

## **GENERAL POTTY TRAINING GUIDELINES**

*In this modern day we have attractive, disposable diapers that keep our children dry and comfortable, therefore hindering their potty training. As a result, we will have children potty trained closer to age three and over.*

### **Feeling Wet:**

- For potty training to be effective, the child needs to feel wet. With modern diapers and pull ups, children are kept from feeling wet.
- Cotton diapers and cotton underwear allow the child to feel wet.
- From the time they can sit up, when the process of myelination has taken place around the sphincter, children have the ability to control their bladder.
- Children who are allowed to feel both wet and dry (by wearing cotton pants/diapers) learn that the preferred condition is to be dry. Therefore they start to hold their bladder and bowels for longer periods.

### **Present the Child With The Reality Of The Situation:**

- At home, or when appropriate, if the child has an “accident”, show the child their soiled pair of pants/diaper, showing them where their excretions *should* go (in the toilet). Often when adults change children, it is all done so quickly that the child is not even aware of their bodily function. Taking the time to show them is necessary and they should never be rushed. With patience, they will quickly begin to associate and understand the process.
- If your child is getting diaper rashes, this is a great opportunity to talk about how the underwear will eliminate the problem.
- Be sure your child has the opportunity to see other family members, especially of the same gender, use the bathroom. Let them sit with you when you are going.
- Buy a toilet ring and provide a step stool, as opposed to a little potty, to get them accustomed to using “adult-sized” toilets outside the home.
- When your child has to sit for a long period of time to have a bowel movement, a good “trick” to keep them seated on the toilet longer, is to read a short story or hang out and talk. This attention to your child will be helpful to give up the diaper and they may look forward to having a bowel movement. After your child masters having a bowel movement, you can slowly wean them off of the extra attention.

### **Involve Child In The Process:**

- After the child is shown the appropriate place to put their excretions and soiled pants and underwear, the child should assist in getting and putting on clean underwear/pants. This gives the child some sense of ownership, and power/control in this area; “I can do it, I can master my own body.”
- Let your child have the fun of flushing the toilet and watching “it” go down!

### **“Help me to help myself.”**

We should bear in mind the following points as we help to raise children in our modern day world:

- Present the child with the reality of the situation.
- Give control to the child on a level he or she can understand.
- “Help me to help myself.”

This is what Montessorians can give to a child when assisting them in this developmental process. No one should control or manipulate any developmental process of a child, especially in the areas of sleeping, eating and toileting.

We must note that these guidelines are for children who have no medical or sensitive developmental needs. In such cases we should adapt our approach, in light of the medical advice and psychological guidance which has been provided.

## BCMS Potty Training Policy

When children start at BCMS in diapers, we will only begin to potty train when your child seems ready. The teachers will inform you if your child seems ready to potty train, or you may inform us.

If you see interest from your child, the first step is to practice at home. Try over a long weekend, or an extended school break, and see how it goes. When you have had consistent success over a good period of time, and are thinking about trying at school, here are the next steps:

- 1) **BEFORE any potty training can begin at school, you must make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher, and the Director, to discuss your child's current progress at home, and how potty training will be attempted at BCMS.**
- 2) Your child **MUST** be able to express verbally to a teacher that they have to go. This is absolutely essential to potty training success at school.
  - a. We take the children to the restroom approximately every two hours. However, **your child must be able to tell a teacher as soon as they feel the urge to go**, so as to allow sufficient time to get to the toilet and avoid an accident. This is an **integral part of the process at school** – as the toilet is further away than at home, and there are so many distractions / interesting things to do here.
- 3) While attempting potty training at school, your child should come to school in **UNDERWEAR ONLY. NO PULL UPS** will be allowed during this process at school.
  - a. Pull Ups are essentially “expensive diapers” – and do not allow the child to experience wetness. Feeling wet or soiled is key to progress.
- 4) Your child will be allowed a maximum of **TWO accidents per day**:
  - a. After the first accident, your child will be involved in changing themselves into clean underwear/pants.
  - b. If your child has a second accident, they will be involved in changing into a diaper/pants. The process will then start over the following school day.
- 5) Please be sure to **bring (and keep your child's cubby stocked with) a minimum of TWO sets of extra underwear, pants, and socks**. Should they need to change, and we have nothing available, your child will automatically be put in a diaper for the rest of the day.
- 6) If after **TWO weeks** your child is still having **regular accidents** at school, **we will stop the potty training process and try again at a later time.**

This doesn't mean that you should stop potty training at home with your child; often children will choose to wear underwear at home, but may not be quite ready to wear them at school, or vice versa. If the child is allowed to choose, they generally give up the diaper in a few weeks, or months, and have fewer accidents along the way.

We have to remember that potty training is a process that the child must go through and every child has their own way of getting there. We have to be supportive and give the child room to feel they are in control. When a child wants to get out of diapers, they usually do so, within a matter of days. If they are hesitant, or are pushed, they will still struggle with the idea of giving up the diaper and the process will take longer.

The teachers want more than anything for your child to have a “dry” day and they have a great deal of experience potty training. My father, Robert Tideman, who co-founded BCMS and also raised ten children, had encouraging words for frustrated parents: “They *will* potty train before they become adults!”