

THE POTTY PEOPLE
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SIX STAGES OF POTTY TRAINING

1. **Exposure/Condition the Toilet as a Reinforcer:**
 - a. Model the behavior with a parent or older child (same sex is preferred).
 - b. Read stories about using the potty.
 - c. Use dolls to demonstrate the expected behavior.
 - d. Watch videos that model using the potty, but avoid those that state that “accidents are okay.”
 - e. Put a toy or treat on the lid of the toilet and pretend that it magically appeared there. Encourage your child to “see what is on the potty.” Bait the potty in this way intermittently (every few days).
2. **Structured Experience:** Prompt your child to sit on the toilet and try to “pee” or “poop” on the potty. Do this when you believe that his/her bladder or colon is full, such as after consuming a large amount of liquids or a meal. Do not have your child sit on the toilet after voiding in his/her diaper.
3. **Differential Reinforcement:** Reward your child for sitting on the toilet, and more so if he/she actually voids on the toilet. Use treats, toys, fun, attention, anything your child values.
4. **Contingencies:** Once your child has voided on the toilet, it is time to make events and items contingent on using the toilet. Set up the sequence of using the potty before access to computer, DVDs, special toys and treats. This is the stage in which limits are applied. For example, sit at the computer only if dry; shut down the computer if your child has wet/soiled his/her pants.
5. **Self-Initiation:** Once your child has asked to go to the potty, or has walked into the bathroom and voided on the toilet on his/her own, fade your prompts and expect your child to respond to his/her own body and not wait to be prompted. Prompts at this stage are counter-productive. Do dry pants checks.
6. **Maintenance:** Continue to apply intermittent rewards and limits based on your child staying dry and voiding only on the toilet. When going out in the community, show your child where the bathroom is, but do not prompt him/her to go to the toilet. Say, “If you need to pee/poop, here is the bathroom.”