



# Getting to the Potty Before it is too Late

**What to do when your child is too busy playing to stop and use the potty.** It's common for toddlers to get so engrossed in what they're doing that it's hard for them to stop and get to the toilet in time. When your child is distracted playing, eating, or watching TV, their brains can easily miss their bodies' cues. This is also more likely to happen before nap or at bedtime when they're tired.

When accidents happen, try to keep calm, and remember your child isn't being naughty or doing it on purpose. These occasions are an important part of the learning process for them. Your child is busy learning how to manage their body. They won't get as much warning as we do that their bladder needs emptying, plus playing with toys is a lot more exciting than using the potty!

## Top tips to get to the potty before it's too late:

- Keep a potty nearby where they're playing so it's easy for them to get there when they need it.
- Explain to your child that they need to go when they first feel their wee or poo coming or they might have an accident.
- A clear instruction such as "potty time now", or "let's go potty" when they need to go is a more efficient prompt than asking if they need to do a wee or poo.
- Avoiding asking your child too often to use the potty. Toddlers should do a wee every 1.5 to 2 hours.



The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity



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Over prompting doesn't allow their bladder to fill and stretch as it needs to and your child is likely to get bored and switch off all together.

- Make it a game and see if they can beat the wee and poo in the potty race. Explain to your child that holding on is more likely to let the wee or poo win.
- Play a game where they ask the toys to wait whilst they use the potty. No toys are allowed to move until they get back,
- If you suddenly find your toddler pooing in the middle of a meal, use the word "wait" whilst you transfer them to a potty.

## What to do if your child has an accident

If your child has an accident, use it as a learning opportunity. It's important not to pretend it hasn't happened. Clean it up together and remind them to use the potty next time. Try not to shame or punish your child about accidents. Gently explain that you want them to use the potty next time.

## About ERIC:

ERIC, The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity is dedicated to helping all children and teenagers manage and overcome distressing continence conditions. Whether it is a toilet-training issue, bedwetting, constipation or soiling problem, ERIC provides expert support, information and understanding to children and young people and enables parents, carers and professionals to help them establish good bowel and bladder health.

ERIC's family support includes a free helpline, parent and family workshops, online resources and information.

**Helpline:** 0808 169 9949 open Monday – Thursday: 10am – 2pm

**Website:** [www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)



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