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Confident Parents, Peaceful Homes

TOILET LEARNING THE BYB WAY!

Toilet training is one of the most difficult tasks of parenting! We help you develop a plan unique to your child's needs. Whether you are getting ready to teach your child to use the toilet, your child has started learning but has hit a road block, or you are troubleshooting unique challenges, we have successfully supported hundreds of families to accomplish this big life skill. Having a plan and evidence-based resources is a great way to set you and your child up for success!

Our approach is effective whether you are interested in teaching your child to use the toilet gradually over the course of days/weeks or more rapidly. We teach you to use YOUR child's data to guide your decision-making about YOUR child's next toileting steps.

PROGRESS LOG

[Download our Toilet Training Progress Log HERE!](#)

Your first assignment is to record some information about your child's current skills, patterns, and areas of concern. Discreetly check your child's diaper or underwear approximately every 30 minutes for at least one day. If possible, recording data on a weekday and weekend is also helpful assessment information. Use one row per check. This information will inform your next steps.

WHY USE ARTIFICIAL MOTIVATION?

In the short video clip below, our founder, Jamie Waldvogel, shares how our expertise as behavior analysts informs our wise, temporary, and efficient use of artificial motivators to teach children to use the toilet.

[Watch video clip to learn more!](#)

MOTIVATION

Your next assignment is to write down your plan for temporarily using “artificial” motivators to support your child’s toilet learning.

Remember, variety is key!

[CLICK HERE to fill out our online form](#) to help you get started.

Next, watch our FREE video:

[*My Child Doesn't Respond to Rewards: Capitalize on Your Child's Natural Motivation!*](#)

Because using natural motivation is preferred for most other teaching!



BABY STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL TOILET LEARNING

When you have a new process to learn at work do you learn and master it all in one day? Do you complete a daunting task all in one day? Did you know there are 30 skills that your child needs to accomplish before they are completely toilet trained? If you had a list of 30 new things to learn to do, how long would it take you to learn them all?

Did your child learn to walk in a single day? They literally took “baby steps” to learn to walk. Do children learn to swim in one session? Do children learn to ride their bikes the first time they try? Do we teach children to read by handing them a chapter book? All of these skills are systematically broken down into manageable “baby steps.” Literacy and math curricula have been created that do just that for teachers, based on research on the best “baby steps.”

Your child will learn to use the toilet the quickest, and with the least amount of stress to you and your child, when you break down this new skill into “baby steps.” Here are the four most common “baby steps” that set children up for success.

BABY STEP 1: COOPERATION

Your goal is baby step 1 is for your child **calmly transition** to the toilet when an adult cues and **sit** for up to 10 minutes. There is no expectation for your child to pee/poop at this step.

We recommend offering your child a novel, preferred activity after they sat calmly on the toilet for X minutes, or seconds, up to 10 minutes. For example, if your child will calmly walk to the bathroom but only sits for 2 seconds, start with sitting for 10 seconds and increase the length of time each time your child is successful.

If pausing preferred activities to transition to the bathroom is the barrier to your child’s toilet learning, we can help work on that too. Our recorded parent workshop, “[My Child Delays, Dawdles, One-More-Minutes, and Still Screams When It Is Time To End Something](#)” [is available here](#) .



BABY STEP 2: PRODUCTION

The goal of this step is for your child to walk to the bathroom when directed by an adult, sit for up to 10 minutes, **and pee/poop**. We use YOUR child's data to inform what time of day you capture teaching moments, how often your child sits on the toilet, and for how long your child sits on the toilet.

At this step, we recommend you offer your child a reserved activity after **each successful pee or poop on the toilet**. We recommend fading reinforcement for the previous baby step by only offering your child one of the novel activities you reserved **once in a while** for success with cooperation (step 1).

Your goal as the parent is to keep it fun! With your child's data to guide you, we recommend you take your child to the toilet as often as needed to prevent accidents, but not too often that it becomes an aversive experience. We recommend you use your child's data to guide your decisions about next "baby steps." Your child is learning bladder control as you gradually support them to remain dry for increasingly longer periods of time. Our goal is to ensure your child successfully stays clean and dry, yet have them feel a slight urge to use the bathroom. For example, if your child has been able to stay clean and dry for 30 minutes, your next step may be to cue your child to the bathroom after 40 minutes.

BABY STEP 3: INITIATION

The goal of this step is for your child to go to the bathroom and successfully pee or poop **without adult reminders or cues**. Your child should also stay clean and dry between initiations at this step.

Depending on your child's age and developmental level, your goal *may not* be initiation. Perhaps your child requires support with their clothing or wiping properly. In these examples, initiation may not be realistic. Consider those supports you provide your child to help you develop future "baby steps."

Sometimes we need to teach a child to initiate use of the bathroom by **changing how we cue** them to do so. For example: After the child is consistently following an instruction or cue to use the bathroom, your next step towards initiation may be **silently** pointing to the bathroom until your child no longer requires your cues or reminders.

At this step, we recommend you offer a novel activity when your child successfully initiates use of the bathroom and pees or poops. We recommend fading reinforcement for the previous baby step, and only offer your child one of the novel activities you reserved **once in a while** for success with production (step 2).



BABY STEP 4: CLEAN & DRY CHECKS

Before starting this “baby step,” be sure your child has consistently initiated use of the toilet and remained dry for at least 3 consecutive days before beginning to *gradually* fade out any artificial reinforcement. Remember, if you *abruptly* stop providing reinforcement, your child will likely start having accidents. We recommend fading reinforcement for the previous baby step, and only offer your child one of the novel activities you reserved **once in a while** for success with initiation (step 3).

At this step, we recommend you **capture your child’s natural requests to create a teaching moment** to do a clean and dry pant check. If you are going to say yes to your child’s request anyway, confirm they are clean and dry before honoring that request. For example, “We can play another more hide and seek, let’s see if you are dry!” Be as discreet as possible.

It is also important to *gradually* eliminate any extra supports that you used to teach the skill, such as verbal reminders, silent cues, or routine cues.

BABY STEP 5: DECREASE ARTIFICIAL REINFORCEMENT

The goal of this step is to decrease the use of artificial reinforcement as the natural social motivators take over. After your child is successfully using the toilet with reinforcement, it is important to **gradually** eliminate the reinforcement over time, rather than abruptly. There is a behavioral phenomenon called an extinction burst that occurs when we **too abruptly** change the contingencies of a behavior. Your child is more likely to regress with toileting if reinforcement is abruptly eliminated.

Scroll down to learn how!

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DECREASE ARTIFICIAL REINFORCEMENT

Ways to gradually eliminate artificial reinforcement:

1. **Offer natural, social reinforcement** for the “baby steps” your child has already learned. You can check if they are clean and dry **less often** each day that your child is successful. As described above, we recommend waiting for a natural teaching moment when your child is asking for something that you plan to say yes to anyway.
2. **Delay** the delivery of the artificial motivator after successful initiation of toileting. Support your child to return the activity they had paused prior to using the toilet. For example, leave the bathroom when your child no longer needs your support, return to the activity that they had paused, encouraging them to follow you back to resume that activity. If your child doesn’t ask for an artificial motivator, don’t offer one!
3. Provide reinforcement **only** for staying clean and dry, which you learned is the last step of our approach to toilet training. If your child's data indicates that they are going to the bathroom every 2.5 hours, we recommend you do a clean and dry pants check about every 3 hours as your first “baby step.” If your child is successful with fewer checks, you may check every 3.5 hours the following day. If your child continues to be successful, we recommend you capture a teaching moment to confirm they are clean and dry 1-3 times per day for the first 2 weeks after they have been successful. Before you know it, toilet training will not be the focus of your days as your child’s natural social motivators take over.

If your child struggles when you gradually eliminate artificial motivation, you may need to teach your child to tolerate delays and denials of their requests. You can learn how to teach these skills to your child, by [clicking here](#) to view our FREE recorded parent workshop, “**Combat Impulsivity by Teaching Your Child Self-Control.**” In a world that values immediacy, we recommend teaching all children an appropriate “knee jerk” response to their requests being delayed or denied.

NEED MORE SUPPORT?

Need more support to apply these tips to *your child's unique needs*? We offer an introductory assessment phone consultation. Prior to your phone consultation, you will complete a short online Google Form that provides information about your concerns so that we are able to conduct our assessment quickly at the beginning of the call and begin offering recommendations.

You can [purchase your introductory assessment phone consultation here](#).

