



Abbey Wood Grange Day Nursery

Toilet Training Procedures

Leaving nappies is a significant step for children and also their parents. It signals the first steps towards independence and so is an important milestone in children's lives. The term "toilet training" is often used to describe the process of moving out of nappies, although this suggests that children can somehow be taught to do this. This is not the case, as gaining bladder and bowel control is largely dependent on the maturity of the child's nervous system.

Although there are different approaches to toilet training, it is generally considered advisable to wait until children are showing physical and other signs that their bodies are ready. It is however, important to work with parents and respect their wishes if they have other ideas or approaches that they wish to take.

Signs that children may be ready include:

- they realise when their nappy needs changing
- their nappy is dry for long periods – this indicates that they are gaining some bladder control (usually from eighteen months to three years)
- they show an interest in potties and toilets
- enough language or communications skills to indicate that they need to go to the toilet.

It is also a good idea to start leaving the nappy off a child and showing them a potty when you know that their bladder is likely to be full. If a child seems fretful or resists sitting on a potty, it is important not to become irritated and cross. This may indicate that the child is not fully ready to start the process and it is often best to simply put a nappy back on and try again after a few days or even weeks. Keeping calm is essential as children must not feel under pressure to 'perform' – this tends to cause them to become overanxious and will result in their feeling too tense to allow the bladder to release the urine. The speed in which children master the process tends to vary, with most children having a few accidents at first.

Accidents are inevitable, especially in the first few weeks of being out of nappies – children do not understand the signals that their bodies are sending them until it is virtually too late. If they are engrossed in an interesting activity, they will often not notice that they need to go. It can therefore be helpful to watch carefully and remind children from time to time. If accidents occur, it is important to be as matter of fact about them as possible so that the child does not become worried. This means that it is a good idea to take the child to a quiet place, help them to get washed and changed into fresh underwear and clothes. Wherever possible, it is a good idea to let the child take as much control of the process as possible so that they can remain feeling self-reliant. The wet or soiled clothes should then be rinsed out and placed in a plastic bag, ready for laundering. It is important to wear disposable gloves at all times during this process. Parents should be kept informed of any accidents, but this should be done away from the child so that they do not lose confidence or, in the case of older children, become embarrassed.

There is equipment for children that can make toilet training a little easier and attractive for children:

- Clothes that unfasten easily
- Inner toilet ring
- Small step to help them reach the toilet
- Attractive potties
- Soft toilet paper

It is also possible to read stories about toilet training, although it is important to make sure that they do not put pressure on the child.

As part of the toilet training process, we need to get children into the habit of washing their hands afterwards. This is essential in preventing infections from spreading, as bacteria is present in bowel motions. Children need to learn to wash their hands using hot water (not too hot) and soap and to dry them thoroughly afterwards. It is suggested that paper towels are the most hygienic way of drying hands in nursery care settings.

When helping children to use the potty or toilet, you should look for any signs of illness or abnormality – for example, you might notice that the children are in pain as they produce bowel motions: this could be a sign of constipation. It is also important to remember that problems in going to the toilet can sometimes be a sign of sexual abuse (see safeguarding children policy).

Infections of the bowel and bladder can be painful for children and so it is important to pass on promptly any concerns that you have to your supervisor or the parents.

Symptom	Could Indicate
Difficulty in passing bowel motion	This is often a symptom of constipation in children. It can cause the children pain which in turn puts them off from passing a motion – this becomes a vicious circle as the stools become harder and less easy to pass.
Itchiness, white discharge	This can be a symptom of thrush – medical attention will be required.
Itchiness around the anal area	This can be caused by threadworm infection.
Diarrhoea	This will need urgent attention.
Pain when passing urine/blood in the urine	Seek medical attention
Strong smelling urine	This can be caused by an infection or could be a sign of dehydration. Seek medical attention.