

Prevention – Support in the Early Years (-9 months to 5 years)

Scrutiny Review Panel

Tuesday 17th December 2024



Key area for focus

Strategies for working towards school readiness in the early years, especially social development and personal care.



Revisiting vision and ambition



Start Well Strategy 2024-2027

- Recognising how critical the early years are for children’s development and success in later life, the refreshed Start Well Strategy articulates how the Council working with the Foundation Trust and other partners will work together with families and communities to prioritise outcomes for children in the earliest years of life over the next 3 years. The strategy is underpinned by the **Healthy Child Programme (HCP)**, a key public health early intervention and prevention policy with alignment to the Greater Manchester (GM) Early Years (EYs) Delivery Model.
- The strategy covers pregnancy to school and supports a shared vision, alignment of priorities and provides a more consistent borough-wide offer with the ability to target services more effectively to the most vulnerable children and families. **At the core of Start Well is midwifery, Start Well health visiting teams and early years education.**
- The strategy sets out an ambitious programme of work and aims to provide a comprehensive, collaborative framework that encompasses an integrated approach to supporting optimal child development from pregnancy to age 5. By focusing on **2 strategic goals and 6 key priorities (see final slide)**, this strategy aligns the ‘Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1,001 critical days guidance (2021) and seeks to ensure every child in Stockport has the opportunity to **start well, live well and thrive.**



Start Well Strategy 2024 -2027

Vision

Working together with families and communities, all children in Stockport will have the best start in life, be ready for school and become lifelong learners

Ambition

By 2027 we will have narrowed the achievement gap at the end of Reception for children living in poverty, particularly boys

Core approaches and values

Inclusive practice, integrated working, relational, restorative and trauma informed practice, coproduction, make every contact count, prevention and early intervention, innovation and evidence based practices

Start Well outcomes

- Children will experience loving nurturing relationships
- Children live in safe homes free from adversity
- Children are supported to have good early years development
- Children and parents/carers have good physical and mental health and access to healthcare

Strategic goal - Ensuring the Start Well System is working together to give families the support they need

An empowered Start Well workforce



- Deliver a high-quality workforce development and training offer to support integrated delivery
- Develop volunteer pathways as a route into employment
- Extend peer support programmes to build capacity and resilience within communities
- Ensure sufficient high quality early education and childcare provision
- Continue to develop a shared understanding of school readiness

Continually improving the Start Well offer



- Ensure better use of data and evaluation to improve the quality of our offer and improve children's outcomes
- Scale evidence-based practice to have the greatest impact on children's outcomes (changemaker)
- Implement recommendations from balanced system to ensure we make best use of resources to support SLC and physical development across neighbourhoods

Leadership for change



- Hold a shared accountability for improving early years outcomes and reducing inequalities, which goes beyond traditional early childhood services
- Grow front line leadership to share influence and responsibility for the quality of practice and impact on children's outcomes
- Ensure effective integrated delivery within neighbourhoods and strong partnerships

Strategic goal - Ensuring families have access to the services they need

Seamless support for families



- Identify and respond to developmental needs of early years children at the earliest opportunity
- Recognise the first 1001 days of life, from pregnancy to age 2, as a critical period to lay the foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing
- Prioritise specific projects that support equality of outcomes for early years children and their families
- Ensure the voice of infants and parents and carers informs and shapes Start Well services and offers

A welcoming hub for families



- Establish One Stockport Family Hubs as a way to access Start Well offer
- Work more closely with VCFSE organisations and groups to improve access and develop our offer

The information families need when & how they need it



- Further develop and clearly define the digital offer to extend access and options of support for families

Home Learning Environment

What does best start in life and school ready mean?

The 'best start in life' starts in pregnancy and refers to providing children with optimal conditions and opportunities during the early years to ensure their overall health, wellbeing and development. There are essential factors that we want every baby and young child to have as the foundations to a healthy, happy life:

- **Loving nurturing relationships**
- **Safe homes free from adversity**
- **Good early years development**
- **Good physical and mental health and access to healthcare**

Stockport are defining school readiness as...

- **'A child entering compulsory education ready to engage in and benefit from all the learning experiences available, enabling him or her to become a life-long learner'.**
- The journey to school readiness starts at pregnancy and continues to the age of five. It is developed through relationships and interactions in the home with parent/carers and family members, in the early learning environment, and the wider community. Within research (local and National), the role of parents and carers and the home learning environment stands out as the greatest influence of a child's development. **Supporting the home learning environment will therefore be a fundamental foundation in achieving the key priorities of the strategy.**
- It is recognised that all children have different needs and abilities and these need to be embraced on their school readiness journey to ensure they achieve their full developmental potential. Our Start Well strategy reinforces a commitment to creating a supportive inclusive environment where all children in Stockport can thrive.
- Work will continue to develop a shared understanding of school readiness in Stockport.



The value of developing Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

- Education Endowment Foundation are clear that evidence shows that actively supporting PSED is effective.
- Good PSED skills underpin academic and cognitive dimensions of learning.
- Children who recognise, express and regulate emotions can learn to co-operate, negotiate and solve problems.
- This will support their development of their executive functioning which is the foundation of long-term learning.



Why do we need to do more?

- PSED is one of the prime areas of learning within the Early Years Framework and the expectation is that all children will meet the expected standard by the end of their Reception year.

In Stockport:

	Number in Cohort	PSE outcome July 24
All children	3259	83.5%
Disadvantaged children	403	68.7%
Black children	57	71.9%
Children at SEN support	275	43.3%
Children with an EHCP	129	10.9%

Championing infant–parent/carer relationships as a pathway to improved outcomes



Importance of shared understanding and language

- Social development and personal care are interconnected aspects of child development.
- These terms fit within the broader concept and holistic framework of personal, social and emotional development (PSED).
- Self awareness, self management/ regulation, social awareness, relationships skills and responsible decision making are the five key social emotional skills leading to school readiness.
- PSED is a term regularly used by our early years workforce however there are many terms used across the complex landscape of services in the early years.
- In Stockport, we are trying to embed the language of social emotional development, wellbeing and mental health as the key foundation for, and terminology of school readiness- SEDMH
- Social and emotional development, wellbeing and infant mental health are closely related concepts, which are often used interchangeably, especially in the context of the early years.
- All these concepts refer to a child's ability to form healthy relationships, regulate emotions and thrive in their environment.
- Research shows that being socially and emotionally ready is the most important factor for early years children to transition smoothly into school and succeed later in life.



LANGUAGE USED FOR ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD



Source: UNICEF Toolkit for early childhood mental health Hogg and Moody 2024

HOW THE WHOLE SYSTEM PROMOTES MENTAL HEALTH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Some of the local services that ensure babies and young children are mentally healthy

Local employer

I can provide flexible work, so this baby's parents can earn money and spend quality time with them.



Midwife

I helped this little child's mum stay happy and healthy in pregnancy, and to have a safe birth, so that they had the best possible environment and experiences at the start of life.



Park Service

I can improve the facilities at the local park so that it's easier for children in buggies to access the play space and for their families to feel safe and comfortable.



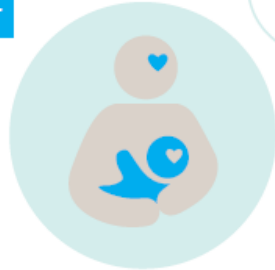
Early Help Practitioner In The Family Hub

I can work with this child and their family to understand their needs and goals, and to help them to access the support that is available in their area.



Baby And Toddler Group Volunteer

I can provide this child and their parents a safe space where they can play and enjoy quality time together.



Early Years Practitioner

I can support this toddler to develop their language, to understand their emotions, to play and to make friends.



Baby Bank

We can give this family warm clothes, books and toys so that this child is comfortable and has things to play with at home.



Early Years SENCO

I can recognise when this child is struggling with their behaviour or emotions, and provide extra support to help them manage their feelings.



Health Visitor

I can help this family with a range of social, emotional and physical health issues, including ensuring that this child is physically healthy so that they feel good and can develop healthily.



Parent-infant Psychologist

I can support this baby and their parents, to strengthen their early relationship so the child gets the nurturing care they need.



GP

I can help this child's parents to get the support they need from local services that can support their mental health.



Social Worker

I met this family during their pregnancy because they have a history of adversity and had a previous child removed. I have helped them to get the support they need to ensure this child is safe and nurtured.



Local Advice Service Volunteer

I can help the child's parents access the benefits and childcare support they are entitled to.



ONESTOCKPORT Family Hubs

Championing infant parent
relationships in Stockport from
conception to five years

A toolkit for social and emotional development,
wellbeing and mental health (SEDMH)



Developed in partnership with



•**Purpose:** Increase awareness of social and emotional development, wellbeing, and mental health (SEDMH) from conception to age five. Reflects the importance of the first 1001 days.

•**Target Audience:** Professionals working with infants and young children aged 0-5 years in Stockport.

•**Importance of Understanding SEDMH:** Essential for all professionals, including midwives, GPs, early years, and childcare providers.

•**Integrated Approach:** Supports consistent standards of practice across services through a shared understanding of SEDMH.

•**Toolkit Components:** Includes a guidance document, i-THRIVE identification and intervention guides and an online Padlet with resources and training.

•**Best Practice Guidance:** Informed by Greater Manchester Social and Emotional Development and Wellbeing best practice guidance and Parent Infant Mental Health Pathways.

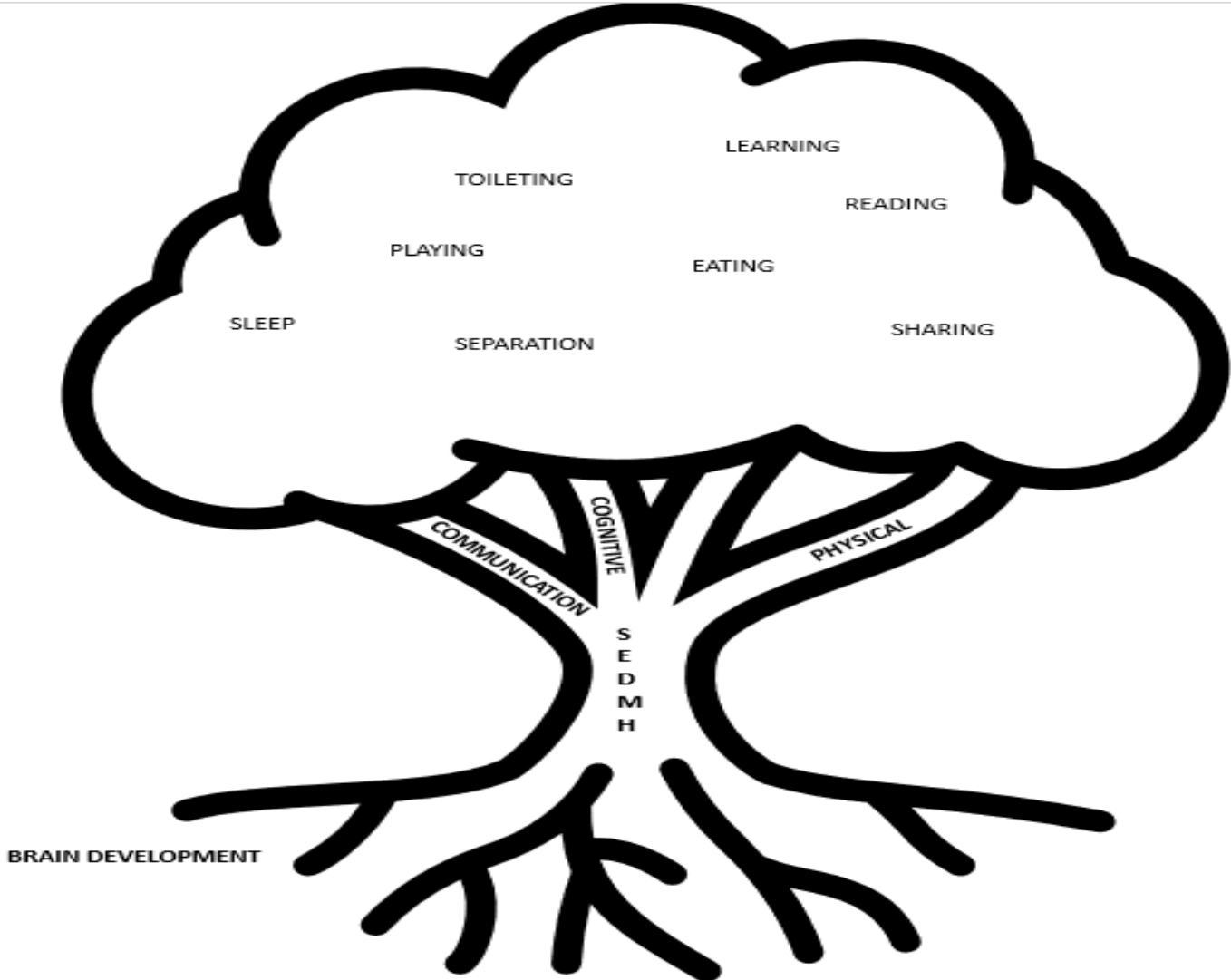


ONESTOCKPORT
Family Hubs



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Early Experiences and environment
Most Importantly the Parent/caregiver-infant relationship

Key strategies and offer



Key strategies and projects

- **One Stockport Family Hubs:** Making Every Contact Count.
- **Voice of Parents, Infants and Young Children:** Essential element in supporting them to thrive.
- **Balanced System Recommendations:** Implemented to improve speech, language and communication support and allocation of resource.
- **Enhanced Maternity Pathway:** Joint midwife and health visitor contacts for targeted support, leading to more antenatal contacts, earlier identification, continuity of care, and stronger family relationships.
- **Changemaker Programme:** Bridging the gap between evidence and practice through the testing of Family Foundations.
- **Dad Matters Initiative:** Bespoke support for dads during the perinatal period, with significant engagement and referrals since January 2024.
- **Family Nurse Partnership:** Equipping teenage parents with the skills to thrive.
- **Peer-Led Support:** Expanded through the EPEC programme, 'Baby and Us' course, and peer mentors for infant feeding.
- **Online Parenting Courses:** 3110 Solihull registrations since September 2021, with 1964 users starting at least one course.
- **Potty and toilet training support:** Provided by Start Well teams, early years providers and Portage as appropriate.
- **Sufficient and high-quality early education and childcare places:** Fostering positive relationships, providing a safe and nurturing environment, and encouraging parental involvement.
- **Think Equal Curriculum Framework:** Implemented in 93 Reception classrooms across 61 schools in Stockport (summer 2024), benefiting approximately 2,480 children each academic year.



Assessments and Interventions – Universal and Targeted from Conception – 2 years

Assessment tools

- My World Assessment
- New born Behavioural Observation (NBO)
- Newborn Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS)
- Enhanced Maternity Pathway
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional 2 (ASQ SE2)
- Early Help assessment (EHA)

Parent mental health screening tools

- Generalised anxiety disorder questionnaire (GAD 7)
- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4 and PHQ-9)
- Parent Stress Index (PSI)
- Core-10

Interventions

- Solihull Antenatal course
- Family Nurse Partnership
- Breastfeeding Peer Support
- EPEC Baby and Us postnatal group
- Home Start Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service
- Dad Matters
- Infant feeding and safe sleep support
- Family foundations course
- Midwife continuity of care
- Access to walking group
- Invest in Play Parenting course
- Solihull supported courses
- Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) courses
- Stay and Play
- Watch Me Play
- Infant Parent Service (IPS)
- Video Interaction Guidance
- Portage and opportunity groups
- ASQ SE and ASQ 3 activities
- Home Start Core Offer
- Funded early years education and childcare
- Timid to Tiger
- Circle of Security
- VCFSE groups

Digital offer

- Solihull online courses
- Essential Parent
- Family Hub website
- Start Well website
- Start Well Facebook
- Early Years App (Bramhall Cheadle Hulme, Gatley and Heald Green)
- GM top tips to thriving
- BBC Tiny Happy People
- Health visiting and School nursing advice line
- Virtual top tips weeks including - No more Nappies and Amazing Babies
- Your baby and you
- Living life to the full – enjoy your baby

Assessments and Interventions - Universal and Targeted from age 2 – 5 years

Assessment tools

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional 2 (ASQ SE2)
- EYFS progress check at age two
- Early Help Assessment

Parent mental health screening tools

- Generalised anxiety disorder questionnaire (GAD 7)
- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4 and PHQ-9)
- Parent Stress Index (PSI)
- Core-10

Interventions

- Invest in Play Parenting course
- Solihull supported courses
- Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) courses
- Transition meetings with schools prior to starting reception
- Dad Matters
- Stay and Play
- Watch Me Play
- Infant Parent Service (IPS)
- Video Interaction Guidance
- Portage and opportunity groups
- ASQ SE and ASQ 3 activities
- Home Start Core Offer
- Funded early years education and childcare
- Timid to Tiger
- Circle of Security
- VCFSE groups
- Team Around Family

Digital offer

- Solihull online courses
- Essential Parent
- Family Hub website
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- Early Years App (Bramhall Cheadle Hulme, Gatley and Heald Green)
- GM top tips to thriving
- BBC Tiny Happy People
- Health visiting and School nursing advice line
- Virtual top tips weeks including No more Nappies
- Transition workshops

Key points and conclusion



In summary

- **Inclusion and Equity:** Integral to the success of the Start Well strategy and ensuring every child has the support they need to thrive.
- **Relationships Matter:** Importance of strong, positive relationships in early childhood.
- **First 1001 Days:** Critical period of rapid brain development.
- **Strong Offer:** Robust support available during this period, which will be further enhanced by the refreshed Start Well strategy and Family Hubs vision.
- **Targeted Offer for Ages 2-5:** Commitment to strengthening support for children aged 2-5 years.
- **Toolkit Implementation:** The social emotional development, wellbeing, and mental health toolkit will be crucial for prevention and early intervention, alongside other best practice pathways.
- **Adopting a Whole Child Approach:** That places social and emotional development, wellbeing, and mental health at the heart of early years support and as the foundation for school readiness.



Appendix



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Glossary of Terms

- **ASQ 3** - Ages and stages questionnaire is a **developmental screening tool** that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years.
- **ASQ SE** – Ages and Stages Social and Emotional- supports assessment of a child's social and emotional needs.
- **Balanced System** -The Balanced System® is a framework and suite of tools and templates that can be used to improve the commissioning and delivery of Speech, Language and Communication services which benefit from an integrated approach to delivering outcomes.
- **Core-10** – The Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation 10 is a concise, 10-item assessment measure developed to identify and track symptoms of psychological distress.
- **Dad Matters** - offers support for fathers in the perinatal period (conception – 2 yrs)
- **Enhanced maternity pathway** – Supporting parents and unborn baby antenatally through a joint midwife and health visitor contact for families requiring targeted support to enable relationship building and joint assessment and plan of care.
- **EPEC** - Stockport Empowering Parents Empowering Communities is a popular parenting programme delivered for parents, and by parents, in their own communities.
- **EYFS** - Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards for development, learning and care for all children from birth to 5 years old in England (Scotland and Wales have their own frameworks). All Ofsted-registered early years providers, schools, preschools and reception classes must follow the EYFS. The EYFS provides the framework to ensure that children are kept healthy, safe, and given the best start in life.
- **FNP** – Family Nurse Partnership is a person-centred, preventative intervention programme offered to young first time parents aged 19 or under, and their children. It is an evidence based change programme that is delivered in the parents’ own homes. It is designed to cover the first 1001 days of life, from early pregnancy until the child reaches the age of 2 years old.
- **GAD 7** – Generalised anxiety disorder questionnaire. A seven question diagnostic tool designed to screen for and assess the severity of GAD
- **GLD** – A ‘good level of development’ can be defined as a child reaching the ‘expected’ level of development at the end of their reception year, at the end of EYFS. It is an outcome of a summative assessment based on learning outcomes in regard to the prime areas of learning.
- **PHQ-4 and PHQ-9** - Patient Health Questionnaire is a patient questionnaire for screening, diagnosing, monitoring and measuring the severity of depression.
- **PSI** - The Parental Stress Scale is an 18-item questionnaire assessing parents’ feelings about their parenting role, exploring both positive aspects (e.g. emotional benefits, personal development) and negative aspects of parenthood (e.g. demands on resources, feelings of stress).
- **TAEY** – Team Around Early years is a shared conversation between a child's setting and key professionals such as a health visitor to ensure access to the right support at the right time
- **VCFSE** – Voluntary, community, faith & social enterprise sector.
- **WellComm** – A tool kit for screening and providing intervention for speech language & communication in the early years.

Digital / Virtual offer

- BBC Tiny happy people [BBC Tiny Happy People](#)
- Half termly top tips and virtual sessions [Half Termly virtual sessions October / December 2024 – Start Well](#)
- Solihull multi user licence – free online courses for parents [Online courses for emotional health and wellbeing](#)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health padlet - [Social & Emotional Development, Wellbeing & Mental Health](#)
- Enjoy Your Baby <https://littfgm.littf4.com/>
- Your baby and you [Your Baby and You :: Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- Stockport Midwives - [Antenatal Class Session 1](#)
- [No more nappies session](#)
- GM top tips - [Greater Manchester \(GM\) 10 Top Tips - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)
- Health Visiting & School Nursing 0-19 advice line - Mon-Friday 9-4.30pm available for parents/carers.
- 0-19 Essential Parent - <https://gmca.essentialparent.com/ecare/start>
- Start Well website - [Start Well – Give your child the best start in life \(startwellstockport.co.uk\)](#)
- Family hubs website [One Stockport Family Hubs - Stockport Council](#)
- Facebook page - [Start Well Stockport | Facebook](#)

Is your child aged 3 -5 and due to start nursery or reception in September?

Are you or your child feeling anxious about this transition to school?

Join us for an online session to learn more on how to support your child so they can start school with confidence

27th June 9.30 – 11.00 am
27th June 1.00 – 2.30 pm
27th June 7.00 – 8.30 pm

(you only need to book on one session)

This session will include useful information on practical tips, routines, understanding your child's emotions and how to support these, brain development and seeking further support for any special educational needs and disabilities your child may have.

HOW TO BOOK:

Visit Facebook page: Start Well Stockport
or website: www.startwellstockport.co.uk



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Top Tips for Toileting

Learning how to use the toilet independently and stopping wearing nappies is a big milestone for your child. There are lots of new and exciting skills for them to learn with your help.



START WELL
TOP TIPS
SESSIONS



When should you start toilet training?

Most children are ready around 18 months. Research shows it is better for your child to stop using nappies between 18 months and 30 months.

The longer you leave it, the harder it can be for your child to learn this new skill and accept not having a nappy on anymore. When your child wakes with a dry nappy in the morning, they may be ready for night time training.

Make sure you're ready too

When is a good time? Make sure it's a good time for you as well as your child. It's best to avoid doing it at a time when there are any big changes or disruptions to your child's or family's routine.

What equipment is needed for potty/toilet training?

A potty (more than one ideally). Choose one that is low to the ground so your child can use it independently. You don't need to spend a lot of money on anything fancy, it must do one job well: catch wee and poo!

Some children may prefer to go straight to using the toilet. If this is your child, get a children's toilet seat and a step stool to help them to feel secure and relaxed. Having feet firmly on the floor or a stool is the ideal position for fully emptying the bladder and bowel.

A travel potty can be helpful when you and your child go out.

Every child is different!

Children with a disability or additional needs can't always communicate their thoughts and feelings so you might not be able to rely on their signals to tell you when they are ready. Most children can be toilet trained; it just might take a bit longer sometimes. The important thing is to support with toileting signs, sounds or words that your child can use and understand and let their bladder and bowel readiness lead the way.

Should we wait for 'signs of readiness'?

No! Many children and particularly those with additional needs, will never give any signs that they are ready to potty or toilet train. Prepare your child by teaching them the skills they need. When your child shows awareness that they've done a wee or poo, it means they are beginning to recognise the signals their body is giving them.

Goodbye nappies, hello underwear!

Whatever stage your child is on their journey, stopping using nappies is a big change for them. Make sure your child is drinking enough during the day. Aim for 6-8 drinks a day. Water is the best drink but milk in moderation and well-diluted squash is OK too.

Dress your child in clothes that are easy for them to get on and off, so they can take the lead. If you have a boy, encourage him to sit down on the potty for both wees and poos especially in the beginning. We empty our bladder better sitting down and it helps to prevent constipation.

Prepare your child

Help your child feel comfortable with the idea of their bodily functions. Read picture books about potty/toilet training together and have a potty in the house you can use for role play with teddies. Remember that young children learn by watching and copying which means you may have to leave any inhibitions at the toilet door. Show them you do wees and poos too.

Ignore the myths...and pressures

There are lots of myths around toilet training that are best ignored. A common one is that boys are harder to toilet train than girls. It comes up a lot but there is no evidence to show it is true. Try not to feel pressured by other parents, focus on your child and remember that you know them better than anyone else.

Making the transition from nappy to toilet can be a challenge. It can feel like a battle – but remember it is a developmental skill not a war!

Using praise and rewards to motivate your child

For most children, encouraging and supporting them to be as independent as possible is the best way to motivate them. Tell them how pleased you are when they see the potty/toilet and use favourite toys such as books or songs to help them feel comfortable using the potty/toilet.

For more information on supporting your child with toilet training, please visit:

www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

www.eric.org.uk

"These will be about how YOU can make the difference to your child's learning in their early years and give them the best start in life."



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