



Potty Training: The Merritt Academy Approach

Potty training is an exciting step toward independence for your preschooler. We are happy to partner with you as we have found that the home/school connection is key to a successful transition out of diapers. In our experience, the potty training process works best as a dialogue between teachers and parents with everyone working together as a team. Here are some guidelines about potty training in conjunction with your child's teachers.

When?

The right time to begin potty training varies greatly by child. There is no magic age, but many children show signs of the physical and cognitive development necessary between 18 months and 36 months. Signs of readiness may include a child who:

- Tells you when he/she has a wet or soiled diaper
- Is bothered by a wet diaper
- Hides or goes to a specific location to wet or soil a diaper
- Child tells you BEFORE they are going to wet or soil a diaper
- Has dry periods of two or more hours
- Shows interest in the bathroom/potty
- Shows interest in wearing underwear or being a "big kid"

Once you and/or your child's teacher begin seeing these signs, suggesting the potty as an option can be a good way to determine readiness. If the child is not resistant, it's probably a good time to give it a try. Books and videos about potty training, an exciting potty chair or seat at home, and the "Potty Time" watch are all fun tools to pique a child's interest.

Getting Started

In most situations, we recommend starting at home where children are most comfortable. It can work well to choose a weekend when you do not have a lot planned. We recommend frequent trips to the potty to "try," with lots of positive reinforcement for trying as well as for success. While working through this time, patience and preparation are very important. Some parents go straight from diapers to underwear, while others use pull-ups or training pants as an intermediate step. Either way, you'll want to have plenty of supplies on hand and be prepared with changes of clothing. Some children need lots of encouragement and reminders, while others make the switch readily. It takes some dedication and commitment to be consistent and get through the first few days. ****Please inform your teacher if you are beginning to potty train at home so that they can be ready when it's time to try it at school.****

School Potty-Training

We have found that some children respond differently to using the potty at school than they do at home. Some who do not have accidents at all at home, do have them at school, and vice versa. Don't be surprised to find your child has different levels of success in different environments at the beginning. While there is a lot of structure and there are regularly scheduled potty times at school, there are also lots of distractions and not much privacy, all factors for new potty users. Potty training is a process, and it can take time.

The school is ready to partner with you when you feel your child is ready for this transition. The level of school involvement varies by age group.

- In Toddler classrooms, this is done on a case-by-case basis for children who are demonstrating readiness. If you are working on potty training your toddler at home, please contact your child's teacher so that you can work together.
- In K2 classrooms, potty training is a focus and all children are offered the opportunity to use the potty regularly. As each child/family is ready for full potty training mode, a plan is devised for that child. The teachers will take the child to the potty at regular intervals, watch for signs that they may need to use the potty, and encourage them to stay dry. You will be well informed of their progress at school by your teacher. Near the end of the K2 year, we will be actively working to potty train in preparation for K3.
- In K3 classrooms, there are generally very few children still working on potty training. We will be actively working to potty train with any children in our K3 program, as the classrooms are not equipped or staffed for ongoing diapering needs. Parents of K3 students who are not potty trained near the start of school will be contacted to check on your family's readiness and to devise a plan. The goal will be to have them potty trained as soon as it is developmentally appropriate for your child.

For all ages of potty trainees, please send plenty of supplies to school so that we can keep your child dry and comfortable. They will need:

- 3 full changes of clothes (including socks and underwear)
- At least one extra pair of shoes
- In the event that a child has had multiple accidents in a day, we may need to go to "Plan B" due to hygiene and sanitation concerns. For this reason, please send a few diapers, Pull-Ups or training pants that we can put on for the remainder of the day (Your child's teacher will notify you)
- Ongoing communication with your child's teacher to make sure everyone is on the same page