This question entrusts him with a bit of responsibility. With older children it’s not necessary to keep reminding as the child can only turn it into a defiance issue.

**DO NOT ASK the child if they have to go pee or potty**

This provokes a kind of auto-response and often they will just reply no to get rid of the question. Besides this is not a guarantee, as many pee/poo in their underwear just seconds after responding ‘no.’

**DO NOT take the child to the potty at definite intervals when he does not show signs of needing to go**

Take your child to the potty only when you perceive he is about to pee or poo.

Some set their child sit on the potty within 15 to 30 minutes after meals to take advantage of the body's natural tendency (gastro-colic reflex) to have a bowel movement after eating. Others turn regular intervals into a game, even using a “potty watch.” But the child may get bored with the regularity, or fixate on a more interesting aspect of the potty, like playing with the baby wipes. This 3-Day potty training method has proven it is much better for a child to associate his body’s need to go with the actual act of going to the potty. There’s less disappointment, even on the part of the child, when he finds he really doesn’t need to go at these intervals.

**Offer liquids throughout the day**

Give your child lots of fibre to eat and water to drink in a regular way so she doesn’t become constipated, a condition which will make potty training difficult. Your child’s diet is the best way to handle this, rather than buying fibre supplements. Never force your child to drink if they don't want to.

Add prunes to the mixture of fruits. The prunes keep him from
getting blocked up and constipated, and prevents a child from holding his poop for days just to avoid using the potty.

**Do a variety of activities together**

Today will be the time to enjoy the variety of books, games, activities and tv programs you prepared beforehand. Never leave the child's side. You must catch your child in the act of going pee or potty.

**Catch your child in the act of peeing or pooping**

Children often give clear cues that they need to use the bathroom — their faces turn red, and they may grunt or squat. You will be now have noticed at what times of day or how soon after meals they tend to have a bowel movement.

If they go in their underwear, stay calm. Do not punish your child. Simply say ‘Yucky, your underwear isn’t dry anymore’ Don’t use words ‘bad’ or ‘no.’ Use positive reinforcement throughout.

**Devise a quick efficient method for cleaning up accidents**

Accidents are necessary for the learning process. There is no other way to learn this new concept without accidents.

Just clean up the mess without any fuss, if possible, you and your child, together. Then resume the potty training routine, the same way as before. The more your child uses the potty, the better she’ll be at it. As you change your child’s underwear, continue to encourage your child to use the potty chair. Dress them in loose-fitting clothes that they can easily take off.

If your child begins to feel pressure that he is upsetting you or causing any other negative feeling coming from you, they are likely to shut down and want to go back to wearing a diaper. If you make them feel bad for it then it will take longer and they won't feel as confident. This can happen even to children who have shown signs of readiness to be potty-trained. So a positive attitude is needed on all fronts.

As long as you have a change of clothes and underwear, you are equipped to handle accidents. Don’t put your child in a diaper after an accident. Put on another pair of underwear and continue where you left off. These accidents only foster and reinforce all that your toddler has learned instead of subtracting from them. Day 2 and 3 should be better, and the days after that, though probably not at the pace you expect.
If you’ve rushed the child to the potty and nothing comes, you can ask them “Where is the pee (or poo)?” then add, “Maybe next time.” You can find your own words for this. Just let your child know you didn’t rush them to the potty for nothing.

**Remember that accidents only add to learning**

Imagine, at this point your child has only just developed the amazing physical ability to manage this body process. As a grown-up, you might not remember it happened for you, but this takes a while to get right. If your child gets upset because of an accident, reassure him that it doesn’t really matter and there’s no need to worry.

Until children are independently potty-trained, a lot depends on how vigilant the parents are. If you’re extra vigilant, you'll have less accidents. If both parents and all grownups within range are showing a united front, children are more likely to want to learn faster.

Each accident carries with it a signal about what part of potty-training your child is trying to get, so it isn’t discouraging at all. Sometimes an accident may show your child knows what it feels like to want to go, but just missed the potty by a bit. At other times they may be so wrapped up in what they are doing that they fail to tell you they need to go, but the flushed “uh-oh” look tells you they know what they should have done.

When dealing with accidents, it helps to remember what it was like when your child was learning to walk. Remember how we were so excited about their littlest steps? Even if they were falling all the time, we saw them as “already walking” once they started trying! Sometimes the progress was a bit forwards, a great deal backwards, and so forth, gradually. But one day it all came together.

**Even just running to the bathroom when peeing or pooping is happening reinforces with the child what he/she can/cannot do**

Older women in my family said that if you get a child to eliminate waste successfully three times in a row, something clicks. They will understand, by the third time, why I set them down on a potty chair. Sometimes a child may even allow an accident to happen just to get confirmation that what I wanted was for them to eliminate waste in the potty.

**Panic or pleading look are telltale signs they are about to release**

Scoop them up and run to the potty!

Look out for more signs that your child needs to go to the potty – some cues include changes in posture, passing wind and going quiet. Sometimes it’s a bit difficult for them to feel like they need to pee when they’re sitting or lying down, even while awake, so you
need to be more watchful. Pay attention to your child if she signals she needs the potty immediately. She might be right!

Be consistent even when you don’t feel like bringing him/her to the potty, or even if you’ve just had an accident a few minutes before

Even if your child starts to pee outside of the bathroom, catch it right away, and lead them quickly into the potty to finish the process.

It is important that your actions communicate that there in only one GOAL: to pee or poo in the potty. Going on the floor or in your clothes is not a valid option. If they pee or poo, act swiftly to get them to the right place. Don’t draw attention to accidents at all. Focus on the positive and on the successes.

If he misses, give praise for the parts that he is able to do: telling you that he needed to go, trying to pull down his pants, running to the potty, etc.

The better they feel about the potty, the more they will want to go. So after an accident you could also say, “Well, we didn't make it to the potty this time but accidents happen we will just have to try extra hard to make it next time!”

Once the role of the potty begins to follow a consistent routine, like bed time and meal time, it will be easier for you and your child, because he will learn to treat is as a good time, and not a separate event.

When they release in the potty, provide a flood of praise

Really make them feel good.

Every child is different but one really big thing in common for all is that when they feel like they did something absolutely FANTASTIC when they go to the potty, naturally they will just want to keep going. Even as adults we want to keep doing something we are recognized for being good at.

When your child eventually gets something in the potty, celebrate this significant milestone with a privilege, such as watching a new DVD or an extra bedtime story. But try not to make a big deal of every trip to the potty or your child may start to feel nervous and self-conscious due to all the attention.
Stay with your child when he or she is on the potty chair. Reading or talking to your child when he or she is sitting on the potty may help your child relax.

Praise is a much better reward than sweet treats, “Well done, Kristine,” or “Hey, your pants stayed dry all day today, whenever you needed to pee or poo you went in the potty,” that kind of thing.

Make sure he sees that the praise is for learning a new skill, not something he has to do to please you. For example you might say, ‘You did that really well’ rather than ‘You are a good boy for Daddy.’

Also help your child associate this success with what he/she was feeling beforehand: “You felt the urge, then we went to the potty and did a pee.” Help him want to do it, not because of the reward, but because he will want to stay clean and dry.

It also helps to praise them in front of other people, even on the phone, so they’ll know it’s quite a big deal.

**Sweet treats as rewards**

Though it is ok to give children treats at times, the rewards you prepare should harmonize with the healthy way you are bringing up your child. It will not help to suddenly be giving a lot of speets in a short time when normally you are teach your child to have a sweet only after meals. Children will expect such things and it can make things worse. If used to start a routine, speets are ok, but make sure it’s not every time they go that you treat them with chocolate or candy, other times praise them sincerely and be encouraging.

But do make a HUGE deal about it! Again, in a way that is not unnatural as far as your child knows you. If you are the type who can make up a spontaneous potty dance or potty song that you know your child will like, then that will add a great deal of fun! But don’t force it if that’s not your style. Use the kind of language – verbal, musical, or bodily – that you know your child understands from you.

If you decide to have some sweet treats, you could try mini M&Ms, mini-marshmallows, gummi bears, or slices of their favorite fruit, like pineapple, watermelon, a different treat for peeing, and for pooping.

Sometimes with the boys, parents have tried rewards like toy cars, trains, trucks, rugs with their favorite cartoon, which they could have as a “prize” the moment they got poop in the potty. Then reduce the amount of rewards as the days go on.
A bit of a downside to rewards

Rewarding with prizes or treats can really backfire with certain kids, as they can come to expect it and then when you try to wean them off the rewarding it can sometimes be harder than the actual potty training. So plan rewards wisely.

Naptime

It helps to pee before naps, and shortly after waking. There may be a few accidents at the beginning, but soon they learn to stay dry during naptime, and at nighttime will learn to either wake you up when they need to go, or surprise you by going to the potty themselves.

Children will also be able to train for naps and nighttime as they get more used to using the potty during the day.

Nighttime

There are times when nighttime training happens sooner than we expect. But don’t worry if it doesn’t. Even when your child is consistently clean and dry all day, it may take him several more weeks to master night training. Boys, in particular, can take longer to develop the physical ability to hold pee in their sleep.

- Avoid big drinks after dinner or close to bedtime. Best to stop liquids 2-3 hours beforehand.

- Take them to potty at least twice before going to bed, but don’t keep them on the potty when nothing is happening.

- Make it clear to your child that you’ll help her in the middle of the night if she wakes up needing to use the potty. Assure her that there’s nothing wrong if she has an accident at night.

- It may help to wake the child 1 hour after he falls asleep, bring him to the potty for about ten minutes, then back to bed again. Disrupting their sleep gently and having them get out of bed and use the potty helps nighttime potty training because it lets them know that it is ok if they have to get out of bed at night and use the potty.
- If you detect any movement from your child during the night, say gently “Tell mommy when you have to pee, okay?”

- If they wet the sheets, be patient, simply change the sheets, remind the child to tell you when he has to go pee, but don’t use any negative words.

  - There are plastic mattress protectors or pads that you can buy for every size of bed or crib. Put sheets under a mattress protector, and sheets on top of it, so if they wet the bed at night you could just pull the wet top sheet, wipe the mattress cover, lay another dry sheet. Even if you have to do more laundry it is so worth it to not have to buy diapers anymore.

  - Put your child in underwear, don’t use pull-ups, even at night. Pull-ups may seem like a reassurance at the beginning, but only contribute to wetness, though concealed.

- It helps to have a night light along the path to the potty at night. Some children do not get up or want to use their potty simply because it may be too dark or scary for them.

- Try to make sure the potty is always easy to access and use.

For parents training children older than 2 years, it may help to have a chart with a schedule written on it “Bedtime Routine.” Let child know that if he gets a star for each item, he’ll have a reward in the morning.

- In the morning, wake him 1 hour before his normal waking time and take him to the potty. Many bedtime accidents happen when children are already awake in bed but don’t get up yet.

**Day 2**

Continue to apply the same instructions consistently from Day 1, with the wisdom learned from observing your child’s patterns and responses.

On Day 2 you can go out to the garden for one hour in the afternoon after they pee in the potty.

Don’t show frustration at accidents or when the child seems to not get it yet. There are times when the child (who was used to disposables) is testing you. They just want to see if they can get the diaper back, as it was much easier to go then. Don’t give
in, just stay positive and happy and they will soon realize you aren’t giving in. It may be Day 2, but don’t push your child. Relax and let him learn at his own pace – he is closer to getting the hang of it than before. Encourage him with gentle reminders and stories. What your child wants most is to please you, and praising him will tell him what a good job he’s doing.

Often you may feel like Day 2 is going to be like Day 1, but it is possible that your child will begin to get it and there will hardly be any accidents. There still might be partial misses, no longer outright messes. On Day 2 your child may learning to recognize the sensation she was first feeling when she needed to go potty, so she will want to make it in time.

At first a child may even be awed by the knowledge that she already knows what to do, but might be a bit awkward and try to hide, but if you pick up on this as a signal, and put her on the potty, then give her a favorite book to help her relax, she will poo with comfort. “Hey that’s great! You are getting it now!” Once a child is able to release successfully the rest can come easier. But still we should be consistent and not let down on following the training routine.

If a child can become difficult, start screaming, or resist any incentives, continue to stay positive and try to ease the pressure.

**Day 3**

On Day 3 you can go out for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon – again only immediately after a pee. This helps reinforce to the child that he needs to pee before going out, and also gives you enough time to get in the house and be near the potty before he pees again.

Wear only shirt, underwear, and loose-fitting trousers when out of the house. Don’t use diapers or pull-ups when outdoors, as any of these can just give the signal to the brain that there is something there to ‘catch’ the poo or pee and can lead to regressions.

There may be a surprise on Day 3, especially if you approached the 3-Day Method with no pressure from expectations. Instead of having the same thing as Day 1 and 2, your child may suddenly get it and be free of accidents the whole day!

But if a child is still showing not seeming to get it, don’t lose heart. His brain and body and muscles are already getting it. Just keep being positive, reminding your child of the parts of the
training that he is able to do. It also helps to continue doing activities you both enjoy in between potty breaks – books, games, ice cream cones, cookies you both bake, etc.

A child’s resistance will soften once the potty proves to be a comforting place. She may make efforts to verbalize instead of just signal, “Mommy, potty” and will willingly sit on the potty. Even if nothing happens, she is still making an effort. At least she’s sitting on it. It will also help if an older sibling comes home from school and is cheering for her.

Of course Day 3 could also become a meltdown, where it seems as if progress made on Day 1 and 2 is being undone. But don’t give up. At day’s end, ask your husband or another grownup to keep an eye on your child for a while then go outside for a bit to vent steam and cry yourself out. Cooling down will bring fresh ideas about how to approach incentives in a more motivating way.

Just when you’re feeling like a total failure, you’ll start to think about things besides potty training – endearing things your child does, how cute your child is in big-kid underwear, how proud he makes you by his dinosaur drawings and play-doh figures, how sweet he can be, what a good sport he is through this training – then you’ll think of how to ease the pressure a bit and make it more fun, or if you’re overdoing the fun, how to tone it down to the kind of reality your child can enjoy.

After the 3-Day Potty Training

Day 4, 5, 6, 7 and onwards…

Pleasant surprises do happen and will happen. Your child will have gotten the basics by now, or may seem indifferent. But just when you are beginning lose all hope, and about to give up, your child suddenly gets it! You take her, she sits down, and goes in the potty!

Rejoice over every bit of progress. There may still be bits of accidents, or variations like being able to pee but not poo, or vice versa. Especially when you start going outside, like to the mall, to your parents’ house, to church. But just stay calm and consistent with your actions, whether they have gotten it or not, as the follow-up period is often the time when we parents let go of the vigilance we applied during the actual 3-Day potty training.

After several days it may help to invest more freedom by telling your child she can use the potty when she needs to (instead of her having to tell you). Then gauge what happens. Sometimes this is where it clicks! Then normalize liquid intake to the amounts that your child is used to. What happens is she has the option of asking you when she needs to go, or walking to the potty herself. Slowly, there is progress in different aspects.
You will also notice improvements which will show you can take your child to public places without fear or embarrassment.

What a tremendous experience when you are able to say “We are done with diapers in this household.” That really feels good!

Observations from fellow parents who have used this 3-Day Method of potty-training with their children:

- Children did learn to use the potty within 3 days. Practicing and perfecting the behavior took another 3 weeks. A total of one month from soiling their diapers to being independent and going to the potty on their own

- When done between 18-24 months of age, the total potty training was done by the end of three weeks

- The 3-Day potty training method even works for 3-year olds

- The 3-day method can take only a day and a half, then just a few accidents in the next two weeks, then no more accidents after

- After the 3-day training, accidents just 2x a week, but only when busy playing. Pooping was helped with the increase of fiber in the child’s diet

- Day 2 was accident-free but Day 3 had two accidents and it felt like starting over. But even with a very stubborn child, it worked after parents just stuck with it and kept being positive

- It took two weeks for a boy not to have peeing accidents, and four months later he still has them, but rare

- Accidents on Day 1, so one parent had to put her son in new underwear every 20 minutes. But on Day 2 he didn’t want to soil his underwear. On Day 3, he did not pee in his underwear at all. An occasional poop accident afterwards, but made quick progress.

- “It took about 5 days for my 20-month old to really get it.”

- One mother had a son about 2 1/2 years old when she gave birth to a daughter. She didn’t begin potty training she had a regular schedule with the baby. Was afraid that he would regress in an attempt to compete with his sister. But it really wasn’t so hard, and the boy was trained without trouble

- Another mother took a week off from work to potty-train her 2 ½ year old daughter. She let her pick out real underwear with cartoon characters. In three days the potty-training clicked and she was completely trained in three weeks
- One had a son and daughter who were potty-trained within less than a week. Went straight to underwear, went to potty every 30 mins. But with her youngest it was a different story, just didn’t really care. Went back and forth for a while. All of a sudden she decided she would actually do it and it clicked.

- Worked beautifully for a boy at 23 months. He had it down by the end of day 2. Most accidents afterwards happened because the mother couldn’t get him to the potty/toilet quickly (stuck in traffic, at the mall, etc.)

- On Day 1, a son peed in the actual potty about 20% of the time. The rest was in the living room. By Day 3, the ratio was the other way around, and he was peeing in the potty 80% of the time, and catching himself if he started to pee elsewhere

- Worked in 3 days for three successive children when they were each just past 2 years old. The mother prepared equipment in advance, got a potty, just took the diapers off and put them in underwear that they picked out. They stayed home the entire time, potty at the ready, and each time they peed or pooped their mother told them to use the potty and they started by getting some in there and then just eventually went in the potty all the time

- Another liked the 3-day method for the part about starting earlier rather than later, its emphasis on consistency and the total banishment of the diaper. She rightly observed that “Pottying should be seen as a daily matter of course. It is something that we all do several times a day so a toddler should learn it is a part of his life and not a separate event.”

- Another mother also had a baby close to the time when she was about to start potty training her toddler. She was scared by other people’s horror stories that she began putting the process off. But when she actually started this 3-day potty training, she wished she started earlier because it was much easier than she feared
Urination – “Peeing/ Weeing”

Most children master daytime bladder control first so they learn to pee in the potty first, then the bowel movements a bit later. Or sometimes sooner than we expect, but that’s getting ahead of the surprise.

Put the potty in a bathroom near the playing area. Lay a protective tarpaulin sheet over the floor or carpet to protect it. Watch for signs that a child has to go, such as hopping from one foot to another, wriggling, and holding hands between legs.

For boys, it is recommended they learn to pee sitting down first, then once they have mastered that, they can transition to standing up. I know there are varying opinions on this, but when I had to potty train my son, I found sitting first to be very helpful. That
position alone is perfect for peeing and pooping. Once my son mastered his bowel movements he chose, on his own, to stand and pee.

Teach your boy to shake his penis after a pee to get rid of any drops. Sometimes, in the early stages of potty training, it’s helpful to float a ping pong ball in the potty for him to aim at. Or he might prefer to sit and do a pee, which can be less messy in the early stages.

If he or she urinates in their new underwear, your child may be more likely to feel what's happening and express discomfort, as opposed to feeling dry all the time in disposables.

**How does the bladder work?**

![Diagram of a child with kidneys, bladder, and sphincter muscles]

- Kidneys make wee
- The bladder acts like a water tank and stores the wee
- The bladder tells the brain when it is time to wee
- When you go to the potty the bladder squeezes, the gate (sphincter) opens, and the wee comes out by itself

**How to ensure healthy urination**

- The moment a child feels he needs to wee, stop whatever he is doing and go to the potty.
- Remind a child that he should not withhold wee
- Don’t hurry or push to make wee come out, just wait and relax until it is ready.
- Drink water with your meals and when you are thirsty
- Include fresh fruit and vegetables in your child’s daily meals

**Bowel movements – “Pooping”**

![Diagram of the digestive system](image)

**How does bowel movement work?**

- Our body uses the nutrients from the food we eat to grow strong and healthy. Whatever isn’t needed by the body comes out as poo
- The bowel (intestines) makes poo
- When it is time to poo, our bowel tells the brain
- When a child sits on the potty, the poo comes out by itself

**How to have healthy bowel movements**

- Include water, juice, fresh fruit and vegetables in the child’s daily meals
- When the child looks like he is about to poo, stop whatever he is doing and go to the potty. Don’t hold on too long.
- Explain to your child that when he needs to poo he needs to sit on the potty
- When he thinks he has finished, ask him to wait a little longer and see if more poo needs to come out
- Teach your child to wipe from the front to the back, and to wipe until all poo is gone.
CHAPTER 10: HOW TO WIPE THEIR BUMS

When taught how to use the potty, girls learn early that they have to wipe themselves, so they are also pretty knowledgeable by the time it’s their own responsibility to wipe their bottom. Boys usually have their mothers or fathers wipe for them. They yell "mommymmmmy!" when they’re ready, they assume the position, and that’s it. They just can’t seem to arch their back right and their hand to wipe properly. Even if they use toilet paper or wet wipes, they do not really come close to wiping anything at all. Boys want to wipe and try to wipe their bums, but often at the beginning can’t reach far enough to get all of it. We’ve even had 2-year olds who can wipe better than 4-year olds!

Along with learning how to wipe, you also need to teach your toddler what she needs to do for personal hygiene after she uses the potty. The habits she develops now will last for her lifetime, so it’s important to start this process from the beginning. Even while learning to use the potty, you can begin to teach how to wash the hands, flush pee and
poop down the toilet, wipe up splashes around the potty. You will want to help little boys
direct their urine stream so they avoid spraying the walls or floor.

The cost of not getting clean is an itchy bum. Stinky bums are not fun. More importantly
your child should know that if he makes a mess while wiping and doesn’t wash his hands
well afterward, he could get sick.

Reinforce the importance of NO POOP ANYWHERE BUT in the potty. They should also
know they will have to bathe if they get poop on their bodies.

If a child may try to reach in and scoop bits of poop with his hands, this simply stems
from his curiosity. This may be unpleasant to deal with, but toddlers are not trying to
upset you. Punishment does not help, but you do not have to pretend to be happy about it
either. You can prevent this without making him feel upset by simply saying, “This is not
something to be played with.” Then wash his hands with soap and water and be sure you
clean under his fingernails as well. There are germs (viruses and bacteria) in poo. If poop
gets on surfaces other than in the potty, hot water and normal household cleaners are
usually enough to clean cots, walls and other furniture.

**When can children begin to learn how to wipe?**

Once your child could reach back far enough, then it’s time for him to be able to do it.
They should be able to start doing it on their own, especially by the time they are 3 years
old. Many of our day care and pre-schools also have the requirement that by 4 years old
kids should be completely potty-trained, to know when to go and clean up, so with your
training, by that age they already know how!

**Correct technique**

Explain what needs to be done, pulling out wipes, wiping from front to back to avoid
infections. You’ll need to wipe your child’s bottom at first, until she learns how to do it
herself.

Teach girls to wipe carefully from front to back to prevent bringing germs from the
rectum to the vagina, urethra or bladder. If this is too complicated for her to grasp, just
Teach her to pat herself dry after she pees.

Learn how to check the wipe so that if it’s not clean, to wipe again. Teach them not to
wipe more than once with the same spot of toilet paper or else they will end up smearing
poop all over the bum.
If using toilet paper, teach child the right technique of how to use a different square of toilet paper to continue wiping, with fresh squares till no stain remains.

**Materials**

*Flushable wet wipes*

These are marketed as a lot easier to use because they are moist so it helps children completely wipe their bum clean.

But a word of warning from user whose family owns plumbing company: “Flushable wipes are NOT supposed to be flushed. They do not dissolve in the way toilet paper does and plumbers have unclogged more toilets than they care to count. If using flushable wipes, have a trash can with liner, next to potty and make sure that is where they are thrown. Better than spending a couple hundred dollars having someone unclog the toilet for you.

So flushable wipes are not so ‘flushable’ after all. (See previous chapter concerning alternatives to flushable wipes)

*Toilet paper*

Types of toilet paper available are:

- eco-friendly post-consumer type which is kind of rough on delicate areas
- basic tissue
- soft tissue w/ aloes and vit. E
- thick strong toilet paper

Flushable toilet paper now readily available, but it is still the best practice to dispose of toilet paper in a lined trashbin, not in the bowl where it can clog the drain. Teach your child to wipe after bowel movements. Toilet paper is supposed to do a better job of cleaning, and ease your burden when it comes to doing laundry. Soft tissue will do, as there’s a downside to teaching your child how to wipe with thick strong toilet paper. Once he does a pretty good job, and uses a lot, he might end up stopping the toilet.

- Take 3 or 4 squares of toilet paper
- Fold into 1 square size
• Wipe from front to back but not further or it turns to smearing. Wipe, don’t spread. Don’t reuse paper. Dispose in trashbin
• Pull out 2 more squares, fold, wipe
• Pull out 2 more squares or 1 wet wipe, wipe and check if there are no more poop marks. Dispose of used tissue and wipes in trashbin
• Flush toilet
• Wash hands

**Learning to flush**

Flushing the toilet after tossing in the contents of the potty is a necessary step to teach your child. Some children are afraid of the loud noise and do not want to be involved in the process, while others can't wait to push the magic button that takes the poop and paper away. Some parents will see a slight increase in their water bill as they find their toddler flushing for fun. Be sure to use a toilet lid safety latch to prevent the flushing of toys, cellular phones, and other basic items found around your house that are not intended for bathroom fun.

**Learning to wash hands**

Develop in your child the habit of not coming out of the bathroom without washing his hands.

One way to motivate your child to wash his hands is to do it with fun soaps especially those that make lots of foam. Girls like pretty towels and colorful soaps. Attach hand towel to bar or shower curtain to keep towels from falling to the floor.

Good hygiene begins with basic hand washing. Not only does proper hand washing technique keep your child’s hands clean, but it also helps keep the whole family free from disease. Washing with regular soap and water will do, or you may use alcohol-based, no-rinse cleansers. These cleansers are a good alternative to soap and water, and most provide moisturizers to prevent dry hands as well as antibacterial coverage for most viruses and bacteria. They are great for use when you are on the go at places like at the playground, grocery store, church, and restaurants where water and soap are not easily accessible. The only time soap and water is absolutely recommended over alcohol-based cleansers is when hands have become contaminated or soiled with body fluids like urine, stool, blood, mucus, etc. In that case your toddler needs a soap and water wash. In fact, I
still prefer plain soap and water, when available, over anti-bacterial cleansers. Teach your child from the beginning how to thoroughly clean her hands.

Five steps for good handwashing:

- Wet hands
- Apply soap (liquid or foam cleanser is preferred over bar soap)
- Rub hands together, creating friction between the fingers, for about fifteen seconds
- Rinse hands well with water
- Dry hands using a clean towel

To help your child with handwashing, place a second toddler-sized step stool for him in front of the sink. Make sure that soap and towels are within a child’s easy view to encourage appropriate use. Water may be splashed around so a small mop-up towel left for children to use after using the sink is encouraged. Ask the child to sing a song lasting at least a minute to scrub away bacteria and germs, and if using a dual hot/cold water source be sure to set the heater to an appropriate temperature to avoid burns.

**Visual aid for learning to wipe**

Use yourself as a model, or show your toddler how, using a teddy bear, so he’ll get the right motion and areas.

The first few times your son/daughter has a bowel movement, you will need to place your hand over his to show him how to wipe… Later, if this seems to go well, you can move on checking his underwear periodically to make sure there aren’t any stains.

You may want to put a special sticker on his potty chart for each time he wipes. This could be a flower, bug, airplane, funny face accents, or even half-stickers for half-efforts, if your child is the type who responds to that.

Try taking some photos of his bum with a digital camera so they’ll see what you mean if more cleaning is needed.

For those who think they need a more practical illustration, you may try the peanut butter on a plate to practice how to wipe. (Don’t worry, peanut butter will still taste good.) This is because some kids don’t know how to wipe anything off, they only know how to smear.
A child may say he can’t, but if you show him enough times with his own hand he can do it, even 3-year olds.

Like any good teaching:

- Start with “my turn” – explain what, how, and why you are doing each step;
- Next is “our turn” – guide him by holding his wrist and modeling what he should do;
- Last step is “your turn” – giving him independent practice with adjustment as needed.

Not everything has to be done in one sitting. By the time he starts kindergarten he should be totally independent for his potty needs. Teachers don’t have time nor are they paid to wipe noses or butts. But sadly, many parents expect them to.

School can instead be a big motivator. If you explain to your child that teachers are not going to wipe his butt, this will encourage him to learn to clean himself voluntarily. Being with other children who know how to use the potty, wipe themselves clean, and wash up will stir him to do the same.

Learning these skills enables your child to start using his reasoning skills and learn to do things on his own. Leave wipes within his easy reach, also towel, soap or sanitizer. Remind your son that he is a big boy and you’re proud of him. Encouraging words get your child to the point where he can take care of himself faster. What a big difference it makes that instead of your child screaming that he’s done and needs you to wipe his butt, he can do it himself.

During the time that your child is learning to wipe, bathe him well so that whatever’s left on the bum will get cleaned up every day.

The wiping will get better. After practicing and realizing that his bum gets sore or irritated when he doesn't wipe well, boys will make the effort to do it correctly. Girls aren’t known to have that much trouble learning how to wipe.
CHAPTER 11: POTTY TRAINING DIFFERENCES GIRLS/BOYS, OLDER, TWINS, MULTIPLE CHILDREN

Potty Training For Girls

Girls tend to be potty trained about three months earlier than boys, but this isn’t always the case. And if she has older siblings, she may learn earlier than if she was a firstborn.

Spark your daughter’s interest in potty-training by taking her on a special shopping trip to choose her own knickers. Favourite cartoon characters are usually a big hit.

Explain to your daughter what it the sensation feels like when she has to pee.

It helps that most girls don’t like getting their underwear wet, so she’s a little more apt to tell you when she needs to go. It may be hit-and-miss on overnight dryness, but eventually she will get it.

Teach girls to wipe carefully from front to back to prevent bringing germs from the rectum to the vagina or bladder.
Girls sometimes regress when a younger sibling arrives

Avoid starting training for a girl during a time of change, such as if she’s just started at nursery, or has a new sibling. She may feel too overwhelmed to tackle this new challenge. Waiting will ensure you get potty training off to the best start.

However, this isn’t the case with all girls. If you’ve already trained your daughter, and she has mastered the skills even partially, such as knowing how to pee but not poop, and loves being the "big girl on the big girl potty" she may regress for a bit when a new sibling comes, or start talking baby talk again, and the potty is the last thing she wants to see. But just keep at it.

Sometimes girls will feel a conflict between wanting to be like the new baby and wanting to go to preschool. But you can take this as an opportunity to say that that if she is going to act like a baby, she won’t be able to go to school.

You can also have a game where you tell her to try to go pee before the baby does. Then tell her that she “beat the baby” because she is a big girl! But if she’s going through a period of saying "no" to everything, wait until the phase is over.

On the other hand, you may have none of these troubles at all. In fact, many mothers I know who gave birth to a second child were able to train their first child with the 3-day method hassle-free, once they settled into a regular routine with the baby.

Healthy urination

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are not common in children, but they are more likely in girls than boys. Take her to the doctor if she:

• needs to pee more frequently, or feels a sudden need to go;
• says it hurts to pee and complains of tummy or pelvic pain;
• starts to wet her pants after having established good bladder control;

Monitor liquid intake, then approximately 10-20 mins after is about the time to pee.

Give your daughter a certain amount of juice or water and note that about 20 mins after having the liquid, she will possibly want to go. Eventually she will start telling you when she needs to.
It’s important not to rush them at any time. After the 3-day potty-training, it will all come together and they will start saying “I need to go pee…”

To actually pee, if it doesn't come right away, sometimes it helps to read from a magazine, sing, or make silly small talk, something that will help her relax and concentrate.

**Motions of wanting to pee**

One reason why it’s important for us to know how to read bodily signals and instruct children to “tell Mommy when you need to go pee/poo” is that often when children are busy playing they won’t notice that they need to go, or they’ll cross their legs and squat until they end up soaking their pants. A child needs to be taken to the potty AT ONCE so they’ll know it’s important for them to make it to the potty IN TIME. Soon they will sort it all out and will begin to want to make in to the potty by themselves, in time.

If they’re a bit older than 2 years and begin making motions of wanting to pee, don't ask if she needs to go, just tell her it’s time to go. Giving the option to say no usually always results in a no at any age.

**Be firm about using underwear, no more returning to diapers**

Sometimes a girl may easily learn how to pee in the potty, but may still have the desire to poop in a diaper. But don’t budge. Remind her that the potty is where big girls go. Eventually they will be motivated to go, even just for the sake of not getting their new underwear wet.

It also sometimes takes an accident in her underwear to help her understand it is more comfortable to pee in the potty than in her pants.

**Helpful innovations in potty training girls**

Sometimes a girl can go for lengths still having accidents after learning basic 3-day potty training, but it helps to take a break and have a change of routine once in a while, such as a short trip away from home. Upon the return home, the time gap will have sealed the basics, and she will be able to use the potty with ease.

Sometimes you can associate the potty with a favorite show your 2-year old watches on television or a favorite story/character she likes from a book.
Dramatize or play “potty-training pretend” using your daughter’s favorite stuffed animal or baby doll

Games full of fun and humor and potty-training words

**Potty Training for Boys**

While girls often achieve control before boys, brothers have been known to be dry before same-age sisters. Also, it is not uncommon, especially for boys over the age of 3, to have bladder control but not have bowel control. And, of course, there are children who achieve daytime and nighttime control simultaneously. Now that there is a more relaxed approach to potty-training, it is more possible that their bowel and bladder functions come under their control at the same time.

**Do boys take longer to potty train?**

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. With infant potty training before 6 months of age, boys and girls collectively can take 4 to 6 months to potty train. When starting potty training at an average age of 28 to 29 months, boys can take 1 to 3 months longer than girls.

For example, a boy may start showing interest around 2.5 yrs, and it could take around 3.5 to be completely trained (nighttime included), but it could also be much sooner than that. It helps if you know what motivates your son.

Or, a girl may be potty-trained at 20 months, but it could be that a boy won’t show signs of readiness until 26 months. But still, you may apply the 3-Day Potty Training method in a same way with a few innovations as needed.

On the other hand, there are also parents who find potty-training boys no more difficult than the girls. A friend of mine started potty training her little ones when each was about 17 months, and they were all fully trained by 21 months.

**Boys’ vivid response to action and visuals**

The disinterested boy needs more support than girls to help learn the sensations of needing the potty, and prevent delays in potty training.

A boy may frighten himself just by his fascination with how things go down the toilet. You have to take him to see what you do in the toilet, as there’s an effective learning that children get by sight. It’s all right to show him the contents of his diaper because
often he has no idea what is in there. He may start to like watching poo go down the toilet and begin to enjoy flushing but explain that he has to do it in the potty first.

A boy may also have a breakthrough when he gets a new batch of underwear with his favourite superhero/character and will not want to pee on them!

Explain to a boy in a way he understands. Some boys really need their dads to show them first.

Make it a fun time. Make sure you don’t instill fear. Routine at pretty much the same times each day a must.

Let your son watch you use the potty. You could also read him books about using the potty. There are several fun selections available and it’s easy to pick a favorite.

When your son is ready to start peeing standing up, have “target practice.” Show him how to stand so that he can aim his urine stream into the potty. Some parents use things like cereal pieces as a sort of bull’s-eye for their little boys to try aiming at.

**Boys at 2 years**

All boys are different it really depends on your son's personality and readiness. If you begin training before 2 years old or slightly over, children are more open to learn, and that is the age when this 3-Day Potty Training method will be most effective.

If your child is just past 1 year, you could prepare him by taking him to the bathroom and telling a story of how big boys use the potty like mommy and daddy. After a while he himself will want to use the potty.

Some parents just leave the door open to the bathroom so that their son could come in and start sitting on the potty, and want to imitate the parents pulling down pants, by also pulling down his diaper, and eventually learn to use the potty on his own.

At 18 months, you could let him explore the potty and play with it for a bit, especially if it’s the kind that plays music as a reward for going in the potty. Sometimes when he goes near the potty he will want to try it on his own.

By the time he turns two, he will be more interested in wanting to use the potty, and will want to stay dry in underwear instead of diapers or pull-ups. Boys have a roundabout way
of suddenly learning what you thought they were ignoring. If he has an accident he will go “Uh-oh,” which shows he knows where he missed and will help clean up.

Mothers I know continue to be surprised how quick and easy potty training is for 2-year olds. Boys will even like to pee like a big boy from the start. And this is an age where selected rewards can still be effective. Reward, but you must explain why you are giving it. Whatever the reward, just make it something he really wants and gets to have it right away, and it doesn’t have to be something you need to buy.

**Boys older than 2 years**

Pride: that’s a ‘boy’ thing.

If you decide to wait till your boy is older than 2, he may begin to assert his own will, so you will have to deal with more factors. By then he will like to think everything is his idea, so you could try having him go to the potty even just once and make him think it was his idea. When a boy thinks it was his idea and that he made mommy so proud, this will make him even more motivated to go.

Or sometimes, they are so stubborn about refusing to use the potty, but when you ignore him, suddenly, overnight, he decides he is ready. Or they may suddenly ask for underpants when they begin to get tired of the inconvenience of needing a diaper change all the time.

Boys who are stubborn may also begin to apply the basics from the 3-Day method once he sees other kids going by themselves. He will start to do things like the bigger kids. Even get up at night and go by himself to the potty when he needs to. A boy who may seem to have the “smallest bladder” and cannot keep dry at night will also find positive peer pressure a great help. When he sees that other kids in kindergarten are dry all day, he will want to be as well.

There are boys who are daytime-trained in one day and then fully trained within a week. Some boys begin to try on underwear and respond to potty-training real quick, as if they had been mastering it by watching from a distance. Other boys take slightly longer. Some younger siblings may refuse to use the potty at the same age as older siblings, especially when the family situation feels more stressful, so you will need to slightly adjust according to what suits each child.
Often with boys, rewards may be effective for a while, but not as much as the freedom and experiences that being potty-trained brings, like being “big boy” enough to go to certain classes, preschool, playgrounds. The idea of being a big boy is far more appealing to him than a piece of candy or small toy. It’s the same with nighttime training - getting the real big boy bed (not the toddler bed he was in) is major to him. Many boys don’t care for rewards at all, or even potty charts.

**Boys past 2 who are still in diapers**

When boys are verbal and have not been potty-trained, they grow so used to peeing in their pull-ups and say it is just easier than going on the potty. It takes an authority figure with a firm resolve to stop changing his pull-up and wean him to underwear and going to the potty, even if at the start he will not like it.

There are some boys whose parents allow to go in diapers until they are past 5 and just say “I didn’t do any training, I just let him have the choice and waited till he wanted to go by himself.” But the 3-Day Potty-Training method doesn’t advocate waiting this late. This method aims to save both parents and children the inconvenience, growth-inhibitors, resentments and even health disorders that come with late potty-training.

“My 3-year old son took forever to poop on the potty. What finally worked for him is that I took a picture of his poop in the potty and let him make a card for his dad, and ever since then he has pooped in the potty. My 2 ½ yr daughter has been in pull-ups, the picture thing didn’t work for her. I think with boys it is a pride thing.”

**Helpful innovations**

If you live in a multi-level house, you could install a potty in each bathroom your child has access to. You could even devise a “potty war cry” for every time you need to spring into action and head to the potty.

Food coloring in the potty. You could try stickers and motivation, but a boy loves to see the colors go in and he loves to mix them with his stream. Plus he learns his colors and which colors mix to make other colors!

Sometimes aiming at froot loops in the potty can help a boy fix his aim and not splash pee all over.

Rewards can be parent-child experiences which you know your son enjoys. It could be amusement park rides, or short train rides, which also reduce the tension surrounding training all day. You could try a reward for him staying dry all day. Then gradually, an experience reward for him staying dry all week.
Potty Training for Older Children

I have observed that the elders in our family all agree that not only is it possible to potty train younger than 2, but it is also generally easier than training a child who is well into his or her third year of life. However, younger parents tend to postpone potty-training till the very edge of later.

Younger parents tend to feel that the older the child, the more quickly he or she will “get it.” That would seem like a normal thought, but long-term experience has shown that the opposite is true:

“Try not to get past 30 months. That age is marked by defiance and resistance, you think its hard now…”

“Children older then about 2 ½ years old are a little harder to potty train. They are resistant to change and are getting set in their ways.”

“How to adjust the 3-Day method to potty train an older/ resistant child?”

Follow the basic principles in the 3-Day potty training method

Diet, equipment, clothing, underwear-only, incentives, physical/emotional preparedness, learning to recognize body signals. Begin your program when you have at least a week to devote to focusing on teaching your child this task.

With older children, be extremely consistent with training, because any deviation will create a setback. Consistency is even more important for an older child than it is for a younger child. Don't plan long car trips or vacations during this time.

Stick to a routine

Routine is a critical component for potty training an older child. Offer occasional reminders only when you notice they are deeply occupied in what they are doing.

Encourage copycat behavior

Encourage your son if he went potty he would be a big boy like his daddy.

Since kids love copying other children, especially older ones, putting your child be in the company of other potty-trained children can encourage their curiosity and motivation.
Instead of vocally bragging about the other child’s bathroom habits, try to let your child’s curiosity be naturally piqued.

A trainee could also copy from an older sibling. One mother prepared both her girls, by taking the oldest to the bathroom with her from the time she was 1 1/2 and by the age of 2 she was in panties and had very few accidents. The younger would watch her sister and decided that she wanted to be a big girl too so she was also potty-trained by the age of 2.

“Four of my kids potty trained themselves by following their sibling, cousin or friend into the bathroom.”

It also helps to copy from a favorite cousin who is potty-trained and about the same age, even for those who regress during a stressful period. It really helps a child resume what she has learned during the 3-Day training, for her to watch her cousin go potty.

**Transfer all responsibility to the child**

The older child is not a toddler anymore, so you may tell the child that it is her body, and “the pee and poop belong to you.” Tell her that she doesn’t need anybody to help her anymore, that it's up to her. Just make the potty available and relinquish control.

Let your child know that this is her choice and you aren’t going to bother her about it anymore. A child can become really anxious at the thought of HAVING TO get to the potty. Once you tell her she doesn’t have to anymore, the anxiety dissipates and she will most likely do it on her own.

Also, instruct your child to help clean up her own accidents, and wash, change her own clothes especially if she is still resisting potty training. This activity may be enough to convince your child that urinating and having bowel movements in the potty are less trouble than cleaning up soiled underpants and carpets or floors.

If there are regressions, clean up accidents quickly, treat them casually, “Let’s clean you up. Soon you’ll be making it to the toilet in time again, just like you used to…” And she will.

**Try to lighten up on the constant reminders to use the potty**

Children older than 3 years seldom need constant reminders to help them become potty trained. Make the child think that using the potty is her idea. Older children can understand reasoning a little better so you can explain more and expect more from them.
Highly verbal preschoolers may prefer making excuses, arguing, or negotiating to simply resisting through their actions. Your child may explain away constant accidents with “I forgot,” refuse to visit the bathroom, or constantly bargain for bigger and better rewards when she succeeds. Again, the first step in overcoming this kind of resistance is to stop engaging. Your verbal child loves nothing more than an interesting discussion or argument; if you refuse to participate, she will soon lose interest in this game.

Many parents continue giving reminders long after they have promised to discard them. As long as reminders continue, the control battle will rage on.

**Brainstorm incentives and rewards**

Once the power struggle has been dismantled, parents need to come up with the right incentive to achieve a breakthrough. Many parents have a defeatist attitude about incentives and think they have exhausted their options. They say things like “She has so many toys that she won’t work for anything new” or “She doesn't care if we take things away.”

The incentive/reward should be something that the child strongly desires. Ask for the child’s input: “What would help you get used to going in the potty?” One of the positives of working on potty training with an older child is that he should be able to participate in choosing a reward. Every child has a different trigger though, so figure out what he really likes (that isn’t too expensive) and use that. You may need to experiment with different rewards to see what's most exciting for your child.

A reward is given immediately after the child releases urine or stool into the potty.

The parent continues to own and control the rewards which are time-limited. Access to a bike, costume, videotape, remote-control car, paint set, or whatever, is time-limited. In essence, the child earns a privilege, not another possession. That’s the way to maintain the value of the incentive.

Remember that even if you use rewards, praise is always the most important. Be patient and praise all progress in the right direction.
**Talk with your child about the training going on, keep a positive attitude**

By talking with your child, she can understand, just by talking it over, how she can improve. Reassure her that you are with her all the way, and what the goal is: “to get the poop in the potty” or “to run to the bathroom if the poop starts to come out.

One mother said to her daughter one day that she was pretty tired of changing pull ups. She replied “Ok, Mommy” and hasn’t worn one since. She only had 2 or 3 accidents more and it was a smooth transition.

At all costs, avoid shaming your older child into using the potty. Instead, offer praise for successes and treat accidents nonchalantly.

Avoid argument and negotiation by keeping the rules simple (no bedtime story if there’s no visit to the bathroom first; one gold star and a big hug for each successful session on the potty) and never making an exception. You can use your child’s newly-developed love of words to your advantage by talking to her about how the body works, remarking on her progress, and elaborating on how free and independent she’ll feel once she’s out of diapers.

During the preschool years, when peer pressure and big-kid ambitions play such a major role, potty training becomes less an issue of directing your child and more one of staying out of the way enough to let her direct herself. By refusing to magnify problems, you will find that most accidents soon vanish and your child is on the road to bathroom success again.

**Give the child a chart for recording progress**

Stars or special stickers should be placed on the chart for every passage of urine or stool into the potty. Separate charts for pee and poop tend to work best. Once the child becomes partially bladder trained, the pee sticker can be given for staying dry all day.

**Review the chart seriously**

If the child has improved, praise her with words, applause, a hug, a lift, or a thumbs-up sign. Say “Keep up the good work.” If improvement is marginal, tell the child to “Listen to your body better.” Let her know you are on her side by saying things like “I’m sorry you messed your pants, I know you want to do better.” If she’s not doing well, ask questions such as “What should we try next?” Try to emphasize the positive.
**Common problems**

- It’s common for a previously toilet-taught child to have some trouble using the potty during times of stress. For example, a 2- or 3-year-old dealing with a new sibling may regress. There may be other emotional reasons for regression, such as being in a new school environment, or moving to a new home, or a new state, or even being bullied.

- Your child has a bowel movement or urinates right after being taken off the potty. This happens frequently early in the potty training process. It may take time for your child to learn how to relax the muscles that control the bowel and bladder.

- If your child was previously potty trained and is having problems, talk with your doctor just to be on the safe side and to rule out things like an infection.

- If your child is 3 years or older and is not yet potty-trained even if you tried, talk to the doctor, who can help determine the problem and offer advice to make the process easier.

- Older children may still have accidents as their age coincides with being loaded with more work in school, than a 2-year old would have to deal with, and 4-5 yr olds get absorbed in what they are doing. Remind an older child that anything she is doing can be stopped for the three minutes it takes to use the bathroom.

- Older children experience conflicts between wanting to be a baby and wanting to be a big girl and may have fits and tantrums over the smallest instructions. Bpys may throw underwear and demand a pull-up. It’s harder to train once they reach the reasoning age, or when they begin to manipulate rewards.

- There are also older children who may have had a bit of potty-training when they were two years old, but had no consistent follow-up from parents. The result is that they only master certain parts of the process, like wearing underwear or peeing once or twice in the potty, but not consistently. In this case, a parent has to start all over again, with the 3-Day potty training method, and completely leaving behind the sporadic training that went before.

- Once children are older, the downside of being trained “bare-bottom” kicks in. Some children who have been potty-trained for years associate potty-training with being naked, and cannot seem to go in the potty or toilet (if in school) while clothed. This is why the 3-Day Potty Training method recommends a child to be clothed normally, with loose fitting light clothing over the underwear.
Sometimes you would have to think of a twist to help an older child who insists he can go only in a diaper. Some can hold their poop for 3 straight days but still refuse to go in the potty, even if they have no problem peeing in it. One mother refused to revert back to diapers, but let her son sit on his potty chair with his diaper just lying on top of the potty chair and reassured that the diaper would still catch his poop even if he's not wearing them. After about a week, the mother was able to remove the diaper atop the potty and her son learned to go directly.

Some older children do learn to pee in the potty, but resist pooping anywhere other than in a diaper. They hold their poop inside and become severely constipated. One of the mothers in my class resisted the urge to put back a diaper on her son just so he would go, even if he begged her for a diaper. What she did was whisk him straight off to the toilet, where he couldn't hold it any longer, and as soon as he did that one poop on the toilet, he never asked for a diaper again.

**Common fears**

**Fear of releasing waste from the body**

- There is definitely a fear in some older children of releasing bodily fluids and solids and it can take a lot of coaxing and perseverance to help them overcome this. It is frustrating, but try to hide your frustration. Be supportive and encouraging. Make a big fuss of success, with lots of praise and eventually they will give it a go!

- Older children may also be physically ready to be potty trained, but find they are scared of the sensations of wanting to go. Some don’t like the way it feels when urine comes out of their body. So they stop themselves from going. This usually happens when they have been used for a long time to going in a diaper or a pull-up.

- Your child gets upset when she sees her poop flushed away. Some children believe that their wastes are part of their bodies, so this may be frightening and hard for them to understand. Explain the purpose of body wastes and the body’s need to eliminate them.

- If your child resists going to the bathroom or seems fearful or anxious during potty or toilet use, try keeping her company while she goes. While doing this, you can help by flushing the toilet for her, encouraging her to flush bits of toilet paper,
letting her accompany you and other family members to the bathroom, and
otherwise reassuring her in concrete ways that there is nothing to be afraid of.

**Fear of the toilet**

- Some children are afraid of being sucked into the toilet if it’s flushed while they’re sitting on it. To give your child a feeling of control, let him or her flush pieces of toilet paper. This will lessen the fear of the sound of rushing water and the sight of things disappearing.

**Risks or problems associated with late potty training**

**Parent-child power struggle**

- Most children who are resistant to toilet training are caught in a power struggle with their parents. This is because they are at an age where they resist constant reminders. Also they might have had previous experiences of being held on the potty or toilet against their will. The child’s response is usually a difficult, strong-willed temperament. These power struggles over potty-training, which are more likely as the child ages beyond 2 years, and into the “terrible twos,” may well set the stage for later power struggles over everything else.

**Health problems**

- Because youngsters do not properly learn to understand the signals from their bodies, they develop hang-ups around bodily functions.

- Many prolonged diaper-wearers also do not learn to fully empty their bladders, meaning they suffer painful repeated infections caused by the retained urine. Others develop severe constipation problems previously seen only in older adults. Chronic constipation is linked to a number of serious problems, including bowel cancer.

- Potty training after the age of 18-32 months may increase a child’s risk of having urinary tract infections (UTIs), bed-wetting, and daytime accidents that last into the elementary school years. Increased risks may be due in part to techniques used with older children, such as insisting they push or try harder to go potty, and the delayed use of muscles related to controlling elimination.

- Health problems, including chronic infections and bladder abnormalities, that come from the tendency to depend on large-size diapers, in which the million-dollar diaper industry is happy to assist, manufacturing more ‘pull-ups’ – the
junior equivalent of adult incontinence diapers – in bigger and bigger sizes. There is also growing evidence that diaper-wearing children are spreading infection in schools.

- Researchers have reported hepatitis infections as a result of cross-infection from diaper-wearers in schools, and there have also been outbreaks of diarrhea and stomach infections linked to dirty diapers.

**Deterioration of support for potty-training at home and in school**

- New mothers are now offered little or no information on how to get their child out of diapers.
- Nurseries and preschools, in turn, who are no longer aware that children can actually be potty-trained earlier than 3 years old, do not generally help parents to potty train their children, inadvertently helping to promote a culture where it is increasingly normal for three- and even four-year-olds to be in diapers.
- So mothers who potty-train their children at the most ideal earlier age, find their efforts undermined, and their children upset when they come home from a playgroup where the teacher did not bother to accompany them to the potty, but assumed that they would go in a pull-up.
- Since potty-training is no longer a priority for most parents, resulting in increasingly older children who are now incontinent. Primary school teachers are expected to deal with growing numbers of diaper-wearing children starting full-time school. Sometimes even three successive children in a family aren’t toilet-trained, even if the oldest of them is seven year old.
- Schools are overstretched as it is, and if a teacher has to leave the class to deal with a child who needs a diaper change, it creates big problems.

In the meantime the expert consensus is that parents need to be encouraged to potty train their children at 18 months. Early training sets a strong precedent for an easygoing parent-child relationship, one that is generally relaxed and unmarred by conflict.

**Older Adoptive Children**

When you adopt a child at birth, and no post-adoption trauma or abuse is present, apply the 3-day potty-training method when you detect signs of readiness in the child (within the window of 18–24 months old). Many parents encounter resistance, emotional
outbursts, and tantrums if they put off training especially till after 3 years of age, even if urologists have not detected any health problems in the child.

If you adopt a child at a more advanced age who has not been potty-trained, consider the factors and conditions in his previous homes, that might influence the level of difficulty in training him to use the potty for the first time. Children usually want to learn, but are embarrassed to be found not to know, or to display unsanitary habits. Even if they seem to resist training at first, or cry and wail after an accident, or even burst out “I wanted to poop in my pants,” just keep the encouraging words and routine for older children, and eventually there will a breakthrough that will help them be more confident in learning.

**Twins and Multiple Children**

Potty-training twins can seem like a daunting challenge if you’ve never done it. But it is easier than you fear, and twice the fun – when they’re not fighting over whose turn it is to use the potty.

To train twins and multiple children of the same age to use the potty, just follow all the basic principles of the 3-Day Method, and consider these additional factors:

**Competition**

If you think you need one potty seat for each child, which they pick up on your preparation shopping trip, you are right! This is not only to avoid buildups when they all want to go at the same time, but so that each will have a specific spot to run to, although there will eventually be races as to who gets to the potty first, or whose potty is better.

**Positive peer pressure**

With twins and multiples you have ready-made positive peer pressure. They usually like to imitate the other’s behavior. When one of them is showing signs of readiness to be potty-trained, the other usually follows along with the same motions. These moments of cooperation can really help them want to use the potty.

**Desire to be different**

So there will be cooperation and there will be differentiation. It can get annoying when one of them resists just for the sake of resisting. Just keep at it and don’t give it special attention. The need to relieve oneself without getting wet or soiled will eventually win out. Of course if you start training them when they are older than 2 years, you would also have to factor in the multiplied havoc that comes when all the children make a riot out of every potty event!
Together, or one at a time?

It is much easier in the long run for twins or multiples to be trained at the same time, especially with identical (monozygotic) twins. However, with other combinations, differences in metabolism or speed of learning of one might cause the other to regress, especially within a mixed team of boy/s and girl/s. Try to determine if a one-on-one approach to 3-day potty-training is better.

How will rewards work?

A discussed earlier, many parents have great success using incentives or rewards, when used right. So with twins and multiples in simultaneous training this can either work or create chaos. You will know how best to evaluate their dynamic. What if only one child merits a reward at a time? How will the other react? So it helps to find out what works for each child, especially if they respond positively to healthy competition. Is it sweet treats? Stickers on a potty chart? A favorite train ride? Find out what is the most appropriate reward that will motivate one to be supportive of the other even in competition.

More of everything

While potty training twins or multiples, there will be as many time the mess. There WILL be setbacks and there WILL be accidents. So adjust the advance preparations to match. Stock up on cleaning supplies. If you are concerned about permanent stains or damage, protect the areas of your house that cause concern. Cover play area floors with protective tarpaulin. Stow expensive rugs or bed covers. Install temporary gates to keep potty training children out of areas that are off-limits for now. It helps the process and adds to the fun to enlist your children to help in cleaning up. These times make great stories which you will all laugh about in years to come!

Adjust your approach to each child

Just like in thinking how to give rewards, adjust your responses to fit your individual children. Some children respond to hugs and praise; others prefer less of a fuss. Some need constant reminders; others want to control the process themselves. Some are open about their bodily functions, while others prefer privacy. You know your children best, and can determine the approach that will be most effective. While you may develop a successful routine during the day, different tactics may be required for other times. How will you handle naptimes, overnights, outings or day care? Flexibility is the key to success.
**Keep them on a similar schedule**

If training twins or multiples at the same time, you’ll find more success by keeping them on a similar schedule. The schedule you followed when they were infants will most likely carry over into potty training also. When children eat, drink and sleep at the same, they're also more likely to go to the potty together. Introducing potty time as part of their daily routine can help them use the toilet consistently.

**Dress in loose, light clothes**

Many families prefer to potty train when the weather is warm. The comfortable temperatures require less clothing, which gets in the way and requires additional cleaning in the event of an accident. Help your twins feel confident and independent as they master their toilet habits by dressing them in clothes that they can manage. Favor easy access clothing, such as pull-up pants or skirts for girls. Forgo fussy snaps, zippers or buttons. Dry-clean only clothing and potty training don't mix; save the special outfits for a later date when your twins are more likely to stay dry.

**Success is certain**

Like all phases of parenting twins or multiples, potty training is a temporary transition. Your children WILL learn to use the potty. You WILL get rid of diapers. You can look forward to a day when they’ll have no more potty accidents and learn to use the bathroom by themselves. It WILL happen. Continue to be patient, flexible and loving. Down the road, you’ll look back on this time and think, “That wasn’t as hard as I thought after all!”
CHAPTER 12: POTTY-TRAINING FOR CHILDREN with AUTISM, ASPERGER’S, DOWN’s, and other diagnosed disorders

Potty-training for children with a certain disability or disorder comprises a relatively large proportion of the total medical literature on the subject of toilet training. It helps to remember that these disorders are just learning delays, so training may take a little longer. But at no time should it be stopped, or given up. We all need to keep growing, although at different paces.

Things to Remember With Autism

Be aware of possible communication issues
What type of language does your child understand? Does he or she understand “potty,” “diaper,” “stay dry,” “pee,” “poo,” “bathroom,” or any other words, signs, or pictures/
symbols that get the idea of potty-training across? Children with autism may have difficulty understanding and associating words with actions and most will at least need more time to process what you say. In reading your child’s readiness signs, try to figure out how he expresses the urge to use the potty. Of course the way they display their readiness may be real messy, but as discussed earlier in this book, it helps to just clean it up, and take the opportunity to explain to your child the need to go in the potty.

Expressive language is almost always a problem for children with an autistic disorder. It will be important to be able to read their cues or teach them a way to express the need or urge to pee or poo.

**Agree on the terms and words to be used**

Decide on what terms will be used to call the places and things in potty training. For example, bathroom, a restroom, a potty, the ladies room, the men’s room, or the john. Children with autism associate a specific word to one particular object and are unable to make quick shifts for the many terms used for the same object.

And, speaking of terms, you might want to consider avoiding childish terms to describe “going to the restroom.” If a youngster with autism learns to say “pee-pee” when he is three years old, he is likely to use that same term when he is fifty-three.

The same can be true when we use anatomically correct words to label parts of the body. Sometimes children with autism are unable to distinguish between words that are okay to use at home talking to parents and words that are more appropriate in social situations. A good rule of thumb is to use words at home that can also be said in earshot of strangers in a public setting.

**Be aware of sensory problems**

Many children with autism or Asperger’s syndrome may have unusual reactions to various sensory stimuli (smells, tastes, textures, colors, temperature, sounds) due to sensory problems.

Watch for signs of unusual reactions when your child is in or near the bathroom. Bathrooms have been known to have an unusual smell or two attached to them – your child may react with fear or tantrums to perfumes, noxious smells, etc.

Bathrooms tend to be either hotter or colder than the rest of the house – make sure the temperature is similar throughout the house. Bathrooms are usually tiled – some children may dislike or fear a cold tile, a fluffy rug, or the colors in a bathroom. You may help by fitting him with warm socks or soft slippers.
They don’t know when they need to go, when their diaper is full, or how to release their bowels and bladder when on a potty-chair. Any new sensation or routine around that sensation can be frightening to them, as they don’t always understand fully what is going on. Flushing the toilet or the noise of drainpipes may be startling, so watch for signs and warn about noises and explain the reasons for the noises.

The more you can anticipate changes for your child with autism and the more you explain the reasons for things, the better prepared the child will be for changes. Despite the additional factors that need to be considered, it is still better to make a complete switch to underwear for potty training, whether for daytime or nighttime.

**Understand the stress of learning a new skill**

A child with autism will probably find it distressing to include potty training in his already full schedule. As they usually insist on sameness, repetitive behaviors, self-stimulation, and insistence on following their own routine, this may interfere with potty training at first, when the idea is new. Problems with organizing and sequencing actions may also interfere with learning a new and difficult skill. But once using the potty becomes a part of his routine, then this insistence on sameness will work to his favor.

Before you begin the potty training make sure your child does not have a medical problem which would interfere with his bodily responses. Usually, this can be ruled out by the family physician after routine check-ups. However, if you notice any unusual signs of too much or too little urination or painful urination, contact your physician for a referral to a specialist. If you notice too much, or too little, or too loose, or too hard stools, contact your physician for a referral to a specialist.

A child with autism has a higher than expected rate of bowel problems (constipation or loose stools or both) and requires extra care if this is the case. During potty training make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids and eats a diet that includes roughage and hi-fiber food, to assure that the bowel movements will not be hard. One hard, painful bowel movement during toilet training may set the child back for a long time! Consult your physician for all of this.
Respect privacy

Family members, teachers, and other caregivers may be used to saying to an individual with autism, “Let’s go change your diaper,” even in public settings such as classrooms, family gatherings, and dinner tables. Even if a child with autism does not appear to be embarrassed or even if he is just four years old, it is more respectful to say quietly, “Please come with me,” or “Let’s go wash our hands.”

Aids to Potty Training

Children on the autism spectrum usually learn better with both visual and verbal materials.

• When introducing potty training to your child, try drawing simple stick figures on paper to show the step-by-step actions. Use these illustrations in a social story, a powerful technique for learning new skills. There are commercial toilet training materials that may help, but they may not yet be adapted for the communication issues that arise with autism and Asperger’s. But you can come up with a lot of creative ideas with dolls, water and play dough to demonstrate the potty training process.

• Social stories are short, simple narratives explaining a very specific task or concept. First, take or get pictures of objects associated with toileting. If you have a computer, you can select clipart images. Arrange the images in the sequence you plan to teach the potty training routine to your child. Keep your sentences short and simple. Read the story with your child each day prior to beginning training. For a child with hypersensitivity issues, you may want to read the book daily for at least a week before you attempt potty training to get him or her mentally ready for the task.

• Other visual and tactile aids also help. Relate the potty to your child’s favorite things. For a child who likes bubbles, his parents encourage him to “make bubbles in the potty” to explain how he needs to pee in the potty.

• Hang a colorful illustrated booklet on the doorknob in the bathroom that breaks down every step of using the potty, beginning with pulling down pants to ending with washing and drying hands.

• You may use an old fashioned 5-minute hourglass while your child is sitting on the potty waiting to poop. Children with autism are likely to stimulate or
persevere while closely watching the sands of the hourglass slowly slide through the bottleneck.

- You can make a silly song to sing in celebration of every step of progress made on the potty especially if your child loves music. Reserve special books that could only be read when your child is on the potty.

- You may use a video camera. When you take off the last diaper have him follow you into the bathroom and watch as you deposit his poop into the toilet. Flush it down. Let him know that’s where it goes. Record this procedure on video and show it to your child as often as you can. And whenever you have to change a poopey diaper go through these motions. You’re trying to help him understand that poop doesn't go in a diaper. It goes in the toilet;

- You may also use a doll or his favorite stuffed toy to illustrate the potty-training process. Turn off other distractions while you have this mini-activity. Dress the doll in underpants and your child in big kid underwear. Then have a sort of role-playing where it looks like you’re teaching the doll to go potty, and you and your child are just talking and eating lots of healthy snacks, drinking juice the whole time. Have the doll go potty over and over, and even award it a ‘treat’ and saying ‘That was great, he went in the potty!’ while the child keeps snacking/drinking and following the process. Whenever the doll goes potty, have your son take the “bowl” out from the potty chair and go dump it in the big toilet. When your child isn't looking have the doll have an “accident” so you can demonstrate what has to be done – go to the potty quick, clean up, run to the bedroom, put on fresh underwear, etc. So together you go the bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, etc. Then you sit down and doll goes on the potty great, another treat to eat and drink, and soon it will be your child who will feel he has to go to the potty and he will run to the bathroom like you did with the doll. He may not make it to the potty in time, but for sure, he will have gotten the whole process and will want to go to the potty by himself sooner than later.

General Guidelines

Relax

Potty training is hard work but there’s no need to get additionally stressed about it from comments by others who try to assure us that “no one graduates school in diapers” or those who insist on “training them as early as possible.” There is no urgency here. Don't
worry about what your family or others say. For a child with autism, it’s just as important to detect from his bodily signals if he’s ready. Then take your time and apply the 3-day potty training method in a way that suits your child best. The follow-up support for mastery will take a longer time, but they will eventually get it, both the peeing, pooping, nighttime dryness.

**Once you relax**

Then it’s time to get to work. Look at this as a job and give it the best effort you usually devote to anything important in your life. The skill of using the potty is very important in your child’s life. It opens doors of independence and privilege will be revealed only as as your child ages and matures. Being potty-trained is a requirement before your child can move up to the next level at pre-school! Not being potty-trained limits your child’s options for child care, school programs, and, if it goes on too long, may be one of the factors that leads to more restrictive placements at school or residential programs in the future.

Make sure you have set aside a lot of time to devote to potty-training, especially in the beginning. You could take a week of from work to devote to the 3-day potty training.

**Check for readiness signs**

For children on the autism spectrum, look for the following, as from the list of readiness signs earliers in this book:

- awareness that he or she has wet or soiled and/or a desire to remove the wet or soiled diaper (pulling at it, taking it off, digging in it, vocalizing displeasure, getting a clean diaper);
- pulling you in the direction of the bathroom;
- ability to imitate at least some actions;
- responds favorably to some form of positive reinforcement (a behavior increases after you reward it with something the child likes);
- stays dry/clean most nights.
- Older children who are already in school may display readiness such as “holding it” all day long, then coming home and peeing on the bed.
Make a chart of your child’s daily routine

Study your child’s routine before potty-training. During the preparation period, make a chart to indicate the times of the day your child eats, drinks, wets, soils, gets changed (with results), and sleeps. Write down each item and the time it occurs in. For example:

6:00am - change diaper - dry
6:15am - drink 1 cup juice
6:30am - ate cereal, toast - drink 1 cup milk
6:40am - change diaper - wet & soiled.

At the end of the week look at the data and determine some general patterns for guiding the 3-day potty training. For example: He soils 30 minutes after every meal or he wets 10 minutes after drinking his juice, etc. These times can then be built into the potty training procedures you are about to set up.

Find several reinforcers (things your child would do anything for)

Reinforcers may be special food treats, special drinks; special toys, or other items that your child loves. Make a rule with everyone that has contact with your child that these special reinforcers will be used only for potty training rewards.

No punishment

Make a rule with everyone who has contact with your child that potty accidents are not be punished. If an accident occurs use it to associate the potty with wetting or soiling. Without showing any irritation, use the words you know he understands. Say, “You are wet (or soiled)... Big boys (or girls) do that on the potty.” If you can, without a tantrum, lead the child to the bathroom and sit him or her on the potty chair once the diaper is off. Immediately reward your child for sitting on the potty and say, “Good pottying!” or “Big boy (or girl)! Sitting on the potty!” (or something similar that is reinforcing for your child).

Use positive reinforcement for appropriate potty training behavior

Use the reinforcers you have identified and save them for potty training. Make sure everyone who has contact with your child is aware of your method and means of reinforcement. If you were able to devote a week to potty training your child, use a schedule (based upon the information you gathered from
charting his or her pottying activity) to see the opportunities for your child to use the potty or potty chair. Use positive reinforcement for each attempt at pottying by giving the reinforcer which your child would like – food or drink treat, balloons, bouncing balls, time with a favorite toy, like Hot Wheel cars or Lego blocks, etc. – after the child does what is expected of him or her.

If your child dislikes the potty or sitting on the potty, you will have to “shape” his or her behavior so he or she associates the potty with the reinforcement. Shaping is a step-by-step process that reinforces a child for getting closer and closer to the behavior goal. Give a reward for each little step in potty training that your child is able to do. For example: Reward the child for coming into the bathroom, then going near the potty, then sitting on the closed potty, then sitting on the open potty, then sitting for five seconds, then for wetting on the potty, and finally for the biggest event of them all: having a bowel movement on the potty! Once a child has mastered one step, move on to the next and do not reward the first step as much. Begin to cut back on the rewards or reinforcers the longer you continue to train. In case of stressful periods or regressions, you may resume giving reinforcers to motivate interest and recall.

Always give verbal praise as you give the special treat or toy. The sincere verbal praise, clapping, cheering, hugs, will begin to take on the reinforcing powers of the treat and, eventually, you can give verbal praise only, as this will be more important than the object treats. Continue doing this reinforcement until the child has mastered the steps.

**Habit training**

Always associate their feeling of needing to go with the actual action of going to the potty. There is no need to sit them on the potty if there is no need to go. There is no need to ask him if he has to go. Do remind him to tell you or get your attention when he feels the need to go. Especially when he is engrossed in watching his favorite show on TV. Use the chart to detect what times of the day or after what activities your child may need to pee or poo. Dress him in clothing they can pull up or down without help. Avoid belts or snaps if your child has difficulty undoing them. If your child is taking a long time to have bowel movement in the potty, read a picture book with him or have him play a game or watch a favorite video on your laptop if that will help him relax. Habit training is not easy, and takes time. But it is an essential step to getting your child to be fully trained.

**How long will it take?**

There’s no easy answer. It depends on your child. Most of the mothers agree that children with autism and other disorders and even those with limited speech or severe mental
delays can be successfully trained by the age of 5 years if basic 3 day potty training was taught the child at about 2 years old.

It’s not an easy road to travel, but it can work. Don’t let anyone convince you that your child can’t be trained. Or that your child will never be trained if he isn’t trained by a particular age. These disorders are just delays in learning, not limits.

Observations about potty training children with autism and other behavioral disorders

- Some with limited speech began to be trained at 2 years old, resisted at first, with screams or running away but completed the training at the age of 5.

- The period between 2 years and 5 years may seem like a long time to wait, but what often happens is after a period of irregularities and accidents and “nothing seems to work,” they SUDDENLY want to use the potty, or they start to be verbal during the training period, and they themselves will say they want to go potty, and will even make try to get your attention to make sure you are proud of them. Accidents will become few and far between afterwards.

- If you start potty training at 2 years old, shift to regular underwear completely, and don’t revert to pull-ups, so the child will quickly associate the feeling of wetness or messes with the need for the potty;

- Even non-conversational children with autism figure out that messes or being wet can be unpleasant and will want go in the potty;

- There may be a prolonged period before nighttime dryness is mastered, from the time your child is already able to stay dry in the daytime; on the other hand there are also cases where nighttime dryness is mastered way ahead of daytime!

- They can also wipe their own bums and clean themselves up, although may use a whole lot of wipes to make sure they are really clean;

- If your child is in preschool, always supply an extra change of underwear and clothes. Talk to your child’s teachers and minders about his potty schedule. If he is taken to the bathroom regularly, he will learn to hold urine and bowel movement until then.

**Older children with autism**

- Children with autism who have started kindergarten may also be motivated by the visual routine of seeing their classmates go to the potty. Or they may also look up to an older sibling as a model if they seem to be resistant to parents’ directions.
• If potty training is started later, and a child is still wearing pull-ups and diapers, full mastery will come much later than the age of 5.

• For older children who have accidents or regressions, explain in a firm voice but no anger “No, you pee in the potty, not in your pants.” It’s also helpful to impose a mild ‘consequence’ (without any negative reprimands) for older children such as making him rinse his own underwear in the sink, changing his own clothes, wiping down the floor. Children hate to take time to do all these and will come out of regression faster.

• It may seem like a lifetime to train children with Down syndrome, but they are incredibly sweet even if they have a roller-coaster of ups and downs and are like they are on their own clock. But they eventually get it;

• We need to have MORE patience, offer MORE support, have an ACCEPTING outlook rather than a frustrated or pessimistic attitude when training children with behavioral disorders. Always remain open to success.

In public restrooms

• On the road, make a habit of taking him to the potty everytime you stop for refreshment;

• Limit liquids on long road trips where you’ve not had a chance to locate family restrooms or single restrooms with lockable doors;

• Have your child go to the potty before leaving home;

• In public restrooms people do understand if you have to take your grown son to the ladies’ room, and show respect when you have made an effort to train your child at home; If anyone complains, just smile sweetly and say, “I’m sure you understand that my son is diagnosed with autism, and he needs my help. Thank you for being so understanding.”

• You could even have some business cards printed to pass out if your son has a meltdown or needs to accompany you into the ladies room. It could say something like: “Thank you for your understanding of my son who is diagnosed with autism. He is a fine young man, but sometimes has difficulty with communication, social skills, or changes in routine.”
• Even more challenging a single dad with a daughter who needs assistance, as many men’s rooms do not have doors on the stalls. And guys run into another layer of issues if their daughter is a screamer or has loud speech;

• Pre-plan trips into public places. Scout out places that have family restrooms and single-stall restrooms with doors that lock;

• Talk to managers of restaurants, stores, your church, movie theaters, parks, and other public places that you frequent. Request a designated family restroom that has some space, a single stall, and a lockable door.
Once your child gets the basics of learning to use the potty, he will be in a much healthier and happier state. And your home and family life quite transformed, hopefully in a good way, from when you first started reading this book. Once the routine of using the potty has been established, continue to follow through with the standards begun during the 3-day potty training period.

More accidents
As long as accidents and near-misses happen, just treat them lightly and don’t make a fuss. For sure, by now you will have detected if your application of the training method has been effective and will be able to appreciate the progress more than be irritated by occasional misses and areas that still need improvement.
Can pee but not poop
Your child doesn’t recognize the need to urinate, even though he recognizes the need to move his bowels. This is normal. Some children don’t gain complete bladder control for many months after they have learned to control bowel movements. It helps to remember this as you continue potty-training support.

Boys pee sitting down
The majority of boys will want to sit while learning to go in the potty. Let him learn to urinate sitting down and, after he has mastered bladder control, explain to him that boys go potty standing up. He may pick this up on his own if he watches his dad or other male friends or family going to the bathroom.

Poop lapses
Sometimes everything seems to work perfectly for two weeks or so, and you even go on holiday and there isn’t a single accident. You come back and your child suddenly lapses back to pooping in his underwear, or suddenly demand to be put back in diapers. These are only temporary bursts, but by all means don’t revert to diapers or pull-ups. Continue to be consistent and supportive. Make a mental note of what stressful factor might be triggering this lapse. After a few days, your child’s cause for anxiety or the basic reason for the lapse will fade and he will resume using the potty regularly.

Wetting the bed and underwear

Offer reminders.
Accidents often happen when kids are absorbed in activities that — for the moment — are more interesting than using the potty. To help keep this from happening, suggest regular potty trips to your child, such as first thing in the morning, after each meal and snack, and before going to bed. Point out to your child some motions he does that shows he may be holding back pee or poop.

Stay calm.
Be assured that a child doesn’t have accidents to irritate you. If your child has an accident, don’t add to the embarrassment by scolding or disciplining. Just say, “You forgot this time. Next time you’ll get to the bathroom sooner.”

Keep a change of underwear and clothing handy, especially for preschool or daycare.
If your takes a little longer to complete nap-time and nighttime toilet training, encourage him to use the potty immediately before going to bed and as soon as he wakes up. Tell him that if he wakes up in the middle of the night and needs to use the toilet, he can either go by himself or call for you to help him.

**Tantrums and refusals after already learning the basics**

Don’t buy in or show any sign of being affected. The child is just a bit nervous, scared, lonely, embarrassed, or angry. Just ignore the outbursts, and continue with the potty routine, giving praise and encouragement at each improvement. Your child may suddenly say “I need to potty” at a time you least expect or just when you are giving up.

**Your child will only go to the potty when accompanied by you**

If your child is only comfortable going to the potty with one particular person, this is normal. If your child will only go potty with you, gradually withdraw yourself from the process. For example, offer to help your child get undressed or walk your child to the bathroom. But wait outside the door.

**Regression**

As emphasized in this book, a stressful event like sickness or death in the family, moving to a new home, attending preschool, birth of a new sibling, a long vacation, could cause a child to seem to revert to old habits. Just give it time and the regression will pass. Never undo the basics. Continue the a consistent routine of using the potty. After things settle down, your child will resume what she has learned and eventually catch on.

Encourage children to be interested in being healthy, and relate their ability to use the potty with the well-being they feel. When we were children, my father used to remind us to “go potty” first thing in the morning. That would mean we could play, study, move around freely in school during the day without suffering tummyaches or headaches.
There’s no need to postpone potty training if your child has a chronic medical condition but is able to use the toilet normally. Be aware that the process might take longer, however.

**When to seek help**

Occasional accidents are harmless, but they can lead to teasing, embarrassment and alienation from peers. If your potty-trained child reverts or loses ground — especially at age 4 or older — or you’re concerned about your child’s accidents, check with your doctor. Sometimes wetting problems indicate an underlying physical condition, such as a urinary tract infection or an overactive bladder. Prompt treatment can help your child become accident-free.
Checking with the doctor

By now you’re probably well tuned-in to how your child is feeling and how regular she is. But it’s still worth keeping an eye out for possible problems connected with potty training. Signs to look for include:

• a big increase or decrease in the number of poos or wees
• poos that are very hard to pass
• unformed or very runny poos
• blood in the poo or wee (sometimes appears as cloudy wee)
• pain when your child goes to the toilet.

If you feel there might be a problem or you’re worried about how your child is adapting to potty training, check with your doctor or child health nurse. A urodynamics test could reveal bladder problems which could help reveal certain causes of stress. Often the problems don’t require additional medication as much as a change in approach.

Nutrition

Ensure your child eats healthy foods — whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables — and drink more water and juice more than milk each day.
CHAPTER 15: OUT INTO THE WORLD

When you are potty training your child you may feel relatively confident in your home where you can easily clean up accidents or get your child to the potty in time. But what should you do when you are in public? How are you supposed to respond to your child’s cries of needing to potty when there is no potty in sight?

There are so many scenarios that can occur when you are in public with a potty training toddler that it can truly feel overwhelming for some parents. As a result, families tend to stay in more during the potty training days. However, this does not have to be the case. You can be in public with a potty training toddler as long as you prepare beforehand.

Most moms who take their potty training toddlers out in public on a regular basis will experience at least one if not more accidents. Just relax and try not to panic. If you remembered to pack an extra set of clothes, underwear, even socks and shoes, you will be ready to clean your toddler up and keep on moving.

Be more proactive than ever: If you are on the go, take a potty break whenever the opportunity arises since you don’t know when the next one will be.
Preschool, Daycare/Childcare providers

We are doing the best for our child when we initiate potty-training them, instead or leaving it to daycare or preschool to do it. Once you have guided your child through the 3-Day potty training method, you can then communicate with the daycare provider or preschool teacher about your child’s progress in potty training. A teacher who recognizes that good potty training habits are valuable for life could promote improvement in your child instead of setting back what he has already learned. This means that other children in the class would be positive peer pressure to your child as he grows on the support he has at home.

Be sure to check with your child’s teacher or care provider to make sure they share your positive approach to potty training. Be sure they incorporate routine bathroom safety (children not left unattended) and hygiene (hand washing & clean toilet facilities) into their child care practices. Also, make sure that your child has enough changes of clothes on hand in case the clothing they’re wearing that day gets soiled.

A classroom environment will help your child when he is surrounded by other children who are also supported to be independent in using the potty. When teachers line up everyone in class to go to the bathroom regularly, children usually follow more readily.

Travel by land

- Bring a regular potty or travel potty in the car. Decide on a potty that your child is comfortable with and can be set up quickly and without fuss. Put it in the back of your vehicle for when your child has to desperately go while on a road trip or in a traffic jam. Either free-standing or foldable, travel potty seats come with plastic bags attached. So when it has been used you remove the bag and throw it away. Portable potties also help a lot when children refuse to use any toilet outside the home. Pull over into a parking lot, an on/off ramp, side of the road, then we set it up on the floor in the back seat, and have him sit and go. Everytime you stop, ask if he wants to pee.

- Keep several spare changes of clothes and shoes in the car.

- Prepare a special “Potty travel kit” with wipes, hand cleansers, and other materials you to need to have
• You may also wish to lay a protective car seat cover to prevent pee accidents from seeping through.
• You can find potty liners that make clean up a snap on the go.
• Bring your child to the potty (for peeing) before a trip and as soon as you arrive at your destination.
• It helps to keep your first trips short if made immediately after basic potty training (of course if you have to take a long-haul flight, there’s support for that too) so your child won’t have to be in the car long. Don’t give your child much to drink before leaving the house.
• As soon as you get to your destination, take your child to the potty to show him where it is and talk to him about using it while out. Tell him that if he needs to go, just tell mommy.
• Maintain the child’s habit of wearing real underwear. Don’t revert to pull-ups/diapers/training pants.
• There are some great potty chairs available today for road trips. There are also inflatable versions that uses regular trash bags for liners. (Although many have found it impractical to have to inflate a seat when your child needs to go “Now, Mommy!”) You can pull over and go right there in the car if you’re not close to a gas station or rest stop. These chairs are inexpensive enough to equip every vehicle you own. Make sure you’ve got changes of clothing and wipes around just in case, of course. Fasten the used liner bag to dispose of at the nearest trashbin.

Visiting friends or family

• When visiting friends, prepare to be flexible. You can bring a potty chair along, as well as any dolls and books your child might enjoy while going to the bathroom. If your friend is uncomfortable with accidents on new furniture and floors, you could try outfitting your child’s underwear with a plastic outer covering. Make sure to explain to your hosts how you handle accidents and they will certainly be willing to help maintain a positive atmosphere for your child. Check out the bathroom quietly, and see it has any loud sounds or unfamiliar layout so you can explain to your child in advance how you will be continuing your potty routine.
• If you are visiting grandparents it’s great if they offer encouragement about potty training, but remind the rest of the family not to keep pointing it out, or even teasing as a whole lot of attention may only make the child nervous and self-
conscious, causing him to hold pee or poop instead of releasing it. If done right though, a child can respond positively to praise from other people and will be motivated to act on what you have taught him.

- Adjust trip lengths or itineraries, especially if done shortly after the 3-day potty training period. Instead of long road trips, short trips to are much more manageable.

**Public restrooms**

- When shopping, some children are afraid of using the big potty. There are more people around, the toilet is large, the flusher is loud. Some parents bring along a potty seat that fits on the regular toilet. OR, if you don’t want to have to carry that around, do as most parents, quickly wipe the toilet seat with sanitizer, kneel beside your child while they are sitting and hold their hand or their body so they aren’t scared about slipping in. Another thing to try – sit as far back on the toilet yourself and then put your child in front of you.

- Children will put their hands anywhere especially while trying to stabilize themselves on an adult sized toilet. Line the seat with toilet paper or seat covers. Make sure you cover the small dip at the front.

- Sometimes we can get anxious about how our child will adjust to going in a big toilet for the first time when we travel away from home, but children can be suddenly capable when they need to go and there is no other choice.

- If you have a little boy, and he is comfortable, try letting him stand up to urinate. If a stool is available, that is preferable. Have him stand on the stool and lean into the toilet a little bit so the angle is will be right into the toilet and not splashing back at them.

- Getting your child used to a regular-sized toilet without a seat is actually the simpler way to go. It can be scary for her to feel unsupported, so crouch down in front of her so you’re eye-to-eye and assure her that you’re holding her tight and offer your thighs as foot support.

- Be careful with the auto-flushing toilet as a toddler is often too small for the sensor to detect, and the toilet can flush while a child is sitting on it. That really scares him! Before putting your child on one, tack a sticker or Post-It or something over the sensor to disable it while you hold your child over the toilet. Some kids are just scared of regular public restrooms because the flushes are SO
LOUD and going on in other stalls all around them. Be ready for this and be ready to offer up a lot of reassurance that it's okay.

- Children can catch on real fast in public and will want to imitate what other people do, like falling in line for a turn at the restroom and getting toilet paper themselves, demonstrating more independence than when at home

**Malls, restaurants**

- When you are out in public with your potty training toddler you will need to know where the restrooms are, right away. This saves you some time when your toddler announces he needs to go potty. By then you won’t have to ask or find the restrooms because you already know where they are. If you are at a restaurant ask the server to seat you near the restrooms. This means that when the need arises you are close by.

- Again, a child who might be lagging in potty training at home might suddenly learn to use the toilet in public, like for example the mother who related, “My son was withholding his bowel movements for days and days at a time and did not ever want to go in a public restroom. One day, when I knew he’d been holding it for some time, we went to a toy store. I figured this was somewhere he enjoyed a lot so he would be relaxed. We walked around that store for hours until the urge struck. He asked me for a diaper and I told him I didn’t have any and that he'd have to go in the toilet if he really needed to go. He wanted to get back to looking at toys, so sure enough – he used the toilet there at the toy store and it set a precedent for pooping on the potty.”

- Put a protective pad in your child’s stroller if that is what you use to get around the mall or at the grocery

**Swimming pools**

Even if your child is potty trained, be sure to bring a washable swim diaper, as this is the usual swimming pool policy. Just make sure that your child understands it is a ‘swim diaper’ for special use. Nobody wants pee in the pool, though staff maintain that the chlorine can handle that, even from grownups who go. This swim diaper is also a protective measure against bacteria from poop, though young children are not known to poop while in a pool.
Swimming pools (on cruise ships)

While most cruise ships are non-US, they still follow United States Public Health Service guidelines. This means no children in diapers, even swim diapers, in pools, for sanitary reasons.

Manufacturers claim that their “swimming pool diapers” hold in body waste. However, studies have shown that these types of diapers do not always do an exceptional job of keeping the waste from entering the water. Infant swimwear usually has built-in diapers, but toddlers usually wear regular swimsuits.

Many ships offer a children’s wading area where kids can get wet without contaminating a sitting water supply. It’s important to be very honest with the state of your child’s potty training. If your child still has accidents, you do not want a lapse to cause a ship-wide sickness. Though as you may probably have observed, when it’s a family cruise and the pool is full of parents and children, everyone just enjoys themselves in the pool and no questions if anyone is potty-trained, though safety guidelines have to be followed.

If the child is ready for a pool a month before you go on a cruise, that’s great! If you're child isn’t ready yet, there will likely be much more enjoyable beaches for you to splash in at the ports, and the boat will be full of entertainment to keep you busy on board.

Parks and playgrounds

Check if your child wants to use the potty during a long playtime or before an outing. If she doesn’t want to go, that’s fine.

Your child may have an occasional accident even after he or she learns how to use the toilet. Sometimes, children get too involved in activities and forget that they need to use the potty/toilet. Suggesting regular trips to the toilet may help prevent some accidents.

Concerts, fairs, and other events

When you and your child have to walk around and won’t be anywhere near your car and a travel potty, an inflatable potty may work for these situations, and there’s another chair that folds up like a suitcase that your child can carry himself, but can be quite inconvenient to carry around and doesn’t always work as intended. Some parents have children who don’t want to use a public toilet at first, but after having to carry these toilet
attachments around all day, most children prefer using the public toilet after all. Just have your travel potty hygiene bag.

Whatever the situation with potty training on the go, you’ve got to be prepared. Try to get your child to use the bathroom before setting out on your trip, and make sure you’ve got everything you could possibly need before leaving the house. More clothes are better than fewer, and always bring a good supply of wipes, as often when you think you won’t need them, is when your child will break out with the worst case of diarrhea you’ve ever encountered. Don’t forget to exercise the same patience while out with your child that you do when potty training at home.

Travel by air

You’d be surprised how alert and cooperative children are when on a journey, and even as exciting as being on an airplane (as opposed to something stressful like moving house), and will ask to be brought to the potty. There’s this novelty of wondering what it’s like to go potty on an airplane. People are usually accommodating especially when they see that the child is potty-trained and parents are making an effort.

“Traveling can lead to more accidents but it won't sabotage the potty training,” says Richard Rende, a developmental psychologist at Brown University. “Some parents worry that if you don't keep on top of potty training at all times, the child will never learn. But the good news is that's not true.”

It’s important to communicate with your child about traveling. You can explain it’s a special situation. Your child will understand the difference. For example, you can tell your child that even though she’ll be wearing absorbent underwear pads (IF NECESSARY) on the airplane, she can go back to big girl underwear at the hotel. Take note of what your child does before he tells you he has to go potty in travel situations.

Many parents have found it convenient to bring a carseat for a child on board the plane. It must go in a window seat or the middle seat of the middle section. A child can then nap comfortably.

What type of underwear in flight?

If a long-haul flight is unavoidable shortly after the 3-Day potty training, there is always the question about whether to use diapers, or pull-ups, or stick to underwear. It is possible to continue the potty training pattern you have already started. You may use a pullup, but treated as underwear, to prepare for unforeseen factors like having to be in one’s seat for long periods of turbulence, or as a consideration to fellow passengers. Chances are he
will stay dry. When he needs to go you would still need to take your child to the toilet and help him to squat over the seat. You would think that if you use pullups for the journey, the child would have a difficult time at your destination resuming your potty-training. But it’s amazing how even 2-year olds understand the “special situation” of a long-haul flight and will go back to using the potty and underwear when you land.

**Using the airplane lavatory**

When we first started traveling with small children, we tried bringing along child-size potty accessories like portable potty seats that fit over an open toilet or those that can be propped atop the closed lid. But eventually, as most parents have found, these additional items are unnecessary and often messy, as toilets in airplanes and in countries around the world are built differently anyway. Even the inflatable model was impractical especially in a cramped spot like an airline lavatory and at the very moment a child needs to go.

It’s part of the fun of your child’s education to learn how to use each of these different toilets. Hold your child firmly as he sits/squats over the toilet. If they are big enough to use Not true with my oldest, who took his time with this task so he was well big and old enough to use the lav himself by the time I got him out of diapers...

Remember those blue-water toilets on airplanes? Now they have suction flushes which can sound scary at first, but if you explain to your child in advance about the funny toilets, he will get over the initial fright easily, and become curious as to “where it all goes.”

**Changing**

Standing up underwear changes are a must for a 2-year-old. You can get him or her used to being changed in the “frisk” position while still at home, a week before you go on a long-haul flight. Remove his clothes from the waist down. As he’s in the “frisk” position cover the floor between his legs with paper towels while you change his clothes. Put a towel over your lap and once s/he is as clean as you could get him/her, tip them towards you, facing away. Lift a leg or two and really make sure their bum is all wiped up. The more you get to wipe while he's standing, the easier it will be. Boys are slightly easier than girls.

Inflight, you may change underwear while the child is standing up in the washroom: Get him/her to stand up on the changing table or on the lid of the toilet and hold onto the basin or a grab handle while you change underwear.
Use the handicapped lavatory for more room to change, as the one with the baby changer is too small for toddlers. This is usually located where you find four lavs together, usually in the middle of the economy cabin. They are clearly marked and usually have a simple opening door, rather than those accordion-style doors the normal lavs do. Use a wide fold-down changing table that is big enough to do a standing-up change on a two-year-old.

**At your destination**

**Bring extra outfits, or have them shipped/mailed**

Most parents by now remember to bring extra underwear, but don’t forget extra clothing. At least one change of clothes for a short trip, but more for a long journey.

If you have to travel with children younger than 2 years, cloth diapers are a helpful aid when you are about to begin potty training. Increasing numbers of American parents are using cloth diapers, and we’ve already discussed that children in cloth diapers potty train more readily. You may bring an extra suitcase with cloth diapers, washable waterproof bags for the soiled ones, and wash/dry them in the laundry facilities at your destination.

These days most airlines charge extra for each checked bag, and you may not want to lug diapers and extra clothing across the country. Mail them ahead to yourself or use a shipping service. The post office is your friend for the way back too – if you find yourself with too much to carry, ship some of it home!

**Make going potty fun**

Keep a journal of the different bathrooms you visit. If your toddler goes without complaint, he gets to take the photos. Make potty breaks into a game by yelling, “I have to go potty, my turn first!” and running in the direction of the bathroom (then let your child beat you) Pick up local wisdom: When in Rome, pee like the Romans! Heed advice from local parents on how to successfully toilet train. Every country has little nuances that help.

**At your destination, find out where the restrooms are**

The main cause of potty accidents when in a foreign destination is taking too much time to find a toilet when maximum pressure has been reached. As soon as you walk into a new attraction or museum, find the restroom and make a quick visit. Brochures usually have a layout of where the restrooms are, but be sure to ask. Older European attractions have intricate floor plans and if you don’t know the exact location of the restroom/ water
closet/ loo/ toilet (or whatever terms are used) your child might not be able to hold it long enough. A little pre-planning can prevent detours when your kid has to go pee or poo “right now, Mommy.”

**Bring your own travel bag of sanitizers, wipes**

Always have your bag of travel potty cleaning supplies with you. Bring an extra bottle of liquid soap or sanitizer in your big suitcase to refill your take-along container.
By the time you have applied the principles of the 3-Day potty training method, you too will have your own story to tell, and whether it was easier than you thought, more difficult, took longer or was over in no time, your child’s potty training story will bear its unique pattern of responses that will guide you for his overall health.

The communication, rapport, understanding between you and your child will build the strong foundation you will need for life.

The healthy eating habits and waste elimination routines you help your child learn will be the basic building blocks of his lifelong well being.

At this point is where many parents let down on the potty routine. We are either so happy that our child has gotten it, and we need a break, so we let down on follow-up support.
Continuous parental support is needed to achieve complete potty training, even as more independence is gained.

Just because your child is trained doesn’t mean they are ready to fly solo. Our toddlers are intelligent but they are not mature. If we left potty trips up to them, they would find that they might suddenly prefer having an accident if they are having fun, like what they are playing, sleep more, enjoying their favorite TV show.

The setbacks brought on by neglect of follow-through support can drag on much longer than the setbacks brought by stress events. You need to remind your child about using the potty if you notice they are holding poop or wee, and not going immediately the moment they feel they need to. Initiate trips to the bathroom until they can make proper judgment calls on their own. Be a constant but considerate reminder to your child until this new habit is established.

You’ve already accomplished so much! Your child has now learned to recognize the signals that his body needs to relieve itself, and knows what to do about it. What needs to happen now is consistency. Keep the child interested in maintaining a good potty schedule. Continue giving your child opportunities to go potty whenever you have the chance.

Now, when your child has an accident, your approach should be a little different than it was during the intensive 3-Day phase. You can now just remind them that they know what to do now, and you know they can follow through.

Eventually, each child will get it, learning the signals from his own body, recognizing the actions he needs to do for his own good. The outside help from us will have served its purpose. It always helps to try to see things from our child’s eyes, and understand the pace they are going through trying to make the connections to learn each new skill.

Once we step out of what we want, the time frame we need to reach, we will get a clear sense of what will help our child as a unique individual, and for sharp insights will arise for you, about how to move forward, innovations to try, conversation that can unlock some understanding.
When you know the territory, you can, in a way, “forget the book!” Until the next time you need it for another child, to see how to tweak it to fit the uniqueness of the child and your relationship within the family.
CHAPTER 17: CONCLUSION-POTTY TRAINING and GOOD HEALTH

We parents must teach our children proper bathroom habits to prevent illness and disease. When children learn good habits early in life, there is a greater chance that these will be carried into adulthood behaviors. Children have different windows of maturity for bathroom training and adults must be attuned to the individual needs and abilities of the child.

**Healthy bowel habits for children**

Regular bowel movements (poo, poop) are important to your child’s health. Bowel habits—how often, how much, and so on—will vary from child to child. Some children go more than once a day, while others may skip a day or two.

**Healthy bowel habits start early in life.**

Ensure your child eats healthy foods — whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables — and drinks more water than juice each day.

**Staying active throughout the day helps to keep bowels working well.**

Teach your child not to hold a bowel movement. Explain that regular bowel movements are normal and important for good health.
Children sometimes ignore the urge to go because they are too busy. To get your child to slow down, have her sit on the toilet 20 to 30 minutes after a meal.

Try not to use negative words like “dirty” or “stinky,” which can make your child feel self-conscious about going to the toilet.

The most common problems with bowel movements are constipation and diarrhea.

It's been said that your bowel movements are like a crystal ball into the state of your health.

**What’s the difference between irregular and constipated?**

It’s all down to what’s normal for you. While the popular wisdom is that everyone should go twice a day, some people only go twice a week. People with slow metabolisms also tend to have slow bowel movements. The important thing is to note your normal pattern and then note changes. Some changes such as frequency or consistency are down to age, diet, medications or lifestyle. Others may be cause for concern.

**Bowel movement issues that need attention**

*Does it smell bad?*

The healthier a person’s digestion, the less strain and the less smell. A low-sugar, high-fibre diet should keep stools relatively smell-free. If you suspect fruit is the problem, choose low-sugar fruits such as apples, pears and berries, and eat fruit away from main meals. Eating lots of red meat can cause stools to smell particularly rancid.

*Does it contain mucus?*

That’s often a sign of candida or thrush. Try building up good gut bacteria by cutting down on sugar and increasing the probiotic content of your food. Try a good quality yoghurt, sauerkraut, tempeh, miso and kefir. A good probiotic supplement can also help.

*Are your stools pale coloured?*

Light-coloured stools may indicate some disruption with your liver, gallbladder, bile or some medications. Bile is a digestive fluid produced by the liver and stored in our gallbladder. Stools get their normal brownish colour from bile which is excreted from the liver into the small intestines during the digestive process. Consider cutting back on excess alcohol, high-fat and highly processed foods and see your GP.
**Are your stools dark or streaked with blood?**

Any sign of blood in stools and you should see your GP. It could be a haemorrhoid but it’s essential to eliminate other causes such as bowel cancer, Crohn’s disease or stomach ulcers. Some red foods such as beetroot can also cause a change in stool colour, as can iron supplements.

**Why does travel affect bowel movements?**

We all have our own comfort time for moving our bowels and the change of time zones, environment, familiar toilet, food and drinking patterns can all upset our systems.

**Do you produce skinny bowel movements?**

See your GP for a colonoscopy if your stools are becoming thinner over several weeks. It can be a sign of rectal cancer.

**Do your stools sink?**

Ideally, a stool should half float, half sink. If it sinks quickly and completely, it may indicate some impaction in the colon due to longer transit time. Eat more fibre and wholefoods and make sure you stay well hydrated.

**Why does exercise help bowel movements?**

Exercise increases our metabolism and decreases the time it takes food to move through the large intestine. It also helps the natural contraction of intestinal muscles that contract efficiently to move stools out quickly.

**The need for healthier toilet practices**

Today, with all the recent observations about how much paper and non-biodegradable materials we use for cleaning up, current dialogue is focusing on the need for better toilet practices. Overcoming our usual squeamishness with language, people are starting to examine the importance of how to deal with human waste. Public necessities should be a subject of serious study, as a toilet is a place where all sorts of human needs and habits intersect.

**Paper or water**

Social entrepreneurs are making headway in trying to produce sustainable and charitable toilet paper, a product that uses recycled material and is chemical- and chlorine-free, with part of the profits to go towards the construction of toilets and improvement of sanitation in the developing world.
There are also ongoing dialogues about whether the use of water to clean up is a much healthier alternative to using paper. The Japanese were once paper people who, after years of persuasion, have become water people, and now produced the most advanced toilet designs in the world. As it turns out, cultures who use paper use the least efficient means of cleaning the dirtiest part of the body. We use this just by force of habit, but it makes you wonder how clean we really are, or what its part is in the diseases that are unique to our hemisphere. Conferences are being held “to question whether we can’t change the way it’s done, or at least improve it.”

**Toilet facilities in other countries**

Some 2.6 billion people – about four in 10 of the world’s population do not have access to a toilet of any kind. They defecate by train tracks, in slum alleys and in forests, and then track excrement back into the house, leading to the opportunity for all kinds of bacterial infections and water borne illnesses that kill 4,000 children under the age of five every single day.

Women, hoping to preserve their modesty, rise at dawn, to relieve themselves under cover of darkness. In India, where open defecation is still practised and tons of human feces left in the open, often deposited beside filthy public toilets.

**Impact of improved toilet facilities on life**

Sanitation and indoor plumbing has been regularly voted the most important invention and medical advance since the 1800’s. Child mortality was known to drop by one-fifth once sewers, toilets and hand washing with soap became routine in London.

In the developing world, the proper disposal of human excrement reduces diarrhea by nearly 40 per cent. Diarrhea still kills more children under 5 than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria.

In villages without sanitation, feces-contaminated water causes not only intestinal, but skin and gynecological disorders. Poor health, linked to excrement, hinders development and therefore prosperity in the world's poorest communities. Studies have found that even the poor will spend money on a toilet if they can be persuaded that good sanitation will, inevitably, end up saving them money. And even revolutionary leaders know that at the very basic, sanitation is more important than independence.

Waste disposal is a dependable indicator of how a country treats its inhabitants, not only where they dispose of waste. This can be downright abuse of human rights as the people who have to collect them do so with a tin pan or bare hands, having to carry baskets of
this to the local waste dump. Men and women with this job are regularly felled by dysentery, parasitic infections and brain fever.

On the other hand, there is the story of farmers in China – some 15.4 million rural households – where fuel is produced from human excrement. Micro-organisms break down the waste in oxygen-free “digester,” producing a gas (mostly methane and carbon dioxide) that can be used as a fuel for cooking; the slurry that remains becomes fertilizer. Instead of being unsanitary waste, human excrement is now turned into treasure.”

So there are two sides of the human-waste story. While others are mired in disease and degradation, countries that are at ease with discussing the topic are able to come up with efficient solutions to turn waste into resource.

Among the goals of World Toilet Day: improve the social status of toilets and upgrade the skills of restroom cleaners and attendants, so that their work has a respectable status. It is a constant concern how to make sanitation more attractive to philanthropic donors and business, and it is a great help that several prominent figures are beginning to give their support.

There’s a lesson for national governments, too. A 1991 cholera epidemic in Peru cost $1 billion to contain (and that didn't include the huge losses in agriculture and tourism). It all could have been prevented with $100 million spent on improved sanitation.

In Korea the recently opened toilet museum in Suwon drew attention to get toilets recognized as a central part of everyday life. It was observed that toilet conditions rapidly improved as South Korean living standards shot from poverty to riches in a generation. Now they are funding toilet building programs in developing countries.

“Going to the restroom is as vital as eating. In a sense, nations and governments should work to make sure everyone has an equal access to toilets and feels happiness in there.”