

5 Potty Training Tips That Will Make You Smile

My kids are now 5 ½ and 3 years old and fortunately the potty training gods smiled on us because both were day-time trained around 2 ½ years of age. Thankfully, our oldest (a boy) was trained about 2 months before our daughter was born. He wore Pull-Ups at night until he was 4 but our daughter quit wearing pull ups when she was about 2 years and 9 months old. Ah, it's so nice not to have buy diapers or Pull-Ups anymore! They each had a couple of night time accidents and we had a few more sheet changes with our son, but overall a less traumatic experience that I was bracing myself for. We did the following with our kids. Try these tips out and hopefully they'll work for you.

1. Observe the signs. If your child is waking up dry from nap or night for at least a couple of weeks that is a big clue to start potty training. There are so many reasons to 'ignore' or not want to 'see' the signs that having your spouse, close friend or in our case a pre-school teacher throw some cold water in your face can really help. I was 8 months pregnant when our son's pre-school teacher said you MUST potty train now. I was thinking to myself "are you crazy woman?! I can barely pick myself up let alone a toddler onto a potty." I figured I'd wait until after the baby was born. I had been picking him up from pre-school and putting on a diaper/pull-up because I didn't want to be unnecessarily cleaning a car seat. After being sternly warned by the teacher not to do that, I ended up putting a towel down on his car seat just in case.
2. Be consistent. When you are potty training make sure to take your toddler to the potty at least every 2 to 3 hours during the day. After a few weeks you'll start to see the time between potty visits diminish. We observed that most accidents happened if we had forgotten to take them to the potty or were afraid to take them to the potty when they were in the middle of doing fun stuff for fear of the inevitable kicking and screaming.
3. Morning and Night. As soon as they wake up (even if it's the crack of dawn and you'd much rather scream out loud than take them to the potty) put them on the potty. Even if they refuse to go, this will get them associating morning time with potty time and show them it's OK to get up to go to the potty than to wet the bed. The same goes for night time. Put them on the potty right before going to bed so they create the same night time association as well.
4. Read a designated potty book. One of the things that worked really well for us with our son was identifying a potty book. I actually got this tip from [Keys to Toilet Training](#) by Meg Zwieback. Every night when we put him on the potty, we would read the same book to him. Since he was (and still is) so active, getting him to sit on the potty for any length of time was challenging. He liked reading the 'potty book' and because he sat longer he more often than not used the potty! This technique didn't work so well with our daughter because she was fairly quick in going so she didn't need to be entertained for long. Must be a girl thing (i.e., we're less inclined to read newspapers and magazines while sitting on the toilet than guys are!)
5. Encourage and Reward. It is so important that you encourage and reward your toddler for going to the potty. You can do this with hugs, creating a chart, treats, activities, toys, etc. With our kids we used a chart that we would put smiley faces on when they went to the potty and sad faces if they had an accident. The chart gave them a visual to see how they were progressing and the act of us drawing a smiley face would make them so proud and happy! We also hugged them, gave them high 5's, clapped, and sometimes gave them a Gerber fruit snack treat. When they went several days in a row without an accident, they would get to do something fun, get a treat, or better yet chose their own Spiderman or Dora the Explorer underwear! Every child is different so try these tips and come up with your own that fit your unique situation. We used these tips and achieved pretty good potty-training results. Now, don't go asking me about [baby sleep](#) tips because I'm still trying to figure those out!

About the Author

The author of this article, Aruni Gunasegaram, is the President/Founder of Babble Soft, which offers web and mobile software applications that facilitate communication between caregivers by helping them with [breastfeeding support](#) bottle feedings, mom's pumping, baby sleep patterns, diapers, immunizations and medicine doses as well as baby's first year photo album.

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