Toilet Training 101
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Overview
- Strategies to improve compliance in children
- Pre-requisite skills for successful toilet training
- Basic behavioral strategies for teaching toileting skills
- How to know when to consult a professional

Rationale for Teaching Compliance Skills First
- If child does not follow most basic simple directions, he/she will not be compliant with toileting skills
- Important for child to learn that following directions leads to positive outcomes (positive reinforcement)
- Parent needs to learn how to give effective directions and prompts and how to deliver reinforcement for basic directions first

Giving Effective Instructions
- Get the child's attention first
- Say what you want the child to do rather than what not to do
- Give one instruction at a time
- Be specific
- Give as sentences not as questions
- Comprehension
- Use gestures
- Neutral voice
- Time the explanation

3-step guided compliance
1. Tell
2. Show
3. Help

3-step guided compliance
- TELL STEP
  - State child's name
  - Tell child what to do (don't ask)
  - State the request clearly
  - Wait 5-10 seconds. Do not repeat your instruction
  - If the child complies, give a specific praise and/or other preferred items
3-step guided compliance

- **SHOW STEP**
  - If the child doesn't comply, repeat the instruction with a gesture.
  - If the child complies following the verbal and visual cues, give a specific praise and/or other preferred items.

3-step guided compliance

- **HELP STEP**
  - If the child still doesn't comply, repeat the instruction and use hand-over-hand prompting to gently guide the child to comply.
  - Do not provide any praise or reward following the use of a physical prompt.

“Broken Record” Technique

- Alternative compliance strategy for older children who are physically larger in size
- Can be more helpful with children who are averse to physical touch or physical guidance
- Tougher to use than 3-step guided compliance because you have to “out-wait” the child

“Broken Record” Technique

- **TELL STEP**
  - State child’s name
  - Tell child what to do (don’t ask)
  - State the request clearly
  - Wait 5-10 seconds. Do not repeat your instruction
  - If the child complies, give a specific praise and/or other preferred items

“Broken Record” Technique

- **SHOW STEP**
  - If the child doesn't comply, repeat the instruction with a gesture.
  - Repeat the last step every 5-10 seconds until the child complies.
  - Ignore any other behavior or verbalizations.
  - When the child complies calmly, give a specific praise.

“Broken Record” Technique

- **HELP STEP**
  - If the child doesn't comply, repeat the instruction and use hand-over-hand prompting to gently guide the child to comply.
  - Do not provide any praise or reward following the use of a physical prompt.

Five Reasons to Take on Toilet Training

1. Children who are toilet trained may have more self-confidence and personal comfort.
2. Individually who are toilet trained are more independent and experience greater social acceptance.
3. Assisting a child becomes more physically demanding as children mature.
4. There’s an immediate and lasting financial benefit as day-to-day costs for diapers increase with age.
5. Toilet training often is an IEP goal since it is important for independence.

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Pre-requisites for Successful Toilet Training

- Child should be able to walk independently
- Child should have some fine motor skills
- Child should have basic receptive language skills
- Parent should receive training in compliance skills
- Child should be compliant with 70-80% of parental directions
- Intact neurological and muscular control
- MOST IMPORTANT: Parents and school should be 100% committed to working very hard!

Materials for Successful Toilet Training

- Regular underwear so child can feel wetness
- Elastic-waist pants for easy pull-up
- Child-size potty or other modifications to regular toilet
- Preferred beverages
- Effective reinforcers (rewards)
- Timer
- Data collection sheets

Effective Reinforcers

- What matters the most to your child? What will he/she consistently work for?
- Is this an item or activity that I can easily limit my child's free access to?
- Does this item or activity cause any behavior problems when my child has it or when it is removed?
- Variety is best
  - Very small reinforcer that can be delivered every 30-60 minutes throughout the day
  - Bigger, more special reinforcer for voiding on toilet

Toilet Training Steps

- Regularly scheduled dry pants checks
  - Prompt child to feel for "wet" or "dry"
  - Reward dry pants (cheering + small reinforcer)
  - If child is wet or soiled, use 3-step guided guidance for child to assist in clean-up

Toilet Training Steps

- Calmly walk child to the toilet
- Use 3-step guided compliance for child to pull pants down
- Have child sit for no more than 5 minutes
  - Praise for good sitting
  - Some children need a book or other item to help them relax

Toilet Training Steps

- Regularly scheduled trips to the toilet
  - The timing of these trips are based on your baseline data collection
  - Prompt child to communicate their need to use the toilet
    - Say "potty"
    - Sign "potty"
    - Touch picture of potty
**Toilet Training Steps**

- Reward child if he/she goes on potty (praise + large reinforcer)
- After 5 minutes are up, use 3-step guided compliance for pulling pants up
- Use 3-step guided compliance for hand-washing

**Data Collection**

- Helpful to have a baseline to determine how often to schedule bathroom practice
- Patterns and frequency of urination – does my child need more fluids?
- Patterns of frequency and timing of bowel movements – does my child have regular bowel movements? constipation problems?
- Data sheets provide objective information about your child’s progress

**What To Do if the “Positive Approach” is not Working**

- Positive practice for continued accidents
- Parent uses 3-step guided compliance and displays “robot face and voice”
- Guides child back to scene of accident
- Escorts child to bathroom
- Prompts child to pull down pants
- Prompts child to sit on toilet
- Prompts child to pull up pants
- Repeat 5-10 times

**What To Do if the “Positive Approach” is not Working**

- Response-cost approach
  - Removing sticker, star, or point from star
  - Taking away highly-preferred item or activity

**When do I Need to Consult a Professional?**

- If you are unsure if your child has a medical or neurological problem that could prevent successful toilet training
- If your child has frequent constipation or withholds stool
- If your child has extreme fear or anxiety about going in the bathroom or sitting on the toilet
- If your child has significant disruptive behavior problems (e.g., noncompliance, tantrums, aggression) with directions or other routine activities
- If you have had unsuccessful attempts at previous toilet training

**Toilet Training Challenges**

- Going in the wrong location
- Problems with sitting to have a bowel movement
- Anxiety with public restrooms (e.g., automatic flushers and hand dryers)
- Fear of sitting on a toilet
- Constipation
Going in the Wrong Location
- Pair sensation of eliminating with being in the bathroom
- First step is to get child to void in their pull-up while in the bathroom
- Making it fun and relaxing
- Gradually shape child to sit on toilet

Problems with Sitting on the Toilet
- Make it fun and relaxing
- Modifications to toilet to make child more comfortable
- Relaxation training (for you and your child)
- Systematic desensitization – go slow!
- “Camp out” in the bathroom until he/she goes
- Use effective rewards
- Use visual cues and pictures of steps and rewards

Anxiety About Using Public Restrooms
- Assess specifics of anxiety
- Relaxation training
- Systematic desensitization and exposure – very slow!
- Effective reinforcers
- Use of visual cues and pictures of steps and rewards

The End
- ANY QUESTIONS?