

# Toilet Training Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

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# Objectives/Agenda

- Introductions
- Rapid-Toilet Training Procedures
- Non-Intensive Procedures
- Bowel Training
- Night-time training and overcorrection
- Q+A, Tips

# Background

- Regional Director, San Diego
- BCBA
  - Experience working with ages 18 months to 20 years
  - Home, school and community settings
- Multiple Subject and Early Childhood Special Education Teaching Credentials
- Parent
  - 23 month old

# When do I start Toilet Training?

- Chronological Age

Typically not before 18 months  
After age 4, it often should be a priority

- Mental Age (Functioning Level)

Lower than 2 years could result in large challenges

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## Other Prerequisite Skills

- Can sit on the toilet for 10 minutes
- Can pull pants up and down
- Can get on and off the toilet
- Follows directions most of the time

For example, if you tell him/her to pull pants down or take a drink of juice, he/she will most likely do so.

# Materials Needed to Prepare



- Potty seat/ring or potty chair
- Several pairs of underwear
- Several options of preferred drinks and salty snacks
- Toys/activities that can be done while sitting on the potty
- Paper towels, soap, step stool for hand-washing
- Wastebasket with plastic liner for wet underwear
- Special reinforcer(s) that is saved **ONLY** for successful voids in the potty. This should be something that can be enjoyed in less than 2 minutes.
- Chairs/stools for adult to sit on
- Digital timer
- Clipboard with several copies of potty data sheet & a pen

# Reinforcers/Rewards

## Suggestions

1. Special treat (ex: small candy, such as a jelly bean or Hershey's kiss)
2. Short YouTube video (with preferred characters, favorite song)
3. Favorite iPad app (limited to 2 minutes or less!)
  1. Favorite toys (2 minute access to favorite sensory toy)



# Potty Chair or Big Toilet?

## Potty Chair

- Pros:

Little  
Moveable

- Cons:

Generalization/rigidity



## Big Toilet

- Pros:

No need for generalization

- Cons:

Big  
Can be intimidating



# Pre-Training

- Use this shaping procedure (reinforcement of individual steps closer to the ultimate goal) if your child resists sitting on the toilet when asked.
- Systematically reinforce these steps. As your child is successful with each step without protest, move on to the next step.
  1. Walks near the potty
  2. Touches the potty
  3. Sit on potty with clothes on
  4. Sit on potty with underwear on
  5. Sit on potty with underwear for 1 minute
  6. Pull down underwear and sit on potty
  7. Pull down underwear & sit on potty for longer
  8. Keep building until sits at least 10 min, preferably 15 min

# Rapid Toilet Training vs. Non-Intensive

- When using **Rapid Toilet Training (RTT)**, the majority of the day is spent in the bathroom
- The individual generally sits on the toilet until he/she voids.
- The interval of when the individual is taken to the potty is systematically increased.
  
- When using **Non-Intensive Toilet Training**, data is collected on how frequently the individual is voiding in a diaper throughout the day. Then, the individual is taken to use the toilet at regular intervals throughout the day, sitting for a predetermined duration.

# RTT Procedure- Fluid Consumption

- The individual should drink extra fluids (e.g., water, lemonade, etc.) prior to and during implementation of rapid toilet-training procedures
  - Avoid forcing to drink
  - Avoid more than 8-10 eight ounce glasses per day
- Keep a drink close by at all times, and the individual should have free access (i.e.- does not need to request the drink)
- Increased fluid intake results in frequent urination and more opportunities to practice bladder control.
- The individual should also be provided with salty snacks (e.g., pretzels) during these times, to increase the desire to drink.



# RTT Procedure- Beginning

- The individual should sit on the toilet as much as possible during the hours that have been designated to follow this protocol.
- Keep this fun by allowing the individual to watch favorite DVDs and play with preferred items (but not the designated reinforcer) while seated on the potty.



# RTT Procedure- Beginning

- The individual may sit on the potty for up to a few hours before voiding during the first day or two.
- Ideally, he/she should sit on the potty continuously until he/she voids.
- Make it a positive experience for the individual!
  - If he/she absolutely needs a break, allow him/her to come off the potty, but require him/her to engage in an appropriate behavior before letting him/her off (e.g., requesting for a “break”).

# RTT Procedure- Reinforcement Tips

- **Immediately** after the individual is done voiding in the potty, deliver lavish/exaggerated praise along with the designated reinforcer (e.g. a few M&M's).
- It is very important for the reinforcer to be delivered **immediately** after the child voids – meaning within ½ second. Verbally tell *WHY* the child is being given the reinforcer (e.g., “YAY! You went **pee-pee in the potty!**”)
- It's important not to give a praise statement while the child is voiding because it may startle them and interrupt the “flow”.



# RTT Procedure- Reinforcement Tips

- It is very important that for the days leading up to and during the toilet training protocol the individual not be given access to the designated reinforcer.
- Have no fear! We will quickly fade-out reinforcer. It will be used initially, until the individual begins to void consistently, immediately upon being taken to the potty.
- In case the individual becomes bored with the reinforcer, have backup reinforcers on hand.

# RTT Procedure- Reinforcement Tips

- The reinforcers should be kept out of the individual's reach, however, all adults implementing this protocol will need to know where these are being stored.
- Ideally, everything should be kept in one location so that everyone can go into the bathroom with a bag that has all of the goodies.
- Keep item on a shelf in the view of the individual. This allows the preferred items to serve as a visual “reminder” as to what he/she will earn contingent upon voiding.

# RTT Procedure- After Voiding

- Once the individual has flushed the toilet, allow him/her to spend the next 5 minutes off of the potty, bare-bottomed, in the playroom playing with you (If age appropriate).
- If possible, the individual should continue to drink some fluids during this time.
- After 5 minutes, return to the potty to try for another void.  
(Note: we sometimes recommend different length breaks from the potty instead of 5 minutes. This is dependent upon the individual's responses and affect during the first few hours of RTT.)

# RTT Procedure- Breaks

- Watch individual closely during breaks.
- If he/she starts to do the "pee-pee" dance or other signs they may need to go potty, ask them, "Do you need to go potty?" and rush him/her into the bathroom.
- If he/she has already started to pee, say, "Wait, wait, we go pee-pee in the potty."
  - Without scaring the child, try to startle the child when delivering this statement, as a startle response usually halts the flow of urine. Then quickly prompt the child to the bathroom.
- If the child is able to stop him/herself and complete the void on the toilet, you may deliver praise and the reinforcer!

# RTT- Moving on

- After the individual begins to self-initiate and can do so 5-6 times, you can move on to a less-intensive procedure.
- No need to push extra fluids any more if you were.
- Keep to a schedule for using the potty (e.g. every hour) and have him/her sit on the potty for 5-7 minutes. Pay attention to gestures/movements that may indicate the need to void.
- If he/she doesn't void, they can get up for another 30 minutes.
- Continue to increase the length of time as long as the individual is not having accidents.

# RTT- Data Sheet

## Sample Data Sheet

Date:	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15	4/9/15
Accident Before Trial?	n/a	Yes	No	No	No			
Self-initiated	No	No	No	No	No			
Time child begins to sit on potty	9:00	9:18	9:23	9:38	9:45			
Duration of sitting prior to voiding	15 m	2 s	10 m	2 m	2 m			
Time of void	n/a	9:18	9:33	9:40	9:47			
Target Duration of Break	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	10 m			

# Non-Intensive Procedure

- Start by tracking their urination.
  - When are they typically going to the bathroom?
  - How often?

# Non-Intensive Procedure

- Toileting becomes a learned part of daily routine through repetition of the task.
  - Track when they currently urinate or has a bowel movement.
  - Take to the potty before this time and embed in your schedule.

\*\*\* Avoid asking if the learner wants to use the bathroom.

# Non-Intensive Procedure

- Ideally, the individual should sit on the potty until voiding (avoid a situation where the individual gets up from the potty and immediately has an accident)
- However, you can also have the child sit for 5-7 minutes and get up if he/she did not void.



# Ideal to Implement Non-Intensive Procedure When:

- Learner is not yet demonstrating awareness of need to use the bathroom
- Other techniques are ineffective
- Mental Age lower the 3 years
- Learner not demonstrating discomfort when wet or soiled

# Non-Intensive Procedure- Data Sheet

TOILET TRAINING									
Date									
Time of Day									
Wet or Dry Pants?									
Urinate									
Bowel Movement									
# Min Seated on Toilet									

# Bowel Training



- Identify times of day bowel movements are most likely to occur
- Similar to urination training, identify ONE STRONG reinforcer
- Prompt/take your child to the toilet 20 minutes prior to the time they are likely to have a bowel movement
- Have child sit on toilet for alternating 5-10 minute periods in between sitting and breaks.
- Verbal interactions on toilet consist of:
  - Friendly reminders
  - “Go poo poo in the toilet”

# Bowel Training



- If a bowel movement occurs:
  - Reinforcer should be delivered **immediately** accompanied by behavior specific praise
    - “Wow!! You pooped in the toilet!”
- If a bowel movement does not occur:
  - Prompt child to stand and look in the toilet
  - Say a phrase such as, “No poo-poo. Its okay.”
  - Child should be prompted out of the bathroom

# Accidents



Anytime you notice your child starting to have an accident:

- Rush child back onto the toilet.
- Use reminders such as, “Pee/poo in the toilet.” “We go to the bathroom in the toilet.”
- Follow any completion on toilet with praise!

# Night Time Training

- Is he/she staying dry throughout the day with ease?
- Is he/she waking up with a dry diaper the majority of the time?

If so, then they're probably ready! The physical ability to hold urine for long periods of time plus the nerve signal from the bladder to the brain to wake up to urinate is both part of age.

\*Avoid Teaching daytime and night-time toilet training at the same time.

# Night Time Training

- Accidents are going to happen- protect the mattress.
- A few hours before bedtime, start limiting fluid intake.
- Absolutely have the child use the potty right before bedtime
- Learner may need to be woken once at night to go to the bathroom until skill developed ly have the child use the potty right before bedtime.
- Use the toilet immediately upon waking up in the morning.

# Summary

- Toilet training is not easy
- It takes time, effort, consistency
- Remember to be patient!
- Do not be afraid to get help
- It's a learning process! It doesn't just happen



# Resources

- [www.projectpottytraining.com](http://www.projectpottytraining.com)
- [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)
- Phat, A. & Cicero, F. (2002). Reinforcement-based toilet training, ABA convention workshop.
- Brazelton, T.B., Christopherson, E.R., Frauman, A.C., Gorski, P.A., Poole, J.M., Stadtler, A.C., Wright, C.L. (1999). Instruction, timeliness, and medical influences affecting toilet training. *Pediatrics*, 103, 1353-1358.
- Coyne, P. ,Toilet training children with special needs. Coyne & Associates Group, a Psychology Group
- Wheeler, M, M. Ed., Toilet Training for Individuals with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities, 2nd edition. (2007)

# Questions/Comments



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