

# Toilet Training support

Many children and young people with or without a learning difficulties/diagnosis struggle with toilet training. It is never too late to learn, the goal is for using the toilet to become a learnt behaviour.

Children indicate readiness in many ways. An awareness of being wet/soiled or a tug of their clothes, patting of their nappy/pants, hiding, may be awareness for toileting needs.

Some children/young people have toilet anxiety and some have co-ordination problems. This can often cause high levels of anxiety for both child and parent. The following strategies and ideas can be used to assist with toileting training awareness.

It can be really helpful to try to work out which part of the process is a challenge to your child. There are many stages to the process. Some children/young people like it to be broken down in a step by step guide so they know what is coming next as part of the routine. Lots of patience, consistency, and of course lots of praise/rewards. Don't stress. One size does not fit all; each individual child will progress at their own pace. The toilet/Bathroom should be a safe fun space.

First Rule out constipation, before starting toilet training.

## Constipation

- You can poop every day or even several times a day and still be constipated, it's about how much? What it looks like? (Bristol stool chart) and how often? It can happen at any age. NOT having fluid and having a poor diet can cause constipation.

## Equipment

- Be Prepared – get the equipment you need, potty, toilet seat insert, children need to feel safe.
- A step or ladder with built in seat can be bought. A urinal that sticks to the wall for boys who want to stand to wee. Your Occupational therapy may be able to help to provide some equipment.



- Spare Clothes, wet wipes, spare plastic bag for wet clothes if an accident occurs.
- Fun toilet bag (bubbles, stress/sensory ball, book, colouring etc.) Small soft blanket, which can be placed over the legs for them to feel safe and secure
- Reminder items - Timer (egg timer, sand timers, on phone/ipad etc.) A vibrating watch.

- Visual toilet routine symbols, objects of reference (toilet bag or material with smell etc.) Now and Next board (help process time) Reward chart. Social stories.

These can help to process an understanding of routine and let them be in control of their choices. It will help with communication, even for those children/young people who can be vocal but are stubborn.



## The Environment

- The environment needs to be comfortable and private for people to go to the toilet. Consider the following -
- Smells – Try a scrunches hair bobble sprayed in their favourite smell, (worn on the wrist) for them to smell or their own little spray they can use or learn to use.
- Bright lights - Children might like to wear a hat or sunglasses
- Noise of the flush/dryers – Ear defenders or headphones, sticker over the automatic flushers (to stop it going off)
- Lock on toilet door \_ let child/young person open and close with yourself in the bathroom as it will help when going to school or going to public toilets.
- Fun things to look at or favourite music playing.
- Using toilet paper can be tricky for some people, so it's valuable to check that your child is able to reach the roll, tear off an appropriate length, and fold it and so on.
- Wet wipes are good to use when learning bottom wiping as they wipe more easily and cover a larger surface area. Some children find them to be quite cold though.

## Habit

- Small steps at regular times, if at school try to do the same – consistency
- Change nappies in the toilet area
- Let your child see the poop out of the nappy/underwear being put down the toilet
- Try and let your child sit on the potty/toilet and increase over time as this will feel like their everyday routine
- Let them see other family members go to the toilet, so they understand it is normal and everyone poos and wees.
- Make a note of what times your child wees (voids) and poos, how long are they dry for?
- Encourage your child to get into a rhythm of going to the toilet so they don't feel rushed. After a meal there is a reflex that stimulates the bowel, so this may be a good time to try and set up a routine.
- Encouraging your child to go after breakfast may reduce the anxiety of needing to go at school.
- Lots of praise, sticker chart with a small reward at the end of the week, could be favourite food/activity

## Clothing

- Getting dressed/ undressed independently may be difficult for your child, encourage and practice the fastening on your child's trousers, pulling tights/pants up and down. Ask your OT for additional strategies if your child struggles with dressing.
- Adaptive easy to wear school clothing available online from Next, M&S and Asda.
- Washable products are recommended when training or kitchen paper in nappies so the child/young person can feel the wet on their skin and start to recognise and respond to the sensation of weeing.
- Puppy pads are often used on car seats, sofa's etc. to protect from accidents.

## Sitting on the toilet

- Support your child to sit in a good position on the toilet, if your child has poor balance they may benefit from a children's toilet seat which helps them to perch more easily, also the toilet does not look as scary with a smaller insert.
- A step under their feet to help them maintain their posture. Knees should be slightly higher than your hips as this is a good position for all poops and wees to be able to come out better.
- Sit with legs slightly apart (especially girls). If they struggle to face forward, sit them the opposite way, straddle the toilet.

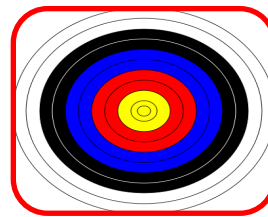


## Going to a toilet away from home

- Plan ahead for using public toilets as they can present more challenges. They can often be cold, be set up differently to home and have noisy hand driers. Talking about what to expect before you go in can help and maybe having a supply of toilet wipes, have a favourite toy to take with you.
- At school, it is valuable to have a discrete conversation with staff that is most likely to support your child and make arrangements such as keeping your child's toilet bag in the toilet for them to use, or going to the toilet just before or after break when it is quieter, using a different toilet may help.
- Getting ready to start nursery/school, look round and look at the toilets/bathroom with your child. Ask for a photo of the bathroom area, so your child can familiarise themselves, making it less scary.

## Techniques to help with toilet wiping

- Some children struggle to do things behind their backs as they are not able to see what they are doing. Playing games which encourage them to pass objects behind them such as passing a beanbag or ball between their hands behind their backs can be helpful. try getting your child to reach for objects that are passed from behind them through their legs e.g. balloons, balls or bean bags.
- You could try putting stickers on to the back of their clothes and get them to reach and peel them off.
- In the bath practice wiping your bottom with a flannel, emphasise wiping “up and away”, rather than wiping around.
- Try letting your child use a small hand held mirror. They can check to see if their bottom looks clean.



- Some people play games which encourage the child to be able to wipe their bottom. You could practice bottom wiping by playing the ‘target practice’ game
- Laminate a picture of a target (last Page)
- Place a small amount of chocolate spread/ baby lotion in the centre of the target
- Encourage your child to tear off 4 pieces of toilet roll at a time- placing one hand on top of the toilet roll and one hand around the piece they want to pull off.
- Encourage your child to fold the paper in half and in half again. Try this on the table first and then on your child’s leg.
- Encourage your child to use ‘pinchy fingers’ to do one pinch of the toilet roll on the target. Use the target as a guide- give your child a score according to how close they can stay to just keeping the chocolate spread on the centre of the target.
- After one pinch/ small wipe encourage your child to look at the paper and hide anything they can see by folding the paper in half.
- Continue until the target is clean/ your child needs a new piece of toilet paper.
- Once your child has mastered this independently without you helping them physically or giving verbal prompts play the same game but hold the target behind your child’s bottom.
- Practice wiping tables /trays /surfaces using the dishcloth and the ‘scoop and lift’ technique.

## Bottom Wiping

Bottom wiping is often a difficult and embarrassing topic to talk about. Often children do not realise the purpose of the target practice game. Once they have mastered this they may need prompting to transfer this skill to bottom wiping. It’s important to help your child to practice this skill independently, allow them to try wiping first before helping them.

When your child is practicing it may be helpful to including washing hands within the routine of going to the toilet.

- Always wipe from front to back, less chance of infection.

- Toilet wiping aid – see picture below. This is useful for someone who needs support/assistance but does not like someone else to help and would like to be independent



### Best position for wiping

- Some Children find that they can sit on the seat, lean to one side and reach to wipe from this position.
- Other children will stand to wipe, but putting one foot onto a footstool can help them to reach. These children may also like something to hold onto though; this could be the side of the bath maybe.

[www.YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BalloonBathroom) - Balloon Bathroom How to improve wiping skills in kids

### Useful websites & Apps for support and advice

- [www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk) (bowels & bladder)
- [www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk) (bowel & bladder)
- [www.autistic.org.uk](http://www.autistic.org.uk)
- [www.milestones.org](http://www.milestones.org) (Autism resources/toileting)
- [www.pants4school](http://www.pants4school)

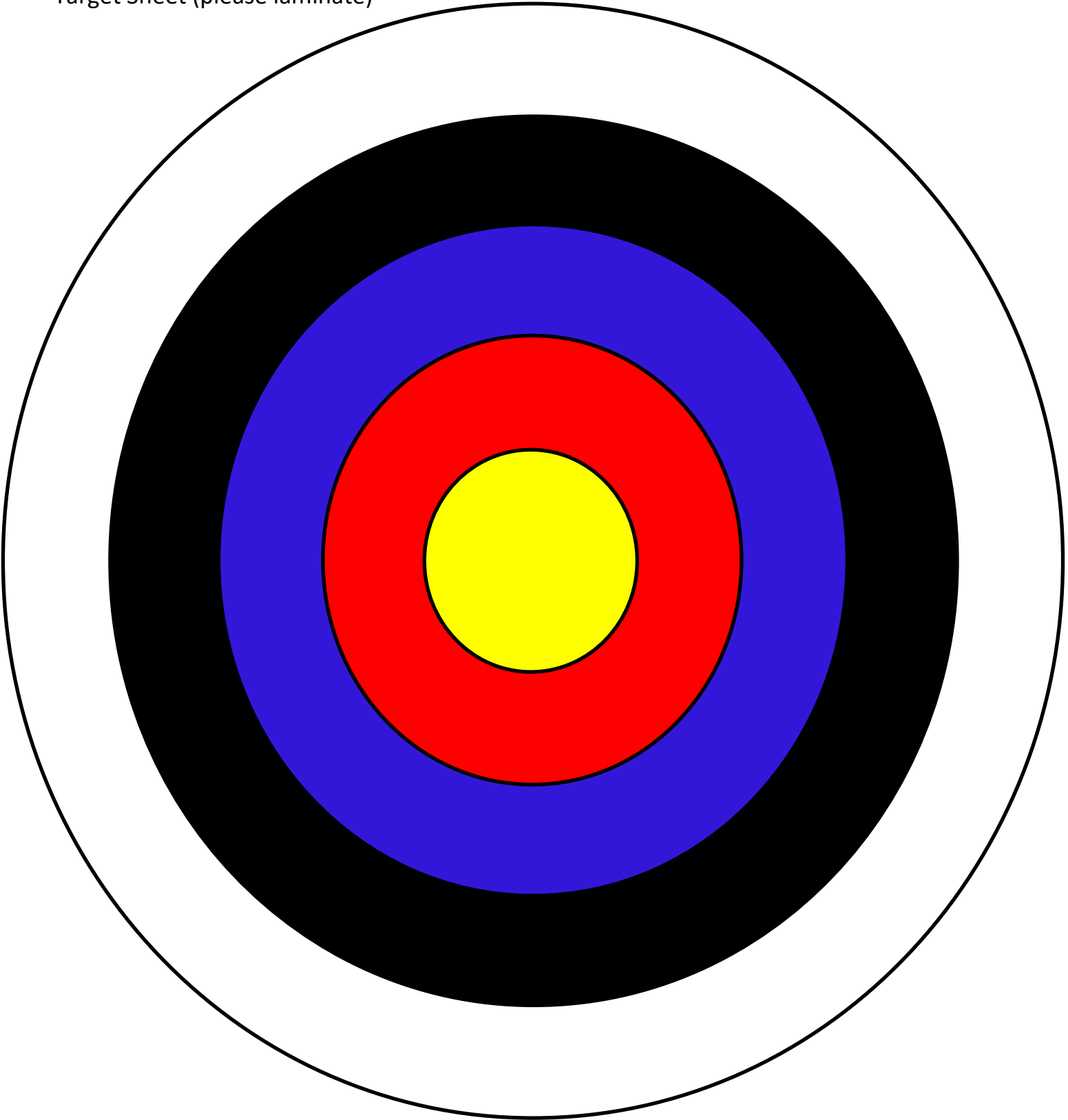
### Free apps for children/young people

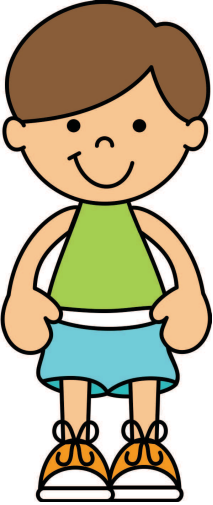
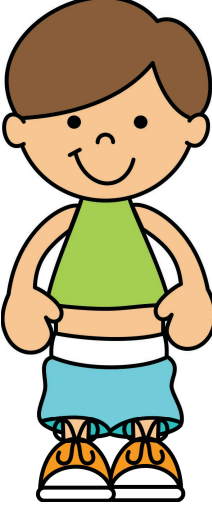



- Poo goes to poo land (social story)
- Happy Poo (fun diary for toilet habits)
- Plant nanny (fun diary for drinking)
- DreamDry (Enuresis)

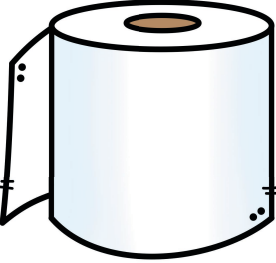
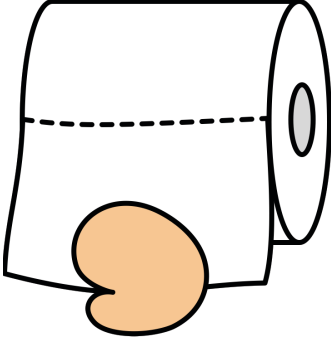
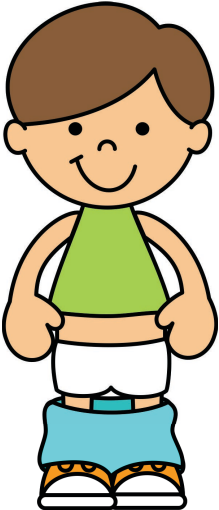
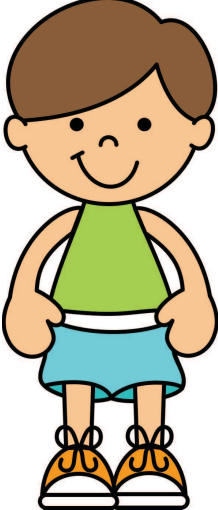

### Products to buy

- [www.pshealthcare.co.uk](http://www.pshealthcare.co.uk) - washable products
- [www.tena.co.uk](http://www.tena.co.uk)





Target Sheet (please laminate)



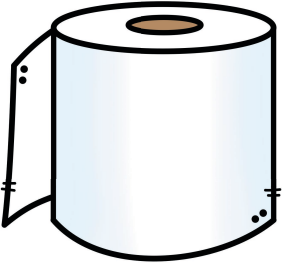
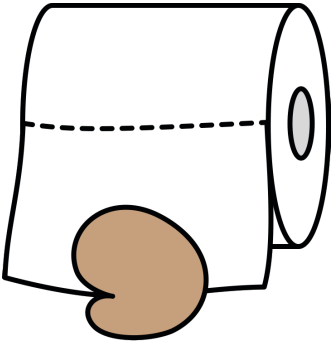
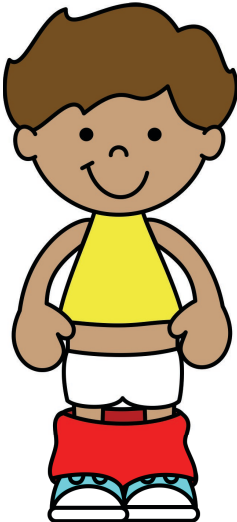

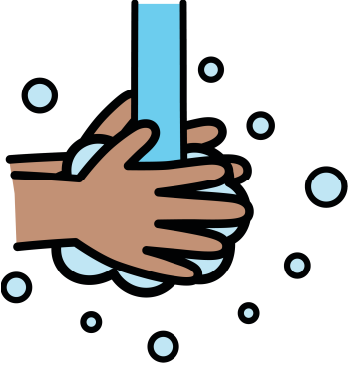

pants down	underwear down	sit on toilet	pee in toilet	poop in toilet
				 <small>© Autism Little Learners</small>

get toilet paper	wipe	underwear up	pants up	wash hands
				 <small>© Autism Little Learners</small>



pants down	underwear down	sit on toilet	pee in toilet	poop in toilet
				

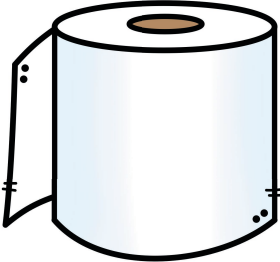
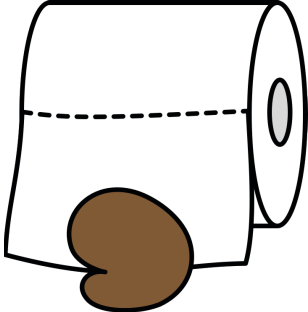
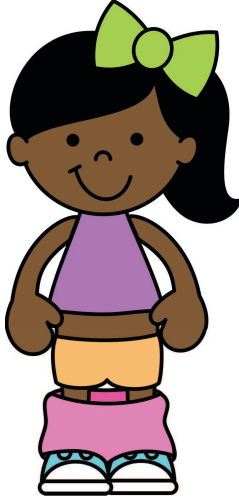
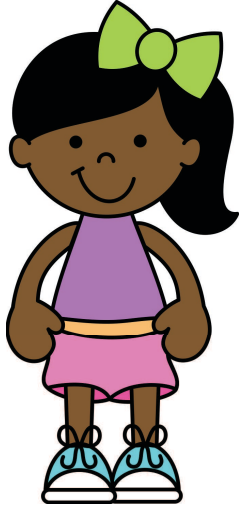

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get toilet paper	wipe	underwear up	pants up	wash hands
				

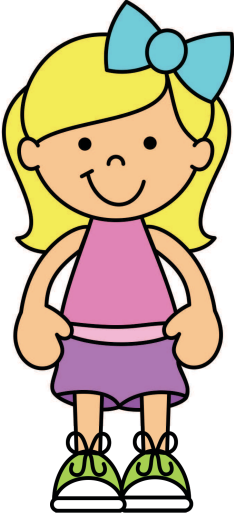
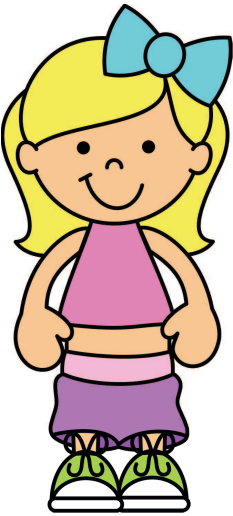



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pants down	underwear down	sit on toilet	pee in toilet	poop in toilet
				

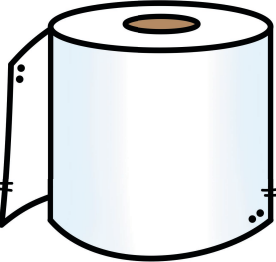
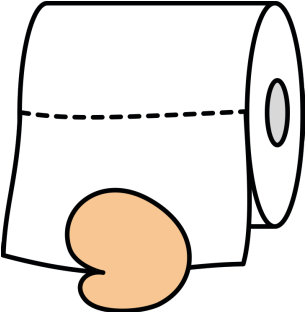
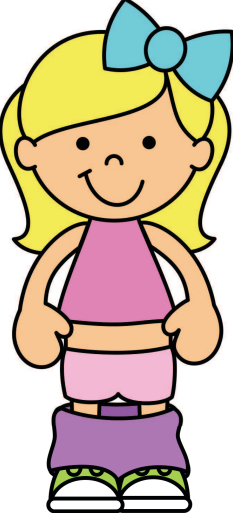
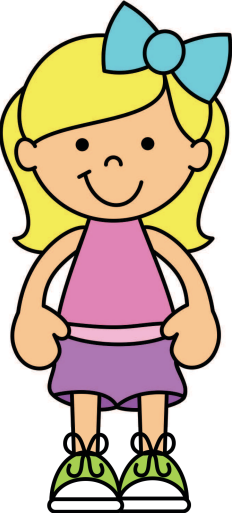
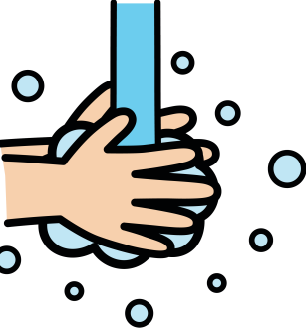
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get toilet paper	wipe	underwear up	pants up	wash hands
				

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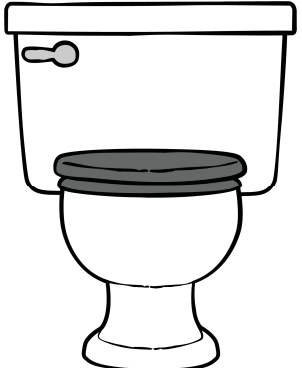
pants down	underwear down	sit on toilet	pee in toilet	poop in toilet
				

© Autism Little Learners

get toilet paper	wipe	underwear up	pants up	wash hands
				

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Other options you may want to cut out and add into the sequence if it is something you are working on.

flush	flush	flush	seat down	lid down
				


Undies down



Sit down



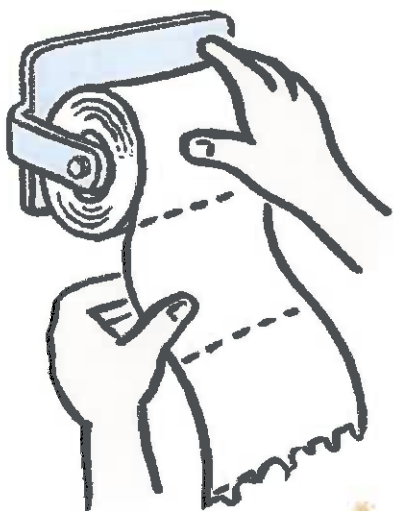
Do wee



Do poo



Get toilet paper



Wipe bottom  
front to back



Undies up

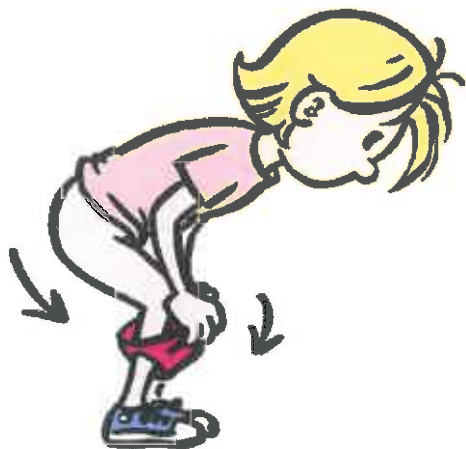


Flush toilet





# Undies down



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# Sit down



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# Do wee



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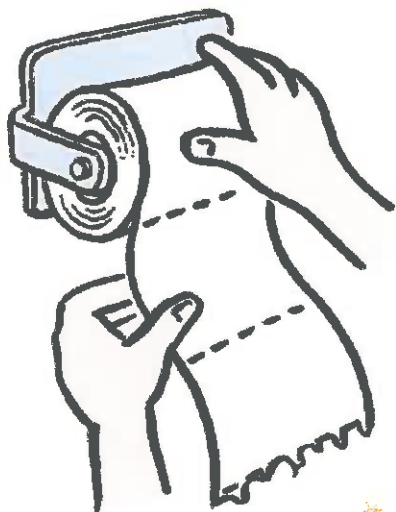
# Do poo



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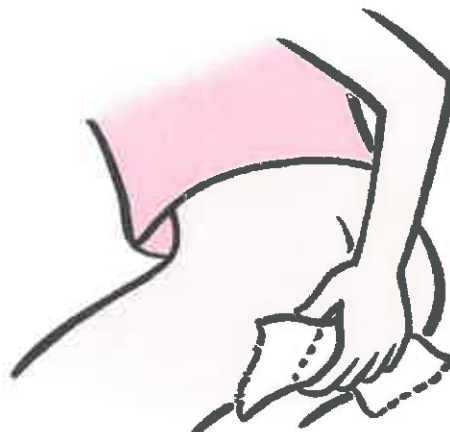
# Get toilet paper



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# Wipe bottom front to back



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# Undies up



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# Flush toilet



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**1**

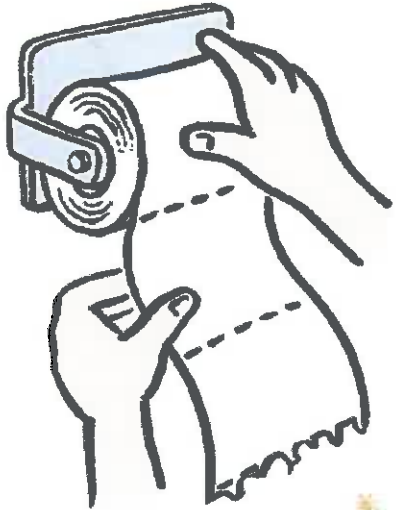
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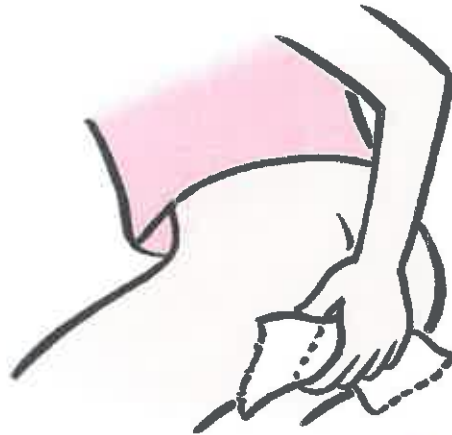
**4**



Get toilet paper



Wipe bottom  
front to back



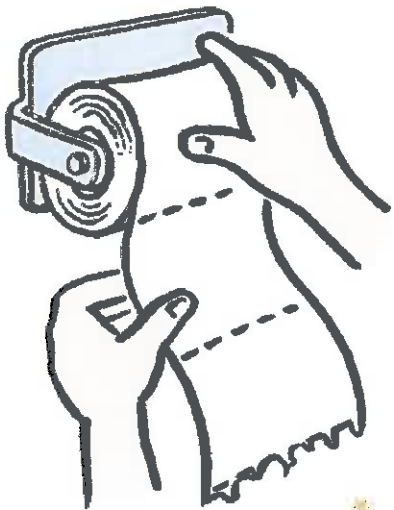
Check paper



Put paper  
in toilet



Get toilet paper



Wipe bottom  
front to back



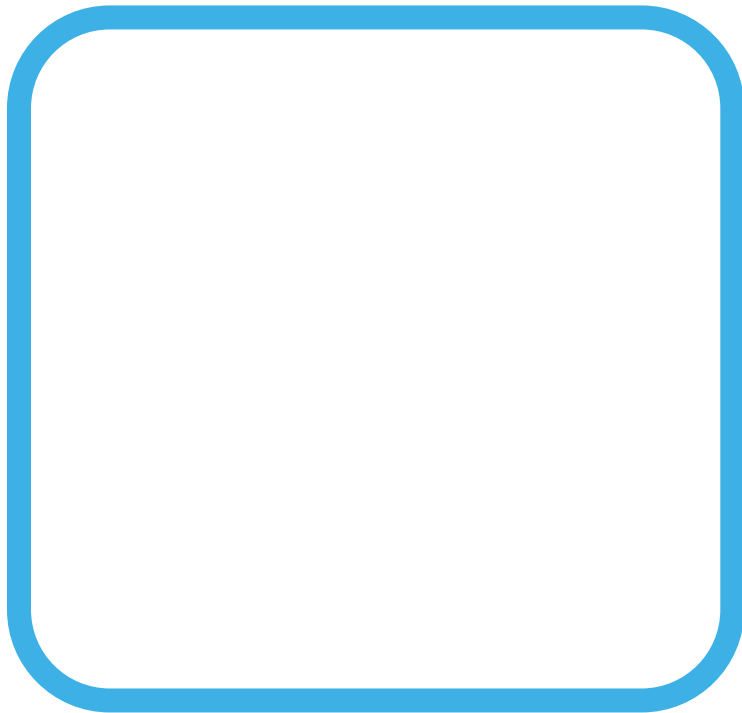
Check paper



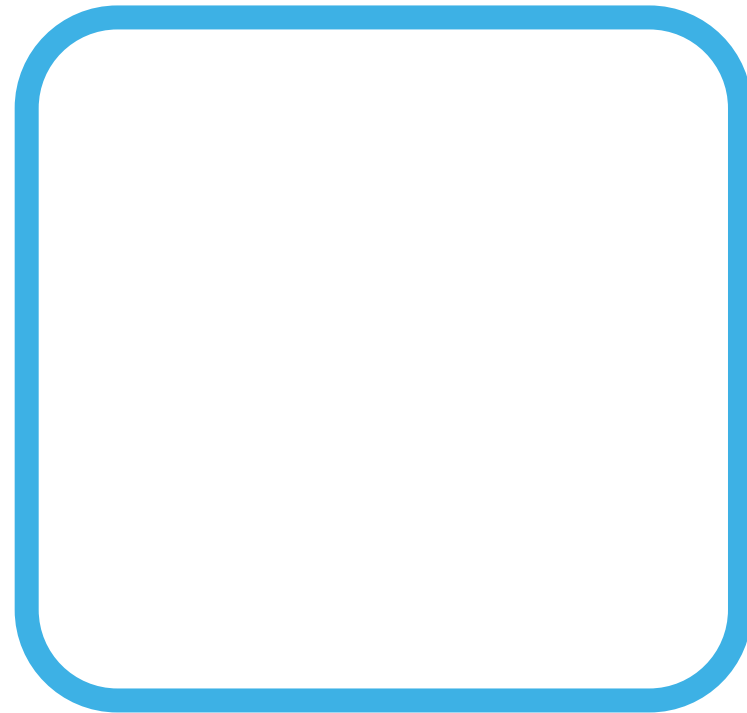
Put paper  
in toilet



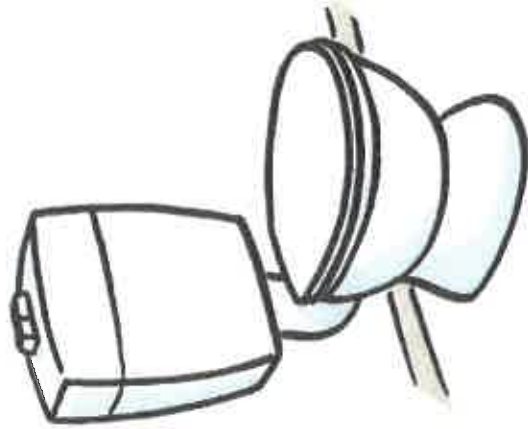
**Now**

A large, empty rounded square box with a blue border, intended for writing or drawing in the 'Now' section.

**Next**

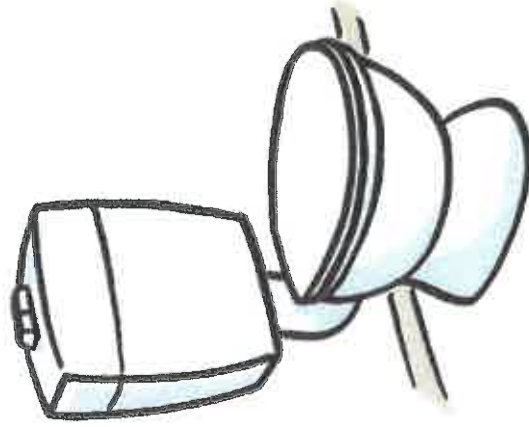
A large, empty rounded square box with a blue border, intended for writing or drawing in the 'Next' section.

Toilet



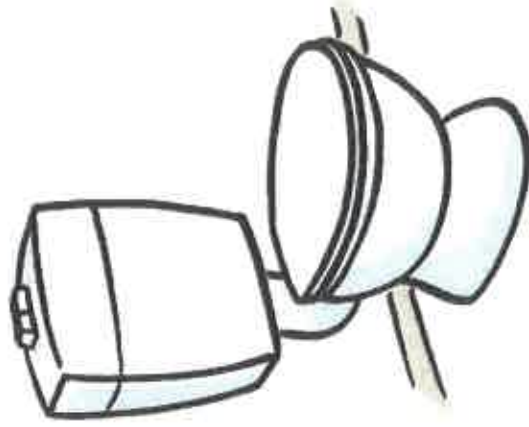
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Toilet



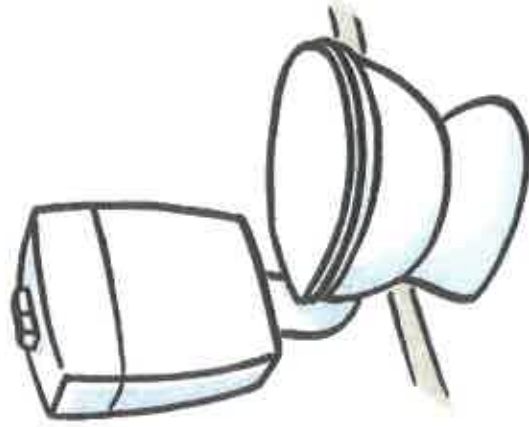
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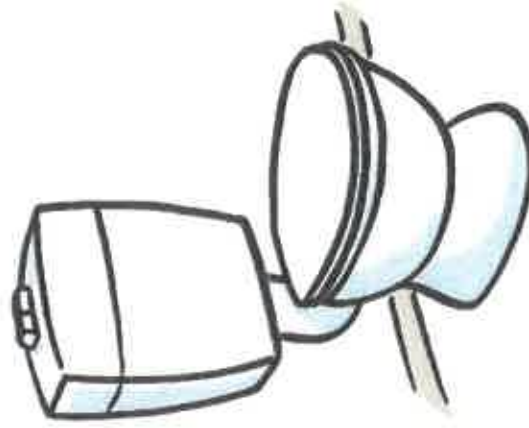
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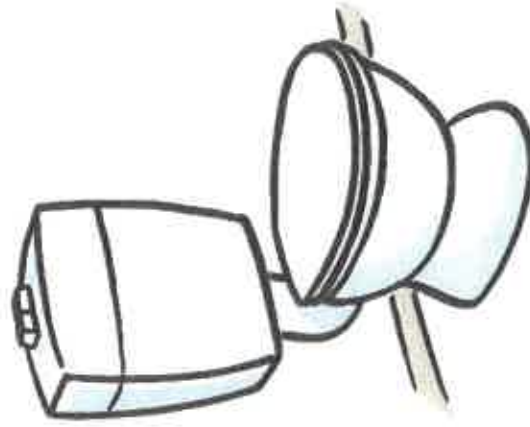
A Victorian Contenance Resource Centre 2010

Toilet



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Toilet



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**Picture/Photo of next activity or reward  
(favourite thing child would like to do)**

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(favourite thing child would like to do)**

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**Picture/Photo of next activity or reward  
(favourite thing child would like to do)**

# ★ Toilet Training Progress Sticker Reward Chart ★

<p>I pulled my pants down myself.</p> 						
<p>I used the toilet for a wee or poo.</p> 						
<p>I used paper to wipe.</p> 						
<p>I flushed the toilet.</p> 						
<p>I washed my hands.</p> 