



Guidance for setting's in supporting parents with toilet training

1. **Identify who needs support:** create and keep a list of those children who are *not yet fully toilet trained* on entry to your setting. Identify who is developmentally ready to start toilet training. You could also list other key areas of independence such as, not yet sleeping in their own bed, using a bottle/sippy cup, dummy use and fussy eater. This information can be gathered during your induction process and used to create an *Independence Indicators Register*. This register will help you identify, from entry into your setting, who needs support and in what areas. As children acquire these key skills of independence, the register will support you in evidencing the progress the children are making and the impact of your support. The SIMLE Parents resource has a suggested baseline questionnaire for independent skills.
2. **Do practitioners have the knowledge?** Share information regarding successful toilet training included the SMILE Parent's Resource with your practitioner team.
3. **Working in partnership;** have an agreed *toilet training plan with parents* so that consistent strategies and routines are used you; include the date you are both going to start, how often 'toilet time' needs to happen, what type of clothing the children will need to wear, what skills will be supported including sitting, wiping and hand washing, when a nappy or pull-up might be appropriate (ie. night time) and what praise or reward is given. Share the little successes and offer moral support so that parents do not to give up or become inconsistent.
4. **Review your setting's approach;** does it currently work for all children and parents?

Top tips to think about;

- Where possible, encourage parents to **try at home first**, such as during the holidays, so that children can learn the skills needed at home before trying to transfer them.
 - Have **toilet training information in different formats** for parents, leaflets, checklists, links to online videos (ERIC), story books to loan and workshops.
 - **We can't wait until the better weather in the summer!** Once children are settled with you, target children and parents with an offer of support each half term. If we wait until the spring or summer before they start Reception, we may not have enough time to support those who struggle.
 - **Reassure** parents that toileting accidents will happen and that's ok.
 - **Prioritise** toilet training with the child's Key Worker as a measure of progress and that they will need to be consistent too and follow the toilet training plan.
 - **Done everything you can?** If families are still struggling with toilet training contact other agencies for support such the Health visiting team.
5. **Supporting struggling or reluctant children;** Consider which aspects they are struggling with and create a **smaller step toilet training plan**. This may include;
 - Just visiting the bathroom to become familiar,
 - Steps to increase their tolerance and acceptance of being helped to undress before attempting to go near a toilet,
 - Water play activities to be able to sense and learn vocabulary related to being 'wet' and 'dry'.

- Music playing in the toilet area to help reduce anxieties or buffer noise from hand dryers.
 - Plan to access additional support, for example, the health visiting team can offer more bespoke support through workshops.
6. **Supporting struggling or reluctant parents;** Do you offer different levels of support for those parents who need it? Once you've offered support, follow up each day with parents so that you can help support issues as they arise. Try offering support in different formats until you find one that works, such as those within the SMILE parenting resource, links to on line videos (ERIC) and organising a workshop.
 7. **Supporting children with SEND;** Are practitioners clear on which children may not be ready for toilet training and what they can still do help? Are they clear on what skills those who are not ready for toilet training, need first such as self-awareness, being able to communicate their needs, engage in sensory activities, understanding each child's diet, being able to tune into children's bowel and bladder habits and recognising and responding to their early tell-tale bowel/bladder urges.
 8. **Be patient, but persistent:** Toilet training is a skill which may take some time to learn, and for parents to feel they can do it. Keep reviewing your list of Independence Indicators, the list will get shorter! Try different approaches with parents and give yourself time, by starting once the children are settled.

A successful approach to toilet training will mean that every child who is ready will start Reception fully toilet trained.