

# Bladder & Bowel UK guide on moving from potty to toilet

Many children start their journey towards managing to use the toilet on their own by learning to use a potty. While a potty is easy to move around and the right size for little bottoms, there will be times when it is more convenient for them to use a toilet. Nursery and school will expect children to use the toilet.

Your child may struggle with change if things are adjusted too quickly. A gradual approach may work better. Outlined below is a guide to the steps you can take to make the move to the toilet as easy as possible.

## 1. Preparing:

It is important to have the right equipment to help your child feel as safe and secure on the toilet as they did on their potty.

### A toilet reducer seat

Relaxation of the pelvic floor is important for emptying both the bladder and the bowels (weeing and pooing). Sitting with the bottom well supported helps the pelvic floor relax. Small children need a toilet reducer seat to provide support for their bottom.

There are lots of different toilet reducer seats available. Make sure that the one you choose fits your toilet snugly, with no movement when your child sits on it.

You may also want to consider whether:

- to choose one with handles – being able to hold on may help your child feel safe
- to have one with a soft surface that might feel more comfortable
- to have one that folds so that you can take it with you when away from home

### A step or footstool

Sitting on the toilet in a squat position helps the pelvic floor to relax, and the end of the bowel straighten. This allows for more complete emptying and helps prevent constipation. As well as having their bottom well supported, children (and adults) should have their feet flat on a firm surface and slightly apart. Their knees should be higher than their hips. They will need a step or footstool for this.

- There are lots of different designs available. Make sure you choose one that is high enough for your child to be in the position described above
- Some reducer seats have adjustable stairs as part of their design

With a step of the right size, or stairs as part of a reducer seat, some toddlers and older children will be able to get on and off the toilet without help and may enjoy being more independent with their toileting.



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### Move the potty close to the toilet

When your child is first learning to use the potty, they may not get much notice that they need a wee or poo. Having the potty near them helps them get to the right place in time. As they get better at weeing and pooing in the potty, gradually move the potty towards the bathroom or toilet. This will help prepare them for the time when they start to use the toilet.

### 2. Practice:

Using the toilet, rather than the potty, is a new skill for your child to learn.

- Let them try sitting on their new reducer seat with their step or footstool, for a second or two initially. Gradually increase the time on their reducer seat. Try to do this at times of the day when you and they are relaxed e.g. bathtime
- If they are reluctant you may want to reward them for having a go, such as letting them flush, praising them, or having a small treat
- At this stage, you are just trying to help them learn to sit in the right place
- Gradually increase the time that they sit for and how often they sit with their toilet reducer seat and step or footstool each day
- Let them see other people in the family using the toilet
- Talk to them about using the toilet
- Use stories and picture books about using the toilet

### 3. Achieving

When your child is happily sitting on their new toilet reducer seat with a step or footstool, start to offer them this as an alternative to the potty. Praise them for getting a wee or poo in the right place.

Think about how you are going to manage away from home. It is important to keep the routine as close as you can to the one you use at home. Encourage them to practice the skill of using the toilet when you are out or when visiting friends and family.

### Further information

Find more information about bladder and bowel health and about supporting your child to learn the skills for toileting at [www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk) in our [information library](#). You can also contact the [Bladder & Bowel UK confidential helpline](#) (0161 214 4591).

For further advice on bladder and bowel problems, speak to your GP or other healthcare professional.

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