

## Toilet Training



Sometime after 18 months of age, a toddler *may* show these signs that say he is ready begin toilet training:

- stays dry for several hours at a time
- regularly lets you know when a bowel movement (BM) is happening
- may squat, tug at his diaper, become very still or hide in a corner after he has a BM
- complain about wet or dirty diapers and wants to be changed
- becomes more aware of cleanliness (his clothes, room, or food)
- understands what you want him to do.

Once you notice the cues for readiness, begin slowly and be patient.

- There is no one method that works for every child.
- If you expect too much of her, or try too hard, toilet training will be a struggle for everyone involved.
- Just like you don't expect her to walk before she is physically ready, you shouldn't expect her to control her bowels and bladder before she is physically able to control the muscles she needs to use.
- Adults cannot have bowel movements "on command," and neither can children.
- Laxatives, enemas and suppositories should not be used for toilet training.
- Begin by getting your child comfortable with the potty chair. Let her see it as you explain how it will be used.
- Next, help him to understand the real purpose of the potty chair or toilet by setting him on the chair or toilet after he has a BM in a diaper. Unfasten the diaper and drop the contents into the chair or toilet.
- After a few days or so she will understand what the purpose is of the chair/toilet.
- Reward success with praise. When he's unsuccessful, don't criticize him.
- Bladder control usually follows bowel control. It may take longer to achieve.
- If he is unsuccessful in his attempt to learn, stop trying to train him and try again in a few months. Some people don't start training until their child is 2 ½ years old or more.

## Otter Tail County Public Health

Government Services Center  
560 W Fir Ave • Fergus Falls MN 56537  
1-218-998-8320

118 N Main, Box 99  
New York Mills MN 56567  
1-218-385-5500

## Feeding Your Child



- ◆ Physically your toddler is growing more slowly than during the first year. His appetite may also be decreasing.
- ◆ Toddlers often develop specific food likes and dislikes, refusing vegetables one month, meat the next month, and milk the next.
- ◆ Offer a variety of small amounts of nutritious foods and be ready to offer seconds.
- ◆ Give your toddler food choices.
- ◆ Most toddlers enjoy feeding themselves and are skilled with a spoon and cup by now.
- ◆ During this *learning period* expect a messy face and hands.
- ◆ Use large bibs and have a wash cloth or paper towels ready for spills.
- ◆ Pour small amounts of liquids (1-2oz) at a time into your toddler's glass to prevent large spills.

## Safety Check



- ✓ Never leave your toddler, even for a few seconds, in or near any body of water without supervision.
- ✓ Block stair entrances and supervise when your child is near stairs.
- ✓ Never leave your toddler alone in the car, even if it's locked and in your driveway.
- ✓ Make sure your child rides in a car seat at all times.
- ✓ Don't let your toddler play with electrical cords or outlets. Keep outlets covered.
- ✓ Put safety locks on cupboards and cabinets that have dangerous things in them. Keep these items **"OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF REACH."**
- ✓ Have the phone numbers of the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) and your doctor handy.
- ✓ Keep pot handles turned inward on the stove.
- ✓ If you have guns, store them safely. Unload all weapons. Lock all guns in a secure location and use trigger locks when available. Lock up bullets in a separate place.
- ✓ Keep matches and lighters out of sight and out of your child's reach. Children as young as age 2 can start serious fires.

*We hope that you are finding Health Tracks helpful. We will be writing to you when your child is around 3 years old. In the next few months we hope you will consider enrolling your child in Head Start. Please call 1-800-450-2900, ext. 149 for more information about that program. We also hope you are participating in your district's ECFE classes.*