

SAYING GOOD BYE TO DIAPERS

In early spring, many Red Room families start thinking about potty training. Some children in the class are already in underwear and fully trained. Some children are not yet ready for potty training and are still in diapers. This note is for those of you in between who think your child is or will soon be ready for potty training and who might not be quite sure how to move forward.

One thing that we know is a necessary first step is adult commitment. We have all heard stories of children who 'potty train themselves,' but this is the rare exception. Most children aren't sure if they want to use the toilet and give up diapers. Most children can't remember consistently to go to the bathroom. Most children have periodic regressions and accidents which must be weathered.

Another thing that we know is essential is consistency. If your child is peeing in the potty at home, it makes sense that we ask her to do it at school. If your child is in diapers outside of school, it makes sense for him to be in diapers in school as well. If your child is in underwear on the weekends, she should be in underwear during the week, too. The parents' and caregivers' expectations for the child should be the same. Children should not go back and forth from diapers to underwear because of accidents, car trips, etc.

Pull-ups are not underwear! Children who wear diapers will pee and poop in them, and for the majority of children, diapers and pull-ups really feel the same. Diapers and pull-ups send the message that you don't need to wait or hold your pee/poop until you get to a toilet, whereas underwear sends the message that you do. We especially discourage parents from putting children in diapers/pull-ups with underwear over them as this sends a conflicting message about what the child is expected to do.

Potty training can be easy or hard, but it always requires work on the part of both adults and children. Children must work to live up to the new expectations we are setting for them. They must work to remember what to do when they feel the need to pee or poop, and they must learn to control their bodies. Adults must work to give their full attention to potty training—to make sure to follow the plan that is put in place, to have clear and consistent expectations, to provide the child with support while making the process as free of pressure as possible, and to have a plan for handling accidents which are an inevitable part of the process.

Potty training is one of the biggest milestones of early childhood and often carries many emotions for both parents and children. Once the transition is completed, parents and children feel a great sense of accomplishment and pride. We have supported many families through the process of potty training, and we are here to support all of you as well!

Kate and Meredith