

Potty Training

The average age for potty training is about 2.5 years, but in countries where people cannot afford disposable diapers, potty training often occurs by 8 to 9 months of age. Pediatrician Dr. Cara Natterson says American children are typically late potty trainers, because parents often miss a window of opportunity to train them earlier. Once your child is about a year old, she has started to form some serious opinions.

Top 3 Tips for Potty Training

1. Give your child a sense of control.
2. Potty training for pee precedes potty training for poop.
3. Their friends count more than you do.

Control issues are paramount among young toddlers. If you try to institute potty-training measures around the same time that your child is starting to form strong opinions, you will find yourself hitting a wall.

What Moms Can Do about Potty Training

Dr. Cara Natterson suggests putting a potty (or for boys, a training urinal) in the bathroom starting around the first birthday. Don't say anything about it. Your child will figure out very quickly what it is. Initially, kids use potties as toys, storage bins, hats -- just about anything other than a potty. Fine. Just ignore it.

The first time your child sits (or stands) and attempts to use it, make a big deal. Your child will test you and see if you react to her using a diaper -- pay no attention. Give positive reinforcement for using a potty and ignore everything else. Eventually, your child will seek the positive reinforcement.

Most kids will urinate in a toilet months before they will poop in one. This is fine. Don't push the issue, because if your child has a bad experience pooping (if she is scared, for instance), it can trigger a cycle of withholding and constipation. Tell your child that you will be proud of her when she poops in the potty, but if she can't do it, then she needs to ask for a diaper when she feels the need to go.

Your child knows how to push your buttons, so even if you think you are being sneaky, it is pretty obvious that you are eager to have him use the toilet. Pushing your buttons is fun for your child, and one way to push your buttons is to refuse to use the toilet.

Most kids, however, seek to impress their friends. Invite a potty-trained friend or family member over and, at some point, ask that child if they will show your child how to use

the toilet. It is not uncommon for the playdate to end and for the unpotty-trained child to announce that they want to use the toilet just like so-and-so did.

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- [Mayo Clinic](#)
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- [National Association for Child Development](#)