

Toilet Training

Toilet training is usually a difficult task for any child and family to accomplish. It can be especially difficult if the child to be toilet trained has autism. There are a number of factors to consider prior to commencing toilet training.

1. Is the child well?

- Are there any medical problems that might impact on the child's ability to be successfully toilet trained at this time?

Have a check up with the GP to make sure that there are no medical problems that may affect toilet training.

- Impaired neurological bladder and bowel control
- Small bladder capacity
- Constipation

Also need to check that the child is drinking well, exercising and eating foods high in fibre.

2. Is the child ready to be toilet trained?

- Are all family members prepared for the intensity toilet training the child with autism will require?
- Are there any other major life changes that will be happening at this time?
- The child should be able to demonstrate signs of recognising the need to be changed, e.g. by approaching an adult, or by fidgeting and appearing uncomfortable when in a wet or soiled nappy
- Adequate bladder control: able to remain dry for at least an hour at a time
- Can the child sit still for about 2 minutes?

5. The final list will comprise only those rewards that are known to work!
(Use only *effective* rewards / reinforcers)
6. Ensure the child knows what he/she is being rewarded for by talking about it or having a visual cue
7. Plan how frequently the reward will be used (reinforcement schedule)
8. Watch out for satiation... don't overuse the reward
9. Tail off tangible rewards as soon as possible
10. Continue the verbal praise

Provide visual supports for the child when beginning toilet training. Check with his/her parents and other professionals to know whether objects, photos or line drawings would be most developmentally appropriate

The following visual supports will help:

- the toilet at home and at preschool/childcare
- the child sitting on the toilet
- a motivating reward
- a toilet that has been used for urine and a bowel motion

For higher functioning children a simple schedule may be used:

