

WHAT DOES BEING “READY” FOR POTTY TRAINING REALLY MEAN?

Parents frequently hear that it’s best to wait until a child is “ready” for potty training before beginning the process. But what exactly does the term “ready” mean? For the answer we turn to the American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) *Guide to Toilet Training* (2003). According to the AAP, parents should watch for readiness in three specific developmental domains: physical, cognitive, and emotional. Let’s take a closer look at what’s required in each case.

Physical Readiness: To actively participate in potty training, children must be physically able to:

- Sense when they need to eliminate
- Delay elimination long enough to get to the potty
- Sit independently on a potty chair

At what age do these skills typically appear? The fact that before the invention of the disposable diaper children in the United States were routinely trained by 18 months is clear evidence that these abilities are available at least by early in the child’s second year.

Cognitive Readiness: To actively participate in potty training, children must *understand* what it is they are supposed to do and be able to communicate about it. That is, be able to:

- Associate the need to eliminate with using the potty
- Understand simple instructions
- Signal an adult when they need to go

Again, the fact that children in the past were routinely trained by 18 months indicates that the first two of these abilities are both available quite early and certainly by 18 months. As for signaling an adult, that’s exactly what the Baby Signs® Potty Training Program enables them to do via the POTTY sign!



Emotional Readiness: Emotional readiness for potty training means a willingness to cooperate. According to the AAP, the likelihood of such cooperation increases after the first birthday with the emergence of the following:

- A desire for independence and self-mastery
- An interest in imitating others
- A desire for approval

Anything, then, that increases the willingness of toddlers to embrace potty training automatically creates the emotional readiness that the AAP says is essential. And that’s exactly what the *All Aboard the Potty Train* DVD, board book, conductor’s whistle and stickers do so well!

Bottom line? Parents can rest assured that, with the help of *Potty Training Made Easy with the Baby Signs® Program*, their children *will* be “ready,” willing and able to potty train.

Online Potty Training Support Group: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/babysigns_pottytraining