

Sensory Issues and Toileting



Auditory (sound):

Dislikes the sound of the toilet flushing or hand driers in public toilets

Try to visit a shop or restaurant with a single public toilet rather than multiple toilets. Child could wear ear defenders or headphones.

Tactile (touch):

Dislikes the feel of the toilet seat

Use a soft padded toilet seat (available at amazon.co.uk).

Only opening their bowels in nappy

Step 1

Get the child used to and familiar with the toilet environment without challenging too much. For example, sitting on the toilet with the lid down to wash hands/face etc. Take the child into the toilet environment at established times that they usually empty their bowel/bladder. This will begin to get them to associate performing within the right environment. At this stage, allow the child to continue wearing a nappy all of the time.

Step 2

Allow the child to wear pants throughout but replacing a nappy when taken into the toilet environment at previously established key times. At school or home the child could observe others using the toilet without yet being asked to sit on the toilet itself.

Step 3

Begin to encourage the child to sit on the toilet immediately following a nappy being put on. Initially, clothing should also be replaced as usual.

Step 4

Now remove lower clothing so that the child is sitting on the toilet with only a nappy in place.

Step 5

Gradually loosen the nappy tabs until the nappy can be just draped over the toilet aperture.

Step 6

The nappy size could be gradually reduced and/or a hole cut into it to allow urine/faeces to go into the toilet. This can then be shown to the child to reinforce the desired performance.

Step 7

Leave using nappies completely and continue with a regularly prompted toileting routine.

Proprioceptive (Body awareness):

Difficulty with bottom wiping

Provide hand over hand help for wiping. Use flushable toilet wipes.

Olfactory (Scent):

Difficulty tolerating toilet smells

Provide the child with a handkerchief with a favoured scent e.g. olbas oil. They can use this to block out the other smells.

Toileting advice

In regard to using the toilet, we recommend a ring reducer on the toilet seat to make the aperture smaller. This makes it less scary and provides more seating support. Many parents use this toilet seat, with two seats coming down; for more information, type in **family toilet seat** into your search engine.



- The other very important thing to consider is a high step in front of the toilet. The step achieves two things: Firstly, without a step, if the child is sitting there with the legs dangling and the feet unsupported, they have to work much harder to stay balanced - this prevents them from relaxing the muscles enough to empty the bladder or to open the bowels.
- Secondly, the opening of the bowels is much better facilitated if the child achieves a closed angle at the hips - as grown-ups, we tend to lean forward with our elbows on our knees to achieve this angled position. For a child it is equally important, and since the legs are too short to reach the floor we can use a step or upside down box to facilitate that position. There is a range of good value products available – please type toilet step into your search engine.

