Toilet Training

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A child can go only so far in life without potty training. It is not mere coincidence that six of the last seven presidents were potty trained, not to mention nearly half of the nation's state legislators.

―Dave Barry

Learning Objectives:
1. Identify developmental markers that suggest a child is ready for toilet training
2. Assess parental obstacles to toilet training
3. Provide anticipatory guidance regarding toilet training
4. Identify health conditions that would interfere with toilet training

Primary Reference:

CASE ONE:

You are seeing Isaiah Paul (I.P.) Freely for his 18-month visit. His mom has no concerns until you bring up toilet training in your anticipatory guidance. A look comes over Ms. Freely's face and she says she has been trying to toilet train I.P. for the last month now. "He just is not getting it" she says. "He keeps having accidents in his pants and I'm getting very frustrated." She wants to know why it is taking him so long because his older sister was fully toilet trained at around this age.

1. What developmental cues will children show when they are ready to start toilet training?

2. At what ages do children typically start toilet training? What might account for some of the differences between individuals and across different cultures?
3. How might parental perceptions interfere with toilet training?

4. What role should the health care provider play in toilet training? What specific anticipatory guidance is helpful? What practical techniques can we recommend?

5. What should the parents do if the child is having trouble with toilet training?

6. What medical problems and medications commonly affect toilet training?

Additional References:


Resources:
1. Toilet training handout for parents.

2. AAP handout on Toilet Training Children with Special Needs.