Continence Questions

Who are the learners?
Children and adults of all abilities can be given the opportunity for toilet training. Although there are some conditions which interfere with total independence when using the toilet, almost all children and adults can increase their toileting independence.

Who are the coaches?
Coaching for toilet training success usually requires a team effort with the individual, parents, teachers, direct support staff, medical providers, occupational and physical therapists, communication specialist, psychologists, behavioral specialists and case managers sharing responsibility for implementing the toileting plan.

When to begin?
Toilet training for children regardless of their disability is best started in early childhood. A child who is not toilet trained by school entry may benefit from a more comprehensive approach. It is never too late to start!

Why is toilet training important when there are so many other priorities?
Maximum self care is a goal. Even children and adults with significant disabilities will benefit from a bowel and bladder management program. In addition to cleanliness, comfort, privacy and dignity, a toileting or bowel and bladder program will help prevent bowel, bladder and kidney related health problems.

Toilet Planning Checklist

Get a medical assessment and treatment.

- Assure that any neurologic disorders that may impact toileting success have been identified.
- Assure that chronic constipation is treated and under control.

Form a team that will develop and implement a toileting plan.

- Assure that the person and family are at the center of the team.
- Include relevant specialists and coaches on the team.
- Include everyone that will assist with implementing the plan.
- Assure that everyone on the team agrees toileting is a priority which can be learned, and is ready to participate.

Develop the toileting plan.

- Establish a baseline. Record bowel and bladder function for a week or two.
- Choose an approach that is consistent with the person’s learning abilities and one that all team members can support.
- Provide a toileting environment that is conducive to learning, accessible, comfortable, safe and private.
- Use socially appropriate language.
- Plan for consistent implementation throughout day, evening, weekdays and weekends, and across all places.
- If there is no progress in 2 to 4 weeks, review, as a team, challenges in carrying out the plan and discuss a change in approach.
- Look for creative solutions to the challenges.

If you need additional help, contact: Peggy Poppe, Continence Project Coordinator

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Developing a Successful Approach to Toileting

Planning for Toileting Success

For parents and teams involved in toilet training

Learning to use the toilet is as much about expectations as abilities!

The Continence Project

Our services include:

- Information and referral
- Identifying training and support needs of providers and parents
- Training for providers and parents on toilet training topics.
- Promoting interagency collaboration and establishing continence as a statewide goal.

A cooperative project of

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