

Potty Training Diary

April 04

We have decided that potty training will begin the day after the boys 3rd birthday. I have been looking for the signs for the past nine months, to no avail. I have had relatives asking consistently when were we going to 'train' the boys etc etc.

All the advice I have had has been to leave it as late as possible. The later you leave it the easy it will be – or so they say. Well let's see. I think 3 years is quite late enough.

I have bought the NCT book on potty training, borrowed the Gina Ford book on Potty training and also checked out the library to see what they had. To say I am not looking forward to it is an huge understatement. I'm dreading it.

For months the boys have played with their potties, sitting on them and occasionally producing a wee and even on one occasion a 'poo' from Thomas, but nothing that I would consider enough of a sign that they were keen to 'ditch the nappy'. Why should they when Mum (or Dad) is always there to do it all for them.

SO we are agreed Tuesday May 19th is 'P' Day. For their birthdays the boys are having Lemon Cake, Chocolate Cake and Pants. They have also both expressed a preference for pink pants – fine with me.

May 04 (8 days into potty training)

Well so far so good. I think it is two steps forward and one back but we have been working quite hard at it with a few hiccups. So far we haven't been anywhere, which I find quite hard but I felt the boys had enough to cope with thinking about when they needed to go, without being in a different place where they might not be so comfortable. Have also started keeping a record of when they manage to do it in the potty as opposed to anywhere else in the house or garden, I'm really glad I have otherwise I don't think I would realise just how much progress they have made and how quickly.

Spoke to someone at Play School who said she had started a month ago with her son and he still has to be asked all the time otherwise he just forgets. Thomas and Oliver just take themselves to the potty and do it. I generally help them take the shorts and pants down and then pull them back up. However Thomas (and Oliver) has got out of bed, pulled his pyjamas and nappy down, done a wee and pulled them all back up and got back into bed, which I think is brilliant. I have said if they keep on doing wees and poos in the potty for the next five days then they can have a new toy train each.

It still seems a very long way from here to taking themselves to the loo, wiping bottoms, hand wash and clothes back in order!

Nov 05 (eighteen months later)

I'm so relieved that I left it till later and then they cracked it quite quickly. Having left it so late I do think they were ready although they would have quite happily gone on letting their Dad or I do it for them.

Of course we have the odd accident where they are so engrossed in something that they forget but generally they are pretty good. I can remember thinking, 'I will never be able to take them on a long car journey!' but of course we do and they are fine. I do however have two classic memories. Driving home from York in solid traffic with one boy desperate to pee, he had his first experience of peeing into a bottle! Then this year we were on our flight home from Cyprus and were told the plane was 'holding' for 10 minutes, 30 minutes later we are still circling the sky with Thomas jiggling up and down, trying to undo his seat belt. We tried calming him down for a but no use, then I saw one of the stewardess was out of her seat, so I crept back to the stewardess near us and frightened the life out of her when I asked if Thomas could use the toilet. Great excitement for Thomas he got to pee over the ice which had been thrown down the toilet!! Relief all round!!

My two main tips would be not to do it too soon, regardless of pressure from well meaning friends and relatives ('oh you were trained by 18 months!!' Etc).

And

Try to minimise trips out, at least for the first week. I think it really helped that we were at home and they knew exactly where their potties were and felt much more comfortable particular when they had accidents.

Good Luck - its great when its over.

Tracey Hassell

Mum to Oliver and Thomas (4 ½)

Potty Training

Yes, I did become fanatical about Gina Ford's 'Potty Training in One Week'. All the signs were there ie:

They are over 18months

Nappies frequently dry after lunchtime nap (what are those with approaching 3 year olds?!)

They knew when a 'poo' was on its way (or so I thought!)

They could understand and follow simple instructions (when selective listening permitted)

They were eager to get themselves dressed

They could name parts of the body when asked

They can occupy themselves with a book or video for at least 5 minutes (thank goodness 'Bob The Builder' is considerably longer!)

We did the 'treats' idea – our Smartie currency seemed to work – if only we'd chosen the non-edible star system.

Jonathan was first in wanting to please, and gain a reward; 2 days later the 'treatless' Lexie joined in. She then made a stunning display, no misses whereas accidents were 50:50 for my little fellow for the first month or so.

Overnight Jonathan got the plot, and remained dry from day one. Its just that there's a minor technicality with 'number two's'. Whether we confuse 'windies', or lack time and motivation to get to the loo, I'm unsure. After all, filling ones pants is a great way of gaining attention. And for me, its grit your teeth time, be patient and avoid my little outburst following 'the tractor which scooped up the poo deposited on my Mum and Dad's patio' episode. Using the loo to pre-rinse pants is my top tip, and be patient.

Jonathan does get angry with himself, and disappointed, and feels a bit humiliated when an 'accident' happens in front of friends. So I'm sure its just a question of 'persevere', we'll get there in the end.

And boy, its nice to save on the nappy bill!

Caroline Baynes

Mother of Jonathan and Lexie who have(?) been potty trained nearly 3 months.

Potty training

I've decided to join the 'very-relaxed-mother'-camp.

Several experienced mums from different countries and of the older generation advised 'they eventually all learn it and the stress and hassle is just not worth it for all concerned'. Then I just read a toddler book that had the same opinion. Hooray!

My boys are now 2 yrs 8mths and naturally started to get interested in the whole business. My mother-in-law gave me the good advice to leave out potties in summer, explain what they are for and let them run round naked or without trousers in summer. That did the trick to a certain extent.

So two potties are available on each floor, we read potty books (with pictures) occasionally, we shout 'well done' when a wee wee has been made in the potty, but there is no pressure. If they want a nappy on, they have one, if they don't want one, they don't. When going out, they always get a nappy on.

They can test out the big toilet if they want to.....so at present I leave the rest to time and the copy factor ...ie in some months I will get the neighbour's older boys round more often. They use the 'big toilet' and of course my boys worship them. This might just do the trick....In the meantime I relax and worry about 10,001 other things.

Claudia Sommerbauer

This may work for you!

I've trained 4 boys, some more quickly than others, and the following worked when I was getting desperate with two of them - I bought the most girly, flowery pull-ups that I could find. They were both dry within a week!!

Gloria Winter

Potty what???

July 2004: St Albans bookshops were stripped of toddler books on diggers, and the potties planted on the lawn for the best part of three weeks. But was that it? No way!

At 2 and 1/2 and with pre-school approaching, Elizabeth and Christopher needed to come out of nappies. So we took the plunge, equipped with 20 pairs of pants each, potties, books and sticker charts (plus little toys as "big" rewards)... to find that Elizabeth responded pretty quickly and was dry and mostly clean during the day by the end of September. Six months later, she was dry at night.

Christopher, however, was soiling his pants 6 -- 10 times a day, and displaying classic symptoms of constipation! Enter our fantastic Health Visitor, with whom we worked on diet, medication, encouragement and rewards. Six months later, a combination of brown rice, brown pasta, Weetabix, dried fruit (especially apricots), fresh fruit and vegetables, plus Lactulose and Califig, was helping to sort things out (and still is...). Fifteen months later, he is now dry at night.

So what tips, from two very different experiences?

- Don't expect miracles: it takes time, gritted teeth and lots of encouragement and positive feedback (for all concerned)
- Prepare yourself -- that's the most important part! If you are not ready, you will find it harder to weather the disappointments, frustration and cries of those around you to give it up if things are not going well
- Talk to friends who have been through it and learn from their experiences
- Make sure your partner is fully involved in the process and is clued up on when to give praise and encouragement, and when not to notice things!
- Prepare the children: talk about the potty or toilet; show them how you do it (!); get other, older children to model; and, be positive
- Use books/videos, such as "Potty Time with Bear" (Bear in the Big Blue House) or "I want my potty" (amusing book and tape in the Little Princess series)
- Stock up on pants, preferably one or even two sizes bigger, so they are easy for the children to pull up themselves
- Get in supplies of: wipes, Febreze Antibacterial (great for carpets, chairs etc.), Napisan, loo roll, kitchen

roll, washing powder etc.

- Planned a travel-free week (or three) to start, so you don't have to move very far from the potties and spare clothes
- Have potties upstairs as well as downstairs, and in the car; alternatively, invest in a portable "Pottette" (£8 available from Boots or John Lewis) and liners, for those moments away from home
- Choose menus that will help the process and give them plenty to drink (but preferably not too much milk, which can have the opposite effect...)
- When you start, sit them on the potty or toilet every 15 minutes, and gradually increase the intervals
- **Lots** of praise when they perform; ignore every accident; don't get upset if they keep having accidents - it is normal!
- If there are problems, particularly with frequent soiling and hiding in corners to do so, seek help from your Health Visitor. Constipation is very common, particularly with little boys.
- Keep at it -- they (and you) will get there in the end
- And when they are dry at night for at least three weeks, try without nappies!

Good luck!!

Hilary Apps

(Christopher and Elizabeth, 20-02-2002)

Nearly there and back again

I love nappies - what a wonderful invention they are. And aren't we lucky to live in the age of the 'disposables'? Ben and Joey are just 3 and we are still in them (well they are anyway). They show very little interest in the matter and seem quite content to go on wearing them. And for me the best part is that we don't have to seek out dark and smelly public toilets.

But getting to this way of thinking has been a hard task – we tried potty training and failed. Several of Ben and Joey's contemporaries (twins too) have been successfully trained since about 2 years 6 months. I felt the pressure continuously to follow suit, but resisted as B&J showed none of the textbook 'signs' at all. They would happily run around in sodden nappies until they fell round their ankles.

But as the boys were to start pre-school in September, we took advantage of the summer to have our first attempt (aged 2y 9m). With great ceremony we bought 25 pairs of big boys pants – and they seemed very excited by it all. But they hated the small potties we bought and both said they 'hurt my bottom'. Buying the larger 'chair' type potties was a great help - they actually sat on them for a minute or two, and things started well after that.

Firstly we used Star Charts – great for the first 2 days then the novelty wore off and they lost interest. We moved on to chocolate buttons which were more successful – not surprisingly. One for a wee and 'two for a poo'. As it was summer they spent most of the time at home running around 'bottomless' and we achieved quite a high success rate, though we have had to move on to white chocolate buttons for novelty value.

But going out was a different matter. As suggested by most, I tried the 'cold turkey' approach to start with and went without nappies/pull-ups at all times other than sleep times. The boys became very good telling me *when* they had done something – after the event of course. I gritted my teeth and thought this was a good sign at least. But we never really got further than this point. I will never forget the time we went to Twins Club (Hertford) and must have got the mop and bucket out 6 times in 2 hours, much to everyone's amusement. We even ran out of spare clothes and the boys went home trouserless and shoeless.

Going to anywhere like a play centre was too daunting and I avoided them at all costs. Ben once did a

wee on the floor in Boots and I remember being so flustered that we just ran out and hoped that no-one had seen the puddle! Religiously we carried a potty in a carrier bag around with us, along with a bag full of clothes. Luckily, being summer, going to the playground was just about ok with its convenient hedges, though I did worry that the boys would grow up thinking that they could simply wee anywhere in public!

The September school date was looming and I didn't know how to progress to the next stage, when hopefully the boys would start asking to go. Being far too busy with trains/cars or whatever, they simply wouldn't give me any advance warnings. I got so fed up of hearing myself saying 'do you need the potty?' – they got so fed up they gave up replying!

I talked to the school and they were happy to help. So the first couple of weeks B&J went in big boys pants, and with school bags stuffed with changes of clothes. The staff did take them to the toilet now and then (with some results) but I couldn't expect them to give them full-time attention. Most days the boys came home in different clothes and with wet shoes, and I felt guilty that the staff had to spend their precious time undressing and dressing my two boys.

In despair, I resorted to pull-up nappies for pre-school which have made everyone's life easier. This soon turned into pull-ups for every trip out of the house, which has now turned into using them at most times other than first thing in the morning and last thing before bed.

Had I had my time again, I would be less stressed about it from the start, and much, much less eager to get from the nappies stage to the no-nappies stage in the quickest possible time. I would start later, and appreciate that if boys simply weren't interested that it wasn't going to happen. For starters, Gina Ford would have gone in the bin! We would also use pull-ups whenever it was convenient - right from the start. I think we tried our training too early because a) it was summer, b) pre-school was imminent, and c) everyone else seemed to have done it.

It is a stressful time for all. There are 3 taking part in the training – them and you. I hadn't really considered my own strategy or confidence at all. I know I should not have worried so much about others, and cared much less about trying to achieve it all as quickly as possible.

So - we haven't managed it so far - but life is much less traumatic for us all. We tried and failed, and facing up to that was very difficult, especially as it seemed so trouble-free for everyone else. But since putting the boys back into pull-ups, our trips out have been so much less stressful.

Now I really appreciate the convenience of nappies - as other twins disappear (often) to the toilets, we can just go on playing!

Tess Gatens

(Ben and Joey 3y 1m)

Potty Training

The whole concept of potty training frightened the life out of me. I had absolutely no idea how to tackle it! My son turned 2yrs old the day before my twins were born, so I decided it would be best to delay this ordeal. I experienced quite a lot of peer pressure from friends who were trying to get their little ones to use the pot. However, watching them put me off even more! I had one friend who literally threw a party every time her son did a wee in the potty. She threw streamers and blew up balloons. The crazy thing was she also did this when teddy used the potty too. Quite bizarre. An American idea I understand. Another friend seemed to be running around behind her son all day with the potty. Do you need a wee?, do you need a wee now?, do you need a wee yet? – I was thoroughly fed up of hearing her, not surprised her son was put off.

Eventually at 2yrs 4mths, I thought I'd give it a go. He'd seen his friends using the potty so he knew what it was for. Without any problems he went for it straight away and was dry day and night within a month. The only funny thing was his first poo. He did this in the kitchen and came running into the

lounge with it in his hand and proudly gave it to daddy! He soon progressed to the toilet, wanting to be like daddy.

I wasn't in any hurry to potty train my twin girls. However when Grace got to 2yrs 1mnth her friend was using the potty, so she wanted to as well. Grace again took to it with ease. Eve was not interested at all. She wanted her nappy. Knowing her so well I felt if she had the chance she would keep her nappies until school! So at 2yrs 4mnths we had a go. I used chocolate buttons – brilliant! One button for her if she used the potty and also one for George and Grace, that way they also encouraged her. Then it was only a chocolate button for poos. Then the shops stopped selling chocolate buttons!!! I have absolutely no problem with using bribery for absolutely anything when needs must. Particularly if I have to get them out of a fun place in a hurry. I would be lost without chocolate! Anyway at 2yrs 6mnths they are both happily using the toilet.

Tips

Definitely one potty per child, they do get quite attached to their potty! Grace was quite happy using the toilet until Eve started using the potty, then she wanted her potty back! Let them wander about with no nappy on at home. But don't let them get too used to this as a friend had problems then when re-introducing pants and shorts!

Those pampers disposable changing mat things are great for on the car seats incase of accidents and also for underneath them for their daytime sleeps, it's a nuisance and can be confusing keep popping nappies back on them.

I only ever used pull-ups as their bed time pants. I totally got rid of nappies as they were big girls, but didn't find a need to use pull-ups except at night.

The Tommee Tippee porta potty thing is brilliant. It's a fold up small portable potty which you attach special bags too, that you tie up and throw away. The bags are like plastic bags with a sanitary towel in the bottom. The bags are quite expensive but if you reserve use to emergencies, especially if you are visiting places where toilets are sparse. I still have it in my bag now for emergencies and even George had to use it for a poo in the summer. Recommended investment!

Toilet trainer seats – the padded ones are best – most comfy as they do seem to sit there a while

Stool - essential to getting onto toilet although may not stop them falling in.

I have found that my friends who tried to do it too early found it took loads longer to succeed. Waiting even just an extra couple of months can make all the difference.

Anyway, definitely don't stress about it, its lots of fun, enjoy!!

Michelle Thorpe

Mum to George 4½yrs, Grace and Eve 2½yrs

Potty training

I haven't tackled multiples yet, but with Max and Luke the promise of a sweetie worked wonders. I know we all try to discourage an overconsumption of confectionery, but particularly with Luke it was the only way I could focus his mind. The only problem being that he drinks a lot and once he got the idea he could then produce wee on demand. He'd be straining away on his potty trying to squeeze out another drop and I worried that he was doing himself some damage. Max was much more relaxed about the whole thing, but then he is not so bothered about sugary treats. I started with one sweet per performance (plus one per many encore), but this was very quickly rationed to one after lunch and one after dinner. After about two or maybe three weeks the sweets are forgotten and they are in the habit of using the potty or toilet.

Katherine Sweeney

Job done, back to 'no sweets now boys' (unless you are Mum and the kids can't see you).

Potty training

Although many people say that bribery isn't the way, I found it worked when potty training my first daughter, back in 2001 when she was coming of an age where I didn't want her in nappies anymore, she was almost 2 years old. On the first day, she didn't seem interested at all, so I left it, on the second day, I said she could have one sweetie if she did a wee in her potty and hey presto, it worked, once she got the hang of it, which was in the course of the 2nd day, I stopped the sweets and from then on, she chose to use the toilet rather than the potty, what a big girl - she's 5 and a half now.

I didn't have to resort to sweets for my 2nd daughter, she was a very quick learner and within a day she too was potty trained (just before her 2nd birthday) and 3 months later, she was dry through the night.

Lets just hope the new twins follow in their sisters footsteps ;)

Lorraine Harper

Potties (from Top Tips Booklet)

- Dresses and vests can trail into the potty and get wet. Use short t-shirts when training and trousers/shorts with elastic waists.
- Children will indicate when ready for potty training. One will probably be ahead of the other.
- There is no right or wrong time to do it. Some prefer summer but winter may be just as easy.
- If it doesn't work the first time, or it's just too stressful for all, leave it a few months.
- Training outside in the summer can save your carpets.
- Use fold up portable toilet seats.
- Relax - don't rush it. Once you start needing to find toilets everywhere you'll realise how convenient nappies are!
- Praise lavishly if the deed is done in the toilet/potty
- Leave potties around the house so they get used to seeing them. Give them one each.
- Have potties upstairs, down stairs, in the garden - this could mean 6 potties, so try and borrow some.
- Travel potty refills are expensive - use cheap sanitary towels and nappy sacks instead.
- Gina Ford has some good tips
- Use Care Mats in pushchairs and car seats, also use under the potty.
- Consider training one at a time, especially triplets.
- Leave as late as possible (even as late as 3 $\frac{1}{4}$).