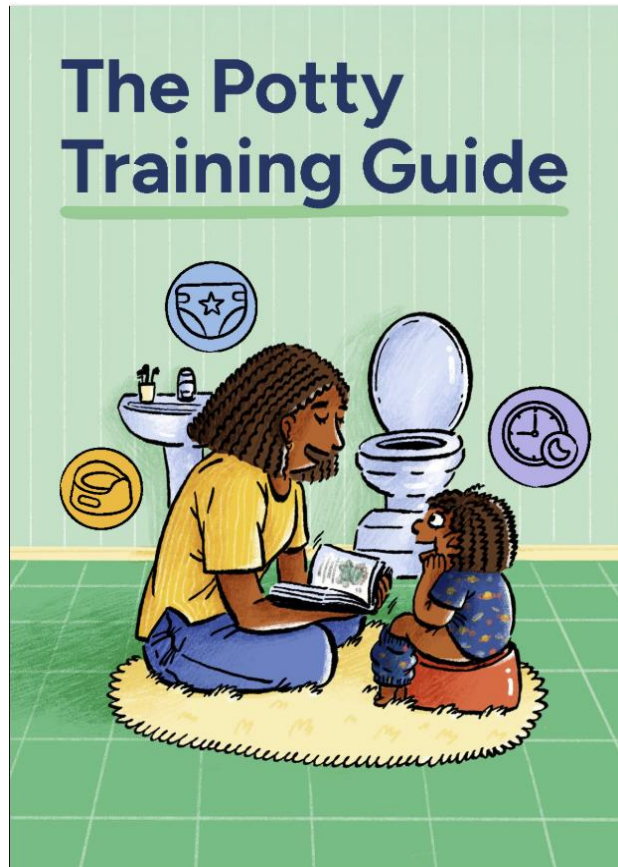


Starting Reception

Erin Willson
Kindred²



The Potty Training Guide



www.pottytrainingguide.co.uk



These guides have been created collaboratively including input from:



Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson said:

"This new guidance from early years experts will be a brilliant help in getting their children potty trained and ready for school."

Health and Social Care Secretary, Wes Streeting said:

"This guidance is vital to achieving our mission of giving every child the best start in life, providing parents with expert-backed advice to support their child's health and development."



How and when to potty train

- 18-30 months
- Guidance and advice on how and when to start
- Top tips on being successful
- Developed in collaboration with experts including ERIC
- Department for Education's guidance updated to mirror and signpost the Guide

www.pottytrainingguide.co.uk



Flexible, accessible, adaptable

- 12 languages
- Read-aloud function
- Pdf (download and/or print), online
- Add your own logo to the front cover
- All images royalty free
- Comms pack to support sharing with families
 - Template email and website copy
 - Social media template



Objectives of today

Practical advice and strategies from experienced professionals looking at:

- Working positively with families before Reception (and once they have started)
- Approaching potty training conversations with confidence
- Balancing support with school expectations



Today's speakers

- Helen Clifton – Child Health Development Workers, City of York Council
- Clío Brown – Director of Early Years and Early Reading, E-ACT Academy Trust
- Dominic O'Regan (Head) & Serena Oberheim (Assistant Principal (Inclusion))
Mulberry West St Leonards



Supporting Early Years Professionals with Toilet Training

- Children spend a significant amount of time in early education settings.
- Children need lots of opportunities to learn through practice and repetition.
- Communication is key with parents and carers.

Healthy Child Service York

- Offering fortnightly workshops for all practitioner's to help overcome the barriers to working alongside parents.
- Aim is to look at how to support parents with toilet training, not how to toilet train.
- Practitioners encouraged to share the link to Potty Training Guide with parents.

A black silhouette of the York skyline, featuring various buildings and a clock tower, set against a light blue background.

Working together to improve and make a difference

Supporting Families

Discussions with settings has highlighted a common theme:

Monday morning and parents say they are starting toilet training but haven't actually started and expect the setting to do everything!

Opening up Conversations

- How is it going at home?
- What routines have you in place?
- If not initiated at home, signpost to The Potty Training Guide and discuss the three step approach.
- Step two (practising) is the most important and takes time.

Communication is Key

Information from Parents:	Information to share with Parents
How often are parents offering the potty or toilet?	How often the child poos and the type of poo they are passing.
What words or signs are used to describe wee and poo?	How much have they had to drink while in the setting.
When is a good time to stop using nappies at home (stage 3.)	Discuss any upcoming room changes and avoid going into pants around this time.
Are nappies being used at nap times?	Have a conversation at the end of the session about how toilet training has gone or keep a diary.

Working Together

- Creates a positive experience for the child.
- Supports the child's confidence and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensures good communication.
- Promotes good hygiene and healthy habits.
- Supports each child as an individual.
- A consistent approach to setbacks.

A black silhouette of the York skyline, featuring various buildings, a clock tower, and a castle.

Working together to improve and make a difference

Common Barriers

- Potty Training regression
 - Only poo in a nappy
 - Stool withholding
 - Toilet anxiety
- Sitting for long enough on the potty or toilet
- Accidents are common and frequent.

Push backs and getting parents on board

- Putting a nappy back on
- *“My child is not ready”*
- Inclusive practice

Tackling difficult conversations

- Open communication is key.
- Create a safe environment
- Use “I” statements
- Sandwich approach
- Focus on Solutions

Remember to reward effort
as much as success, stay
calm and give praise.

Challenges

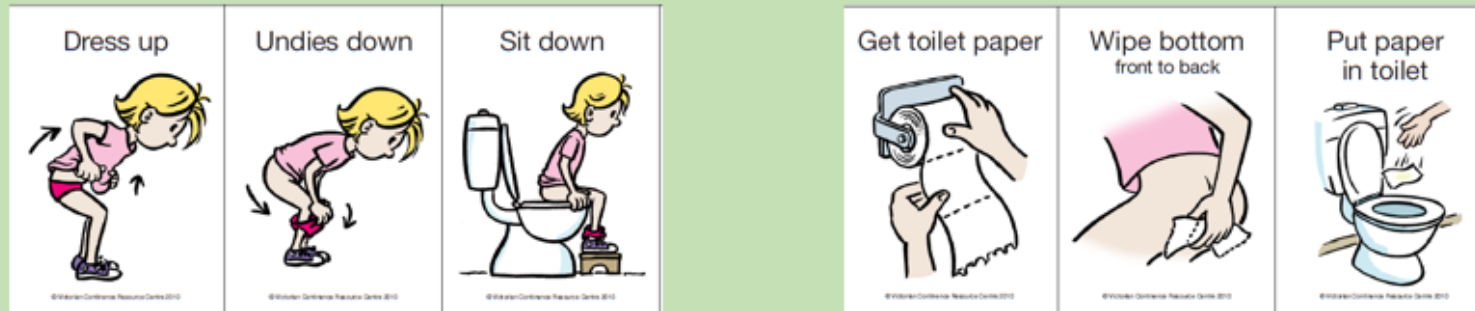
- Increasing numbers of children who aren't toilet trained.
- Increasing communication and interaction needs and the impact of this.
- Physical needs that mean adjustment to equipment before a child can start toilet training.
- Adult support needed in school for intimate care

How do we try to reduce the numbers of children starting school who aren't toilet trained?

- Speak to parents/carers before starting school. Start transition early.
- What are the barriers they are experiencing at home?
- What can parents and school agree as part of the transition programme?
- Sign posting to help e.g. Good people leaflets, school nurse at transition events.

How do we support families?

- Once the child has started school then look into why the child toilet trained.
- Agree that when a child starts school they are wearing a pull up (not nappies) As this enables the child to start to carry out behaviours needed for using the toilet.



- Are they interested or scared of the toilets, starting to sit on the toilet when you change them, flushing the toilet, using the sink.

How do we support families?

- Developmental skill. Do they show signs of being ready, knowing when they are wet, going somewhere else when they need the toilet?
- Communication and understanding with child. Is the child able to communicate clearly that they need to go to the toilet? Do they need to sign. Use symbols or objects of reference. Sequence pictures of going to the toilet. Apps such as 'See me go potty'
- Are there any other barriers to using the toilet in school. Are they settled? Physical access? Diagnosis? Anything that worries the child?

Communication and understanding with home and school.

- Keep communication open with parents and carers. Agree things for them to do at home to support. Such as continuing with the routines around using the toilet.
- Once the child is showing signs of being prepared to try toilet training agree a start date. In most cases this would be the beginning of the October half term. Explain to parent about the importance of the routines and clothing so that you have a consistent approach between home and school. On return to school meet first thing and find out what has happened in the holidays. Check that they are wearing pants, have plenty of changes of clothes, discuss the timetable for toilet visits and agree the period of time to trial it.



Supporting Families with Potty Training

E-ACT

A collaborative approach across home, nursery, school
and the wider community

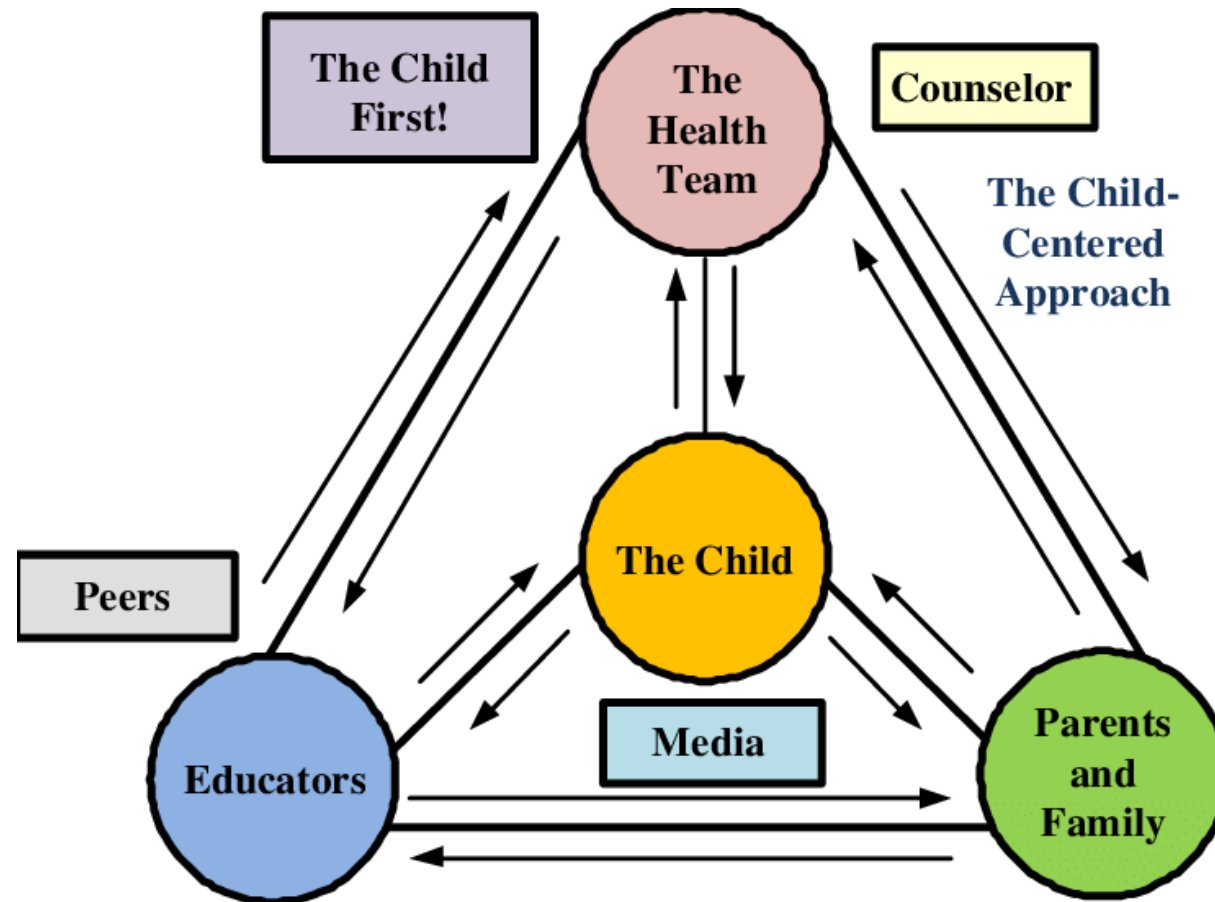
Clio Brown

Director of Early Years and Early Reading

‘The effect of parental engagement over a student’s school career is equivalent to adding two or three years to that student’s Education.’

John Hattie, Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 MetaAnalyses Relating to Achievement, 2008.

Everyone a school ready expert!

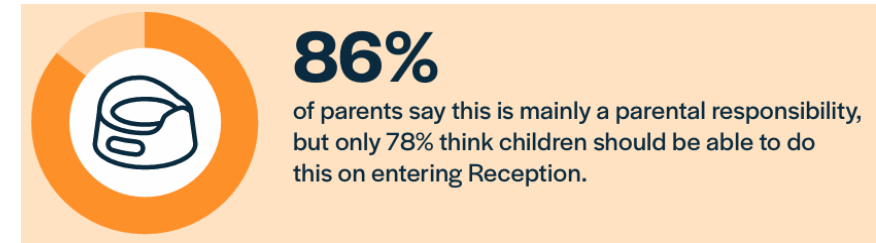
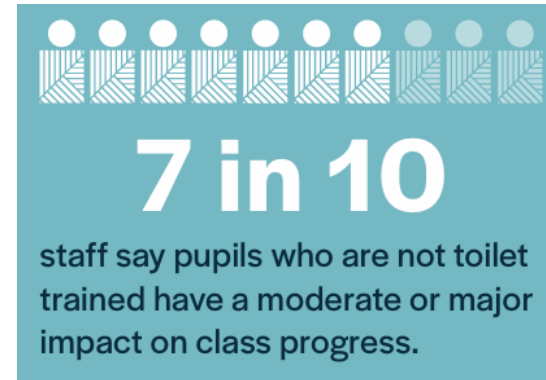


The Challenges We Face

What are we seeing?

- Increasing numbers of children arriving in Reception not yet toilet trained
- Parents receiving mixed messages from different sources
- Anxiety around starting school
- Medical, developmental and SEND considerations requiring individualised support
- Difficult conversations when expectations differ between home and school

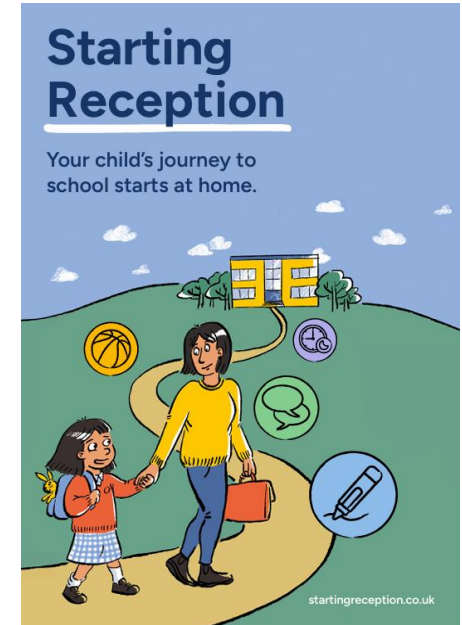
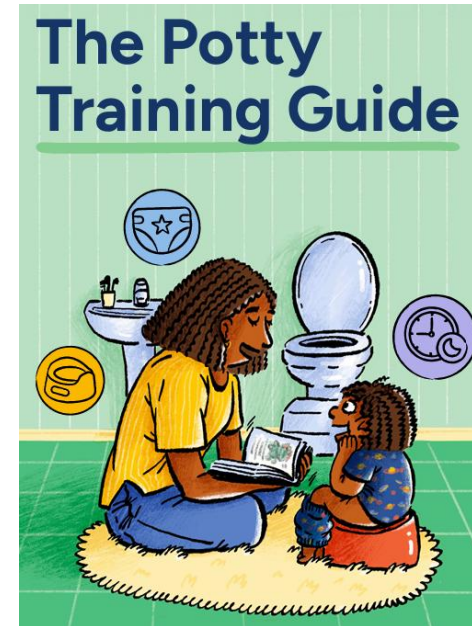
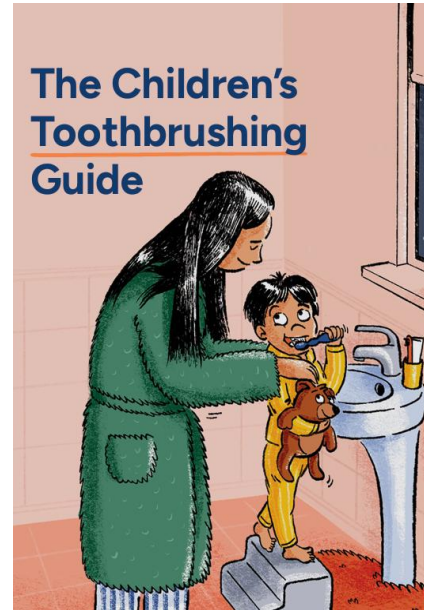
Not toilet trained



Our Starting Point

We approach every conversation with:

- empathy
- curiosity
- consistency
- partnership



Working Closely with Nurseries

Strong transition partnerships

We work closely with our nursery partners to ensure families receive consistent messages.

Examples include:

- Regular communication with feeder nurseries
- Joint meetings with parents
- Sharing concerns early
- Discussing readiness for Reception as part of transition planning
- Agreeing consistent expectations and support strategies



Why this matters

Children benefit when:



*Stronger together, better outcomes
for every child.*

Home Visits and Early Conversations

Starting the conversation before September

Home visits provide an opportunity to:

- Build relationships with families
- Understand each child's individual needs
- Discuss toilet training sensitively
- Explain expectations in Reception
- Identify any barriers early
- Signpost families to support where needed



The Home Visit Handbook: Building Bridges

Purpose of the Visit

- Emphasise the importance of building strong partnerships with parents to support the child's development.
- Help the setting, parents, and child prepare and plan for this significant transition.
- Identify any SEND to allow for early intervention and smooth transition for the child.
- Observe for any potential safeguarding concerns to report back to DSL.
- Staffing for Visits
- Visits should be carried out in pairs:
- One staff member can engage with the child while the other communicates with the parent or carer.
- Ensures personal safety during the visit.

Items to Bring

- School information pack
- Photo album/local story for starting school.
- Spare forms
- Home visit checklist
- Mobile phone
- Colouring pencils and paper
- Books or toys for the child

Personal Preparation

- Familiarise yourself with the route, address, and any parking restrictions ahead of time.
- Share your visiting schedule with another staff member.
- Contact the school or designated colleague once all visits are completed.
- Be mindful of pets or additional adults in the home.
- Choose a seat near an exit, and if you feel uncomfortable at any point, politely excuse yourself and leave.

Professional Considerations

- Refrain from commenting on the home environment to avoid implying judgment.
- Show respect and understanding for cultural differences.
- Follow appropriate customs, such as removing shoes or dressing modestly, as needed.
- Be conscious of time limitations for both staff and families.



Home visit template for entering Nursery or Reception

Discussed	Tick	Comment	Action if required (when and where)
The Child			
Child registration			
Getting to know you booklet			
First Reception			
Attended Nursery			
Medical Needs			
Keep the difference between right and wrong			
PCOB check			
Dental check			
Other			

Reflect on Research

Guidance for Practitioners: The Ofsted report "Are you ready?" provides insights into good practices for ensuring that disadvantaged children are prepared to start school, including the role of home visits in supporting school readiness.

Government Recommendations: The Education Committee's report underscores the importance of supporting a strong home learning environment, citing evidence that parental engagement significantly influences children's cognitive development before school.

Addressing Variations in School Readiness: Research published in Child Indicators Research identifies that home visit family support and other interventions can help address local variations in children's school readiness across England.

Starting Reception: Which skills should children know before starting reception? This practical guide, written by early years education experts, helps you prepare parents to prepare child for school.



First Impressions

- Home visits
- Website
- Stay and Plays
- Community links
- Shared vision



Build trust early and that foundation will always be there to aid in every conversation.

BUILDING TRUST



WAYS TO BUILD A POSITIVE PARENT-TEACHER

RELATIONSHIP



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Many parents only see their child's teacher occasionally and you want to leave a great first impression. You want your encounters with parents to be warm and gracious.



COMMUNICATION

It's important to communicate often and through various channels. Whether you communicate through text, email or phone calls, be sure to keep parents in the loop about their child's progress.



LEARN FROM PARENTS

Listen to parents when they're talking about their child. They may give you insights about the child that you were unaware of.



BE RESOURCEFUL

Be prepared to suggest resources when a parents asks questions. If you are not aware of a resource, point them in the direction where they can find the resource.



EXPLAIN DECISIONS

Take the time to explain any decisions made about the child. Educating parents who are unfamiliar with the education system makes this process a lot easier.

Our Message

"We want to work with you, not judge you."



Working with the Wider Community

It takes a community to support a child.

We also work alongside:



Joined up support. Shared focus. Better outcomes.

Our aim

To ensure families receive:



What Has Made the Biggest Difference?

Key lessons from our practice:

- ✓ Start conversations early
- ✓ Build trusting relationships
- ✓ Be clear about expectations
- ✓ Keep messages consistent across settings
- ✓ Work alongside families rather than against them
- ✓ Use community partnerships to provide additional support

Most importantly...

Children are most successful when parents, nurseries, schools and professionals work together.



Final Reflection:

Every conversation is an opportunity to build confidence, strengthen partnerships and support children to be ready for school.



Top tips for parental engagement:

1. Reassure parents who may not perceive themselves to be 'clever enough' to help their children with the EYFS, and who may feel defeated about becoming more involved, that they are doing the right thing for their children
2. Provide additional support and guidance for parents in helping their children learn. Share information about the Early Years Foundation Stage [What-to- expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf](#) (foundationyears.org.uk)
3. Inform parents about their child's care and development so that they can support the child, even though the assumption may be that the child is 'coping fine' on their own.
4. Provide information to all parents, even those that live separately from the child. This is paramount and ensures that the parents are included.
5. Think about how to involve grandparents and other significant family members who may also have a 'parenting' function.
6. Identify the barriers preventing parents from engaging and what the school can do to break down these barriers

If you liked this you may enjoy...

- Birth to 5 Matters: [Birth To 5 Matters – Guidance by the sector, for the sector](#)
- EEF: [Early Years Toolkit | EEF](#)
[\(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
- Impact EYFS Hub: [Early Childhood Hub Archive : My College \(chartered.college\)](#)
- Starting Reception: [Home - Starting Reception](#)
- Kindred Squared:



Any questions or comments
please do get in touch!

- Clío Brown-
clio.brown@e-act.org.uk
- Director of Early Years and
Early Reading
- Linkdin: Clío Brown

