

Potty Training Your Child with Down Syndrome Before the Age 5

Down syndrome toilet training support.



How Underwear 4 Kindergarten Was Developed

Disclaimer

We are not a medical professionals. This information is based on 12 years of experience working alongside children with Down syndrome and is for information and support purposes. No part of this presentation is intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you feel your child may have a health problem impeding their potty training process, please get in touch with a physician or other qualified healthcare provider for consultation, diagnosis and/or treatment.



A New Mindset

Working within a different framework will help you

- manage expectations
- decrease frustration
- increase your success

Potty training your child will be a positive and rewarding experience for you and your child.



Our New Outlook on Potty Training

1. It will take time, up to two years (for some kids). It is ok to have an unsuccessful day. Dry your child off and try again tomorrow.
2. It is ok to prioritize other things (but keep practicing) until you are ready to prioritize potty training.
3. You will need to make adjustments every time your child's schedule changes.
4. You will need to watch your child for any "tells" that they need to "go".
5. If your child needs extra support but can go weeks without any accidents, consider your child potty trained.
6. Your child will eventually tell you and others when they need to "go."
7. Give yourself grace!



Why Children With Down Syndrome Need A Different Approach To Potty Training

- According to Niemczyk (2018), a study of 317 participants, found that 46 -73 % of children with Down syndrome have urinary incontinence.
- According to Kitamura, Kondoh, Noguchi, & et al.(2014) a study with 55 participants found that 18% of children with Down syndrome had a weak stream, prolonged, and intermittent urination.
- Meaning that your child may have difficulty starting or maintaining a stream of urine it also means that your child might have trouble fully eliminating their bladder.

(Niemczyk, 2018; Kitamura,Kondoh,Noguchi,et al. 2014)





WHAT?

Why has no one ever told me that?

In My Experience

- Everyone of my students have had a weak stream, prolonged, and intermittent urination, when starting to potty training.

What Does This Mean For Potty Training?

- Allow longer sit time on the potty chair is important to starting the urine stream.
- Focusing on going more is important to maintaining and increasing the strength of the stream.
- Managing constipation in children with Ds to reduce urinary incontinence.
- Allow children with Down syndrome to have a longer time with compensatory strategy, starting as young as 18 months, will be the most impactful to your child's potty training success.



What to do?

Our Method in 9 Steps.

I wish I could say 9 easy steps, but that would not be the truth. I do believe this method will be less stressful and more successful than any other method.

Teach your child to wait

Waiting Hands



Waiting For an Item



Waiting for Activity







Find these videos on Youtube at [Raise Up Down Syndrome](#)

Step 1: Set Yourself Up for Success

Get to know your child's potty/poo schedule.

- Check your child's diaper more often for a week or two.
 - Every 15 to 30 minutes
 - Note the times that your child is wet or poopy.
 - Watch your child closely for any “tells” signs that your child needs to go or is going.
 - Use a data sheet to help you keep track.
- 

Step 2: Getting the Right Stuff

- Get a potty chair that sits on the floor. Make sure it has a high back and sides that slightly wrap around your child.
 - Get a small table/chair that will slide over your child's legs.
 - Ipad, Tablet, or Tv.
 - Rewards/motivators.
- 

Step 2: Potty Chair and Set Up



Take it to the Bathroom



Step 3: Get Started

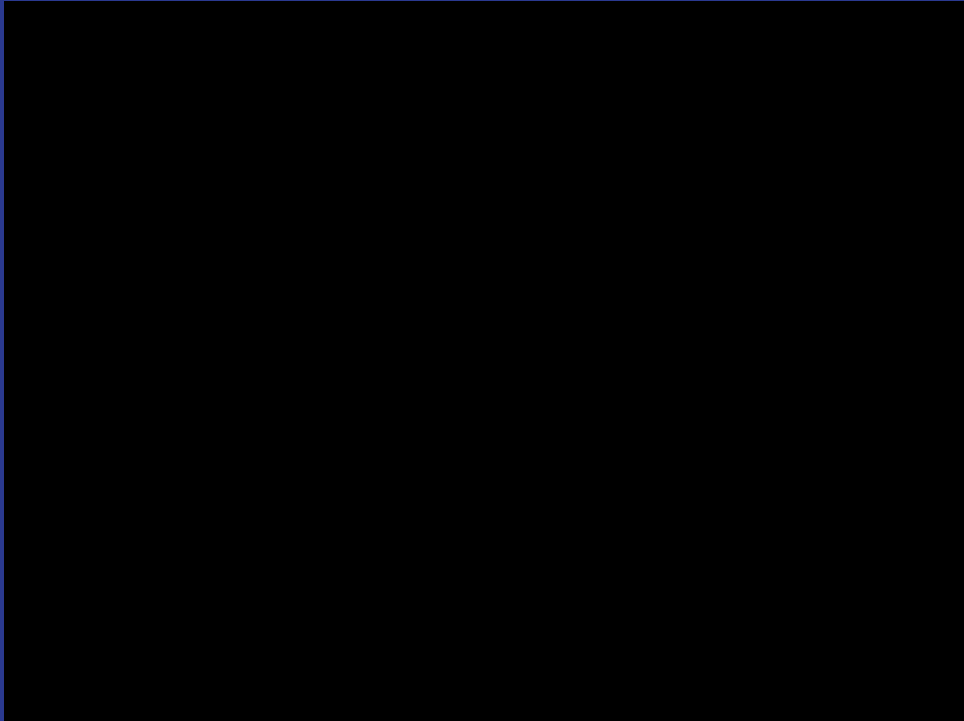
- Using the data from diaper changes, Choose **one or more** times a day to put your child on the potty chair.
 - Your child on potty chair 5 - 10 minutes before you think they need to go.
 - Allow/encourage your child to sit up to 30 minutes.
 -

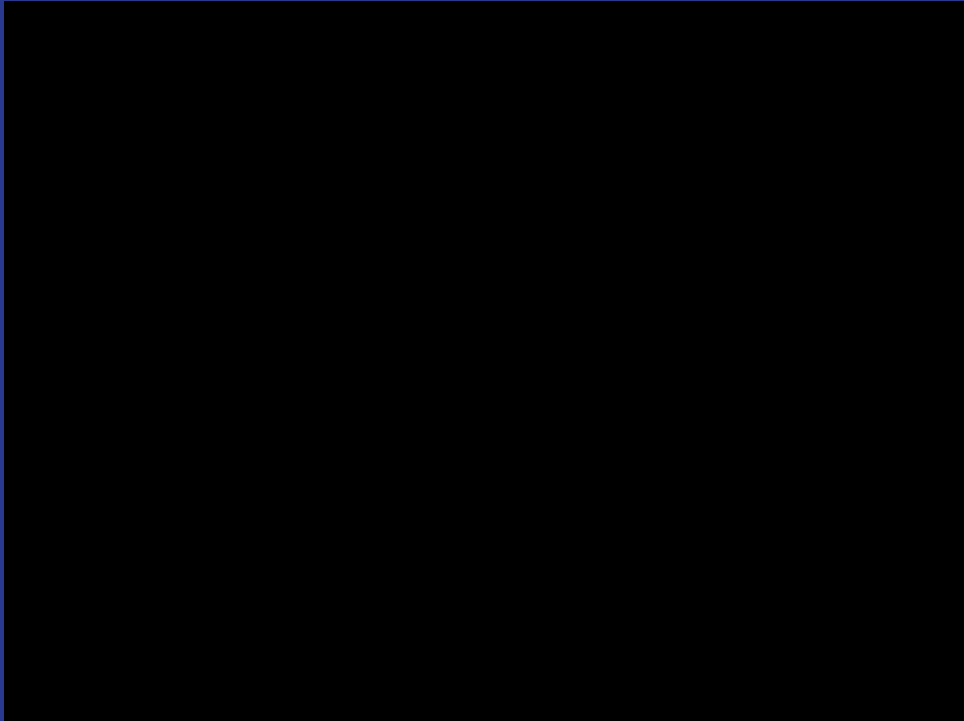


Step 3: How to Keep them on the Potty


- Use a tv, or tablet with a video like Leapfrog Letter Factory.
- Choose something that will keep your child sitting but not so exciting they do not relax.
- They may spend a lot of time on the potty chair initially, so an educational video is best.
- It is likely your child will need to sit for twenty to thirty minutes in the beginning.



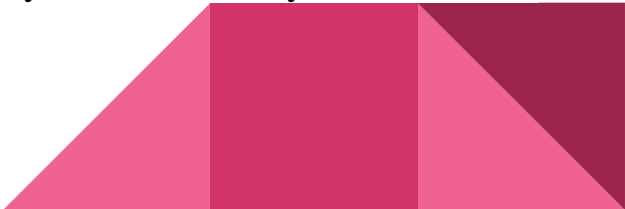




Step 3: Good Times to Try Using the Potty Chair

- After morning snack is a good time for most of our students.
 - First thing in the morning, especially if they wake up dry.
 - Five to ten minutes after lunch/dinner.
 - Before bath or before bed.
 - You will want to continue to track your child's potty and poo
- 

Step 3: Timing it Just Right


- Your child may potty right after you take them off the potty chair
 - Keep trying until they go.
 - This will take some time.
 - Play around with the times you have your child sit on the potty chair.
 - If you find a time that works well, try to commit to that time every day.
 - If you can not find a time that works for your child to go potty.
 - Give your child at least 8 oz of a favorite drink, then have them sit on the potty chair six to eight minutes after they have finished the drink.
 - Or have them drink their favorite drink while sitting on the potty chair. This may work better if it takes your child needs more than 20 minutes to drink 8 oz.
- 

Step 4: Keep it Positive


- Keep it positive, don't get frustrated if they don't go on the potty right away.
- Right now, the objective is to give your child the chance to go.
- As long as you consistently give them opportunities to go, you are doing this step right.
- They will eventually go potty on the potty chair.
- **Do not forget to praise your child every time they use the bathroom.**
 - Good trying,
 - Good sitting,
 - Good job going potty!
 - Good job washing hands
 - Good job walking to the bathroom
 - Look for anything good to praise them.

Step 5. Build the Brain-Body Connection

Your child goes potty on the potty chair yay!


- Your child may only go a tiny bit in the potty chair.
 - If your child has sat for ten or more minutes and has gone potty, take them off the potty chair, show them the potty in the potty chair and tell them you went potty in the potty way to go!
 - If they have gone potty but they have sat less than ten minutes, don't say anything; give a bit more time to see if they will go more. After ten minutes, take them off the potty chair, show them the potty in the potty chair, tell them you went potty in the potty way to go!
 - If your child has not gone in the first 10 minutes give them up to 30 minutes to go before you take them off the potty chair.
 - Give your child as many opportunities to go as you can.
- 

Step 6. Increase the Opportunities to Go

- Your child will probably be going just a little bit at a time.
 - It might take ten or more minutes for your child to go.
 - Add as many bathroom breaks as you can to your child's daily routine
 - As the brain-body connection gets stronger, it will take less and less time for your child to go.
 - Keep track of the time it takes your child to go potty. You should see the time slowly decreasing.
 - This step takes most of our students about three months.
- 

Step 7. Focus on Fully Eliminating the Bladder

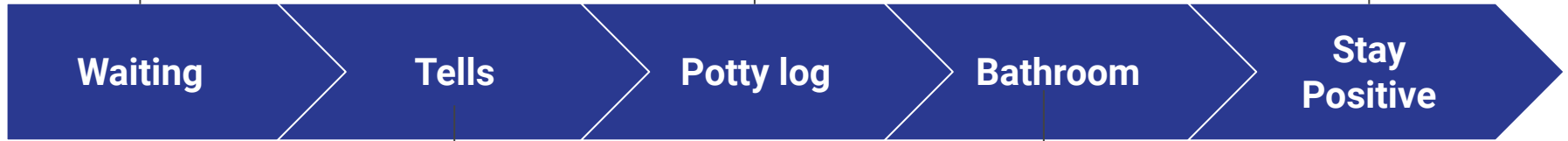
Now that your child is going potty faster.

- After the first little potty, you say, “*good job go more,*” wait two to three minutes
 - Ask her/him to “*go more.*” Wait for another two to three minutes,
 - Say “*go more*” one more time.
 - Do this every time your child uses the toilet.
 - Eventually, with support, your child will fully eliminate her bladder.
 - The potty chair should visibly have more potty in it.
 - You will continue on this step until your child starts to fully eliminate without verbal cues and without the need to go, stop, go, stop, go, stop.
 - Your child’s stream will become stronger, and the time needed to eliminate fully will decrease. The time needed for this step varies greatly from child to child.
 - I believe that children with lower tone need more time on this step.
- 

Continue to teach and practice waiting. Increase the amount of time your child will sit on potty chair. Goal 20 - 30 minutes.

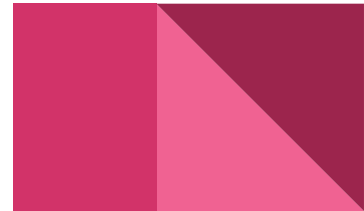
Continue to use potty log and check diapers often. Point out when they are wet or dry, do this the whole time you are potty training.

You can not potty train your child without their buy in. If your child feels your frustration or pressured it can cause them to shut down.




Continue to watch for tells. Take them to the bathroom when see any telltale signs. Give your child the language you need to potty/poo. Use sign too.

Use bathroom for all toileting needs. If you wait until a child is 4 or 5 to use the bathroom for toileting needs behavior can develop. "I have never had to stop and go to the bathroom before why do I now!?"




Step 8. Keeping the Diaper Dry

- Always make sure to praise your child for staying dry between bathroom breaks.
 - It is important to point this out, so they understand that the goal is to stay dry.
 - Most children stay dry for about 45 minutes at the beginning of this step.
 - It is important never to scold your child for being wet.
 - When a student is dry, I say, “*You’re dry! Good job staying dry!*” I say this with over-the-top excitement.
 - I give a reward for staying dry the first week or two. **Continue to praise always.**
 - When a student is wet, I say, “*You’re wet, potties go in the potty chair*”
- 

Step 9. Make the Move to Underwear

The Diaper Underwear Hybrid

- Practice moving to underwear
 - Maybe a Saturday morning for two or three hours.
 - If this is successful, they can add other times to wear underwear.
 - But remember, you are still working to keep the diaper dry as well.
 - Eventually, parents and children understand what is needed to be successful. Parents know when their child will need reminders to go potty.
 - Children will express the need to go by physically going to the bathroom, sign language, or saying potty.
- 



Other Tips and

Tricks For,

Common behavior issues,

and life hacks to

make potty training smoother.


Behavior: My child will not sit on the potty. He/she is scared of it.

Suppose your child is resistant to sitting on the potty chair. Your child may need to be desensitized to using the potty chair. This process makes the child less likely to feel shocked or distressed by situations. Coupling the toileting process with positive responses by substituting a new adaptive reaction to a fearful setting, the child learns a more appropriate response to situations. Encourage your child to touch the potty chair, sit on it with clothes on, and praise and reward your child for all attempts. Once your child is no longer resistant, you can start to potty train. Watching a sibling sit on the potty can also be helpful. This process may be helpful in other situations. Most students who need to be desensitized to one thing will need it for another. Keep this in mind when your child is resistant to new situations



Behavior: My child will only sit for a few seconds.

Your child may need to work on learning to wait. This is one of the most critical skills we teach students at Little Leaf. Point out any time of the day when your child needs to wait by saying and signing you are waiting. If you are at a red light, or in line at a store, tell your child, we are waiting. Teach your child to wait by sitting in one spot while you do something else. Start with very small intervals of time, 15 seconds, and build to at least one minute. Praise and reward any wait time. Once your child has learned to wait, they will be able to wait on the potty chair.



Behavior: Stop it Before it is a Problem.

- If the Ipad becomes a problem (you think they are going to the bathroom to get it), then the new rule will be the Ipad after you start to go. I say, “*get some potties out. Then I will turn it on.*” I allow them to stay on the potty chair with the Ipad for 3 - 5 minutes after they are finished going. Now the Ipad is becoming a reward for going potty instead of a tool to go potty. I only do this if they consistently ask to go and do not potty.
- Start to fade the Ipad/tablet once your child can fully eliminate in 5 - 8 minutes. Many children will need the Ipad/tablet for a bowel movement for more extended periods of time.

Allows Child to Relax & Go

In my experience, children need a longer sit time on the potty chair to innate the urine stream or to go poo. They stop and go, so they need more sit time to empty their bladder. A Tablet or TV with leapfrog or preschool prep videos will help with this need.

Learning Opportunities

Video modeling is a powerful way for children with Ds to learn. Hearing a sound over and over is important for speech development. I do not feel that we can produce the sounds in isolation as many times as most children with Ds need us too. These videos do this in a fun way and causes no pressure for our kids.


And it leads to this! And This!

Fosters Independence

After a child has learned waiting hands, I do not have to be close to a child on the potty chair. I can walk away, and check in on them every so often. I believe many children do better without the pressure of someone waiting for them to go.

Why I Use Tablets

Tips for Communication and Language.

- Most young children are not great at answering yes/no questions accurately.
 - Tell your child it is time to go potty.
 - Even if your child can answer yes/no, they may still need you to tell them it is time to go potty while they are still in the potty training process.
 - If your child can accurately answer yes/no questions, asking may be appropriate.
 - Use sign language to communicate with your child about toileting needs and activities.
- 

Tips and Hacks for Boys

Aiming can be very hard for our little boys.

I use a large puppy pad under the potty chair for any splashes.


Try to move their bottom to the back of the chair, help them spread their legs out a bit, and lean them slightly forward onto the table.

In the case of flying pee, try very hard not to stop or startle him while he is going. It is best to let it fly and clean it up after.



Seek Medical Interventions.

Medical interventions, including pelvic floor muscle training therapy, may support urinary incontinence. Here is a link to the Seattle children's hospital's pdf on incontinence in children. <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE2627.pdf>



Tips and Hacks for Rewards

Keep it exciting these are all big hits for us!





Thank You!

References

- Kitamura, A., Kondoh, T., Noguchi, M., Hatada, T., Tohbu, S., Mori, K. I., Matsuo, M., Kunitsugu, I., Kanetake, H., & Moriuchi, H. (2014). Assessment of lower urinary tract function in children with Down syndrome. *Pediatrics international : official journal of the Japan Pediatric Society*, 56(6), 902–908. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ped.1236>
- Niemczyk. (2018). Incontinence in individuals with genetic syndromes associated with intellectual disability. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20181023jn>

