

## Potty Training an Autistic Child

Potty training a normal, healthy child can be hard work. What do you do when that child is Autistic? Maybe they do not even understand what it means to use the potty. Here are some helpful suggestion when potty training and Autistic child.

1. Make sure the child is ready to be potty trained. Just because all the books says they need to be trained at two does not mean your Autistic child has the ability to do so. Do they know when they are wet or have a dirty diaper? Do they have a dry diaper all night?
2. Does your Autistic child have the skills to undress and redress. If not this can making potty training harder unless you intend to let them run around naked for the next few months. This can also make for a lot of time spent scrubbing carpets. It is best to wait to potty train until your child can easily undress and redress them selves.
3. Use a reward system when potty training. If they use the potty, or attempt to use it give them some type of reward. This can be a treat or a toy. Make sure that anyone working with the child knows they are to be rewarded for their potty efforts.
4. Do not punish the child for accidents. If your child has an accident remind them that is what the potty is for. Make sure everyone working with the child knows this too. Mixed messages will not help.
5. Find out what your child's schedule is. It does not take long to do this. When during the day are your child's diapers dirty? Use these times to sit the child on the potty. You can keep a journal of the day to see a pattern in potty time. Then you will know the times to focus on potty training the most.
6. Do not give up. If your child does not catch on right away do not give up. It takes a few weeks for a new skill to be learned. If you keep switching from diapers to the potty this will just confuse the child even more. Consistency will be a key factor when potty training. This goes for any child not just Autistic children.
7. Do not make your child feel stressed about potty training. If they think they have to use the potty they may immediately turn against it. Let your child see the potty and get familiar with it before they are made to sit there. Place the potty out in an area for them to examine it for a few days . This will let them become comfortable with the idea.

Remember Autistic children can take longer to catch on to a new skill. Do not stress out about the potty training. It will happen when the child is ready. If you are stressed the child will feel that, and they will have a much harder time relaxing to use the potty. It could make them avoid potty training all together. Just relax, your Autistic child will not be in diapers forever.