

Tips for Potty Training

Over the course of the Bambini program, children will potty train. Some children train early, and some only right before they enter Casa. Please refer to our Toilet Learning Policy for important notes and safety and sanitization around toilet learning. There are many amazing books, websites and videos about toilet learning; while AHM does not recommend any specific method, we encourage you to research and find a method that works for your family. If you have questions about toileting, please contact office@aspenhillmontessori.ca.

Before starting to introduce sitting on the toilet...

- Look for physical signs that your child is ready to toilet learn:
 - They are aware when they are going to the bathroom, and may hide to go, will pause and focus, may squat, or may grab their front/bum
 - They tell you that they have peed / pooped
 - They show interest to watch you on the toilet, flush the toilet, or want to sit on the toilet
 - They talk about wanting underwear like friends / not wanting to wear a diaper anymore
 - They ask you to change them / they start trying to take their diaper off when soiled
 - Your child's educators indicate that they are seeing signs of readiness at care

Once you see some of these things, encourage curiosity...

- Use clear words to express the act of using the toilet ("pee," "poop," and "potty"). Use these words when you change their diaper, and talk about 'when you start going on the potty...'
- Ask your child to let you know when a diaper is wet or soiled. Encourage them and be positive when they let you know.
- When you see them straining or pausing to use their diaper, verbally identify behaviors ("Are you going poop?" "Are you peeing right now?") so that your child can learn to recognize the physical feelings for "peeing" and "pooping." The physical feelings are different for each. As adults, we think of them as the same, but your child will need to learn to identify each feeling.
- Invite your child to try flushing the toilet
- Allow your child to observe the process of toileting
- Read books for children out loud about learning to use the potty (No More Diapers for Ducky, Diapers Are Not Forever, No More Diapers, Potty Time, and Potty Superhero are good options)
- Watch videos made for children about how to use the potty / no more diapers
- Encourage your child to try sitting on the toilet and mimicking the process if they wish

Get set up for toilet learning

Once your child is demonstrating interest and you have been socializing them to the idea of no diapers, set your space up for effective learning at home. Please teach boys to pee sitting down for

now, and to tuck and hold down their penis. (If there is a special word to refer to penis that your child will be familiar with, please let us know.)

- Get a toilet insert with handles for the adult toilet, and a step stool that is wide enough to be stable, and high enough that it supports the child's feet when they are sitting down. We recommend using the adult flush toilet for training rather than a floor-based plastic potty - we find that transitioning back to a flush toilet at care can be more difficult for children trained on a plastic potty. Involve your child in unpackaging the items and talk about what they will be used for. Use words like "It's almost time to stop using your diapers!"
- Buy "training underwear" for your child (NOT Pullups). These are cotton/polyester underwear that have some padding; the purpose is that your child will feel wet if he/she goes potty in them, but they are padded/quilted to absorb some of the potty to minimize the mess. (*Diaper and PullUps are so efficient, that toddlers never FEEL wet, so they can be completely unaware of what is happening physically when they "pee" or "poop" because there is little or no discomfort when they go potty in diapers.*)
- Make sure you have enough simple clothes on hand so your child can undress and dress easily. To mimic the experience that they will have at the Centre, dress them in elastic-waist pants that are very easy to pull down and up. Slightly too-big is best.
- Calendar an entire weekend or week to start potty training. Don't schedule playdates or other activities that will bridge over meal times or take the child away from home for more than 30 minutes. Try to remain at home for meals and keep to a rigid schedule.
- Observe and note when your child tends to wet or soil themselves in the day carefully to see if you can catch patterns. This will be the windows that you have your child sit on the toilet.
- Have a 'sitting entertainment' bucket ready, or a few favorite shows cued on a tablet or phone, to make the 'waiting' special. Having a visual timer like a 5 minute hourglass can help.
- Let us know that you are preparing to start toilet learning at home, so we can be ready to help!

Demonstrate

- Show your child how you sit on the toilet and explain what you're doing (because your child learns by watching you).
- You can also have your child sit on the potty seat and watch while you - or one of his or her siblings - use the toilet.
- Show and practice pulling pants up and most importantly, down
- Practice wiping with clothes on, let your child try
- Have your child try sitting on the toilet with just their diaper on, and then with their diaper off, so they can feel the difference
- Show them how to put the toddler insert in. However, for the week of toilet learning, have one bathroom set up just for them! Try to have members of the household use other bathrooms, OR ensure that they re-set it for the learning child every time.

- Talk to your child about 'sitting and waiting' - sometimes it takes a while! Show them how the sand timer works, and what fun things they will get to do while sitting.
- If you have a doll that can “pee,” have your child feed the doll water and then put the doll on the potty to mimic what you want your child to do.

Time to learn

- Set up your training bathroom on a Thursday. Keep your child home on Friday (3-day method).
- Keep the same schedule as they will in a school day.
- Offer lots of tasty fluids and snacks to ramp up the need to go. Let them play as normal.
- Set a timer. After about 30 minutes, use a statement out loud that the child will hear at care, such as “It's time to go try on the potty.” Have your child climb up, turn around with balancing help, pull their own pants down, then sit on the potty and try to go. If nothing comes out, sit for 2-5 minutes and read a book/watch a show. If still nothing, say “That's OK, we'll try again in a bit.” Let them pull their pants up, even if it takes a while, have them wash their hands, and go back to playing.
- Sit 15, 30 and 45 minutes after every session of eating, and 15 / 30 minutes after drinking. Also have your child sit at the times when you notice a pattern of wetting or soiling. Try to have your child sit at least 5 minutes per 'sit'.
- Don't make your child sit on the toilet against his or her will. If your child refuses, say, 'OK, would you like to go try in 2 minutes or 5 minutes?' and then get their help to set a phone timer. Then follow through.
- If possible, have your child be without pants / diapers completely for 2-3 days, or have them just in pants without underwear.
- Remember to keep the fun things ONLY for when they are sitting! Digital shows are great for this :)
- Praise all attempts to sit on / use the toilet, even if nothing happens.
- Accidents will happen. It's important not to punish potty-training children for “accidents” or show disappointment when they wet or soil themselves. Instead, tell your child that it was an accident and offer your support. Reassure your child that he or she is well on the way to using the potty like a big kid. If your child poops in their pants, work with your child to remove it and put it in the toilet. Say something like “poop goes in the potty.” Then proceed with having your child help clean themselves up.

When your timing works, and your child pees or poops in the potty, give lots of praise, encouragement, clapping. If a parent is at work, call and have your child tell what they accomplished. If your child has a favorite relative, do the same. Or, make arrangements with a friend so that your child can call “Superman” or another character that your child would be proud to tell about his/her accomplishment.

Keep working on it every 30-45 minutes each day through the weekend until a stopping point such as dinner time.

You will see the most success with using the toilet if you place your child on...

- Immediately after waking up in the morning or after a nap
- 30-45 minutes after drinking fluids
- 15 – 30 minutes after meals for bowel movements
- When they are showing signs that they need to poo (hiding, grunting, stopping in the middle of the room)
- Before bathtime

Evaluate your success at the end of the weekend. If your child is catching on quickly and is willing, we're happy to start at care as well with training pants. If your child is resistant / struggling / not interested, wait 2-3 weeks and then try on another weekend. Stay in touch with the Centre to advise.

There may be times when your child regresses or moves back a step; this is a typical part of the process. Remain positive.

Bringing potty learning to care

When your child appears to be mastering potty training and is seeing success at home, please let us know in the app / via office@ and we will review if your child seems ready to transition at care. *Please note, often children will transition at home for 1 month or more before success at care, as a group environment has more distractions than home!*

We ask that children who have just graduated into toilet learning wear the elastic waist uniform pants, leggings or the skort. Have your child practice putting on, pulling up, and taking down their pants many times on their own, ideally NOT when they have to go to the bathroom. Let them start wearing their uniform bottoms to practice at home first. Have them dress themselves in the morning, and have them practice during the day. Have them practice on the toilet step stool as well when they **don't** need to use it, so they can practice turning around, pulling pants down, and sliding on to the seat backwards. We will assist your child with wiping in their early learning days.

Please talk to your child about ending diapers at care, and talk to our admin and educators via the app / office@aspenhillmontessori.ca e-mail address before you begin. We do require that children new to training come with plenty of thicker training underwear and extra pants / socks as they are learning. Having your child participate in selecting training underwear can help motivate effort.

Every child's journey into toileting is different, and sometimes it feels like it will never happen. Be patient! With community support, we look forward to helping your child make the transition out of diapers.