



Routine-Based Toilet Training

Whānau/Family Information

Typically, the goal of toilet training is to teach your tamaiti/child to be aware of the need to go to the toilet and then to use the toilet when they need to. For tamariki/children who do not have awareness of the need to go to the toilet or who do not have the level of independence needed to go on their own, routine based training is an alternative to the usual toilet training techniques. Routine toilet training is an adult driven and routine based plan to support tamariki to have success with toileting.

Routine training could be considered when your tamaiti

- Has not had success with other training techniques
- Does not have awareness of having a wet or poo filled nappy or has a strong dislike of this
- Does not have awareness of the need to go to the toilet
- Is resistant or not interested in toilet training
- Has toileting patterns that are difficult to determine

How to start a routine-based approach

Complete a daily toileting diary for your tamaiti. Try and collect a weeks' worth of information to get a good idea of their toileting patterns. An example of a toileting diary is available on the next page.

Then set a toileting schedule based on the times of day your tamaiti is likely to have a wet or dirty nappy. If they have no set pattern, start with 1-2 toilet sits per day and build up to 6 toilet trips, based on your usual routine and daily activities. We suggest trying minute sits on the toilet on waking and after mealtimes, i.e., after breakfast, after morning tea, after lunch, etc. There's good evidence to suggest that children are most likely to need to use the toilet around 20 minutes after a meal.

Predictability is a key element of routine based training. So, try to plan toilet trips at times that work for your daily routine. Set yourself and your tamaiti up for success with a plan that is realistic and that you can follow on a daily basis.

The following could be considered to support a routine based approach

- Keep communication simple. Routine toileting should be framed as a task rather than a question i.e.. "it's toilet time" rather than "do you need the toilet?". Use words, manual signs, and/or pictures that your tamaiti understands. Coordinate the language you will be using with other caregivers and your child's school so that you are all using the same terms for the toileting routine.
- Keep as much of the toileting process in the bathroom as possible. If your tamaiti has an accident, support them to sit on the toilet as part of the clean-up process.
- Consider using visuals for each step of the toileting routine so that your tamaiti knows all the steps that will occur and when. Use pictures and words that your tamaiti understands. There are a range of great video options around toileting for tamariki on YouTube or Vimeo that you might like to explore.
- Try and keep toilet training exciting! Reward your tamaiti and provide almost constant positive reinforcement as they gradually incorporate this new habit into their routines. You may like to consider options such as reward or sticker charts to support their motivation to engage in this new routine.

Hang in there! Toilet training can be a long process as your tamaiti learns this new habit. Celebrate the small successes and keep working on the toileting routine you've established for at least six-eight weeks before adding any changes. There will be bumps in the road; talk over any problems that occur with other caregivers or support people – it's a team effort to support tamariki to toilet train!

Toileting record diary

The purpose of this diary is to record the current toileting patterns of your tamaiti. Try and get a weeks worth of information, and aim to check their nappy every hour or so during this time. It's helpful to note down in the comment section any additional information that could be useful such as: attempted but no success, or information about the type of poo that your tamaiti is doing – Constipation can be a factor in delayed toileting for tamariki. Here is a link to more information if you feel this could be a factor for your tamaiti:

<https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/constipation>

Day 1:

Time	Meals/Sleep	Wee's	Poo's	Comment
	Drink (D) Food (F) Sleep (S)	Wet nappy (WN) Wee in toilet (WT) Dry (-)	Poo in nappy (PN) Poo in toilet (PT) Dry (-)	Showed awareness (A) Indicated need (I) Toileted with no result (NR)
6 am				
7 am				
8 am				
9 am				
10 am				
11 am				
12 pm				
1 pm				
2 pm				
3 pm				
4 pm				
5 pm				
6 pm				
7 pm				
8 pm				

Day 2:

Time	Meals/Sleep	Wee's	Poo's	Comment
	Drink (D) Food (F) Sleep (S)	Wet nappy (WN) Wee in toilet (WT) Dry (-)	Poo in nappy (PN) Poo in toilet (PT) Dry (-)	Showed awareness (A) Indicated need (I) Toileted with no result (NR)
6 am				
7 am				
8 am				
9 am				
10 am				
11 am				
12 pm				
1 pm				
2 pm				
3 pm				
4 pm				
5 pm				
6 pm				
7 pm				
8 pm				

Diary adapted from the "Toilet Time" information booklet, appendix 6. Government of South Australia, Dept for Families and Communities, 2004.