Potty Training Children with Disabilities

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Consider Typical Development

- It takes a long time from readiness to success
- Daytime control comes before nighttime
- Bowel control - 19 months
- Bladder control - 21 months
- Should not be a power struggle or negative situation
- Some children need more time
- Practice and consistency help
Potty Training Today

- Children are training at later ages than 30 years ago
- Most parents wait for the child to show readiness and desire to participate
- Child centered approaches typically used
- Some children learn quickly, others take a long time to learn this
What are the steps?

1. Recognize the need to go (respond to sensory signal)
2. Wait to eliminate (hold it)
3. Enter the bathroom
4. Pull down clothing (only partially undress)
5. **Sit on the toilet
6. **Eliminate in the toilet (motor control)
7. Use the toilet paper correctly
8. Pull clothing back up
9. Flush the toilet
10. Wash hands with soap
11. Dry hands
Where to start

- Start teaching steps 5 and 6
  - Sit on the toilet and eliminate in the toilet
- You will do steps 1-4 for your child
  - Recognize the need, wait, enter the bathroom and pull down the clothing
- Help your child do steps 7-11
  - Toilet paper, flush, pull clothes up, wash and dry hands
Is my child ready to start?

- Will child sit on potty without fear?
- Does child indicate discomfort when soiled or wet?
- Can child communicate need to go?
  - Sign, gesture, point to object, verbalize
- Does family want this task accomplished?
- Is child able to release urine or feces?
- Are diapers dry for 1 1/2-2 hours ever?
Does your child sit?

- 3-5 minutes without an electronic device or TV in front of them?
- Sit to eat or graze for food?
- Don’t ask them, tell them, “time to sit” (show reward, when/then)
- May need to use timer to help them stay seated
- Baseline time of sitting, keep adding 10-15 secs. each time
- Sit 6-8 times per day
- Work up to at least 3 minutes
- Once child will sit for 3-5 minutes each time, we can then begin potty training
Parents reported these readiness signs most commonly

- Hid or moved to private area to go in diaper (can tell when they need to go) 51.3%
- Could remain dry in diaper for 2 hours 47.4%
- Removed wet or soiled diaper 36.8%
- Indicated need to have diaper changed 34.2%
Recognizing need to go

- Are there behaviors that indicate child needs to go potty?
  - Child’s facial expressions
  - Child goes off to corner of room
  - Child squats in play
  - Actions or predictable behaviors

- Child lets adult know when they need to go
Child with disability

- Which readiness signs exist?
- What must be adapted or modified to encourage participation or to communicate this need?
- Can parent identify child’s need to use potty?
- Is child interested in potty?
- Is child watching others?
- Are other adl skills also addressed?
Promote the idea

- Allow child to watch others use potty
- Introduce potty in play
- Use dolls that go potty
- Read potty training books
- Watch potty training videos
- Work on concepts of wet/dry when bathing or swimming
Get everyone on board

- Have meetings with day care/preschool staff and discuss the plan
- Get cooperation from anyone who will be watching the child (extended family members, all caregivers, school staff, church workers, etc...)
- Discuss the plan, the communication to use with the child, the progress tracking form, the rewards
- Keep the program consistent across environments
- You will start it during a blocked time at home, then it is to be carried over from then on
Am I ready as a parent to do this task?

- How much do I really want my child to do this?
- Do I have time to devote to this?
- Is there an upcoming vacation or opportunity to focus on this for a week?
- Can I recognize my child’s need to go?
Not good to start when

- There are major transitions ahead
  - starting new preschool, new child coming into the family, divorce in process, etc..
  - Child is ill
  - Scheduled surgery ahead
  - About to go on a vacation or trip
  - Just before we are changing the clocks
  - Spring ahead, fall back dates
Tracking Patterns

- Determine your child’s pattern
- Keep a record for 2 weeks
- Do not change your routine during this time
- Record from the time your child wakes up, every hour if the diaper is wet, soiled, or dry
- Keep chart in good location - accessible
- Do not do this when we are about to change the clocks
- Track carefully, across environments
Chart Review

- Now look at the chart
- Can you anticipate times when the child will most likely need to have a BM or go tee tee on the potty?
- We want to get them on the potty about 15 mins before these times- get them on before so we can capture the opportunity to get the to go in the potty
Getting Ready

1- Get child ready - Present the idea
   - Books and videos, introduce potty

2- Parent - get determined and ready
   - How, when, where, routines

3- Tracking for two weeks

4- Set the routine and start the process
Considerations

- **Sensory Issues**
  - Sounds in bathroom, touch of wiping, echos

- **Routines**
  - If you do it this way the first time it becomes the rigid routine that will always be done
  - What exactly do we need to do

- **Fear of bathroom**
  - Change to make it pleasant, art, music, etc..
Provide appropriate positioning

- Potty chair or toilet?
- Many styles of potty chairs to choose from
  - Can sit on floor or by themselves
  - Can go over toilet
  - Musical or not?
- Want comfort for the child
- Need support for the child
  - Feet firmly on floor
  - Sit balance considerations
  - Table or lap tray
Other considerations

- Reducer rings - toilet inserts
  - Decrease size of toilet seat for more support
- Step to reach toilet
- Defectors
- Boys - sit then later stand
- Will you read books when on potty?
- What is the reinforcer your child will love to earn?
Clothing

- Keep it simple
- Child should wear clothing that is easy for child to manipulate for toileting
- Pants and underpants or pull ups to knees and back up
- Minimize fasteners to aid in speed of doffing
- Double the underpants vs diaper
Positive Reinforcement

- Reward when voiding occurs
- Individualized and special to child
- May need to have toileting chart with stickers to show success
- Once child goes tee-tee, they are also reinforced by being allowed to leave toileting area
Parent reported reinforcers TT

- Lots of verbal praise 63.2%
- Getting to wear big kids underwear 27.6%
- Food rewards 25%
- Toy rewards 13.2%
- Sticker rewards 13.2%
Parent reported reinforcers-BM

- Lots of verbal praise 42.1%
- Getting to wear big kids underwear 19.7%
- Food rewards 14.5%
- Sticker chart 14.5%
- Toy rewards 9.2%
Ready- Begin

- Best to start when you have at least 4-5 consecutive days at home
- Get EVERYONE on board- across environments before you start
- Keep it consistent
- Will child wear underpants, pull ups or diapers during the training?
- Keep it positive
Tracking continues

- Now track when you child sits – S- sits only
- When the child has already gone in the diaper or underpants- D-BM, D- TT
- When the child actually goes on the potty
  - P-TT, P-BM
Rapid Potty Training

- A behavior shaping technique designed for toileting
- Inclusive of prompting
- The most cited example of graduated guidance
- Most children have some success within two weeks and improve from there
Rapid Potty Training

- Best to plan when you have 4-5 days at home with your child to concentrate on the potty training, you will be in the bathroom much of the time

- Original Program
  - 1. Scheduled toileting opportunities
  - 2. Increased fluid intake
  - 3. Positive reinforcement
  - 4. Overcorrection- no longer considered
Strategies parents reported-TT

- Let child watch others go 64.4%
- Sat child on potty every 1 1/2-2 hours 59.3%
- Read books about going potty 47.5%
- Dry pants check 39%
- Watch videos about going potty 35.6%
Strategies parents reported-BM

- Sat child on potty at usual time for BM 46.8%
- Read books about going potty 40.4%
- Let child watch others go 40.4%
- Watch videos about going potty 38.3%
- Tracked child’s potty habits 34%
Best Practice Strategies

- Natural Environments - bathroom
- Consistency across environments in procedures, cues, communication, expectations
- Partial participation working towards full
- Powerful reinforcers for success
- Potential to generalize to other environments
Gender Considerations

- **Boys**
  - usually stand to urinate by school age
  - will sit for a bowel movement
  - Need to train boys in both techniques
  - Aim or use of defector very important

- **Girls**
  - Should wipe self front to back- NOT back to front
  - Wipe anus from reaching behind
Toileting is a life skill

- Promote as much participation as child is capable of doing
- Allow child to communicate needs, direct actions when possible
- May need to track progress to determine effectiveness of program and change it periodically
- Many children may take a long, long time to learn this skill
Potty Training Outcomes

- 1) Continence - the child can recognize the sensation for elimination and communicate this need to get to the bathroom

- 2) Mastery of chain of behaviors - going to the bathroom, managing clothing, sitting on potty, elimination success, wiping, redressing, and washing hands
Potty Training

- Each child is an individual
- Illnesses, surgeries, stress, changes in life can contribute to set backs
- Do not get into power struggle, keep the focus on the positive- when the child does go- it is a great accomplishment and take a minute to recognize, celebrate, show joy
The End

- Questions?