



Most parents start potty training because the child shows an interest in using the toilet. They want to be like their friends, copy their brothers and sisters, or just like the idea of wearing pants and being independent. This makes potty training much easier.

However, parents of a child with Social Communication Needs (SCN)/ Autism know that life is not always that simple. Understanding when to start can be tricky if the child has no interest in toilets or doesn't care that their peers are wearing pants.

Potty training a child with autism may feel impossible. It can feel like yet another challenge when life is already difficult. But it is not impossible, it is just different and an important step in growing up.

It helps to know that training a bladder is easier if you start young. The wee and poo comes in smaller quantities and the sensation of 'needing to go' can be clearer before 4 years old. That doesn't mean it can't be done later but it is worth having a try before your child goes to school.

We tend to think of wee and poo as one single potty-training event. However, training a child to wee in a potty or toilet comes first. Some lucky folk find that the wee and the poo come as double act but for many it is 2 different processes. 2 different sets of muscles, controlling 2 different holes when you think about it! So, let's do one thing at a time...wee first!

With this in mind, we have created a step-by-step guide to help you through the process of how-to potty train your child with SCN/ Autism.

- **Step 1:** How do I know my child is ready to be potty trained?
- **Step 2:** Creating a plan for potty training your child
- **Step 3:** Getting set up for potty training
- **Step 4:** Potty training communication
- **Step 5:** Nappies off, pants on!
- **Step 6:** Getting started with potty training
- **Step 7:** What about the poo?
- **Step 8:** Potty training when you're out and about
- **Step 9:** Potty training troubleshooting

So, let's get flushing!

Step 1: How do I know when my child with SCN/ ASD is ready to be potty trained?

First, we need to understand a little bit about how your child's body works. Throughout the day, your child's bladder slowly fills with wee as liquid is filtered. When a child is very young, this wee leaks out easily and frequently. They have no control over this. As your child gets older, the bladder learns to fill a bit before releasing the wee in one go.

When a child can hold the wee in the bladder for an hour or more then they have developed the muscle control needed. This is the first sign that your child is ready to be potty trained.

But how do you know if your child has developed this muscle control if they can't tell you? Here's how you find out.

How to spot the signs



After working with lots of families and running an early intervention centre we began to recognise some familiar signs. For one child it was a special dance, for another it was becoming still and gazing into the distance. We learnt that parents are often great at spotting these things when they know what to look for.

Watch your child carefully over a couple of days and ask yourself the following two questions:
Can you spot their unique signals that a wee is about to happen?

- How often do they happen and is there a pattern? e.g. do they wee 30 minutes after a drink or is it after drinking lots of water at bath time!!

If you can't spot a signal then not to worry, you can try the kitchen towel trick instead.



The kitchen towel trick

We can find out if your child has developed the necessary muscle control by using a simple sheet of kitchen towel.

- Put a sheet of kitchen towel in your child's nappy
- Check every 20 minutes to see if it's still dry
- Do this for a couple of days and see how often your child is having a wee. It helps to set the timer on your phone so you don't forget to check!
- If there is an hour when you have checked 3 times and it is still dry then you know your child can hold wee in their bladder and therefore have the muscle control needed!
- Note down the times when you notice the kitchen towel is wet and times when it is dry. Is there a pattern, how long can they stay dry, are they weeing at roughly the same time?

Don't give up, keep going!

It is really important that you as parents feel up to giving this a go. It will take time and patience. You will need to be thorough and keep trying for a couple of weeks. Check you have the time in your day and enough in the tank to keep your sense of humour. Trust us, it'll be worth the effort when your child is sat on the potty doing a grown up wee.

Ready or not?

Before moving onto step 2, let's take another quick look at how to tell if your child is ready to be potty trained:

- If your child makes a particular face or body position before the wee...ready!
- If your child is uncomfortable when their nappy is wet and wants a change...ready!
- If they keep taking their nappy off but is not weeing a trickle all the time.....ready!
- If they can hold wee in their bladder without leaking for an hour and a half or more....ready!
- The parents are ready to give it a go!

If your child is ready to be potty trained then it's time to make a plan. Let's move on to [Step 2](#).

Step 2: Creating a plan for potty training your child with SCN/ ASD



“All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination.” – Earl Nightingale

Like most things in life, having a plan is essential and potty training is no exception. The temptation can be to jump in the moment your child is ready, but you will have a lot more success if you plan ahead. Here's what to do:

Re-introduce your child to the bathroom

Start by always changing your child's nappy in the toilet or bathroom. You can change a nappy almost anywhere these days but we need to start setting up the idea that the wee and poo go in the toilet or potty. This is where the action is going to be, so it's important the child associates going to the loo in the right room.

Show them how it's done!

This one is simple, let your child see you going to the toilet. You may feel embarrassed, but it really helps if the child can see what happens and what goes where. Show the child how the toilet seat works, where the wee and poo goes and what the flush is for. Do all this before there is any pressure on the child to actually sit on the potty or toilet and do anything themselves.

Warming up

Have your child get used to the idea of using the potty or toilet by getting them to sit on it for a short time. You could ask them to sit there while you read them a story or run their bath. In the morning you could say “just sit there while I get your nappy”. However, you do it, we want them to get the idea before we expect them to actually do anything.

Get the whole family up to speed

Like with most changes to your child's routine at home, it's important to have the entire family on board and working towards the same goal. The same goes for potty training.

Check that everyone in the household is ready for the new potty-training plan. Everyone must agree to stick to the new rules and routines you have set up. We understand that people have different sensitivities around using the loo, but we need a team effort here, so it might need talking through. If your child sees you doing one thing, but his brother or sister doing something different, it can be confusing.

A part of this team effort is to agree that accidents, making a mess or a smell will not be discussed in front of the child and they will be calmly cleared up. On the other hand, sitting on the potty, having a try with any drops in the right place will be approved and broadcast. Hooray!

Planning for potty training

Before we move onto step 3, let's take another quick look at what we can do to get ready:
Change nappies in the bathroom
Let the child watch
Have a go at sitting on the potty or toilet
Get the team on board
Now we're all set, it's time for [Step 3](#). Action!



Step 3: Getting set up for potty training

Similar to how we find the right tools to help us do our jobs more efficiently, we must make sure our child is set up for potty training in a way that works for them!



Choosing your throne for a mighty wee

You need to decide on using the toilet or a potty. If possible, go straight for the toilet as this is what we want in the end. If you or your child are anxious about safety then go for a potty. We would suggest the toilet with a 'seat up, sit down, hold on' formula but it is your decision.

"Seat up, sit down, hold on"

Once you have decided, make sure your potty or toilet is easy to get to and if you choose the toilet, don't forget to tighten up the screws on the seat as there may be a little more movement than normal.

Teaching your child potty training vocabulary

Your child needs to know the names of everything they will see and do. Run a vocabulary check and make a list of the words your child needs, for example:

- Wee
- Poo
- Nappy
- Pants
- Bottoms
- Seat
- Flush
- Wipe
- Wash your hands

Please choose names for things that will work in the long run. I remember a child who used to announce she was 'shooting bunnies' when having a poo...interesting but a bit confusing! Try and teach the understanding of the words by saying them often at the right times in everyday life.

Choosing the right clothes for potty training

Your child's clothes need to be 'easy access' such as jogging bottoms or a skirt that is easily managed. You don't want to miss the moment because you are struggling with belts, buttons or ties. Remember, keep it simple when potty training and remove anything that will make it more difficult.

Take pictures of your toilet

Take pictures or photos of your toilet and have them to hand. You are going to use them a lot even if your child can talk (...more on that later!)

Getting set up for any accidents

Accidents will happen and we all have different tolerances for smell and mess so get a couple of clear up kits organised and place them strategically around the house. This could include:

- Disinfectant spray
- Cloth
- Wet wipes
- Rubber gloves
- Nappy sacks
- Air freshener spray

Remember, it is important to get things cleared up calmly without discussing the mess or smell in front of the child. We celebrate the wins and stay calm about the accidents.

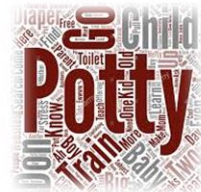
Buy lots of pairs of pants and don't forget socks! If a child wets themselves, the socks often get wet too. This can be very uncomfortable for some children, so you will need to change both. Don't buy fancy ones, go for cheap and cheerful as you will go through a few pairs. You might even find yourself throwing some pairs away after a monster pool!

How to get set up for potty training

Let's quickly run through everything we need to get set up for potty training:

- Decide potty or toilet
- Check your child knows what everything is called
- Lots of pictures of potty or toilet
- Easy access clothes
- Clear up kit
- Lots of pants and socks

Now we're all set, it's time to focus on communication. Let's move on to [Step 4](#).





Step 4: Potty training communication

Recognising when you need a wee comes naturally to most of us. We feel the sensation and go to the loo, we barely even need to think about it. However, this is a lot more difficult for a child with autism.



How to simplify potty training communication

Learning how to recognise your internal body signals is hard. Not only that, but converting these body signals into a message to then tell someone that you need the potty or toilet is another complicated process. We can simplify this process by breaking it down into 2 steps.

- Step 1. Train the bladder to empty into the potty or toilet.
- Step 2. Recognise the sensation of a full bladder and make a request.

By breaking it down into 2 steps, we make the communication and interaction part a lot easier for your child. The focus should first be on getting the wee and poo in the right place. The talking side of things can then come later.

Your child does not have to be a skilled talker. They may have no speech. Potty training is possible. We are going to make the process easy by using pictures for all the children. This works by making pictures a part of the routine for going to the toilet. It takes the pressure off. The child is learning to make a big change from weeing in their nappy to weeing in the potty. This needs to be as easy as possible. The pictures will do the communicating. Learning to say you need a wee at the right time and in the right place can come second and is easier if the child has the pictures to help them think of what to say.

Showing your child with pictures

Pictures are very important and can make the whole thing less stressful for everyone. When it is time for a wee, you are going to show them a picture of the potty/toilet and say calmly, 'it's time for a wee' and then take them. Always show the same picture so they begin to relate the sensations with the image. A common mistake is to ask the child, "do you need a wee?" Do not do this. It may help children who are not autistic as it reminds them what is needed. However, if the child is autistic they now face yet another challenge. The child will have to understand the words, check their internal body state, form a reply and then interact and talk. Much harder!

It is better if you show them the picture, say "time for a wee" and take them to have a try. You may be too late but that's okay, remember, accidents are normal and nothing to worry about. Just keep trying and you'll get **there**.

Setting up a time to go to the toilet

We can set up a routine that means the child is regularly taken for a 'try for a wee' at specific times. Match these times to the information you got earlier in steps 1-3. This helps the child develop a relaxed understanding of emptying your bladder without the constant questioning. It forms a good habit of going to the toilet regularly and takes the pressure off remembering. This is where liking a structure and routine is a real advantage for a child with autism!

If you are not sure then set up times that work well with the average day and school day, this might include:

- Wake up
- After breakfast
- Mid-morning
- Before lunch
- Mid afternoon
- After tea
- Before the bath



Then into a nappy for bedtime. Keep it simple and calm and expect some accidents...we all make mistakes when we are learning.

Using a picture strip in the bathroom

Once you're in the bathroom, use a simple script with a picture strip like the one below.



Insert picture strip

It is important to say the same thing and follow the same sequence every time, no matter who has taken the child to the bathroom.

We find the following script effective:

Time for a wee
Trousers down
Pants down
Sit down
Hold on
Have a wee
Wipe wipe
Pants up
Trousers up
Wash your hands
Hooray!

Don't forget to say it cheerfully and optimistically, we are creating a positive experience!

Communicating about potty training, one step at a time



Teaching your child how to go for a wee comes later on, when the child has experienced lots of successes getting the wee in the right place. Remember, one step at a time. If you have been using the same picture from the start, the child will start to use it themselves as they relate it with the routine and sensation, and you have made it normal.

The child has more chance of speaking if we take the pressure off. Keep in mind, reading your internal body signals can take a while but with practice they will get it.

Before we move on to step 5, let's run through the important points to remember about potty-training communication.

- Know your child's unique signals for when they need a wee
- Use the same picture of the potty or toilet every time you take them to have a try
- Don't ask lots of questions
- Use a simple script and picture strip for the routine
- Remember, accidents happen!

Now we're communicating about potty training, it's time to say goodbye to nappies and move on to [Step 5](#).

Step 5 "Potty training, what a load of pants!"

Changing from one item of clothing to another is no big deal for most of us, especially when the promise of a more comfortable fit is involved. This might not be so clear for your child though and communicating comfort levels might not be so easy. So try looking at it from their point of view, nappies have been ok up until now so why change? Pants feel different and some children like things to stay the same!



Introducing your child to the idea of pants

We need to start by taking an interest in pants generally. Show the child that you wear pants, that Daddy wears pants, brothers and sisters wear pants, Granny, Grandpa etc wear pants. You get the idea. When we were training children in the specialist nursery, all the parents would happily join in to set up the idea of pants being normal and okay. It would sound a little something like this:

"Is anyone wearing pants today?"

"Oh yes, I'm wearing pants!"

"Me too!"

"Do you wear pants?"

"I don't leave the house without them!"

"Just let me check what colour my pants are today, blue!"

"My pants are white with pink spots!"

We'd have fun talking about pants, with everyone happily showing each other a corner of the pair they were wearing that day. The children saw this and pants would quickly become normal to them.

Try this at home. Do you have adults in your family who could help you with this? Do you have regular guests that wouldn't mind joining in talking about pants?

It's important not to make this about 'big boys/girls wear pants and nappies are for babies'. We are simply setting up the idea that pants are ok and the people who the child knows, loves and trusts wear pants too.

Always use pants

Buy lots of pairs of pants and wash them a couple of times so they smell like the child's clothes. This removes the new/just out of the packet smell that can upset some children.

Although it might be tempting to buy pull ups and nappies that are easy to remove, the sensation against the child's skin will remain the same. They will continue to associate that sensation with the pattern of peeing in a nappy and continue to do just that. Don't fear pants, embrace them!

When to put the pants on

When the big day arrives, follow these simple steps:

Signal to your child that it's time for the toilet

Use script/picture strip once in the bathroom

Sit them on the toilet for a try

Put the pants on

We can expect lots of accidents in the first few days (luckily you have your clear up kit ready from step 3). This is okay, and the child will get used to the sensation of being wet which also helps.



Talking pants

Before we move on to step 6, let's recap the most important points when it comes to pants:

Start with introducing your child to the idea of pants

Ask people the child knows to talk about wearing pants

Buy lots of pairs of pants and do not use alternatives

Put their first pair of pants on when they use the toilet

Expect lots of accidents!

We can now turn our thoughts to Step 6 – the big day!

Step 6: Potty training in action!

Like with most big decisions which involve trying something differently, it helps to set a date. By committing to that day, you can make sure everything, and everyone involved is ready, and wake up that morning with a positive mental attitude about the potty-training challenge ahead.



The night before the big day



On the night before the big day, prepare the following:

- Prepare the pictures you plan on using by sticking them in easy to access places with blu tack
- Place the picture strip for the routine you are going to use near the toilet
- Be clear on the script you plan on using when it's time to go
- Place the clear up kits strategically around the house
- Set reminders on your phone with an alarm that remind you when it will be time for a wee
- Take a deep breath before going to bed and remind yourself that tomorrow begins an exciting new chapter in your child's life!

The morning of the big day

Today is the day. You can do this, just stay calm, cheerful and keep going. It will take practice, but you will get there.



When your child wakes up, follow these steps to get your new routine started:

- Get up, nappy off
- Show picture of potty or toilet
- Sit on the potty or toilet
- Show picture strip and read script
- Wait a moment for your child to, 'have a try'
- Wipe, wipe
- Pants on
- Wash hands
- Finished, hooray!
- Get dressed in 'easy access' clothes

With your first try finished (well done!), it's time to get on with the rest of the day. It's important for your new routine to take priority so keep an eye on your reminders, stick to the script and stick to the plan!

Staying realistic throughout the day

We must also be realistic with our expectations. Don't expect your child to sit on the toilet or potty for hours. Have a try and a couple of minutes later say, "good try, well done, wash hands, dry hands, let's play." We must make potty training a positive experience and celebrate trying.

Remember your child is sensitive to your mood which is why it helps to be realistic about what progress might look like.

Here are three big achievements that often get overlooked:

- Sitting for 2 minutes on the potty without complaining, hooray!
- Wearing pants without taking them off for 10 minutes, hooray!
- Watching the flush without worrying, hooray!

Having an accident

Remember what we said in Step 2, making a mess or a smell will not be discussed in front of the child and it will be calmly cleared up.

Clean up accidents in the bathroom calmly and without fuss. After you're done, change the child into dry pants and keep going!

Talking about potty training positively

Once you start potty training, people who are close to you and your child will naturally begin asking how it's going. Be careful not to have hushed conversations about accidents or mistakes and instead, focus on success stories!

Be sure to have a few generous comments up your sleeve for those difficult days where your mind goes blank. Practice saying things like:

"Jack looked at the potty picture very carefully today what a good boy"

or

'Jack is trying lots of pants today'

The child will start to worry if your spirits drop so staying optimistic and being approving is essential.

Should my boy be weeing sitting down or standing up?

Most people teach weeing sitting down first. Boys need to learn how to wee standing up, but this can be taught after the basic routine is established. Don't worry too much about this now, get the basics sorted first.

When you think your child is ready for a standing wee, get his dad, brother or trusted adult to show him how it is done. Develop and practice another simple script to use once he's standing at the toilet.

We find the following script effective:

Trousers down
Pants down
Hold it
Point it
Have a wee
Shake, shake
Pants up
trousers
Up
Wash hands



Learning how to aim your willy as well as remembering everything else can be tricky! He might take a few goes to get it right but practice makes perfect!

At the end of your first day potty training

Well done for making it through your first day, you're almost done!

When it's your child's bedtime, put them back in a nappy for the night. By doing so you won't need to worry about night time accidents, which will make for a better night's sleep for everyone!

With your child now in bed and your feet firmly up, it's time to give yourself a pat on the back. Your child has started their important journey into potty training. Although you may feel exhausted, you must get ready to repeat the whole thing again the next day. Consistency is the key when successfully building a new routine.

Keep trying each day. New skills take time to learn but these ones will be useful lifelong!

Key points of getting through your first day

- Get the pictures ready
- Practice the script, ready to use with the pictures
- Remind yourself there will be accidents and practice breathing!
- Work out some positive things to say to yourself and anyone else if they ask
- Stick to the plan and hold steady through the day

Now we've done weeing, it's time we talked about poo. On to Step 7 we go!

Step 7: What about the poo?

When your child is having a wee, the poo may come through as a bonus. Maybe you spotted the child was about to go and after getting them to the potty in time, all went well. Hooray, that is fantastic. This is how it goes for some children.

Remember, weeing and pooing are two different events. Sometimes the poo needs a bit longer to get sorted and this is okay. With your child already weeing in the right place and wearing pants, the hard part is out of the way! Your child has got used to sitting on the potty or toilet, has experienced success and the routine is a part of everyday life. These are important changes and all help make the next step easier.

Now, let's get the poo sorted.

Getting started with doing a poo

Start by making sure your child has seen a poo in the toilet, so they know what it is and where you want it to go.

We want the child to stay relaxed and calm. Try and stop everyone jumping to attention and getting alarmed when you see the child needs a poo. Anxiety or stress means all the muscles squeeze up very tightly making it very difficult for any poo to get through!

What to do if your child is anxious about pooing

Most importantly, we want to try and avoid the child 'holding on' as this can cause constipation. This is very uncomfortable for the child and yet another thing for them to try and communicate. In this case, it is better to use a nappy and wait till everyone feels more relaxed.

If you can see your child is getting anxious and holding on, then put a nappy on in the bathroom. Be sure to do this when the poo is due or when you see the warning signs. The script then changes to "nappy on" instead of "sit on the potty". Wait for the delivery and then change the child back into pants, hooray!

Pooing in the toilet, knowing the signs

When you are ready to try doing a poo in the toilet, revisit step 1. We will use a similar process for learning to poo than we did to wee so it's good to refresh your memory here.

The poo signs are often more obvious than weeing and most parents just 'know' that face or what their child disappearing to a special place means. After working with lots of families and running an early intervention centre we began to recognise some familiar signs ourselves. These include:

- crouching over
- hanging on to a bit of furniture
- finding a private corner behind the curtain, under the table or behind the door

Think through the times your child usually has a poo. Can you spot patterns of behaviour? You'll quickly have all the information you need

When it's time for a poo

Remember to ask yourself the following two questions:

Can you spot their unique signals that a poo is about to happen?

- How often do they happen and is there a pattern?

Once you are clear it's time to prepare the picture strip just as you did for the wee. This time we're going to add a poo to the correct part of the picture sequence, along with the word poo to the existing script. The same sequence of words with only one change means the routine is familiar. This is reassuring as the child knows everything is ticking along as usual.

So, when you can tell the child needs a poo, show them the potty or toilet picture and continue with the same script as for the wee but just say poo instead.

What if my child is still in a nappy?

If your child is pooing in a nappy to keep things moving, continue with this strategy until the poos are coming without stress. Only then are you ready to move things forward. Gradually move putting the nappy on, nappy filling, the wiping and pants back into the bathroom. As your child becomes relaxed over a few days, ask the child to try for a poo on the potty before you put the nappy on and one day it will happen. Don't take the child by surprise with loud whoops of joy but show them you are pleased, then wipe, pants, wash hands and you are ready for the next bit of the day.

Pooing in private

If your child likes a bit of privacy, e.g. they find a private place to have a poo, then find a job to do nearby whilst your child is sitting on the potty. Staring at them and holding on means you are up close and personal and some children just can't go with this kind of pressure.

Doing a poo, one step at a time

Let's quickly recap the most important points for doing a poo:

- Weeing and pooing are two separate holes
- Show the child a poo in the toilet
- Avoid holding on
- Use a nappy until they are ready

- Understand the signs of when your child needs a poo
- Use the same picture strip and script as weeing but add poo
- Give your child privacy if need be

Training for the poo does take a bit longer for some children but it is totally achievable. You need patience and stamina to keep going... and a sense of humour!

The bathroom is a safe place which we are able to control. What happens when we're out and about though, and your bathroom isn't nearby? It's time for [Step 8](#).

Step 8: Potty training when out and about

At the moment, getting out and about in lockdown is not so easy. This doesn't mean toilets won't be necessary after once it's over.

Practice makes perfect

When you are able to go out, be sure to practice using the toilets in other people's houses where you know they will be clean and easy first. Then try shop, café and other public toilets. Some are less desirable but knowing how to go to the toilet when you are out and about in the world is important.

Needing a wee when you're on the run

Everyone gets caught short sometimes but going to the toilet when you're out and about is important. Cracking out a potty in the public bathroom is also OK if you don't feel your child is ready to try the toilets.

And if you get caught out and peeing behind a tree is a necessary solution, keep it quick and boring otherwise **it may become a sport in its own right!**

Preparing the car for toilet training

Protecting car seats is important during toilet training. Make sure you have a wee before you start a trip and then use a towel on top of a black plastic bag on the car seat. If your child has an accident the towel is then easily enveloped in the bag, lob in the wet clothes as well and then unload into the washing machine when you get home. This way the car seat stays dry all ready for the next adventure.

Wipe wipe!

Some children need help learning how to wipe their own bottoms. It is easier at the start with the grown up to do this but learning how to do it for yourself is a part of growing up.

Show the child how to pull the paper off the roll, tear it, wipe and then put it in the potty or toilet. You may need to help your child by putting your hand over theirs to teach them the wiping motion but once they get the idea, prompt and help as little as possible until they can do it all on their own.

Being a boy and using a urinal

If your child is a boy the men's toilets in shops, school etc will have urinals. You need Dad or a trusted adult to show your child how to use these. Most people don't have them at home, but they are a part of life!

Potty Training when you're out and about

Learning to use the toilet when you're out and about is essential, and an important part of growing up. Before we move on to the final step for some potty-training tips, let's quickly look at the most important points to remember when potty training out and about:

- Practice going to the toilet when you're out and about
- If you have to go behind a wee, do not make it exciting
- Using a potty in a public toilet is okay if you're not ready to sit on the toilet
- Prepare your car for potty training
- Don't forget to show your child how to wipe
- For boys, get a grown up to show them how a urinal works

Well done! Steps 1-8, in the bag!

Trouble Shooting Tips

Okay, don't forget. Practice makes progress.

Here are some troubleshooting tips that will help you when potty training your child with autism:

Stay calm and positive

The most important thing is to stay calm and positive. The children are like sponges for anxiety and it will make everything harder if everyone gets nervous. Remind yourself that you and your child are having a go at something new and that mistakes will happen as they are a natural part of learning.

Bed wetting is a part of potty training

Keep your child in nappies at night until they wake up dry for several nights in a row. It is important not to risk disturbing a sleeping child. A child that is woken to go for a wee to avoid a wet bed is potentially a child who thinks it's time to get up and start the day!

When the child has been dry for a week, they have then developed the control to last the night. Take them for a wee before bed, put the nappy on and then take them again first thing in the morning. Nappy free nights might take longer but sleep is important for everyone.

When your child is reliably dry all night, simply leave the nappy off and continue the routine of a wee before bed and first thing in the morning. You have set up a routine that will work for life!

Potty training when you child is ill

If your child is ill then they will have a lot more accidents and it may feel like you have gone back to the beginning. Try not to be disappointed. It is hard to remember new things when you are poorly. The skills will be regained as they feel better. As soon as you can see the child is back on form, get the old routine back in place, stick to it carefully for a few days and you will get back to where you were.

Potty training can be overwhelming!

Some children are sensitive to things about wees, poos, toilets and toilets. It might be the smells, the sounds or a combination of everything. It is important to keep things very simple.

Some toilet and potty cleaners do smell very strong so choose unfragranced ones if this is a problem. Gradually let your child get used to the sound of the flush, perhaps let them wear headphones and watch the flush and see what is happening. Add a flush picture to your routine and make sure the child knows when it is going to happen as the unexpected flush can increase the alarm for some children.

Some children are picky about where they go

Some children are very particular about where they will wee and poo. This goes for some adults as well so it is not outrageous, it's just a part of how some people think! If this is the case for your child, try adding a bit of variety as holding on for very long periods increases the risk of urine infections and constipation. It is also helpful for real life to be able to tolerate using other toilets if you have to.

Dealing with constipation

If you think your child is getting constipated, increase the amount of water and fluids plus lots of exercise as this helps move things along. Make sure the sitting for a poo is relaxed and perhaps add a story, music they like or the treat of watching something on the iPad as they sit there. A bit of distraction helps get the muscles relaxed. If these things don't work consult your Doctor for advice.

Using a book to help

There are lots of stories and books about using the toilet or potty and adding these to the routines can help provide information that reassures an anxious child. Find one you like and add it to story time. You can also use Social Stories. This is an idea created by Carol Gray and involves telling the child the sequence of what happens in pictures. There are lots on the internet, you just need to find one that fits you and your child or one that you can adapt.

The Gina Davies Autism Centre YouTube Channel



The Gina Davies Autism centre has made a series of helpful videos free, on our youTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX2NYL2BqVo> to watch this guide's supporting video, "Toilet training, let's flush some!"