

Potty Training Readiness Checklist

How to Use This Checklist

- ☐ Observe the child for **3–5 days** during regular routines (arrival, transitions, outside time, before/after nap).
- ☐ Mark what you consistently see.
- ☐ Share results with the family and choose the next step: **Start / Practice / Wait**.

Key: A child doesn't need every skill to begin, but they need enough readiness to reduce frustration for everyone.

Physical Readiness

Check all that apply (seen consistently):

- ☐ Stays dry for **1–2 hours** at a time
- ☐ Has predictable bowel movement times (often around the same time daily)
- ☐ Shows awareness of being wet/soiled (points, tells you, hides, pulls at diaper)
- ☐ Can walk to the bathroom area (with supervision)
- ☐ Can sit safely on a potty or toilet with a reducer seat
- ☐ Shows basic bladder/bowel control (pauses, holds, then releases)

Notes: _____



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Communication Readiness

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Can communicate needs in some way (words, signs, gestures)
- ☐ Understands simple directions (“come here,” “sit,” “pants down”)
- ☐ Has a consistent word/sign for pee/poop (or will learn classroom words)
- ☐ Can tell you after an accident (“wet,” “pee,” “poop”) even if not beforehand

Notes: _____

Motor & Self-Help Readiness

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Can help pull pants up/down (or is practicing with support)
- ☐ Can sit and stand up with minimal help
- ☐ Can wash hands with support (turn water on/off, rub, rinse)
- ☐ Can follow a simple 3-step routine (example: “walk → sit → wash”)

Notes: _____



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Social-Emotional Readiness

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Shows interest in the bathroom/potty (watches, asks, imitates)
- ☐ Can sit briefly (10–30 seconds) without distress
- ☐ Accepts caregiver help with toileting routines (calm enough to participate)
- ☐ Transitions are manageable most days (not currently in a major adjustment period)
- ☐ Recovers from setbacks (can try again after an accident)

Notes: _____

Classroom Readiness

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Family can provide **several changes of clothes** (and extras for accidents)
- ☐ Child is dressed in **easy-on/off** clothing (elastic waist preferred)
- ☐ Staff can offer consistent potty opportunities during the day
- ☐ Bathroom is set up with: step stool / reducer seat / wipes / gloves / visual steps (as needed)



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- ☐ There is an agreed plan for accidents (calm script + quick change routine)

Notes: _____

Provider next steps:

- Offer potty opportunities at predictable times
 - Teach a consistent routine (see “Potty Routine” below)
 - Use calm language and plan for accidents
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Ready to Practice

Typically: Some strong signs, but a few key areas still developing.

Provider next steps:

- Practice sitting at routine times (no pressure)
 - Practice clothing skills (“push down/pull up” with support)
 - Build comfort in the bathroom with books/songs
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Not Ready Yet

Typically: Few readiness signs, high distress, or major changes happening.

Provider next steps:



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- Focus on comfort and routines (handwashing, bathroom visits)
 - Recheck in 3–4 weeks or after transitions settle
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Classroom Potty Routine

Use a calm, consistent routine every time:

1. “It’s potty time, let’s try.”
2. “Pants down.”
3. “Sit and try”
4. “All done, wipe/flush.”
5. “Wash hands.”
6. “Back to play!”

Tip: Praise effort: “You tried! that’s how we learn.”

Accident Plan (No Shame)

What to say:

“Oops, your body is learning. Let’s get cleaned up. We’ll try again later.”

What to do:

- Change quickly and calmly



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- Child helps with one small step if able (pants up, clothes into bag)
 - Wash hands
 - Return to play
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When to Pause and Suggest a Family Health Check-In

Share concerns if you notice:

- pain or fear with urination or bowel movements
 - constipation, stool withholding, or very hard stools
 - frequent accidents with no progress after consistent practice
 - sudden regression with additional symptoms
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Optional: Family Connection Questions (Quick)

- What words do you use at home?
- What is your goal right now (practice vs. training)?
- What times do you try at home?
- Do you use rewards or prefer none?
- Any privacy/modesty preferences?



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