

Listed below are a variety of additional resources available to you.

Bright Start Responsive Parenting

This project is funded by the State of South Dakota Office of Child Care Services. This six-week series of classes is designed for parents that have children ages birth to three years. Classes cover a variety of topics including: discipline, temperament, and stress. Classes are FREE and child care may be available.

Infant/Child CPR

This program is designed to give parents, child care providers, and other adults information and skills on CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation). These classes are ongoing throughout the year.

Insight for Children

These classes are designed to give information about how children develop and why they do the things they do. Topics include sibling issues, temperament, and childhood behaviors. Classes vary in length and are FREE.

Temperament Project

This project is funded by the Sioux Empire United Way Success By Six Program. Services provided are FREE. Learning about temperament can help with discipline issues, behavior concerns, and social development. Individual temperament consultations are available, as well as temperament screenings.

Mutch Woman's Health Library

Various materials of interest to women are available for check-out at the Mutch Women's Center for Health Enrichment. Books, videos, and pamphlets cover a variety of topics including but not limited to: parenting, stress, and health information.

Toilet Learning

A Child's Developmental Process

C.H.I.L.D. Services of
Sanford Children's is located at:
1115 W. 41st Street, Sioux Falls, SD
(605) 333-0698



1305 W. 18th Street • PO Box 5039
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5039
sanfordchildrens.org

Toilet Learning

A Child's Developmental Process

Toilet learning is a natural part of a child's development that is either encouraged or discouraged by adult influence. Despite anxious parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors, children will become toilet trained when the child is ready. Toilet learning is a natural part of the course of a child's early development. Adults in a child's life often complicate this course in development by pushing, nagging, begging and pleading with children due to frustration, anger and disappointment.

Unfortunately, claims of children trained at one year were more due to toilet timing instead of toilet learning. Toilet timing is when the parent develops a schedule of when the child is put on the toilet and has success with the child performing with urination or a bowel movement. The difference in toilet learning is that the toddler's brain decides he needs to go to the bathroom and the child makes a deliberate attempt to oblige.

There are two key factors in toilet learning that you will find in many other developmental milestones for children, a physical readiness and a mental desire. Recognizing these signs of readiness provides encouragement; not pressure. Many times adults get so excited at the first indication of toilet learning there is a subtle or strong pressure to hurry the process. This type of pressure can cause the child to become stressed which will often result in a withdrawal or a regression which will only prolong the toilet learning process. In toilet learning development, there is a great variation from child to child. Girls tend to become toilet trained earlier than boys and early training is not a sign of intelligence. Most children show signs of the desire to start the toilet learning process by 2 years of age. Children generally achieve the skill of being toilet trained between 2 to 3 1/2 years of age. Night toilet learning may take longer for some children. It is not uncommon for children to have accidents even after they seem to be fully trained.

Some Signs of Readiness:

- Child pulls at pants, is pacing or squatting to indicate physical sensation of a full bladder or the urge for a bowel movement (generally happens between 18 to 30 months).
- Child can physically sit on the toilet.
- Child acknowledges he or she is wet after urination.
- Child acknowledges he or she is "dirty" after a bowel movement.
- Child can sit still long enough to use the potty chair.
- Child likes clean, dry diapers.
- Child understands what the toilet is used for.
- Child understands relationship between dry pants and going to the toilet.
- Child wakes up dry after naps.

Ways to Provide Encouragement:

- Mention using the potty when your child shows initial readiness signs.
- Change your child quickly before he or she has become accustomed to wet or dirty diapers.
- Give a child an active role in the process, i.e. deciding to use the "big potty" or their own small potty chair.
- Let your child spend time with children who are toilet trained.
- Read toilet learning storybooks to your child.
- Never flush the toilet while the child is sitting on it.

- Allow the child to flush the toilet. It is common for children to scream if you flush the "potty" away.
- Be casual and matter of fact about the toilet learning process.
- Be encouraging of the small triumphs and reassuring during the accidents-just as you would do in the learning to walk process. This will help your child believe he or she can do it.
- Start the process when readiness signs appear. Ignoring these signs and waiting for the child to "fully" train him or herself may only prolong the process of toilet learning skills. When other habits replace the initial interest and desire, the "teachable moments" become harder to find.
- Children should not be punished for accidents; this only emphasizes the negative and gives a child the ability to control the adult through toilet learning behaviors.

Helping a child learn toilet learning skills will take time, patience and a sense of humor. Rushing a child through this process or forcing a child to measure up to the peer pressure to conform will only potentially prolong the process and weaken your relationship with your child. Remember-when the legs and brain are ready, a child will walk; just as when the child's body is physically ready and the brain has the desire, a child will start on the developmental course of learning toilet learning skills.