TOILET TRAINING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PRESCHOOL SETTING
WORKSHOP GOALS

- Learn to determine if a student is ready to start toilet training
- Create a plan for starting the toilet training process
- Identify supports to communicate toileting expectations and increase motivation for your student
- Review ideas for problem solving once toilet training has been attempted
GETTING STARTED

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE TOILET TRAINED?

- Stays dry in between being taken to the toilet
- Follows a schedule of toileting trips
- Communicates the need to use the toilet
- Independently goes to the toilet

These levels may be different for urination versus bowel movement
WHY MIGHT IT BE DIFFICULT TO TOILET TRAIN A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY?

- Social Communication
  - Delays in expressive communication (verbal and nonverbal)
  - Understanding expectations and following directions
  - Social motivation
  - Challenges with imitation and social orienting

- Restricted and Repetitive Interests
  - Preference for routines and sameness
  - Atypical sensory responses
IS YOUR STUDENT READY?

- Medical needs?
- Bladder control
  - Remains dry 1.5-2 hours at a time
- Voiding pattern
- Motor skills
  - Walk to and from bathroom
  - Sit on toilet
- Behavior
  - Sit for 2-5 minutes on the toilet
- Instructional readiness
  - Follows 1-step instructions, such as “sit down”
- Physiological awareness
  - Awareness when needing to go
  - Discomfort when wet or soiled

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HOW DO I SET THE STAGE FOR TOILET TRAINING?

- Take Data
- Set Goals
- Make the Bathroom Positive
TOILET TRAINING DATA COLLECTION

- Look for patterns in
  - Time of day
  - Length of time since eating/drinking
  - Setting
  - Activity
  - Person they are with
Setting Goals Based on Data

- Sitting/Completing the Toileting Process
  - Outside bathroom door
  - Inside bathroom
  - Sitting on toilet seat with pants up
  - Sitting on toilet with pants up
  - Sitting on toilet for set intervals of time

- Increasing Success

- Communicating/Initiating Need
MAKING THE BATHROOM POSITIVE

- What might be unpleasant about the bathroom to your student?

Adapt the environment based on this!

- Footstool at base of toilet
- Cushioned seat w/ handles
- Towel/blanket over lap
- Tissue in toilet to reduce splash
- Use lamps/adjust blinds
- Keep door open / closed
- Flushable wipes
- Wet wipes/hand sanitizer
- Floormat/rug
- Something to block automatic flush
- Urine catcher
- Designated bathroom

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LET’S GO!

- Setting a Schedule

- Communicating Expectations

- Increasing Motivation
PREPARING TO FOLLOW A SCHEDULE

- Eliminating diapers/pull-ups
  - Cold turkey
  - Countdown to “No More Diapers”
  - Identify times of the day to wear underwear
  - Put underwear under diaper/rubber pants

- Clothes
  - Loose fitting underwear, socks and a shirt
  - Extra clothes for accidents
  - Underwear with favorite character on them
SETTING A SCHEDULE: TOILETING TRIPS

Using your toileting diary, decide:

- What interval of time can your student be successfully dry?
- What times of the day does your student typically urinate and/or have a bowel movement?
- How many trips can you realistically make during the day?
- Increase fluid intake based on this
SETTING A SCHEDULE: TOILETING TRIPS

- Ideal Schedule:
  - Amount
    - 6 sits a day
    - Up to once an hour
    - Any amount is a start!
  - Length
    - 3-5 minutes per sit
    - No longer than 10 minutes
    - May need to start small!
USING A VISUAL SCHEDULE

- Place in a convenient and central spot at your student’s height.
- Include toileting on the schedule, as well as increased snack and drink times.
- Place toileting trips after a neutral/less preferred activity and before a more preferred activity.
- Reference it in a matter of fact way using a consistent phrase to initiate trips.
USING A TASK ANALYSIS

- Reference it when completing each step of routine and prompt them to complete it
- Rely more on strip to fade your role out of the process
USING A TIMER

- Give an initial direction including time limit.

- Make it visible and easy to reference.

- Give a warning before it goes off.

- Honor it!

- Use it during other activities.

- If timers are not used, consider other ways to quantify time
  - Song
  - Pictures
  - Different visual
ACTIVITIES WHILE SITTING

- Activities/toys can be provided while sitting if they:
  - are not overly distracting
  - do not make your child overly stimulated
  - are moderately preferred, but aren’t the reinforcer you will use for success
  - might promote urination/bowel movement
WHAT THE TRIPS LOOK LIKE

- At set times of the day, calmly tell your student (not ask) that it is time to go to the bathroom and use the visual schedule to prompt the transition.

- Once in the bathroom, use the task analysis, timer, and other environmental modifications to keep the focus on toileting, keep it positive, and keep the momentum going.

- If challenging behaviors occur, keep the focus on the trip and following through with the direction/expectation you have communicated.
SETTING A SCHEDULE: DRY CHECKS

- Schedule dry checks depending on your student’s intervals of dry time
- Start small (5-30 minute intervals)
- Teach “wet” and “dry” concept during instruction
REINFORCEMENT

- **What?**
  - Something a student is willing to “work for”

- **Why?**
  - Different social motivation
  - Task demands

- **How?**
  - Clear, immediate, and specific
TIPS FOR CHOOSING REINFORCERS

- Choose reinforcers that are easily provided and quickly used.

- Avoid using items that are freely available to your child.

- Vary reinforcers to prevent your child from becoming tired of it.

- Make sure they are realistic to provide often!

Think outside of the box!!
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REINFORCEMENT

- Make reinforcement available immediately and in response to the appropriate behavior.

- Always pair reinforcer with “behavior specific praise.”

- “Catch” your student being good during the toileting procedures.
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REINFORCEMENT

- Vary the “level” of the reinforcer to match your student’s performance.

- Make sure to keep reinforcement part of toileting even after you have seen success!
COMMUNICATING REINFORCEMENT

- Choice Board
- First-Then Board
- Token Economy
GIVING CHOICES: VISUAL OPTIONS

Real Objects  Picture Symbols  Written Lists
USING A “FIRST-THEN” BOARD

- Display what your student is supposed to do “first” and “then” what your child will receive as a reward for completing the task.

- What is your goal? First:
  - Walk in bathroom
  - Play inside bathroom
  - Sit on toilet with seat down
  - Sit on toilet with seat up

- Access to the reinforcer in the “then” box should be immediately following expected behavior
USING A TOKEN ECONOMY

- **What is it?**
  - A visual display of progress towards a reinforcer

- **When?**
  - Reinforcing appropriate behaviors throughout an activity

- **How?**
  - Include behavior expectations visually
  - When initially teaching, provide tokens often enough that your student accesses reinforcement quickly and easily
  - Provide specific verbal praise for each token and upon receiving final token, provide immediate reinforcement
ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN!

- If your student starts to have an accident, you can say, “You need to go to potty” and IMMEDIATELY have him/her sit on the toilet.
- If your student urinates in the toilet, praise him/her, but with less enthusiasm.
ACCIDENTS DISCOVERED DURING A DRY CHECK

- You can say, “Your pants are wet” in a neutral tone.
- Take your student to the bathroom and help him/her remove the wet clothing.
- Dump contents in the toilet.
- Have them complete the rest of the toileting routine except the parts are reinforcing to them (flushing, washing hands).

Remember, your student should receive as little attention as possible during this time!
PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER
MY STUDENT IS LEARNING TO SIT

- Focus equally on teaching adaptive tasks associated with toileting during sit (pulling up pants, washing hands)
- Use a timer to set expectations
- Start with short intervals (e.g. 30 seconds) and gradually increase with success
- Provide occupying activity appropriate for sitting
- After “bathroom time,” allow access to a highly preferred activity
MY STUDENT DOES NOT WANT TO SIT

In addition to “learning to sit” plan:

- Give minimal attention to your student’s inappropriate behavior during sit.
- Use prompts to help your student stay seated until timer goes off.
- Continue to model/play with the occupying toy until timer goes off.
- As soon as timer goes off, allow your student to leave the bathroom and access to preferred activity.
- Consider decreasing length of sit and altering reinforcement provided for sitting.
- Work on associated adaptive tasks outside of sit instead of during sit (washing hands, buttoning pants)
MY STUDENT WON'T "GO" ON THE POTTY

- Adjust Schedule
  - Shorten time between trips, sit for longer periods of time (no more than 10 minutes), or have more focused schedule based on data

- Pay attention to pre-cursor behaviors
  - Increased movement
  - Going to a certain area

- Differential Reinforcement
  - Consider removing occupying activity during sits
  - Provide most valuable reinforcement for successful sits
  - Provide minimal attention for unsuccessful sits
MY STUDENT CAN’T TELL ME HE NEEDS TO GO

- Lengthen time between scheduled sits
- Provide large amount of praise for dry checks
- Have visual reminders visible and accessible during other activities
- When it is time to go to the bathroom...
  - Do not verbally prompt your student
  - Direct your student to the “bathroom” picture symbol
  - Prompt him to pick up the picture and walk with picture to the bathroom, place it on door, etc.
MY STUDENT CAN’T TELL ME HE NEEDS TO GO

- Provide minimal attention to your student when completing the bathroom routine.
- Do NOT verbally prompt your student; use nonverbal prompts to help your student complete the routine when needed.
- After completing the routine, provide reinforcement and focus on independence.

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SUMMARIZING THE PLAN

- Determine if you and your student are ready to begin toileting training
- Collect data & set realistic goals
- Create a sit schedule and dry check schedule
- Use visual supports to clarify expectations
- Use reinforcement to provide motivation