

The Ultimate Potty Training FAQ

*Straight Answers To Parents' Most Frequently Asked
Questions About Potty Training Their Kids*

By

Johanne and Greg Cesar

Copyright and Legal Information Here

Are girls easier to potty train than boys?

Since I have three boys, it's easy for me to say boys are difficult!

But on a serious note, I worked in the child care field for many years, and I have trained both boys and girls – more than 300 in all.

It's hard to say who is harder to train. Boys and girls are probably just about even.

However, what I will say is that girls are usually more advanced than boys. So they can be trained earlier than boys. They also seem to learn faster than boys as well.

But in the end the frustrations, trials, and tribulations are identical. Girls will give you the same problems that a boy will give you. So if you do have a girl, I am sorry to tell you it is no easier.

Here is the way to look at it: children of a young age are only children. They are not girls or boys yet. They are just little young kids looking at the world with open eyes. It's later on in life when society starts to say you are a girl so do this, or you are a boy so do that. So if you have a boy, don't treat him like he's slow or behind.

The one disadvantage to potty training a boy is control. I'll explain this when we get to that question.

Are pull-ups or plastic training pants best?

Let me start by telling you about the day my kids turned 2. That was the day I started potty training them. And the very first rule was no diapers during the wake up hours.

That means that as long as their eyes are open, they are not allowed to wear a diaper. Only in very limited circumstances would I put a diaper on my son while potty training during the daytime.

Have you ever heard the saying "If it looks like duck, quacks like a duck, and walks like a duck, it must be a duck?" A duck is a duck no matter how you look at it. By the same token, a diaper is a diaper – no matter what fancy name you call it!

So whether it's a diaper, a pull up, or plastic pants, it does two things.

- ❖ It makes it much too easy for the child to go in their pants. Remember, potty training is not fun for your child. It is hard work. That child does not want to be potty trained any more than you want to do it. Pull-ups are nothing more than a glorified diaper.

I love the commercials on television that tell you to use pull-ups to build your child's confidence. My question is, how the hell does it do that? Try this test. Ask a 6 year old if they would like to wear a pull up or a diaper and watch their reaction.

That 6 year old doesn't want either one. Why? Because they are one and the same. A diaper is a diaper is a diaper.

Don't underestimate how smart your young child is. Ever notice how cunning your little darling can be? They know the difference between right and wrong. Your child knows, "Hmmm, if I am wearing a pull up, then I guess it's okay to pee on myself."

It's funny how we as parents forget to use our common sense sometimes. I can't tell you how many times I've heard parents say "Little

Tommy or Suzie is misbehaving because he or she is jealous about their new baby brother or sister.”

These parents believe their child can experience a complex emotion like jealousy. Yet these same parents don't give their child credit for grasping simple concept like “don't pee in your pants.”

Believe me, your child knows the difference. It's your job to show them you know as well.

- ❖ Diapers make it easier for your child to pee on himself/herself, while the training pants make you, the parent, lazy. Oh yes, training pants are the worst thing you can do for yourself.

Potty training is just as much work for you the parent as it is for the child. Interestingly, most of the questions we received talk about what the *child* should do and how the *child* should do it. Not one email asks about what the parent should do. Even the child psychologists take the same stance.

Take a look at the potty training books in your library. Most of the books are geared more toward the child. Almost none are about helping the parent learn how to potty train.

Potty training is all about making sure your child goes to the potty before they wet or dirty themselves. So ask yourself a simple, logical question: Why would you ever want to put training pants on your child? Is it in case they go to the bathroom, or is it in case you did not get them to the bathroom in time?

So avoid putting training pants on your child. Not only will they make good use of it, but you will get too comfortable and forget to take them to the bathroom

Here is another major reason you will not want to use training pants or use them sparingly. Are you ready?

Imagine your child pooping in his/her training pants. The mess to clean up is ten times worse than going in a diaper. Not to mention that when you

take the training pants off, the rest of your child's little body becomes soiled. This alone is enough reason to think twice about training pants.

Try not to have any diaper or diaper substitutes on your child during the waking hours unless it is an extreme emergency. An emergency would constitute having to go to a public place with your child, and knowing there is not going to be a bathroom.

Something else to keep in mind is training pants are more expensive than regular diapers. No wonder the manufactures want you to believe they help build confidence...thus you should buy them by the case loads.

Believe me, you don't need them. The only think close to training pants we every used was the disposable swim trunks when we were in the pool. That's it.

At what age do boys consistently respond to potty training?

What rewards and methods work best?

Are there differences in potty training boys versus girls?

Well the answer to that question depends on a couple of things. It is not really true that boys are more difficult to potty train than girls. Girls however seem to learn faster than boys do.

The fact is potty training is potty training. You might have a boy and a girl, and experience the same type of problems or situations for both. Frequently it does not matter what sex the child is.

In my experience what I have found is on average boys can become consistently potty trained at 24 months. For girls, on the other hand, the average age is about 19 months. I have seen girls as early as 17 months that are fully potty trained.

Basically what this means is girls will understand and become fully potty trained a lot earlier than boys will. If you try to potty train a boy that early, he might not understand everything that you are asking him to understand, and so he won't comply. I'm not saying it's impossible to train a boy that early, but it just means that you have a lot more work to do.

Now if you decide to potty train your child earlier, the question is not how successful you are going to be or if you will be successful at all, but rather how difficult the process will be for you.

It's most important to notice and learn your child's behavior patterns. Ask yourself what is your child's attitude? How do they behave? These things will affect potty training more than gender.

If your child is laid back and not easily stressed, you might have an easier time potty training them. But if you have got a child that basically questions your authority on everything, well guess what – they will be like

that about potty training, too! As a matter of fact, you might have a more difficult time because now you are trying to get them to do something they do not want to do. And if you have a fighter on your hands, well now you have got a boxer!

You have to look at what is happening in the potty training process. For a boy or a girl you are in essence reversing a year and a half to three years' worth of conditioning. So keep that in mind, and realize that no matter what your child's gender, you have some work on your hands. Whether it's a boy or a girl, their behaviors and their consistent attitudes are what will make the difference.

When you are potty training, you are trying to teach that child to recognize that they have to go to the potty and that they hold it. All their conditioning from birth has been to just let it go. So you need to re-condition them to hold it and to recognize where to go. The middle of the living room is not the right place; the bathroom is the right place.

As for rewards, again it really depends on your child. Some rewards work better than others. A reward that works for one child will not work for another child. The answer to this question all depends on you and your child.

You know your child better than anyone else. You know what your child really wants, what your child does not want, and what *motivates* your child. So when putting a reward together, it has to be a reward that will motivate, not just a reward that is "hey I like this" or "yuk, I don't like this." A reward must actually motivate them to *action*.

As for the differences in potty training boys versus girls, the techniques are the same. What you do for a boy you will do for a girl. The only difference is once boys are potty trained eventually they will be standing up. That is it. The exact same words, the exact same techniques you will use for a boy and for a girl.

Girls will pick things up faster and understand them better the first time around than a boy will. So girls can start earlier.

My boy used to ask me when he wanted to poop. But since we started training and I was bringing him at regular intervals to the potty-toilet, he no longer asks for a toilet when he wants to poop, and we have had a lot more accidents. Why is this?

There are a couple of things going on here.

Why is this happening? First of all, it looks like your child was potty trained and now he is having some accidents. Let's try to figure out why.

First of all, your son is a two year old, so congratulations for having him potty trained by that age. Outside of other reasons that can cause a regression – moving, a new baby, a change of school, change in family situation, new teachers – here is what I think can be causing some of these accidents.

Your son probably gained some confidence. He was going to the bathroom at regular intervals and felt “Well, I am potty trained.” Remember as a parent you have to be vigilant. Kids are kids. Your job is to be proactive, not let the child decide when he is potty trained. The ownership of the responsibility is still on you, the parent.

So as your child got more confident and exhibited more actions of being potty trained, you began to let your guard down. And by letting your guard down, instead of going to the potty at the same interval, maybe the intervals were getting longer and longer. As these intervals got longer, the child was not going to the bathroom as many times a day. This increases the risk of a full bladder. With a child that is confident that can lead to accidents.

So remember, you still have to be vigilant and watch your child, even though they may be potty trained. This is because accidents can happen when they get confident and you let your guard down.

My son was totally potty trained. And now he wets himself.

What do we do? What are good reward systems?

How long do you use the reward system?

The fact is, kids *will* have accidents, and sometimes it can be their playing – they're with some other kids their age and they forget to go to the bathroom. My main question is, is he having an occasional accident or has he totally reversed and is wetting himself every single time?

It is not uncommon for kids to reverse. What you have to remember is potty training is a process, not just an event. Once your child becomes potty trained it doesn't mean you stop. You have to continue so that they build the right habits and the right attitude towards potty training.

There are other issues that can cause your son or daughter to reverse themselves and go back to needing to be potty trained. A lot of times it can be some kind of a psychological event. What you should ask yourself is how has your son or daughter's behavior been recently? Normally in these types of situations you will also notice a behavior change, not only just a change in a child's attitude towards the potty.

This can be a sign of more serious things that are going on in the child's life. Is there a new brother or sister in the house? Is Mom or Dad working a new job and the schedule has changed? Is the child going to bed later or earlier in the morning. Did your child start at a new school? Did that child lose a friend or move to a new town?

These are all things that you want to ask yourself to be able to determine, is this a *reversal* in potty training.

Most importantly, how old is the child? If the child is only two years old then maybe the child was never fully potty trained.

If the child is an older child, four or five, then the question is, what would cause an older child like that to reverse what they were able to do before. Look into what's going on in the child's life.

Reward systems vary. There are definitely things that we use that work very well, but it all depends on your child.

You know your child better than anyone else. For example, when we used to take our son to the pediatrician the doctor would say, is there anything you noticed in the child? Maybe the child was quieter than normal. Those are things only a parent would know. So you know your child best.

You know what your child likes and doesn't like, the foods they like and don't like, the desserts they like and don't like. So, build a reward system around your child.

Some kids, you might use cookies as a reward. Other kids are indifferent to cookies. They might prefer television as a reward. Some kids react better when you give them positive feedback. Other kids react better when you take something away. So, you might have to test what will work, what doesn't work. Once you get that reward system in place, though, and you know what does work, you'll have very good results with it.

As for how long to use the reward system, continue using it as long as it's working. If you're getting the results that you want from the reward system, continue to use it.

Again, potty training is not an event. It's something that takes awhile to do or to perfect. So, continue using that reward until you can see that your child is exactly where you want them to be. Your child will get tired of the reward before you do. Once they start outgrowing the reward, that's when you'll notice they don't need the reward and they're potty trained fully on their own. They won't need any more external help from you, the parent.

How can I as a babysitter/grandmother help with potty training my two-year-old granddaughter?

It has been 28 years since my youngest child was potty trained. What is the best method now to help with potty training a two year old? And how do I encourage my two-year-old granddaughter in potty training without problems?

Although this is a simple question, it does not necessarily have a simple answer. As a grandmother/main babysitter, I am sure there are a lot of things you want to do for your granddaughter. Potty training is just one of them. Although it has been 28 years since your youngest child was potty trained, believe me, the techniques and ideas are pretty much the same thing. Human nature is human nature. It has not changed in 1,000 years.

There are some things I need to know to answer your questions fully.

One, are you the only caregiver for that child?

Two, how did you become the caregiver for that child? Was there some kind of traumatic experience for the child, and you, as the grandparent, had to take over or become the foster parent?

Three, is that child going to daycare?

What I am trying to find out here is whether there is anything psychologically that would impair or effect your granddaughter's ability to become potty trained. If you are the only person that is taking care of that child, you are the only person we should be talking directly to. But if other people are involved, they need instructions.

Let us start with the assumption that you are the main caregiver for that child.

In my book I say time and time again, the key is getting your child, son or daughter, to start using the potty. What you want to do is get them on a schedule. I would say every 15 to 20 minutes, have your granddaughter sit on the potty for one to three minutes. You do not want to go longer than three minutes because the child does not have that long of an attention span. After three minutes of sitting down, the child will most likely start to complain. That can cause trauma and for her and she won't want to come back and sit on the potty.

If you follow the steps outlined in my book, you will find getting your granddaughter to use the potty is not very difficult at all. So are you the only caregiver for this child, or are the child's parents involved, or is there a daycare involved?

If you are the only caregiver then it is simple. Follow the instructions as we have outlined them in the book. If you are not the only caregiver, what you need to do is make sure everyone is on board with what you are trying to do.

Potty training is not an event that a single person can do on their own. Your son or daughter comes in contact with many different people if they are in daycare or if there are other caregivers helping with the rearing of that child.

What I would do is create a one-page sheet which outlines what your goal is for your granddaughter. Then I would make sure every person that is helping with the raising of that child – the daycare people, the child's parents, everyone – has a copy of this schedule.

It is critical that everyone follows the schedule. This can't be something that only you do, and that everyone else does not do. It simply will not work that way.

Let me give you an example. My son, within 7 days of turning 2, was fully potty trained during the daytime. Three months later, my husband and I took a trip to Las Vegas. We were only gone for about four days. Because it was Las Vegas, we decided to leave the kids with our in-laws.

Well, I had left a sheet with instructions and a schedule to follow for his potty training. But you know how in-laws can be. They have got their

own ideas of how they should do things and how they did things 20 and 30 years ago, and they decided to do things the way they did it. The in-laws decided that they would let my son play all day as long as he wanted, and when he wanted to go to the bathroom, he would come and tell them when it was time for him to go to the bathroom.

In the four short days that we were gone, my son's potty training was completely reversed. The three months worth of work that we had done were gone. My son had probably two accidents the week that we had come back from our trip. Keep in mind, three months prior to that he had not had one accident.

Here is what happened when we were gone. The in-laws conditioned my son to use the potty when he wanted to use the potty, and as you know, boys will be boys, kids will be kids. They will play as long as they want to play, and sometimes they forget that it is time to go to the bathroom. So when we got back, he was totally conditioned to use the potty when he wanted to use it, not on the same schedule that we had him on.

So the moral here is, if you are potty training your granddaughter, you want to make sure that everyone is on the same page with what you are doing. If they are not, it won't take much for them to undo all the work that you have done.

You must remember, kids at that age, their minds are very easy to change and condition. It does not take a lot to change how they think or what you have taught them. In potty training, we call that regression. In other words, a child was going in one direction and something causes a regression or a step back.

There are many other things that can cause regression. Sometimes a kid regresses as an act of rebellion. The child is upset or not happy with the parent for whatever reason, and they decide to get even by having accidents and pooping in their pants or peeing on themselves. This is how the child lets out the frustration.

In other situations, regression can be a form of jealousy. If there is a new baby in the house, sometimes the lack of attention will cause the older child to regress as a means of getting attention from the parents.

My oldest son was fully potty trained, and as soon as we had our second child, he regressed for approximately two to three weeks. Now, his regression was not a full regression, but it was to the point that we had to keep an eye on him a lot closer than we had previously. As we knew he was fully potty trained, we were able to relax, but when he regressed, we noticed he had an accident or two, and thus we had to pay more attention to what was going on.

Now, as for your granddaughter, the question is, are you the sole care provider for that child because of some traumatic experience to the parents or some situation that has led to the parents not being in the child's life anymore?

You might not realize it, but this is a very, very traumatic experience for that child. Studies have shown over and over again that children as young as two to three months know the difference between a caregiver and a parent. So this child knows the difference between you as a grandmother and her real parent raising her.

If that is the case, it will take, in most cases, a little bit longer for you to potty train your daughter or your granddaughter. Keep that in mind as you work with her. Because of a traumatic experience, that can cause a lack of focus. She may experience serious regression, and she may not want to move forward with the potty training. She may also show signs of rebellion.

So with all that being said, and again I am not sure what your exact situation is, have fun things near the potty. One trick my husband used, as we mentioned in other parts of the book, is reading to our sons when it was potty time. We also used to keep floating toy fishes in the bathroom, and right after potty we would fill up the sink and let them play with the toy fishes in the sink.

The goal was to get them used to being in the bathroom, giving them a reason to go to the bathroom. Even when they did not want to go to the bathroom, when we said you get to play with the fishes, automatically they decided to go.

So I hope this answers your question, and remember the goal is to make it fun and to get your granddaughter on a schedule so she has a positive reason to go to the bathroom.

How can I get my child to go to the potty?

How can she let me know when she wants to go to the bathroom?

Why is it fun sometimes, horrible other times?

When do I know I'm trying too hard or is she just not ready?

Getting your child to let you know when she has to go to the bathroom is something that comes with time and a lot of practice. When you first start potty training, there is no way in heck that child is going to tell you when he or she has to go to the bathroom. What you have to do is establish some form of an alert system that triggers a memory inside that child to go and use the potty.

One thing I've always used was a timer. I would set the time for intervals depending on who I was training and the age of the child, usually between 20 and 30 minutes. When the timer went off, it was like a celebration. It was potty time. You might even go to the store and get noisemakers and bells so that when the timer goes off, everyone in the house is ringing the bells and blowing on the noisemakers.

Something that you also might like to try is every time the timer goes off, have the child say "It's potty time!" That way, you get your child involved in the process. So, I would go to the store, pick up a timer, and use that to make staying on schedule fun.

Now for a little story. We didn't use a timer, we used the microwave. Every time the microwave went off, it was as if it was the Fourth of July in our house. It got to the point that every time my son heard a microwave, even if we were at a store somewhere, he would yell, "It's potty time!" So I can attest to the fact that a timer is an excellent way to get the child to let you know when they have to go to the potty.

As your child gets older, he/she will start telling you she has to go to the bathroom. I can't tell you what a wonderful feeling it is, knowing that you don't have to be as vigilant, that your child is smart enough to now be proactive on her own. Believe me, with practice and with time, it will happen. Just make sure that she practices.

Even after you start training your child and she starts getting the hang of it, you will hit some frustrating moments. Sometimes it will be fun and other times it just will be a miserable experience. The best thing that you can do to get through those times is to be consistent.

Believe me, the very first time you are inconsistent, your child will pick up on it. So make sure that whatever intervals you set, you keep those intervals no matter where you're at. If you think your child has to go potty in the morning, you make sure every morning that you take her to go potty. The one morning you skip, your child will give you an accident. So the easiest way to make things more fun for you is being consistent.

Also, have a talk with your child and let her know what you expect from her. Help her understand what she's supposed to do and let her know what makes it fun for you as the parent. That way, she knows that when she uses the potty you're going to be happy.

There's more to it that will make the difference between potty training being a fun time for you or a fun time for the child. As I've mentioned time and time again, this is hard work for both of you, parent and child. Your child does not enjoy having to learn to go to the potty because it means work for her. And it's difficult for you because it's work for you. We talk about noticing your child's habits, and there's one time that is pretty consistent when it comes to very young kids. That time is naptime – the same time almost every single day.

If you are the parent of a 2 year old, then there's usually a morning nap and an afternoon nap. So make sure you don't force the issue when you know it's naptime. Take your child to the bathroom before she gets tired. Once she is tired, there is nothing you're going to be able to do to get her cooperate with you to use the potty. So make sure you know when her naptime is and take her to the bathroom before you hit that time frame.

As for knowing when you are trying too hard or if the child is just not ready, in my opinion, there is no such thing as trying too hard. As long as you're not punishing the child or screaming at her or yelling at her, I don't think you can be trying too hard.

If you can say the words, "Let's get some toys to play," or "Who wants a snack?" or maybe "Who wants candy?" and that child understands what you just said, then you can never be trying too hard. If she understands these types of commands, she understands when you say it's time to use the potty. So, I would continue as long as you see you're your child understands what you mean.

How can I potty train my son without losing my patience?

I am sorry to tell you, but the truth of the matter is, when it comes to potty training, you *will* lose your patience. You must remember this is going to be a difficult time for you and your child. So be realistic. You'll lose it once in a while!

You are trying to teach the child something that they are totally uncomfortable with, and something they have never done before. In most cases, your son or daughter is approximately two years old. That means you are trying to reverse two to three years of habit and comfort in a short timeframe.

Think about yourself and a habit that you've been trying to get over. How long did it take you to get over that habit? For your child, it is going to be the same thing. It will not happen overnight, so you must keep that in mind.

When you start the process, be prepared for the difficult times. Unless you are Mother Teresa, chances are you will get upset.

The question is, how do you handle those periods of frustration and your anger? It is not that the child is trying to purposely drive you crazy. At this point in their life, they just are learning something new, and thus it takes extra patience on your part.

I always tell parents, at least a month before you start the process of potty training, get yourself mentally prepared. Come up with little phrases or sayings or things that you can do when you start noticing that your last nerve is on edge. Maybe it is counting backwards from ten, maybe it is singing a song, maybe it is taking a drink of a soda or juice. Whatever calms your nerves down, you want to make sure you program that into your life.

The key is to start practicing this at least a month before you start potty training. So when it comes time to potty train, and you find yourself in a situation where you are frustrated or angry at your son or daughter, you will know exactly how to handle that process.

Potty training will frustrate you. You must set your expectations correctly. Do not expect your child to start potty training today and not have accidents. Messes and accidents are inevitable.

You also mentioned how do you deal with an angry child or a child that just does not want to listen. There is more to this question than meets the eye. I would say this is not just a simple potty training question, but maybe a question that revolves around behavior patterns.

I think what you need to do with your child is re-establish the parent-child relationship. I think the child has crossed that line and is exhibiting behavior that is not conducive to the parent-child relationship. Although each parent has different methods and ways of handling such a situation, I would suggest digging deep within yourself and seeing how you can get control of that relationship and show your child who is in charge.

Subsequently, I do believe that once you re-establish that relationship, you will find potty training will be a lot easier. When your child has learned to listen to what your expectations and what your wants and needs are, you will find when you take that child to the potty, they will not be as angry, they will not be as defiant, and they will start to listen to you.

So in conclusion, set your expectations properly, and do not set them too high. Even if your child is an older child, say three or four, if they have not potty trained before, this is still something new to them. Find ways to balance your emotions. Then make sure that you have established a healthy parental authority with your child.

How can I teach my daughter not to be afraid?

This is a perfect question to be answered because it allows me to explain the potty training process and what is happening in that process for the child.

As I mentioned in my book, there needs to be a reversal of habit. You need to interpret what your child is thinking of when it comes to the potty. In many cases children are definitely afraid of that potty. It is something that they have never done before, and something they are very uncomfortable doing.

You, the parent, know it is good for your daughter. But she doesn't realize that yet. Potty training is not an event but a process. It is something that you start and must work through. It will not happen overnight. The easiest way to get your child used to going to the potty is getting her used to the mechanics in a non-threatening manner.

The one thing that most of us never do when it comes to potty training is preparation. By preparation I mean we do not sit down and plan what the steps we are going to take and when, how are we going to handle potty training, and what needs to be done step by step. I suggest taking out a notebook and writing down your goals. Write down how you are going to do this.

This preparation should happen at least three to four weeks before you actually start potty training your child. I would start introducing the word potty and what potty means to the child a few weeks before you start. Make sure the child goes to the potty with either parents or an older sibling at least a few weeks before you start. The goal, again, is to get her used to going to the potty and being in that potty room.

If you are going to be using a portable potty chair, what I would do is put the chair in your child's favorite place in the house. Let's say there is a family room where the child likes to play with all of her toys. I would put the portable potty chair next to the toy chest at least three to four weeks before starting potty training. The child will get used to seeing the potty in a non-threatening environment.

When it comes time to introduce her to actually using the potty, it won't be such a threatening action. It is not something that they will have to use the first time they see it!

Think about what is going through your child's mind the day you start potty training. Think about the moment you introduce her to the potty or to the portable potty chair. Not only are you shocking her by having her use the bathroom, but you are also shocking her double by forcing her to use a mechanism or tool that they have never had to use before. That is what you call a double whammy.

What you need to do is eliminate one of the shocks. The easiest one to eliminate is the introduction of the potty chair or the portable potty. Get her used to it well in advance before you actually introduce potty training. Then it will not be a threatening tool to the child.

If your child is positively afraid of using the potty, or every time you mention the word potty she goes into hysteria, there are some other tactics you may try. Let's start with using a different word. Sometimes you can use a different word other than potty, one that is more soothing. You might want to experiment with different words and see how your child reacts. If your child reacts favorably, then that is something that you might want to try to use.

Another tactic is to find something that your child is very interested in and likes to do. Use that time as a time to try to get the child to go to the potty. Maybe it is reading, maybe it is a favorite snack, maybe it is a story that they like to hear, or maybe it is a beloved toy they love to play with or hold. Find out what really motivates your child and use that as an incentive.

Let me give you an example. Let's say your child really loves Barney or Tickle Me Elmo. I would go so far as to put a portable TV and VCR in the bathroom. Instead of saying, "Let's go potty," I would say, "Let's go watch Elmo" or "Let's go watch Barney." What you have in essence done is this: you did not tell the child let's go potty, you told her let's go watch your favorite video.

If you still get resistance, then the trick is to start playing the video. Once the video starts to play and the child is watching, she will forget

where she is, and slowly and calmly you can undress the child while they are watching the video and not paying attention to what you are doing. You should also be able to get your child to sit down on that potty without even noticing what you are doing.

Now, they might be so absorbed in the video that they actually do not use the potty. That's okay, at least you are getting the child used to sitting down on the potty and not being threatened by it. This is a step forward. Eventually what this will do is it will erode the barriers that your child has to using the potty.

Another thing you can do to get your child not to be afraid of the potty is using pep talks. I know as a parent this can be frustrating for you. You have a hundred things you need to do and no time for speeches. But how you introduce the potty and how you say the word potty, especially the inflection in your voice, will affect your child.

Have you ever walked into a room where everyone was laughing and you automatically started laughing without knowing what in the heck was going on? Even though you had no idea what everyone was laughing about you just started laughing spontaneously. The reason was the hilarious energy of the room made you laugh.

The same thing works for your kids. If you tell your child to go use the potty in a grim or threatening tone, then the child will feed off of your energy. So say it with a very pleasant and laughing tone. Tell the child "Let's go potty!" as if you were going to a party.

Psychologically you need to make your child feel that using the potty is one of the most exciting things that they can do right now and there is nothing else to replace it. Again, what you are doing is wearing down the barriers the child has to using the potty. A happy tone of voice and overall upbeat energy will help do that.

How do I get my child to go before he actually wets. He tells me potty after he's already gone. Should I limit his fluid intake while potty-training?

As you mentioned, once your child goes to the potty, he or she then says potty. By that point it is already too late because your child is wet. As a parent I can certainly understand how frustrating that can be. You know the child knows the difference because they are telling you they are wet, yet why didn't they tell you this before they wet themselves?

I will not go into much detail here, as I have covered this in detail in my book, but again the key is being proactive and getting your child on the potty before he or she wets. Remember, potty-training is not your child telling you they have to go to the bathroom. Potty-training is you getting your child to the bathroom before they have to go.

Once a child knows the difference, then he is potty-trained. So the actual act of potty training is you getting the child to bathroom before he has to go, and thus through repetition he learns what the sensation of needing to "go" feels like before he has to do it.

The other part of potty-training is just getting him to not only use the bathroom, but to know the difference and be proactive on his own.

Should you limit his fluid intake while potty-training? Now this one of those questions that no matter who answers, whether a parent or a psychologist, the answer is an absolute and resounding no. Do not limit your child's water intake during potty-training.

It is never a bad idea to limit juice, as it is high in sugar. But you can also dilute your juice with water. But please, do not want limit your child's fluid intake. This can lead to serious dehydration, especially if you live in a warm climate.

I am not a doctor, so I don't want to give you medical advice, but I definitely would not limit the fluids my child is taking because you don't know when you might be depriving a child of liquid and when it will lead to dehydration.

Frankly, in my opinion, the more fluids you give them the better! The more they will use the bathroom, which leads to more opportunities for them to learn when they have to go to the bathroom and what they should do when they get there. If you severely limit the fluid intake, they won't go the bathroom as frequently, which means fewer opportunities for you to train your child to do the right thing.

However, in the evening times or at bedtime, I do limit the fluid intake because you want your child to wake up dry.

The more times your son or daughter wakes up dry, the more you can reward him or her. When your child wakes up in the morning dry, you have helped them to build confidence. This will help them to stay dry every night.

How do I know he understands the concept of “potty?”

I can tell you what the psychologists will tell you, or I can tell you what my experience has been.

The scientist spends months and years in laboratories studying the behaviors of kids. Here's how it works. They take a few hundred kids from the age of 1 on up. They monitor these kids on a continual basis for a few years. They could be looking for many things. Potty training is just one of them.

There are obvious signs that a child is ready for direction and help. Noticed I said direction and help. I will explain in a while why I said that.

Once the child shows signs of readiness, the psychologists plot the age on the chart. After watching several hundred kids, they develop an average age when a child will be ready for potty training.

That is what the psychologist will tell you when it comes to potty training.

So the question is "How do I know my child understands the concept of potty training?"

The truth is he/she doesn't understand the concept of potty training at first if you follow my methods. It's your job to help your child get the concept down.

Let me explain why I said “help your child” versus “potty training your child.” You see by the time the child exhibits signs of readiness, you have already lost months of opportunity to potty train. Think about it for a second.

One of the signs you are told to watch out for is a child asking to go potty. Another is the child wakes up dry in the morning. I don't know about you, but if my child is waking up dry in the morning, it looks to me that my child is partially potty trained!

Thus the child literally trained himself. At this point he just needs a little guidance from you.

So start training your child before he/she starts showing signs. By the time you see the signs its already too late – they are well on their way. Some kids are way more advanced than others. You might have an 18 month old who is waking up dry in the morning. (This is definitely not the norm, but it can happen.)

My rule of thumb is start training them on their second birthday. You can't go wrong.

So how do you know they understand the concept of potty training? You don't and neither do they. Just learn how to control your frustration when you first start training them. This is going to be a very difficult time for you and your child. It's even more difficult for you if there's another sibling in the house or you work longer than normal hours at work.

This time in your life is equivalent to the first time you got on a bike. It was probably difficult at first and you wanted to give up. But you kept going. Eventually you learned how to do it and became a pro at it.

Your child will eventually get it and become a pro. So don't give up on him/her. Through repetition and constant support your child will understand it. The proof will be in their successfully going potty when they need to.

How do you know when your child is ready for potty training?

Let me ask you a few questions.

- ❖ How do you know when your child is ready to start reading?
- ❖ How do you know when your child is ready to start school?
- ❖ How do you know when your child is ready to start riding a bike?

The answer is you don't. But at some point in your child's development you will start teaching them some of the activities above.

Just think about it. When you decide to start teaching your child how to read, what will be your deciding factor? Do you think your child will bring you a book and say "I want to start reading!" Do you think maybe one day you will find your three year old in his/her room trying to read a book? Chances are this is not what's going to happen.

Most children don't want to start reading. Want to know why? It's hard work. It's easier not to know how to read, than it is to spend months learning the alphabet.

Don't worry, most adults are the same way. The majority of people don't like learning new things. Isn't it true most people don't volunteer to learn a new skill at work even though they are ready to do the work? Why is that? It's uncomfortable. It's hard work. Getting people out of their comfort zone is not easy.

From a human behavior standpoint, we are no different today than when we were kids.

So how do you know when your child is ready to be potty trained? You don't. The question is how do you know when you are ready to potty train your child. Only *you* have the answer to that question.

Keep reading and I will tell you when I decided to start training my child. It will be up to you if you want to do the same. But first let me tell you why the power should be in your hands.

Most psychologist will tell you to look for signs your child is ready. Here are some of those signs.

- ❖ The child asks you to go to the bathroom.
- ❖ The child wakes up dry.
- ❖ The child does the pee pee dance (holding it and wiggling).
- ❖ The child takes off their diaper.
- ❖ The child goes to the bathroom themselves.
- ❖ The child hides before bowel movements.

According to these signs, doesn't it appear to you the child is already exhibiting signs of being potty trained? I mean, if the child is waking up dry already, what more do you need?

So you can either wait for your child to show you signs, or you can be proactive. Depending on your child, if you wait for them, they might not show you a ready sign until they are 3 years of age. By that time you've lost a year of peace and tranquility that comes with a fully potty trained child.

For me the start date is really easy. The day each one of my boys turned 2 was the day they started potty training. For me 2 years of age is the right time. Remember a 2 year old can do a lot of things. I figure if you are smart enough to tell me no and jump off the couch, then you are smart enough to use the potty.

How long does it take to potty train your child?

Oh such a simple question, but a very complicated answer. It depends on many different variables:

- ❖ You.
- ❖ Your child
- ❖ Your family
- ❖ Is your child in daycare?

Potty training is not an event, it is a process. In other words, you do not start today and then you're done tomorrow. You might start today, but you may not be done for a long time.

Now let me clarify this for you. It only takes you a few hours to learn everything you need to know to potty train your child immediately. With the right conditions, your child can be trained in only a few days. You heard me – only a few days.

But even though your child is “trained,” they need lots of repetition. One simple event can set your child back. So you have to continue potty training even after they are trained so they do not forget what they've learned. I cannot emphasize enough how important this is. Repetition, repetition, repetition. They will forget if you stop training.

I can honestly say that within 2 weeks all of my kids were trained and did not need diapers during the day time. We even took a 1 day bus ride within 4 weeks of my boy turning 2, and we did not have any accidents. The key is repetition. The more you keep up with your child and continue the reminding, the faster he or she will learn.

Then comes your child. Some kids learn faster than others. Girls will learn faster than boys. I've been fortunate to do the right things that helped my boys to be fully trained in less than two weeks.

But remember that kids like to play. When they play, they will forget to go to the bathroom. Even my six year old, who is fully trained, has to be reminded to go to the bathroom when he's playing.

So as long as you're a parent you might be potty training. Of course, if you still have to call and remind them to go to the bathroom when they're in college, I think there's a problem. But while they are children, you will probably always need to be at least a little bit conscious of their bathroom issues.

I mentioned earlier that potty training is a process. Sit down and have a conversation with the preschool teachers. Talk to all of your family members. Explain that you are starting to potty train your child and what you expect from everyone.

Remember kids will forget in an instant when they start training. So even one person – at the daycare or in your immediate family – who does not continue the process can set you back a few weeks. The only way to avoid this is by making sure every one is on the same page.

Some daycare workers are not happy about potty training, but it's their job. If you have a problem, have a talk with the director of the child care center.

If your child is not in daycare yet, then make sure you ask any daycare center you are considering what their potty training policies are like. If they don't offer potty training, that does not make them a bad daycare center. But it does mean it will take you longer to fully potty train your child.

Keep these basic facts in mind and you will succeed wildly. Most of the success will depend on you. Don't forget it. Kids develop at different times. Follow the instructions in our book and the process will go fast. Make sure you get everyone in your immediate circle involved – otherwise they will sabotage your process. Not purposely, but because of their lack of knowledge.

How to you help your child know the difference when he has to pee and when he has to poop?

How often should I take him to the potty to poop?

How do I keep him interested when he is on the potty to go poop?

When you first start potty training your son or daughter, the reality is they do not know the difference between going No. 1 or going No. 2. That is one of the main reasons why you should always potty train boys sitting down. As mentioned in the book, one day when I was taking my son to the bathroom and he was standing up, low and behold, a nice No. 2 came out as well as a No. 1. I had some mess to clean up.

Learn from my mistakes and do not do the same thing. Like I said, at first they do not know the difference between No. 1 and No. 2. Almost invariably, children will learn the pee sensation before they learn the poop sensation.

Sometimes as a child is going No. 1, it just happens to be luck that they go No. 2. But, in all cases, kids will learn to be potty trained for peeing first before they learn to be potty trained for No. 2. So once you have gotten the child used to sitting down, and they learn how to pee, then you can start preparing them to be potty trained for No. 2. Here are some things that should help you do that.

First, note when he or she normally goes poop. Kids at that age are very easy to track. They are very regular. If they go today after dinner, they will go every day after dinner. If they go every day around 3:00, they will continue to go everyday around 3:00.

Once you have noted when he or she likes to go poop, make a chart of that. Then everyday around that same time, your goal is to try and catch them before they go to the potty. The key is to get them going No. 2 while sitting down, not hiding or doing some other activity. When you think you

are sending your daughter to the bathroom to go No. 2, you want to be very clear with your instructions.

Do not just say “Let’s go potty.” Say, “Hey, it’s time to go poop” or “It’s time to go No. 2”. Be very specific with what you are saying. Let them know exactly what your expectations are. Remember, what you say psychologically can trigger how and what they do, just like it works for adults.

As a matter of fact, how you use your words works better with kids than adults. Kids do not know any better. They normally won’t second guess you. So whatever you say can impact them psychologically. If you ask them to go poop, they will go poop.

When the day comes and you see your son or daughter poop while they are sitting on the toilet, make a big celebration. My husband and I would clap and we would jump and say “Wow, you went poop in the potty!” It got my son wonderfully excited about pooping in the potty. We even let him look at it because as crazy as it sounds, kids like to look at the weirdest things. He always felt proud when he pooped so he got to see it!

We would have special rewards just for going No. 2 in the potty. Let’s say if we gave him a sticker for peeing, we would give him a different type of sticker or a star for doing No. 2 in the potty. Use different types of rewards to get your son or daughter to exactly what they need to do, be it No. 1 or No. 2.

Also, whenever our son did No. 2, we let him flush the toilet. And it became something that he just loved doing, flushing that toilet. Now, if he just did No. 1, he did not flush the toilet. He was not allowed to. But, whenever he did No. 2, he was allowed to flush the toilet. I have no idea why, but most kids love flushing the toilet. So, use that as a reward to get your child to do No. 2 in the potty.

Another interesting thing my son fell in love with doing was after he did No. 2, and he flushed the toilet, he would get up and play bye-bye potty, or bye-bye poo poo. So the first time you notice your child does No. 2 in the potty, after you have cleaned him up, stand by him and together say “Bye-bye poo poo.”

Do this every time he or she does No. 2 in the potty. What you will find is they will get accustomed to it. Every time they do a No. 2 in the bathroom, they will be glad say bye-bye poo-poo to the potty going down the drain!

I don't believe in waiting until a child is older to begin training. That's not the norm in other cultures. We started working with our twin daughters at 15 months, and they were doing wonderfully.

But due to some surprise upheavals in our lives, we had to push the training aside. Now, they're 20 months old and aren't nearly as cooperative.

We've now hit the "I don't want to" with one of my daughters and the other one has too much to see and do. What can we do? Have we waited too long?

And, you don't expect the child to fully understand what's going on before they start walking, so I believe they don't need to have a complete understanding and concept of potty-training before we begin working with them.

Today, it's official. Fifteen months to be potty-trained is the record that I have seen so far. Not surprising, it was girls. And it was twin girls, so congratulations to you as a parent in having twin girls potty-trained by the age of 15 months!

Also, it's no surprise that the potty training has completely reversed on you. As you've mentioned, for some unavoidable reasons, things have changed in your life and you had to push off the potty training.

Potty training is one of those things that once you start, you don't stop. When you do stop, not only will there be a complete reversal, but it will be much harder the second time around to get that child potty-trained. For some unknown reason, when there is a lapse in potty training, those children come back tougher than ever.

It's like when you're sick, and you go to the doctor and they give you some kind of medicine, maybe penicillin or whatever the case may be. The doctor always tells you, "Take this for so many days and do not stop until

the bottle is empty or the amount of days has been up.” There is a reason the doctor does that – to make sure all the germs in your body that are making you sick are gone.

The doctor knows if all the germs are not gone, when you stop taking that medicine, if those germs are still in your body and your immune system starts to get weak again, then you will get sick again. And that sickness comes back with a vengeance. Potty training and behavior modification is no different.

When you start, do not stop because it is much more difficult to get a child to start again. Also remember an object in motion tends to stay in motion. If you’re going in a positive direction, you’ll continue going in a positive direction. But if you start going in a negative direction, you’re likely to keep going in a negative direction.

So, it’s no surprise that your twin girls are now saying, “I don’t want to.” So here are some suggestions that I hope will help.

First of all, it’s never too late. There is nothing you can do that is ever “too late.” Your children will become potty trained. The question is how difficult will the process be.

So, you have to be vigilant and continue moving forward in potty training, even if you think they don’t want to do it. Never think it’s too late, or you’ve missed the boat. It’s just not true. The later you wait, the more urgent it becomes to make sure you get them trained, but it’s not too late.

What I would do is if both of your twins are uncooperative, I would take them to the bathroom separately. I hate to suggest this because it will mean much more work for you as a parent, but it will work. What happens is kids will follow other kids, so if one is not cooperative, the second will not be cooperative. They will vibe off of each other and follow each other’s patterns. To combat this you take them to the bathroom separately and at different intervals.

I also would not make it a public announcement that it’s potty time. What I would do is call one separately, and take her to the bathroom. Then I would call the other one and take her to the bathroom, unbeknownst to the

other. Once one of them starts to consistently follow your directions and consistently use the potty, then you can start bringing them together.

Now you can try to get the one who is using the potty to help you potty train the other. Remember, kids like to help and they like to imitate.

You mentioned that if the kids aren't walking yet, how can we expect them to be capable of potty training? Well, developmentally, at 15 months to two years a child should be walking and be running around the house and tearing things apart. If the child is not walking, there are some other issues that must be addressed and potty training is not one of them.

So, I would definitely talk with a doctor to find out why your child is not walking if that is the case at two. Your potty training issues may not be about potty training, but of mental and physiological development.

Your last question, "Should I use diapers for naps and at bedtime?" At first, they will use diapers for naps, and yes, absolutely for bedtime until they are trained during the evening or even during the nighttime. Once you start seeing some signs of continual potty training during the daytime, you can gradually take the diapers away during naps. Just make sure naptime is at a consistent time every day. In other words, if the nap is at 10:00 and at 2:00; always make sure naps are at 10:00 and then at 2:00.

Also make sure before they go to a nap, they are not drinking any fluids that will shorten the naps.

I have tried rewards from McDonalds to playground, and nothing seems to work. I took him to the potty. He sat for ten minutes and then I left to go to take my daughter to school. We got back an hour later. He was still dry. He went potty again. He had already had a couple of Ovals and, after a lengthy stay on the potty, would go. He began watching TV and about 15 minutes later stated that he could go potty, so we ran. He was already wet. I am at a loss. I still made him sit on the potty, and we read and sang songs for about 20 minutes. He is almost 3 ½ years old and I will still probably have to change his Pull-Up before he walks across the stage at his high school graduation.

Your son is about 3 ½ years old, which is late to me in potty training years, but it is not anything to worry about. If you are still changing his diapers when he is in high school, then you'll have a REAL problem.

From your questions, I see some positives, so you should be happy you are doing some things that are correct. The thing to remember is that TV makes kids forget. When that child is sitting in front of that TV watching Bob the Builder or Barney or whatever the case may be, they are in another world. They forget everything that is going on around them, and thus potty training is the last thing that they are thinking about.

Think about a slot machine. No matter how much money you put into a slot machine, it eventually has to pay out. Sometimes it pays out big. In our case, a normal payout might be doing number one, or a huge payout might be doing number two. The fact is, it is just a lot of numbers. That machine will pay out large sums of money.

How do you relate this to potty training your child? No matter how many times you take them to the potty, if they do not go, eventually they

will pay out. And that payout will be wet pants or doing number two in their big-boy underwear.

Make sure you take him to the bathroom on a consistent time interval, let us say every half hour. You take him to the bathroom at 9:00 a.m. and he does not go. Instead of taking him to the bathroom at 9:30, take him to the bathroom at 9:20. Remember, the payout is coming and you know it. The question is do you get the payout to the potty before it is too late?

The best strategy for you is to stay ahead of the game – and ahead of your son.

When your son is watching the television, as he was doing, he probably had to go to the bathroom, and he knew it. The TV was just too good for him to get up and tell you. Then it started to hurt. So what happened is, the pain became more important than the television program. At that point, he decided to tell you.

By the time he called you and said, “Mommy, I have to pee,” he was more than ready to let go. As you ran to the bathroom, that is when your son ended up having the accident.

Although there was an accident, there is a reward here. You should be happy that he told you before he actually wet his pants. Him wetting his pants was not actually an accident of not being potty trained. It might actually be an accident of being too potty trained – he can hold the potty long enough to watch that TV until it hurts so bad, he just cannot hold it any more.

What you have got to do now is one of two things. (1) Watch his intervals. If you notice the last time he did not use the potty or did a lot of pee in the potty, take him a little bit sooner on the next interval, especially if he is watching television. Because he will not let you know before it is too late. (2) Be vigilant at getting him to realize as soon as the tickle sensation starts, it is time to go potty.

What you can do in between intervals is ask him if he has to go to the potty. At some points, I would ask my son every ten minutes, “Do you have to go potty? Do you have to go potty?” Most of the time, he would say no. But as the potty trainer, I knew when it was time, and even when he

did say no, we would go to the potty. Try these tips, I am certain you will see results.

I placed my daughter's feet in a shallow pan of water which makes her pee. Should I continue this? She definitely does not like the wet clothes on her skin, but just will not go.

I guess the question I must ask you first is how old your daughter is.

Sometimes you have to do drastic things to get the results that you want, especially if the child is an older child. As I mentioned earlier, I am not a psychologist. I am a parent who figured out how to do something right and it worked. So I cannot give you a medical answer about putting your child's feet in a shallow pan of water.

What I can say is be careful what habits you teach. To me this seems like a very drastic and extreme approach that would lead your child to need a pan of water every time he or she has to go to the bathroom!

If that happens, what do you do when you are in public? What happens when you are at a friend's house or what happens when you are on a trip? There may not always be a pan of water available.

There can be other issues going on here that would cause your child not to want to use the bathroom. Again, the answer to this question depends on the age of the child. If the child is two or maybe three, then there are probably no psychological issues going on. But if your child is five or six, then there is something deeper happening that is causing your child not to want to use the bathroom without that pan of water.

What you have to ask yourself is, what was the water doing to help your daughter go to the bathroom? I know when I was growing up, I was always told that if you put someone's hands in water while they were sleeping, they would wet themselves. I never believed it, but if it is true, the reason is because it makes you think of water.

But in this situation, I think it may be a crutch that might be pretty hard to reverse once the child is accustomed to it. You want to teach your child to recognize how to go to the bathroom on her own. That way she won't

need devices like water or anything else. She'll build good habits and will know how to go to the bathroom when she needs to go to the bathroom.

It seems your child still does not understand why she is in the bathroom. She just knows that when her feet are in water, she should "go." So it is almost avoiding the underlying issue, which is training the child to know where to go to the bathroom when her bladder is full – and not to go on herself.

To get your daughter to move in a positive direction you need to take advantage of the fact that she hates having her clothes wet on her skin. She wants to keep herself dry, and this is very positive.

So use the information in my book, and if you are proactive enough, you want to train your child to use the potty by taking her to the bathroom frequently.

I cannot stress this enough. Potty training is as much your responsibility as it is your child's. At first your child does not know when to go to the bathroom. Thus, it is *your* job to get her used to sitting on the toilet and going to the bathroom. And the way you do that is by repetition. Being vigilant. And making sure everyone who comes in contact with your child – whether it is a daycare worker or a grandparent or a babysitter – knows what needs to be done.

If you have to, take out a sheet of paper and write the times your child has to go to the bathroom. If you have to use a stopwatch, or an alarm clock, use it. Anything to remind you to take your daughter to the bathroom.

I used the microwave oven because it had a timer. Every 20 minutes, I would set it. Whenever it went off, I would say "It's potty time!" It got to the point that whenever my son heard a microwave oven go off, no matter where we were, he would say "It's potty time!" Even in the grocery store. Be careful what you teach because sometimes those habits are hard to break!

Is it best to use a potty training chair or an insert in the regular toilet? How will the choice affect public restrooms?

The answer to this question is a matter of preference. I think you have to look at a few things, then decide what is right for you and what is right for your child.

Remember kids are not born with a manual. There is no instruction book that says your child is going to use the potty seat or a toilet top.

Each child has their own personality. Sometimes the child will let you know which way they want to go. Then that will help you make your decision.

What I will do is give you my opinion. I will also let you know what I did and why I did it that way. Hopefully my answer will help you make your decision.

The main theme of my book is to think about practicality and reality. Everything you do when it comes to potty training not only has to work, but it also has to be realistic. You have a family, a life, and a million other things to do. So potty training has to fit in.

For my first son I used the potty chair exclusively. He had his own little potty chair and he loved it. I even used a black magic marker and put his name on it. Since we were always downstairs in the house, his potty chair was kept downstairs.

By the time my second son was ready for potty training we had moved into a condo that was on one floor. Now I must preface this by saying my second son was really advanced at everything. He always did things easier and a lot faster than other kids.

We started him on the potty chair. As a matter of fact it was the same potty chair we used for my first son. Haven't you heard of hand-me downs?

I told you he was advanced. One day we had to get him to the bathroom very fast. There was no time to get him to the potty chair. In a dash we took him to the regular toilet. Then it hit us. Let's see if we can keep him on the big boy toilet as we called it.

Well, he started using the big boy toilet on a regular basis. So most of the time he would use the big boy toilet. When he was feeling lazy he used the potty chair. But most of the time the big boy toilet was the choice. I think watching his older brother on the big boy toilet helped.

It got to the point where the two of them used the potty chair as a step stool to reach the sink. Of course the lid was down.

Then came our third son. We saw how much our second son loved the toilet seat so we decided to see if the trend would continue. And continue it did. He was potty trained exclusively on the big boy toilet. He never sat on a potty chair. I really don't think he would know what a potty seat was.

So in my opinion I would stick to the big boy toilet seat. We had very good luck with it. Again keep in mind what I said earlier. Some kids might not like the big boy toilet. You have to see what works for you.

Now I also mentioned practicality and reality. There are some other reasons why the big boy toilet is a better choice. And it has nothing to do with your child. To answer you bluntly: TIME. It is a lot easier and faster to use the big boy toilet. They sit, they go, you flush, that's it.

Potty chairs are time consuming in that you have to continually clean them. I just can't forget having to lug that potty chair up the stairs to clean it. I had to do this every day. A few times I even spilled a few drops. It definitely is not fun having to clean pee from the carpet.

The other issue with the potty chair is sanitation. After tripping over the potty chair a few times, we decided to put it in the laundry room. By the end of the day the laundry room had a strong odor of urine. It is not easy getting urine smell out of a room.

Then there was the poop and having to clean that out of the chair. When we went away for the weekend, guess what was in the back of the car. Can you imagine going to a friends house and seeing the look on their

face when you whip out the potty chair. You don't get too many invitations back.

All I can say is after using the big boy toilet, I could not go back.

When my youngest son was potty training, my older two were 5 and 3. Having 3 kids under the age of 6 is not easy. There are plenty other things I could do rather than cleaning a potty chair. To be honest, if I only had one child I probably would use a potty chair again.

I don't want to put toilet inserts down, but I would not use them personally. Especially if you only have one bathroom. If you have a separate bathroom for your child it might be feasible. If not, they are a pain. Just think about it. Every time your child uses the toilet you have to insert and remove the potty chair and clean. That will drive you crazy. At least with the potty chair you only have to clean it once a day.

Here is another good reason I like to train on the big boy toilet. Unless you live in a box and never venture out your door, you will be out in public. Potty training does not stop when you leave the house. You have to keep training. So if the child is potty trained on the regular toilet, he/she will use public restrooms much more easily. Thus making it easier for you to keep up the good work!

As you can see, I prefer the straight toilet, but it's just a preference thing. See what works best for you.

Is it easier for a mom or dad to train a boy?

Well, I am a mother of three boys so the answer to that question is pretty easy. Of course it's easier for a mother to train a boy than a dad!

Honestly, the true answer is not about a person of a particular sex training a child of a particular sex. Potty training is potty training.

Whether you are a mother or a father, there are the same frustrations when it comes to potty training whether it's a boy or a girl.

What makes the difference is who spends more time with the child. As you know, the first few years of life, mothers spend more time with the children than the fathers do. It's just a natural part of our society.

There are some parents where the father spends more time with the child. It all depends on what the family situation is and what the work situation is.

Thus, mothers have a better chance of getting the child to relate to bathroom instructions. The child will listen to the parent they are more comfortable with. The child might feel more compelled to listen to a mother than they will to the father, simply because the mother is spending more time with the child.

Also don't forget the maternal instinct and the forces of mother nature. The mother is seen as the nurturer. Even the child knows this and can sense this. There have been many studies which show that even if a child is separated from the mother at birth, he or she will suffer psychological consequences. So it's just natural that the child has a closer bond to the mother than the father in most cases. Not all the time, but in most cases it's good rule of thumb.

Now, I will say this. A father can absolutely help with the potty training, especially if it's a boy. Boys want to be like their daddies. So I would suggest, even before starting the potty-training process, that your son go to the bathroom when dad goes to the bathroom. Boys are curious and they will try to emulate their father.

In my own case, my third son was potty trained the fastest. Why? Because he had three examples to follow. He watched his two older brothers and his father. He was potty trained a lot faster – even through the night – than my two older sons were.

So in conclusion, it's not easier or harder for a male or a female to potty train a boy. It's just natural that the boy will listen to the mother more than he will listen to the father, and will try to imitate the father in the bathroom. So get your husband to help with the process, and just give your son that nod to success.

My child does not understand potty training language and is 27 months old, should I start potty training anyway?

Let me start this answer by stating I am not sure what potty training language is. You should know that I started potty training my boys the day they turned 2. So according to my ideology you are 3 months behind. I believe your child should be potty trained by now.

But don't fret, it's never too late to get going. Your child is only 27 months old.

Here are some things you can do right now.

This is a good time to get a child's potty chair. Sit it next to the adult toilet. Next time you go to the bathroom have him/her sit on the potty chair next to you.

At first just have the child sit there. They can have their clothes on. You just want to get them used to being on the potty. This is a good technique especially if your child exhibits no desire whatsoever to start potty training.

After a while you can have them sit on the potty chair with their pants down. Do this for a day or two. Then start encouraging them to go in the potty. The key here is to expect them to use the potty.

Kids are extremely smart and can pick up on your emotions and tone. If you expect them to go in the potty then they will pick up on it.

Psychologically, you *expecting* them to go potty is different than you *making* them go potty. You will find yourself doing and saying different things. When you just tell them to go potty, you'll find yourself happy if they simply sit on the potty.

Now if you *expect* your child to go potty, your whole manner and body language are different. Even the language you use will be different. You see I always *expected* my sons – and all the children I've potty trained – to

go potty. So when I sit them on the potty I usually say something like "I have a reward for you as soon as you go potty."

Did you see how I said that? The reward comes after they go potty. I don't simply say sit on the potty. Psychologically I've given them a direction and a goal without coming out and saying it.

If I tell them to just sit on the potty, they will just sit on the potty. Remember, kids are much smarter than we give them credit for. They know and understand the difference between the two commands. So watch how you ask them to go potty.

Although you might think your child does not know *potty* language, he/she does understand *body* language. They do understand what you are asking them to do. Potty training is about getting them to know on their own without you having to tell them.

I speak with parents all the time and not one of them believes their child understands what the parent is asking them to do. I am here to say you couldn't be further from the truth!

Just think about it. Name a 16 month old that doesn't scream like hell when they are told to go to bed. If the child is smart enough to understand what going to bed means, believe me, they understand when you say go to the potty.

My daughter is 4 1/2 and refuses to use the potty. I've tried everything from discipline to reward.

Every time she's had an accident I've let her clean herself with my supervision and she doesn't seem to mind it.

I've tried revoking privileges such as TV, favorite toys or helping in the kitchen. Is there anything else that will trigger an interest? She needs to be potty trained in order to be ready for kindergarten in the fall.

There is no clear cut answer to this question. First let's start with what is not normal in this situation.

- ❖ 4 1/2 year old, not potty trained (at least during the day).
- ❖ Very rare for a girl to not be potty trained this late in the stage.
- ❖ Child is not responding to positive or negative stimuli.
- ❖ Child does not mind cleaning herself up.

As a parent, a teacher, and an educator I can say this is totally unheard of in normal situations.

There is always one thing I keep in the bag and works no matter what. If the child soils himself/herself, let them clean it themselves. A normal child does not like to clean the mess any more than you do. When you let them clean themselves they will remember that the next time they have to go.

It acts as a motivator and reminder to run to the bathroom – otherwise they have a dirty mess to clean up. When my son had an accident after being potty trained, I let him clean it himself. You should have seen the look on his face. He did not even want to touch the diaper.

At the time of this writing my son is turning three and he's had three accidents. He knew he would be cleaning himself up. When he has to go to

the bathroom now, he drops everything and runs as fast as he can. Believe me, kids should *not* like cleaning themselves up.

At 4 1/2 years old, your child should be potty trained through the night, let alone during the day. Accidents do happen and you can expect them. Kids will be kids. When they are playing they forget everything else.

But if your child wets every time, all the time, then something is definitely not normal.

This is one of those times where I agree with the psychologists. If you look at the charts they plot, most kids at this stage are fully potty trained.

I am hoping you agree with me. If a child can ride a bike, count to ten, know their a-b-c, point out colors, know shapes, memorize songs from the radio, then that child knows the difference between using the potty and dirtying themselves.

Also if someone told me there is a 4 year old that is not potty trained, I would say 95% of the time that it must be a boy.

I would consult an expert and rule out developmental problems before proceeding with anything else.

My little one goes potty, number one, and most of the time, number two when others watch him, but when he gets home he will not even tell us when he needs to go, and we have tried and tried to get him to go. What are we doing wrong? We are not scolding him. We even try to give him positive reinforcement, but nothing happens. What can we do? Are there any tools out there to help us out?

I've said it time and time and time again, kids are very smart. What I see here is you have a very smart young one on your hands. He knows that when people are around to make sure he goes to the bathroom.

I do not think it's because he is embarrassed or does not want to go on himself. I think it's because he knows he will most likely get in trouble when those people are around. Or it can be for attention reasons.

Your child definitely exhibits signs of an intelligent individual that is potty trained. The funny thing about potty training is it's not like you are sometimes potty trained and other times not. Potty training is potty training.

Once your child has become potty trained or shows signs that he is potty trained, that means he can be potty trained when he is in the house, potty trained when he is outside of the house, and potty trained when he is at the neighbor's house.

When your child shows signs of being responsible in one location and not responsible at another location, I think it then becomes a situation of control or lack of control in one of those areas.

If your child is going potty when other people are around, at public places, or in school, then your child feels and knows if he dirties himself in that area or that location, there are consequences. But when your child gets home, his confidence level goes up and he feels very relaxed and maybe he feels he can get away with anything at home. So he does not take the same responsibility as when he is outside of the home.

You mentioned you are not scolding and are giving him positive reinforcement and nothing is working. As a parent, I can tell you the last thing you want to do is scold your child for anything. You do not want to make it a traumatic experience for your child.

But in some cases the child needs to know that there are consequences for not following through on what they are supposed to be doing. What those consequences should be is up to you. You are that child's parents. For some parents, it might be scolding. For other parents it might be a time-out. Or it might be lack of free time. Or no dessert. That is completely up to you.

Think about it. Don't we live in a world where it is a give and take, owning up to the consequences of our actions? This is a good time to start letting your child know that every one of their actions has consequences.

One trick I used with my son was letting him know that any time that he got a time-out for something or was punished for something, it was not me giving him a punishment, it was him opting to go for a punishment or to go for a time-out. Let me show you how to use this in your situation.

Let us say your son's name is John. John continues to wet himself and soil his clothes when he is at home. What I would say is something like this. "John, if you keep your clothes clean, you will get X. If you dirty yourself and you pee on yourself or you poop in your pants, you will get Z, or you will lose Y."

So now the ownership of the action is on the child. It is up to that child to make a decision. It is almost as if you put complete control in that child's hands. Again, what you choose as the motivator is up to you as a parent. I am not here to tell you what you should or should not say or do. That is completely up to you. You know what motivates your child better than anyone else.

It will not happen overnight, but within three days you'll see that once you find the right motivator, your child will give you the results that you are looking for. And the key is to be consistent. Do not think because your child is a two or three-year-old he does not know the difference.

As you can see, your child knows the difference between when other people are around and when it is just you and your family. Based on this, he decides when to use the bathroom or not use the bathroom. That shows a fairly sophisticated thought process. So do not think that your child cannot comprehend the difference between positive and negative reinforcements and the results of his actions. He certainly does know.

There are a lot of tools out there that can help and potty train, most are geared towards potty training during the evening. I have never used any of them. Again, as a parent, you are certainly welcome to use them, but I want to teach my children how to use the potty from a natural basis. After all, what will happen when the tool is not around and they develop a dependency on such tools?

My sister says we waited too long for potty training. My daughter turned three, are we too late for potty training? She is small for her age.

The act of potty training has more to do with psychology than it has to do with physiology once the sphincter muscles are developed. Let me put that in better terms

Potty training has more to do with mental ability than it does with size.

If your child is small in size compared to other kids his or her age, that should not affect her ability to be potty trained. Whether she is tall, small, wide or skinny really should not make a difference.

Her size might affect how comfortably she will fit on a potty seat or toilet seat. But it should not affect her ability to learn the mechanics of potty training.

Let me give you an example. Let's say your child is very small for her age. If she is using a normal potty she might have a difficult time getting on the potty. Thus, the child might develop resistance to potty training, because she knows she is going to have a difficult time using the potty. In essence what happens is the child loses confidence in herself. So she decides she does not want to go through that, and she refuses to go to the potty.

Suppose you are using a potty chair or a port-a-potty. Child size also can affect the use of that small potty as well. Some kids are larger than others and if your child has a hard time sitting on the seat because of size, you'll get the same result. The child will not want to use that potty.

Potty training is training the mind and the body to work together. Once the child notices that her bladder is full the goal is to trigger something mentally that tells her to go use the bathroom. So it is not going to be the size of your child that matters, but being able to notice when her bladder is full. What you might have to be vigilant about with a smaller child is her bladder will fill a lot quicker than a larger child's.

So when you set your intervals to take your child to the potty, you might need to take her a lot more frequently than you would a larger or older child.

You asked me if it was too late to start your child potty training or did you wait too late because she is three. It is never too late. Even if your child is turning four or five, it is something you must do.

What you need to keep in mind is the longer you wait the more difficult the process is going to be. The reason for this is because the child is developing stronger and stronger habits, through the repetition of certain actions. The more ingrained those actions are in the child's mind, the harder it is going to be for you to reverse them.

In addition, the older the child, the more the resistance. You are dealing with a youngster who is a lot older and has many more cognitive skills. The child wants to do her own thing. It is easier to train the child when she is young and less resistant than when the child wants to go outside and play and hang out with friends and just do her own thing – and not listen to mom or dad.

So, in conclusion, it is never too late, but just keep in mind that the longer you wait the harder the process and more work and effort you will have to put into potty training the child. Also there is going to be more work to reverse habits that are deeply ingrained in that child.

The size of your child does not matter, it is how well your child is mentally trained to recognize when it is time to go to the potty. A smaller child might have to go more frequently than a child who is larger in size or stature.

My son is 3 and will not use the potty. Can you supply me with pictures of other boys on the potty?

If your child is 3 and not potty trained yet, don't lose too much sleep over it

If your child is 4 and still not potty trained, then you have to get in high gear and move fast. It's time to get in focused mode. Your biggest enemy now is time.

You see, by the time your child hits 4 there are more critical things about to happen that make it vital that he be fully potty trained. There is no kindergarten class in American that will take a child that is not potty trained. So not being potty trained by this stage will affect your child's education. Not to mention what will happen to his confidence.

For right now, if your son is 3, most daycare systems will not let your child into a toddler program if he is not potty trained.

At this point I don't think pictures will motivate your child fast enough. The pictures certainly won't hurt so I would still use them. I would also pick up a few videos. Play them in your VCR every day, all day. You'll get sick and tired of the videos. You'll probably memorize the videos like we did.

Immediately get your child sitting on the toilet. Every 15 minutes get your child on the toilet. Let him sit there for ten minutes at a time. Then 15 minutes later get him back on the toilet.

Give him a reward for going in the potty. I would always let my kids flush the toilet if they went in the potty. If they did not use the toilet then they were not allowed to flush the toilet. They were crazy about flushing the toilet, so this was an excellent reward.

You might think this is crazy, but it really happened. My kids loved being read to. So my husband would keep books in the bathroom. When it was time to go potty, he would read to them in the bathroom. It worked

beautifully. It got them to sit on the potty for an extended amount of time. Most of all they became accustomed to the potty and were not afraid of it. They related the potty to story telling.

Remember this. Kids like to do what other kids or people do. This next tactic is also drastic, but you are in a drastic situation if your child is 3 or 4 and not potty trained.

Here is what you do. Find a friend or someone you know who has a child the same age as your child. Set a play date with that other person. While you and the other parent enjoy some lunch, let the kids have a potty party.

Bring some toys to the bathroom and let the kids sit there. While games go on, they will not realize they are being potty trained. This will get your child accustomed to the toilet fast, in a non-threatening way.

If your child's play date is already potty trained, then your child will learn even faster. Kids learn from each other. They will follow the lead of the other child. Peer pressure works when they are teens, and it can certainly work in a healthy way when they are younger.

Don't fret if no one in your family has a child the same age as yours. There are plenty of other places to find a play date. First start with the daycare your child goes to. There's got to be someone else there in the same situation. Just ask the teacher to point out who is potty trained and who isn't.

If your child is not in a daycare, then go to your local library. Hang out at the children's section and make some new friends. Libraries do play dates and story time, so find out when the next one is and be there. You could also go to the stores that sell clothing for kids your age and network with other parents. Go to a Gymboree or Discovery Cafe if there is one in your area. That's the perfect place to meet other parents.

Finally, if all else fails, you can ask your pediatrician to pass your name to another parent going through the same thing. Keep in mind your doctor cannot give you their name without written permission from them due to strict HIPPA laws. But there is nothing stopping him from passing along your contact info.

As you can see these measures are a bit drastic, but when time is not on your side you have to take drastic steps!

My son seems afraid to poop in the potty. Every time I work with him sitting on the potty, he cries and says he doesn't have to go poop anymore. My son clearly knows when he has to poop, because he asks for a diaper. If I don't change him into a diaper, he won't poop, but then complains that his butt hurts. When I say it is because you need to go poopy, he clams up and says his butt doesn't hurt anymore.

First of all, your son is not afraid of pooping in the potty. That is not what kids are afraid of. You have to ask yourself, what is the underlying problem that makes your son afraid of going in the potty. Sometimes, it can be a control thing. Children just don't want to do what you are asking them to do. It's not a function of pooping or of using the bathroom. Some kids are just very strong-willed.

Now that you know and understand that, you know it's not taking your son to the potty that you have to be apprehensive of. It's the will of your child that you'll need to work on. Just like in any other human situation, the easy way win over a strong-willed person is to gradually wear them down.

Maybe you can get your son to go to the potty in the morning or once a day, and gradually increase that. Perhaps you need to switch the incentive that you are using to get him to go to the bathroom.

Or maybe there aren't any incentives. Perhaps your son gets away with a lot of different things at home. In a situation where there is very loose parental guidance, you might have a child that feels they can do whatever they want to. The child may even believe that he can manipulate you by crying.

Remember that potty training is not fun for the child. You are actually taking them away from things that they have fun doing, like TV, playing, hanging out with their brothers or sisters or friends. So understand that. Potty training is taking them away from fun, so they are going to resist it. That is what they are most afraid of. It's not the potty. It's the loss of fun.

Yes, he is going to cry, but eventually the crying will stop. I can guarantee this. I have been through it hundreds and hundreds of times and it happens every single time, exactly the same way. All it takes is getting the child used to sitting on the potty and getting them to want to go.

Now you say your son clearly knows and understands when he has to poop, because he asks for a diaper. This brings me to a point that I have stressed over and over and over in this book. Children are a lot smarter than we give them credit for.

You see, as stated from your question, it's not the sensation of going to the bathroom that has to be taught here. That child knows when he or she has to go to the bathroom. What needs to be taught here is *where* to go to the bathroom.

Many kids hide when they have to go poop. This demonstrates that the child knows when he or she has to go to the bathroom. They're smart enough to know to go and hide or they're smart enough to know to wait for a diaper. Some parents have told me their child that will go and get the diaper themselves, and put it on, before using the potty!

I just cannot explain to you in words how disturbing that is - to see a child that is smart enough to go and get a diaper, strap the diaper on, and then go to the bathroom in the diaper and not go sit down. It is ten times easier to sit on a toilet than it is to go and get a diaper and put one on! First of all, the child has to think ahead. He has to have enough time to go get the diaper and put it on before soiling himself or herself. It is obviously faster and easier to just run to the toilet and sit down than it is to go get a diaper. The problem is the child was never taught to run to the bathroom before running for the diaper.

Now in your question here, I see that your son is four, so time is against you. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to break those habits. So here's a trick. You say that he will pee on the potty anytime he wants to. He has no problem going to pee. Well, there is your angle. Eventually you have to find that psychological trigger that will motivate your son to action. I think that is it. Pay attention to your son's habits and signs. Learn when he has to go poop. When you notice that he has to poop, take him to the

bathroom to pee. For example, the next time he says to you, “Mommy, my butt hurts,” take him to the bathroom to pee.

You’ll say something like, “Okay Johnny, let’s go pee in the potty.” Now I will teach you something that every adult knows. There is no way you can hold poop in if you’ve got to pee. I must tell you, as smart as your kids are, they’re not smart enough to be able to do that. So as he’s peeing, eventually he will poop.

When he does poop, reward him tremendously. Give him a valuable reward for pooping in the potty. After a few of these rewards, he will find that there’s more rewards for pooping than for just peeing. And then he will pick it up on his own.

There are kids who will hold their potty for long amounts of time because they simply do not want to use the potty. That is called holding. Again, keeping vigilant, continue to take him to the bathroom every 20 minutes or so. Notice when he has to go to the bathroom and make sure you are taking him before he poops!

So in conclusion, your son is not afraid of the potty. He’s afraid of all the fun that he’s going to lose. He needs to be trained that when it’s time to use the bathroom, here’s where you go. Not in a diaper.

At four years old, your child is extremely smart. The fact that he’s getting a diaper when it’s time to go to the bathroom shows extreme cognitive ability. Your son is very knowledgeable and knows the difference. He just needs to be trained and get to the right habits.

*My son wants to play, play, play. What child doesn't?
How do I get him to tell us when he needs to use the potty
so we can get him started?*

Well, I can start by saying you are absolutely right; kids love to play, play, play, play, play. Even when they are five and six years old and fully potty-trained you will find that while they are in the midst of playing they may forget to go potty.

This is why it is your job to be vigilant. Kids will forget. Lets face it; kids are kids. So you have to get your child on a schedule. During the course of a day you might remind your son to go to the bathroom every half an hour. As the child gets older, that might be every 45 minutes to every hour.

Continually taking the child to the bathroom and forcing them to empty out their bladder reduces the risk of an accident happening.

To answer the question “how do we get him to tell us when he needs to use the potty?” that comes with maturity. When you first start potty training your son, he will not tell you he has to go. When he is playing he will fight you tooth and nail about going to the bathroom. I can tell you from experience, as good as I am when it comes to potty training, my son did not always tell me when he had to go to the potty.

Here are some tricks that I've used that have worked tremendously.

Number one, when your son or daughter has an accident when they are playing, it is a very embarrassing situation for them. At that point let your child clean themselves up. You don't want to clean that child up when he or she has an accident because you become an enabler; you are helping the child with their habit of pottying on themselves.

So, when your child has to go to the bathroom, if he has an accident, let him clean himself up. What will happen is the next time he has to go to the bathroom, he will remember that experience and run to the bathroom.

My son is turning three in approximately 2½ months. He lets us know every single time he has to go to the bathroom. Even though he knows how to do it himself, he will still let us know. That comes from six, seven months of just pure training. We got him on a schedule. Whenever he finished eating, we took him to the potty. Now, when he finishes eating his food, he says, “Mommy or Daddy, I have to go potty.” It’s like clockwork.

For some strange reason, kids love to go to the bathroom in public places. So whenever we were in places like the grocery store or the mall, we always took him to the potty. The goal wasn’t to get him used to using the potty in public places. The goal was, let’s get him to the bathroom so that when we are further down the aisle, we don’t have an accident! As every parent knows, the last place you want to have an accident is in a public place or in a grocery store when you’re at the checkout counter. It’s not a fun experience.

So here’s what happened. It got to the point that every time we went to the same store or Wal-Mart or a grocery store and he saw the double doors, the first thing he said was “I need to go potty.”

Even if he went potty shortly before arrival, as soon as he got to the store he had to go potty. So it almost became a game for him. It was fun to go to the potty, even though he didn’t have to go.

I know, as a parent, when you’re in a rush and you’re in a hurry and you’re trying to get things done, it is frustrating to stop everything that you’re doing to run and take him to the potty – only to find out he does not have to go.

Yes, it was a wasted trip. But you know what? We were very glad that he was asking to go to the potty. Even though it was a game or even a joke to him, even if maybe it was our fault that we got him so trained to ask to go to the potty that he was wasting time going when he didn’t *need* to, nonetheless it was a wonderful experience to see that he was taking the time and asking to go to the potty. Now this started as early as 27 months, so that’s just about two years and three months old.

So figure out something that makes it fun for your son to go to the potty. Give him an incentive to go, and soon you will find that he will start asking you.

The only caution is be careful just how fun you make it, because it can become a pain when he wants to go every five minutes! As I mentioned, my son is turning three in approximately two months. Every time we are in public and he sees a public bathroom, he has to go to the potty. Fifty to sixty percent of the time, he really doesn't have to do anything. He just wants to check out that potty!

My son will be three in April. Should he be punished for accidents? We are just starting and are not real consistent because he is with multiple people during the week. How long does it take to master and I would like to start over with some guidelines.

To say this is a difficult question is to say the least. Should he be punished for accidents? Well, at the age of two, you must expect that accidents are going to happen. Even at the age of three, it is possible for accidents to happen. Remember, kids will be kids. While they are playing, watching TV or doing something they like, accidents can happen.

As you know, I am not a psychologist nor have I studied child psychology, so I am not here to give you a lesson in the theory of parenting. I am simply here to give you guidelines. I can also help you understand how I lay the potty training process down and what I do to get things to work.

But the ultimate decision is going to be yours. I cannot say that you should punish your child or that you should not punish your child. You have to do what makes sense for you.

Personally, I did not punish my kids for accidents. Yes, I got frustrated on many occasions. It's only natural. But instead of punishing them, I let them know there would be consequences for their actions. The consequences varied depending on the child. Sometimes it was a loss of play time, or perhaps a favorite toy.

Does your son have one accident in six months, or is he having an accident two times a day? Again, age is a major factor in making these decisions. A child that has just turned two is just starting the process and might be feeling his way around. A child that is three who is having accidents... that depends on how long your child has been potty trained.

If you have a three-year-old who is just starting to be potty trained, accidents are inevitable. I have seen children that are four years old, just starting the process, and they have accidents. But a child who is four years

old that has been potty trained for two years, and is still consistently having accidents, that is a different matter. Again, as a parent, you have to decide how to handle this situation.

If you feel you have a child that has been potty trained for a while but is still having accidents consistently, you have a decision to make. To help you make that decision, let me ask you a few questions.

How do you handle a child that bites? As you know, most schools will not let your child in if he is biting other children. As a parent, how do you handle that situation? You try to understand why your child is biting. If it continues, you probably give the child ultimatums and also let him know that there are consequences for his actions.

In this example, it is the behavior of biting that you do not want your child to exhibit. So there might be some form of a punishment. What that punishment is, I can't say. But it must be *meaningful* to your child. Maybe it is a time out. Maybe it is no snacks. Maybe it is no TV. As a parent, that is your decision.

The child must know and understand the consequences of biting. You, as a parent, feel it is just not right – any parent would agree such behavior is not right. Your job is to train your child to not exhibit such behavior.

In the example of potty training, the situation is very similar. You have a child that is exhibiting a behavior that the child should not be doing. So first assess how well your child is potty trained. If his potty training is firm, if he understands what he ought to do, then the next thing he has to understand is simple: accidents have consequences.

However, from your question, you say that you are not really consistent. You also mention that your child is with different people on a weekly basis.

Unfortunately, I have to tell you if you are not consistent, do not bother to lay down consequences. It just will not work. Children learn through repetition and consistency. Not just consistency from you – consistency from *everyone* that he is in contact with on a daily or weekly basis.

So make sure you are talking with the people who are coming in contact with your child. Make sure they understand and know what your plan is, so everyone is working towards the same goal.

Can you start over? Absolutely. There is *nothing* to stop you from starting over. Just remember, it is easier to teach a behavior than it is to reverse a behavior. If you have already ingrained certain behaviors into your child, it will be very difficult to reverse those behaviors. It's much easier to train a child to do something new.

There is nothing to keep you from starting anew and working to get your child where you want him to be. It will take a little bit longer, but it is definitely possible.

Should I teach a boy to sit or stand?

The answer is quite simple. What is your primary objective? Are you potty training your boy or are you teaching your boy to go to the potty standing or sitting?

When I asked myself the same question, the answer came to me very fast. My first objective was to potty train my boy! That should be your main objective as well. Whether he stands up or sits down is a secondary issue.

Now I will give you two very good reasons why I prefer to start potty training sitting down. I know that I am not the only person who feels the same way. Take a look at all the companies that make potty chairs. They are all designed for the child to sit down.

I have never found a company that made a potty urinal. Want to know why? It's too hard to teach a boy to potty train standing up! Although my third son put a hole in this theory – and wait till you hear what he did.

Here are the problems with starting your boy's potty training standing up:

First, it's like trying to teach your child to read by handing him a Shakespearean play. Or teaching your child how to ride a bike with a ten speed. Or teaching him to talk by starting with words like dissertation, exasperation, etc.

You get the point. Potty training is hard enough. Why make your child work harder than he really needs to? When your child uses the bathroom sitting down there is not much to think about. He just sits. He goes. That's really easy.

But when he stands up the complications go through the roof. He has to balance. Have you ever watched a two year old stand up? It's like watching a tree in a wind storm. He goes back and forth, never standing perfectly still. When he's standing, he not only has to use the potty, he also has to balance himself. Not a very good combination.

Second, a two year old has no aim at all. I have a 6 year old, and after he uses the bathroom you would think someone opened a garden hose and pointed it at the wall behind the toilet. He is six and should know better. He has balance. He has aim. Yet he still can't get it right.

Now here is the kicker. You should see what the bathroom looks like after my husband uses the bathroom. He's just as bad as the kids. Ladies, you know exactly what I am talking about! It must be a guy thing.

If my husband can't aim right, there is no way my two year old can aim right.

So those two reasons alone should convince you to teach your son to go potty sitting down.

I mentioned that my third son put a whole in my theory. Not only did he not use a potty chair, he started standing up very early.

He had two older brothers, so he decided that he had to use the bathroom just like they did. This is understandable. The youngest child always talks faster than the older kids. They also like to potty train faster than the older ones.

I am sure by now you realize that most everyday objects are not designed for your child. Either things are too high or too low. Potty chairs and toilet seats are no different. The potty chair is too low for them. Because their aim is bad, they end up sprinkling all over the walls and cabinets. Because toilet seats are too high they end up missing it all together. Not a pretty sight!

But once my third son started potty training standing up, he refused to sit down. He wanted to be just like his brothers. This made it difficult when we went out. Even in a public restroom he refused to sit down. And public toilets are much higher than those at home. I literally had to hold him in the air while he went to the bathroom.

This brings me to my final point about why I strongly suggest that you potty train your son sitting down.

I was in a public restroom with my son. As usual, I was holding him in the air so he could go potty. To my surprise and amazement he was letting it out from the front and the back. I had a nice #2 shoot out the back like a rocket and land smack dab in the middle of my leg. Both he and I were soiled beyond belief. I was distraught!

On at least three occasions I walked into my bathroom to find number two on the floor. The lesson? At first kids just know they have to go. They don't know the difference between number one or number two. So if you are training your son standing up, then expect a few accidents like these to happen.

When do you know it's time to take your tot to the bathroom and what are the signs they have to go?

Let's try to break this question down.

First, how do you *know* when it's time to take your child to the bathroom? This answer depends on the age of the child.

Younger children go to the bathroom more often. Their bladders fill up quicker than older children. And the younger the child is, the less self control they have. So be vigilant and keep a watchful eye.

As I mentioned earlier, true potty training is about being proactive. You want to make sure you are taking your child to the bathroom *before* they have to go, not waiting for when they desperately need to go.

Second, what signs should you look for?

- ❖ Dancing around with their hands between their legs.
- ❖ Standing still and quiet.
- ❖ Hiding in a corner.
- ❖ Doing the “pee pee dance” as I call it.
- ❖ Squeezing their legs together.
- ❖ Very jittery shifting weight from one side to the other.
- ❖ Talking and breathing very fast.

These are all telltale signs that will help you know when your child has to go to the potty.

By this stage in the game you should really know your child's habits. Most kids are pretty regular. If you pay close attention, you will notice the times of day your child goes to the bathroom. You can even notice what activities and foods cause your child to go potty. Once you've got these patterns down, you can work on being proactive.