

TOILET TRAINING



We realize that some children come to school lacking basic toilet training skills. While this can be frustrating and disrupting to the classroom, it is important to keep in mind the needs of that child and other children in the classroom. The Health Department supports the efforts of Chautauqua County's educators and their aides. In our effort to prevent, promote and protect the health and wellness of Chautauqua County we want to highlight some information shared by the *NYS Department of Education in a memo dated September 29, 2023 on toilet learning.*

Learning Environment Considerations:

All students deserve a warm and safe environment that creates a sense of belonging and connectedness and helps students to feel supported. Toileting accidents can be a source of embarrassment and distress to a child, especially when a trusted adult or peer reacts in an insensitive way. How an adult or peer reacts can significantly impact the child's social-emotional health, self-esteem, as well as interest in learning. Being proactive is key. Toileting is a skill to be taught and mastered over time and incorporating the following best practices can assist in planning and fostering children's independence.

- **Involve the child's family** in developing a toileting plan to build skills. This plan should include common vocabulary words and a consistent routine that is both culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate to be used both in the home and at school.



- **Build bathroom times into the daily schedule** to establish a consistent routine, while also allowing children to access the bathroom as needed.
- School personnel should **frequently check** in with children who are being toilet trained (e.g., arrival time, before/after snack, and meals, transitioning between activities, etc.) rather than depending on them to tell the adult. This will remind the child to use the toilet facilities before an accident occurs.
- **Read books** and incorporate toileting picture books into the classroom library and centers where appropriate (e.g., dramatic play, science areas).
- **Ensure that each child has one or more sets of extra clothes available.** Parents may need to be reminded to send in a replacement set of clothing each time that the child has a toileting accident.
- **Be encouraging** to the child. When there is an accident, have a private conversation with the child reassuring that they may use the bathroom any time the need arises and remind them of the toileting plan in a positive manner.
- **Have a plan** and protocol in place for changing the child in private when there is an accident so as not to disrupt the classroom routine (e.g., an adult staff member directly supervises the children from the bathroom doorway where they are able to enter the restroom quickly to provide assistance).
- **Stay calm and positive.** Children are sensitive to other's reactions to their behavior.
- **Provide positive praise** and support for the child's efforts.

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Q & A

Q. Are there any special considerations for prekindergarten students with disabilities?

A. Yes. It is the program's collective responsibility to know and implement any toileting skills goals or services (e.g., *specially designed instruction, nursing, self-care, etc.*) as identified in the child's IEP. In addition to the best practices identified above, the program must ensure that the learning environment is a place that feels safe and where students can see themselves represented and reflected. Photographs, gestures, and visual cues can help students develop language around toileting.



Q. When a child has a toileting accident, who is responsible for assisting in the clean-up (e.g., *wiping a child, bagging soiled clothing, etc.*)?

A. Toileting is not a nursing function. Any adult can assist a child in toileting. To ensure the safety of children, school districts should inquire with their insurance company to identify the number of staff who must be present when assisting with toileting.

Q. Should staff wear gloves when assisting a child with toileting?

A. Yes. Due to the need for hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (e.g., *disposable gloves*) when dealing with body fluids, a sink with soap and hand drying method(s) should be readily accessible in the location where staff change or assist students with toileting.

When changing students or assisting them with toileting staff should:

- Wash hands before putting on clean disposable gloves.
- Use cleansing wipes designed for cleaning the perineal area (*groin area*) or toilet paper. The use of paper towels is not recommended as they can irritate the skin in the perineal area.
- Dispose of the used wipes in a trash bag, and used toilet paper may be flushed.
- After cleaning the student or assisting the student to wipe after using the toilet, staff should remove gloves and wash hands again before assisting student with putting on clean undergarments, or clothing.
- Lastly, staff should encourage (*and assist as needed*) the student to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Wet or dirty clothes should be placed in a plastic bag that can be sealed tightly and stored out of reach of children until sent home to be laundered. Rinsing children's clothing or laundering soiled clothing at school is discouraged because it provides an opportunity to contaminate hands and other surfaces.



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