Toilet Learning Policy

Applies to: *all members of staff*

Policy Statement

At Dots & Tots Day Nursery we recognise that toilet learning is an important developmental milestone and every child reaches this stage at their own pace. Our approach is child-led and based on developmental readiness rather than age or room placement. We work closely with parents and carers to provide a consistent approach between home and nursery, encouraging children to develop independence, confidence and healthy hygiene habits. Children will never be pressured, rushed, compared with others or made to feel embarrassed throughout their toilet learning journey.

Aims

- Support children to become independent at their own pace.
- Promote positive hygiene and self-care routines.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Provide inclusive support for all children.
- Maintain children's dignity, wellbeing and safety.
- Ensure consistent practice across the nursery.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Before toilet learning begins, staff will discuss each child's routines, readiness, language used at home and any successful strategies already in place. Parents will be kept informed of progress, achievements and accidents to maintain a consistent approach.

Parents are responsible for providing sufficient nappies, pull-ups, spare clothing, underwear and any other personal items required throughout the nursery day. Several complete changes of clothing are recommended during toilet learning, and all items should be clearly named.

Recognising Readiness

Children begin toilet learning when they demonstrate developmental readiness. Staff will consider the whole child rather than one single indicator.

Physical signs

- Remaining dry for longer periods.
- Recognising the need to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Showing awareness of wet or soiled nappies.
- Having predictable toileting patterns.

- Sitting comfortably, happily and safely on a toilet or potty.

Communication and language signs

- Using words, gestures or signs to communicate toileting needs.
- Showing an interest in toilets and toileting routines.
- Following simple instructions.
- Beginning to understand and communicate body cues.

Independence and emotional readiness

- Showing an interest in doing things independently.
- Attempting to pull clothing up and down.
- Participating in handwashing and personal care.
- Being willing to try new routines.
- Showing confidence with reassurance from familiar adults.

Children do not need to demonstrate every sign before toilet learning begins. Professional judgement and discussions with parents will determine when the time is right.

Supporting Children Through Toilet Learning

Children will be provided with regular opportunities throughout the day to become familiar with toileting routines, recognise their own body cues and develop independence with personal care. Staff will encourage children through reassurance, positive language and praise whilst ensuring children are never rushed, pressured or compared with others.

Staff will always remain appropriately available during toilet learning. During the early stages, children will receive closer support from a familiar member of staff who will remain nearby to provide reassurance and assistance whenever required. As children develop confidence, understanding and independence, staff will gradually encourage greater independence whilst maintaining appropriate supervision.

Children may continue to wear nappies or pull-ups until they are developmentally ready. Parents are encouraged to provide clothing that is easy to remove, and children will continue to have prompt access to toilets throughout indoor and outdoor play.

Where children require additional support due to medical needs, disabilities, developmental differences or special educational needs, we will work closely with families and relevant professionals to ensure appropriate, inclusive and individualised arrangements are in place.

Accidents and Regression

Accidents and periods of regression are recognised as a normal part of toilet learning. Staff will always reassure the child and respond in a calm, supportive manner.

Where a child experiences changes in their toileting, staff will:

* provide reassurance and maintain the child's confidence;
* continue familiar routines and strategies that support the child;
* work with parents and carers to understand any changes that may be affecting the child;
* provide additional encouragement and support where needed;
* review whether any adjustments to the child's approach or environment may be beneficial; and
* seek further advice or support where concerns remain.

When a child has an accident staff will reassure the child, support them to change and clean themselves where developmentally appropriate, encourage them to participate in their own personal care routines whilst providing assistance where required, maintain the child's privacy and dignity, place wet or soiled clothing into a sealed bag for collection, follow the nursery's Hygiene and Infection Prevention procedures and share relevant information with parents where appropriate. Children will never be criticised, punished or made to feel embarrassed.

Safeguarding and Recording

Toileting information, accidents and significant progress will be recorded in real time wherever possible using the nursery management app.

Intimate care is a position of trust and staff understand the importance of always maintaining professional boundaries. Only suitable members of staff who have completed the nursery's safer recruitment process, including appropriate safeguarding checks and a valid DBS check in line with statutory requirements, will provide intimate care to children.

Staff providing intimate care will follow the nursery's safeguarding procedures and will ensure care is:

* appropriate to the child's age, development and individual needs;
* carried out with sensitivity, respect and professionalism;
* provided in a way that promotes the child's independence wherever possible;
* explained to the child using appropriate language;
* delivered in a manner that protects the child's dignity and privacy; and
* consistent with the child's care needs and agreed routines.

Children will be encouraged to participate in their own personal care routines wherever developmentally appropriate. Staff will provide reassurance, guidance and support while recognising the importance of helping children develop confidence and independence.

The design of the nursery enables the toilet areas to be clearly visible from both the Ducklings Room and the Butterflies Room. Staff supporting children with toilet learning will always remain

within the sight and sound of other staff members. No member of staff will ever be alone in the toilet area with a child without other staff being able to observe or hear interactions. This provides an additional safeguarding measure for both children and staff whilst maintaining children's dignity and privacy.

Any safeguarding concerns identified during toileting routines will be managed immediately in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Children will be supported to develop an understanding of personal boundaries, privacy and keeping themselves safe. Staff will encourage children to communicate their needs and will always take children's voices seriously.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will provide calm, consistent and respectful support, encourage independence, communicate effectively with parents and seek guidance from the Nursery Manager where concerns arise. Children will be encouraged to flush the toilet, wash and dry their hands thoroughly and develop good hygiene habits

Monitoring and Review

We recognise that effective toilet learning and personal care support requires regular review to ensure children's individual needs, safety, dignity and wellbeing remain at the centre of practice.

Risk assessments will consider all aspects of toileting and continence support, including:

* the safety and suitability of toilet areas and facilities;
* access arrangements for children of different ages and developmental stages;
* supervision levels during toileting routines;
* intimate care arrangements;
* hygiene and infection prevention practices;
* individual medical, developmental or SEND needs;
* equipment and resources used to support children; and
* any identified concerns, incidents or changes in children's needs.

Any hazards, concerns or areas requiring improvement will be addressed promptly, with appropriate action taken to maintain a safe and supportive environment for children and staff.

The Nursery Manager will monitor practice through observations, supervision, record reviews and feedback from families. This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance or nursery practice changes.

Related Policies

- Nappy Changing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- SEND Policy

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Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner