

Toddlers Should Take the Lead in Potty Training !

Becoming potty trained is an important childhood milestone - both for children and for parents! However, too often this part of growing up is pressured and becomes an unpleasant time for the entire family. It is important to remember what is normal:

- ◇ Most children will be toilet trained by age 3 and 1/2 years. Some as early as 24 months but these are true exceptions.
- ◇ Girls train earlier than boys - often a full year earlier.
- ◇ This is an event the child has complete control over. "Training" should not and cannot take place until the child is good and ready.

Often a child demonstrates their interest by signaling the need for a diaper change. At this time it is a good idea to get a child size potty chair. This is a less threatening way to introduce toilet use.

Allow the child to use the chair for everyday play, watching TV, etc. When they show interest in using the chair to urinate or have a stool allow them to sit on it for a short time, but do not expect results at first. The very first urine or stool produced on the chair will probably be by accident! Regardless, **ALWAYS** make sitting on the chair a positive experience and be excited about any successes, no matter how small.

On the flip side, during potty training an 'accident' in the diaper or clothes should not be grounds for punishment or scorn. Stay positive, encourage toilet use, but remember this is a new skill and accidents are going to happen.

Several books have been written on this matter. Some outline plans for home training. I have no objection to these books but I never recommend such a plan before 3 years of age. Until that time my motto is,

"LET THE CHILD TRAIN THEMSELVES!"