RESOURCES

1. Maria Wheeler book: Toilet Training for Individuals with Autism and Related Disorders
7. Autism Speaks Toilet Training ATN Guide
   http://www.autismspeaks.org/docs/sciencedocs/atn/atn_air_p_toilet_training.pdf
9. Karen Krivit, LSW is an Autism Consultant at Elwyn SEEDS. She can be reached at krivtk@elwyn.org or seeds.elwyn.org

Toilet Training Guide for Children with Autism

By Karen Krivit

Is my child ready?
What if my child doesn’t speak?
What if my child shows no interest?

A Step-By-Step Guide for Families

Designed by Lauren Poole
from Drexel Antoinette Westphal Graphics Group
DOs & DON'TS

- Do seek one professional help if you continue to have a difficult time.
- Do remember to use words like, “It’s capable of many wonderful things.”
- Do remember that it’s not working.
- Do remember to reward the right steps.
- Do learn that your child is not you.
- Do learn about your child’s sensory and communicative needs and try to respond to them.
- Do make the change.
- Do EMOTIONS to get support for yourself before during and after this.

BEDROOM

- Don’t tell your child that it’s not working.
- Don’t make the change.
- Don’t say things like, “It’s not working.”
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6 COMMUNICATION/REINFORCEMENT

Make sure to use a word/picture/or sign to communicate that your child is "going to the potty". By combining the act of peeing with the picture of the toilet your child will learn what this is called. This is very important so that your child can eventually tell others he has to use the bathroom. Also, your child may not learn to tell you that he has to go but he will learn to understand that the symbol for "bathroom" from YOU means "it's time to try to go to the toilet". Many children with Autism learn routines better if they are shown a picture of what you are talking about instead of just hearing about it.

3 PREPARING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Set up YOUR OWN schedule first! This will require your own emotional and time commitment: If you and your supports are determined to succeed with Toilet Training it's best to set aside and invest in a whole week where you and your supports can be completely attentive to training. If your training efforts are inconsistent, this method will not be as successful, all your efforts will be more frustrating to you and your child's diapering needs will last longer. You will need to understand that by committing to Toilet Training, you will need to commit to using only underwear during the day and no more diapers. (Yes, this will be messy at first, but not for long!) Setting up the environment: You will need underwear and, changes of clothes, including socks. Many families use plastic liners over the cloth underwear to cut down on leaks and messes. The floor will need to be easily cleaned. Many families put plastic tarp over carpeting. Many families move a number of highly desirable toys into the "training room" for this time and adults take shifts. You will need a timer that you will set and reset each time you go with your child to the bathroom to remind you that it's time to try again. You will need lots of special drinks to encourage your child to urinate frequently. You will need a step stool so that your child's feet can be firmly planted when he sits on the toilet to give him a secure feeling. Many families also use a toilet seat insert (less than $10 at most box stores) so that the opening of the toilet is more "child sized," giving him a SAFE feeling.

4 PREPARING YOUR CHILD

Even if your child can talk, always use visuals such as a 1-page picture story, pictures or a very brief DVD (traditional potty books are too long). Show your child the toilet, underwear and rewards (out of reach but not out of sight) and have pictures of these that he can see while you speak very simply about what's going to happen. Remember that kids with Autism understand things that are in pictures much better than when they are spoken to with words alone. Work with your child's special education staff for help with these visual aides. Most children feel more secure when they can see a picture of what is happening versus hearing someone talk about it.
Play all attention with this now.

child will not feel any need to get another reward, as he will be content to

sheets are something that is short lived, and not a big deal, says your

thinks, you get a prize; the reward

in that small and special reward and then say in a calm voice, "Look,

child. You did most likely not feel really uninformed, but it is

these issues as during

can feel overwhelming at

toilet and the feeling of

many sensory issues

your child, which

will pool, remember that

now why will be in

he is afraid of food, or

be afraid of eating, or

on the toilet to help him

with muscle tone in his

then you will need to stay with

learn to control this

situation, he can easily

behaving even if he is a boy. Once he is more skilled and has control over

Get your training area by putting on special underwear and

5 GETTING STARTED