

# Sterling Parents

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## The Potty Training **CHEAT SHEET**

There are many potty training methods out there, with an array of people claiming to have solved one of parentings' big hurdles! However, you'll inevitably discover that your toddler might not fit the "mold" of certain training methods. So instead of expecting to tailor your child to a potty training method, why not tailor your approach to your unique child!

Check out our cheat sheet with all the important aspects to consider when potty training your toddler.

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## Readiness

There is no “perfect” age to potty train. What matters is if your child is showing signs of readiness. Attempting to potty train before your child is ready usually prolongs the entire process. Research shows that most children show signs of readiness between 27-32 months.

Signs of Readiness:

- Tugging at a dirty diaper
- Wanting privacy when they pee or poop
- Showing interest in other’s using the bathroom
- Longer time periods between wet diapers or waking from a nap dry
- Communicating when they are about to go or have just gone

## Timing is Everything!

Since you can't predict how quickly your child will grasp on to the concept of potty training, your timing is important. Moving from diapers to using a toilet is a big change that requires a lot of attention. If there are other big changes happening in your life (i.e. new baby, a move, etc), it might not be the right time to add in potty training. You should also consider how much time you have to focus on learning this new skill. Planning a vacation or travel? Might not be a good time to test your child’s abilities on a long car drive.

## Prep, Prep & More Prep

Depending on your child’s exposure to using a bathroom, the concept of potty training can be daunting. It is important to demystify what it means to use the toilet. Prior to starting potty training, model the process for your child. Have them engage in play around the concept. You can even read books and watch videos to help them get excited for this big change. If your child shows any fear around the concept of using the toilet or flushing, helping them understand the basics can ease their fears.

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## The Gear

We aren't saying you need ALL the things to potty train, but there are a few items parents find helpful. "Big kid underwear" can be framed as an exciting right of passage. Allowing your toddler to select their style of underwear can also give them a sense of control. Another popular item for potty training is a training toilet or toilet seat converter. These mini toilets can be used on the go or in a play area as a frequent reminder and convenient practice location. *Another travel tip – have something handy to cover the auto flush feature on toilets. The automatic flush can surprise new toilet users and create a negative association with going to the bathroom.*

## Consistency is Key

You've probably found that consistency is a key part of many aspects of parenting – potty training is no different. When you decide to start potty training, it is important that all key players are on the same page and ready to follow the established routine. It is helpful when parents, grandparents, caregivers, etc are all on board with working towards this goal. Inconsistency can easily confuse the message for the child.

## Praise & Reward Systems

Many popular training methods incorporate positive reinforcement for toddlers. It is a wonderful motivator! You know your child and your family best. Determine what style of praise is most motivating and what rewards fit into your lifestyle. Planning your reward system out in advance will help avoid starting bad habits. If offering a treat or gift each time isn't a reward you want to stick with for long periods of time – try 5 min dance parties or a sticker chart instead!

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## Location & Position for Boys

When you first start potty training, picking a familiar location that is central to where your child spends the most time can be helpful. The longer the distance is for your toddler to get from “I need to pee!” to a toilet, gives more opportunity for accidents. Training toilets that start close to a play area and gradually move towards your bathroom can be a nice transition. In addition to location of the toilet, positioning on the toilet is important for boys. Most methods have young boys start in the seated position and graduate to standing when they have a better understanding of their body’s sensations. Once they graduate to standing to pee, drop a few cheerios in the toilet and have them aim!

## Stay Positive

Accidents happen! Whether you plan on using training pull ups or jumping right into “big kid underwear,” the potty training experience rarely goes off without a hitch. Set your expectations appropriately and avoid any negativity associated with mistakes. Each time your child attempts to use the toilet is a victory worth celebrating!