

Toilet Learning 101 Handbook

It is now time for your child, or a child in your classroom, to start toilet learning! This is a VERY exciting time for both your child and you! You are probably wondering where to start. You may be feeling overwhelmed, but please remember, THIS is what we do. We are here to help you every step of the way (except at home, but we promise to support you with our knowledge and experience during this venture). There is no exact book, or training, that is the exact way to start the process. It can vary for every child, but also each parent. What one parent may be comfortable implementing, others may need an alternative. However, being in a Montessori setting, it is valuable to learn the basics of the Montessori toileting process. The MOST important thing is that we, as teachers, and you, as parents, work together to ensure that we are on the same page and providing consistency between school and home.

The following process is posted in every toilet training bathroom here at Cascade Montessori, and it is sent home with every family in their welcome packet. It is important that we teach the full process from the beginning of toilet training. Adding steps in as we go only provides confusion. Purchasing step stools is an important factor in preparing for this process and it will encourage your child to be independent as they learn.

Toileting Process

Child should be completing the tasks below independently, only using assistance when necessary. IF the task is new to the child, show them how to do it and then encourage them to try. Verbal confirmation of success helps the child know they are succeeding and provides confidence. Example: “Yes”, “You did it”, “Correct”.

1. Get step stool (if necessary).
2. Turn on the light.
3. Put the step stool in front of the toilet (if necessary).
4. Pull down pants and underwear past knees (or off, if needed).
5. Sit or stand (depends on your child’s gender and comfortability/preference). Encourage boys to stand, lean hips forward and hold the back of the toilet, if needed. Boys can also be placed straddling the tank, in preparation to advance to standing. Some boys prefer to sit with the tank to their back and push their

penis down. We start with trying one of the first options, but have to keep in mind that we want the child to feel comfortable in this process.

6. Upon completion, your child should get toilet paper and wipe. Encourage boys to use toilet paper to wipe up any drops (“Be a sweetie, wipe the seatie”).

7. Stand, if in seated position.

8. Pull up underwear OR sit down to put underwear on.

**Please allow your child to be challenged. It is imperative for their problem solving, fine and large motor skills. If they get frustrated, it is a great time to ask “would you like help?” They may choose to do it themselves. They may ask for “help please”.*

9. Pull up pants OR sit to pull up their pants.

**It can be helpful to put their pants on the ground with the legs clearly spread apart so that they are better able to navigate one foot into each of the pant legs.*

10. Put down the lid.

11. Flush (use two hands, if needed).

12. Move the step stool to sink, if necessary.

13. Turn on water.

14. 1 (ONE) pump of soap.

15. Lather for 10 seconds (have your child count to ten, slowly pronouncing each word- this is also a great way to work in language and math). Count with them!

16. Rinse (while scrubbing hands together) for 10 seconds (counting aloud as before).

17. Get a paper towel to dry hands.

18. Turn water off.

19. Put the paper towel in the trash.

20. Return step stool, if needed.

21. Turn the light off.

The process we practice doesn't always go perfectly. But as they say “Practice makes perfect!”

Your child will be in either Pull-Ups or underwear during this process. If your child has urinated or had a bowel movement in their underwear, you'll replace their “covering” and dispose of things at your preference.

At school, if they urinate in their pants, we will help them get out clean clothes and change into them (allowing the child as much independence as possible). If they have a bowel movement in their pants, we will change the child's clothes and drop as much of

the BM into the toilet as we can. If it is “glued” to the clothing, our staff are only able to put these items in a bag for parents to wash. All soiled clothes will go into a bag and then into the class laundry basket near the front door.

Extra important things to keep in mind during the toilet learning process:

1. Please send your child in clothing that provides as much opportunity for independence as possible. Pants and shorts with an elastic waist are most convenient for them to learn with. Please NO DRESSES, SKIRTS, ONESIES or OVERALLS. I know, they look SOOOOO cute.,but they truly hinder your child’s ability to be independent (dresses often dip into the toilet and the other items also inhibit independence).
2. Why Pull-Ups are an important transition point for your child- Pull-Ups vs. Diapers. Diapers have buckles, while Pull-Ups allow the child to practice, *on their own*, how to put them on independently. The “up and down” motion of a Pull-Up can teach your child preparation skills for when they start wearing underwear. It is important to acknowledge that Pull-Ups should not be worn past the point when children have the ability to acknowledge when they need to use the toilet (with either verbal or non-verbal cues).
3. Underwear Types- There are both thicker and thinner underwear that you can purchase in stores or online. When your child starts wearing underwear, in the Montessori setting, it is preferred for a child to wear the thinner style. This allows your child to feel when their clothes are wet, or soiled. Most of the time they will not enjoy it, but this is part of the learning process. It is “cause and effect”. They realize that they are able to feel wet or soiled and they often realize that they have control of when they release those bodily functions. When they are wearing thin underwear, we can also see the wet, or soiled, clothes more easily this way and be able to attend to it more quickly.
4. If a child has soiled or wet their pants, you can say “I see your pants are wet, we should go change them so that your body is clean again”. Speak with facts vs. opinion. Accidents will happen and we can easily clean them up and help the child with this process. We never want to make a child feel like they are wrong for having an “accident”, but we also don't want them to learn that it’s okay to go in their underwear. Speaking with facts can help in this situation.
5. When a child has a bowel movement in their underwear at school, teachers will need to dump as much of it into the toilet as they can. If the BM is soft and

“glued” to the underwear, we are only allowed to put it in a bag and send it home, according to our state licensing authorities. This same concept applies to their pants, if they become soiled as well. This is simply a standard part of helping your child through the toilet learning process. We advise parents to purchase inexpensive, elastic waisted pants and shorts so that when they get soiled, it is an easier loss. For those who are more earth conscious, purchasing second hand is a great solution.

6. The Montessori Method is very focused on allowing a child to develop their independence. It is important that we allow the child to do things for themselves *and at least try* each time *before* we help. This includes being able to take off and put on their own clothing, climb up to the toilet using the step stool, being able to flush the toilet and climbing down using the step stool. If a child has a bowel movement in their underwear, please help them to remove their clothes, as this isn't something they should change on their own for sanitary reasons.
7. When washing hands, the child needs to be able to climb up to the stool on their own. Our hand washing process is to get hands wet, get soap, scrub the soap on the hands for roughly 10 seconds and rinse for an additional 10 seconds (as stated above in the process). Then your child can get off the stool and get their own paper towel, dry their hands and throw it away on their own. It's very important that we make sure hands are as clean as they can get to prevent illness from spreading amongst our rooms. Having your child practice proper hand washing as often as possible at home will help them in preventing the spreading of illness at school and elsewhere.

Thank you for taking your time to read our Toilet Learning 101 Handbook and partnering with us for consistency as we assist your child in their toilet learning!