



### **Toileting Regression: What Can You Do?**

- Reinforce routines and structure as much as possible:
  - o Visual schedule for the day: provides consistency so that your child knows what to expect.
  - o Use visual sequencing for toileting routine so your child can anticipate each step.
  - o **Scheduled intervals** of taking your child to the bathroom (based on typical patterns of elimination). Contact your child's OT to discuss a specific trip training plan for your child.
  - o Take your child to the bathroom at the scheduled time for toileting. **Do not ask them** if they have to go to the bathroom because more often than not, they will say no even if they do need to go.
- Use strategies for making toileting a fun and motivating activity, and the toileting environment a comfortable place to be:
  - o Ensure your child has the correct equipment for proper positioning on the toilet.
  - o Sensory: Consider the toileting environment and how this may impact your child's willingness to go and stay in the bathroom. For example, are the lights too bright, is the exhaust fan too loud or does the air freshener or soap have a strong smell that they find aversive.

Contact your child's OT to discuss equipment needs and how to make the toileting environment more inviting.

- o Ensure there are no medical conditions that may have contributed to a regression in toilet training (e.g. constipation)
- o Make the process fun! Use potty songs to motivate, lots of praise and positive reinforcement for when your child has completed the routine.
- **Prepare for accidents:** having an accident pack on hand when you are not at home, with wipes, underwear/pull ups, plastic bag, extra clothes can reduce stress levels.
  - o Respond to accidents by:
    - Remaining calm, using a neutral tone/expression and limit attention (as providing attention to the accident can reinforce it).
    - Only reward the behaviour you want (e.g. peeing in the toilet)
- Taking time for yourself
  - o Children with DS are very perceptive and sensitive to the emotions of others. They will pick up if you are stressed, which can contribute to their own anxiety and impact their daily routines (especially toileting). As difficult as it can be to find the time especially as we navigate this new normal amid a pandemic, self-care is also very important. Take time for yourself, do not rush the toileting process and remember regressions are common and can be overcome.

Each child is unique with their own specific toileting routine. These are just a few things to consider when your child is undergoing a toileting regression. For additional support please reach out to your child's OT or contact DSRF's OTs to discuss your child's toileting program.

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