

Ideas For Learning At Home Ready For School

ELG Physical Development: Moving & Handling

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

ELG Physical Development: Health & Self-care

Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. **They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.**

Toileting

Being toilet trained is a skill that children need to develop independence, self-esteem and confidence to thrive at school. Ofsted guidelines state that every child should be able to go to the toilet independently by the age of five.

However, it's a developmental milestone that can create stress for families. Being able to assess a child's readiness, knowing how our bowel and bladder works and how to keep them healthy are all vital for supporting children.

A consistent approach to training at home and at school during this stage, including language used and deciding when to go nappy free make things easier for the child.

Here are some top tips to help:

- Think about the toilet environment – children need to feel relaxed to go! Make them a pleasant place to be with books, bubbles, posters, singing songs etc.
- Use toilet seats and footstools to help children feel secure and get into a good squat position (feet supported, knees higher than hips).
- Encourage boys to sit down to wee so that they empty their bladder fully. This also provides opportunities to poo that can be missed when standing.
- Avoid encouraging children to empty their bladders too often – this can get very boring for them and doesn't allow their bladder to fill properly or learn to hold more. On average children should be able to go 1.5 – 2 hours between wees.
- Work with the body's natural, prime pooing time e.g. 20 – 30 minutes after eating. Encourage a sit on the potty or toilet after lunch and not before!
- Make sure children have a drink at regular intervals throughout the day. This will help them to recognise their bladder signals as well as keeping their stools soft.
- Always reward effort and not just success!

Lots of children only want to poo in a nappy or start to withhold poo when they start training. Children who will only poo in a nappy are completely normal. Lots of children go through a phase, usually soon after potty training has begun, when they refuse to poo in the potty or toilet and insist on using a nappy.

Other children go through a phase of refusing to wee in the potty or toilet. You'll find the information and techniques below will be relevant to them too.

Some boys and girls will work it out for themselves, but without intervention some would happily

poo in a nappy for years.

Here are some tips to help you break the pooing in a nappy habit.

If your child insists on using a nappy to poo, **DON'T SAY NO**, or they will simply try to avoid pooing. Withholding the stools will lead to constipation – which is definitely something to avoid! Let them have the nappy on just to do their poo, and work on gradually changing their behaviour.

So, where do you start?

1. Constipation

Constipation often plays a part in potty/toilet avoidance. A big, hard, painful poo will scare the child, and to stop it happening again they simply hold on. Make sure any constipation is really well managed before attempting to change toileting behaviour.

2. Making the toilet less scary

Some children are frightened of the toilet itself. This fear will need to be overcome before they can start learning to sit on it. If your child is scared of the flush, start by flushing it while they stand by the bathroom door, then gradually ask them to come a little closer. When they are near enough, encourage them to put just a little bit of toilet paper in the toilet to flush away.

If they are worried about the water splashing back when they use the toilet, show them how to put a layer of toilet paper over the water in the toilet bowl.

Create a game with a few bottles of food colouring! Add a few drops to the cistern, then ask your child to guess what colour the water in the toilet will change to when they flush.

3. Learning to sit on the toilet

To start with, sitting on the potty/toilet should have nothing to do with pooing. The emphasis should be completely on relaxed, happy sitting – when you ask them to do so. To start with this may be a five second sit, once a day, fully clothed. That's fine! Reward them for sitting, and resist the temptation to mention wee or poo!

The key now is moving forward *gradually*, so each little step forward is an achievable goal. *You* plan when the toilet/potty sitting should take place – aim for 20-30 minutes after each meal as that is the best time to poo, and before bed. Make sure your child's bottom and feet are firmly supported.

Over time you'll build up a regular toileting programme, with your child sitting on the potty/toilet for 5-10 minutes four times a day. Keep a bag of special toys in the bathroom ready so they look forward to exploring what's there whenever they sit on the loo.

Remember to reward every potty/toilet sit with your agreed system.

4. Next steps

Once you've made sure your child is not constipated, and they can happily sit on the potty/toilet for 5-10 minutes, you're ready to begin working towards them pooing in the right place.

The key thing is to work out where they like to poo in their nappy, for example behind the sofa or in the corner of their bedroom, and where you want them to poo – on the potty/toilet. Put as many tiny steps as possible in between until eventually they reach the potty. Each step should be an achievable goal.

Be patient – this may take a long time, but it will be worth it! Read the examples below for ideas

of how other parents encouraged their children to move step-by-step towards the potty.

Remember to build in washing their hands thoroughly after sitting on the potty/toilet. Model this for them and why not sing a nursery rhyme to help do a thorough job. **Hand washing is an important life skill and helps us stay healthy and prevents the spread of germs.**