

	Title/Description: Toilet Training Support in Early Learning	Approved by: Dr. Ammir Rabadi, MD
	Date: 3/23/24	Section: YPS Health Services

Procedure: Toilet Training Support in Early Learning Overview

- All students are unique in their development and mastery of personal hygiene skills.
- School personnel should incorporate key Personal hygiene and Toileting Skills mastery plan which may involve:
 - The child’s family to maintain consistency to build skills.
 - Building bathroom scheduled time into the daily day.
 - Frequent “check-in” times at specific intervals or times of day.
 - Ensuring each child has a change of clothes available.
 - Plan accordingly in the classroom if there is an accident for the child to change in private.
 - Stay calm and positive providing a strong foundation for the child’s efforts.
- If a Toileting Aide need is identified promptly inform the administration about this need.
- Toileting is not a nursing function. Any adult authorized by the District to perform this task, within their regular contractual duties, can assist with toileting.
- If gloves are needed for a classroom, please contact Health Services for supplies, at (914) 376-8226.

Growth and Personal Hygiene Skills:

Each child is unique in their growth and development, acquisition of personal hygiene skills, and developmental milestone accomplishments.

Goals of personal care and skills are demonstrated with:

- Growing independence in using personal hygiene skills (e.g., washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting, etc.)
- Exhibiting self-help skills when dressing, cleaning up, participating in meals, etc.
- Recognizing and communicating the need to use the restroom or when experiencing symptoms of hunger or illness.

Each child is an individual and some may have yet to master the aforementioned skills. Care should be provided as gently and respectfully as possible to empower all children to succeed. Respect the dignity of all students, including young students who are learning personal care and hygiene, should be a priority and goal for all educational settings. School personnel should implement:

- Developmentally appropriate support, accommodations, instruction and encouragement
- A warm and safe environment that creates a sense of belonging and connectedness and support

Toileting accidents:

Toileting accidents are oftentimes a source of embarrassment and distress, especially when a trusted adult or peer reacts in an insensitive way. An adult or peer's reaction can significantly impact the child's social-emotional health, self-esteem, and interest in learning. Toileting is a skill to be taught and mastered over time and incorporating the following best practices can assist in planning and fostering children's independence.

- **Involve the child's family** in developing a toileting plan to build skills. This plan should include common vocabulary words and a consistent routine that is both culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate to be used both in the home and at school.
- **Build bathroom times into the daily schedule** to establish a consistent routine, while also allowing children to access the bathroom as needed.
- **School personnel should frequently check in with children** who are being toilet trained (e.g., arrival time, before/after snack, meals, transitioning between activities, etc.) rather than depending on them to tell the adult. Being proactive is key before an accident occurs.
- Read books and incorporate toileting picture books into the classroom library and centers where appropriate (e.g., dramatic play, science areas).
- **Ensure that each child has one or more sets of extra clothes available.** Parents may need to be reminded to send in a replacement set of clothing each time that the child has a toileting accident.
- **Be encouraging to the child.** When there is an accident, have a private conversation with the child reassuring them that they may use the bathroom any time the need arises and remind them of the toileting plan in a positive manner.
- **Have a plan in place for changing the child in private when there is an accident** so as not to disrupt the classroom routine (e.g., an adult staff member directly supervises the children from the bathroom doorway where they are able to enter the restroom quickly to provide assistance). A toileting Aide may be needed in the classroom or building to assist in this process.
- **Stay calm and positive.** Children are sensitive to other's reactions to their behavior.
- **Provide positive praise and support** for the child's efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Must children be "toilet trained" to attend prekindergarten or kindergarten?

A: No. Mastery of self-care skills, including toilet training, cannot be a requirement for student enrollment; therefore, children who are not toilet trained cannot be excluded from either prekindergarten or kindergarten enrollment. The district does not have the authority to deny entry.

Q: Are there any special considerations for emergent multi-lingual learners (EMLs)?

A: Yes. Different cultures have different expectations regarding toileting and when it should be achieved. It is the program's collective responsibility to learn about the student's culture and toileting expectations in addition to building relationships with both students and their families. In addition to the best practices identified above, the program must represent all students and reflect (e.g., photographs, texts in multiple languages, gestures, and/or visual cues)³.

Q: Are there any special considerations for prekindergarten students with disabilities?

A: Yes. It is the program's collective responsibility to know and implement any toileting skills goals or services (e.g., specially designed instruction, nursing, self-care, etc.) as identified in the child's IEP.

Q: When a child has a toileting accident, who is responsible for assisting in the clean-up (e.g., wiping a child, bagging soiled clothing, etc.)

A: Toileting is not a nursing function. Any adult can assist a child in toileting.

Q: Are district teachers not required to assist with toileting?

A: No, not if not contractually prohibited.

Q: Can a district require parents to come in and change the child due to privacy issues?

A: No. School districts should not be requiring family members to leave home or work to change their child. It causes undue hardship on both the child and the family. Leaving a child sitting in their soiled clothing, even for a short period of time, can impact the health and wellbeing of a child (e.g., urinary tract infections, rashes, and irritated skin). School districts must support the child in their toileting journey. If the child requests the parent and refuses to be assisted, the parent will need to be called.

Q: Can a child be sent home from school when a toileting accident occurs?

A: No, not as a general rule. A child should not be sent home when a toileting accident occurs. School personnel should reference a child's individual toileting plan. Any time you send a child home, it disrupts the learning process, impacts the child's social-emotional well-being, and negative feelings can develop toward school. In unavoidable circumstances such as no access to clothing, inability to console the child or other special circumstances a determination of status will need to be assessed.

Q: If a child is still learning, is there special equipment required, such as changing tables or potty chairs?

A: Yes. Child-size toilets or modified toilet seats with step stools are recommended. The use of separate potty chairs is not recommended for use in prekindergarten or kindergarten classroom settings because sanitary handling of bodily fluids is difficult. Equipment used for diaper changing needs to be appropriate to the size of the child and be in a private location.

For more information, here are some helpful links:

- [Managing Emergency Health Care and Communicable Diseases in the School Setting](#)
- [Safety and Health | Department of Labor \(ny.gov\)](#)
- [The New York State Center for School Health \(NYSCSH\)](#)
- [1910.1030 - Bloodborne pathogens. | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

Q: What can be done if a child is not progressing with toileting skills?

A: The district should include the family in the development of a plan that supports the child using the toilet independently. Working with the family to establish vocabulary words and a routine that can be used consistently at both home and school can assist in developing this skill. If learning does not progress, seek

support from school nursing staff, health services, a private healthcare provider and if necessary a psychiatric consult.

Q: Should staff wear gloves when assisting a child with toileting?

A: Yes. Due to the need for hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (e.g., disposable gloves) when dealing with body fluids, a sink with soap and hand drying method(s) should be readily accessible in the location where staff changes or assist students with toileting. When changing students or assisting them with toileting staff should:

- Wash hands before putting on clean disposable gloves.
- Use cleansing wipes designed for cleaning the perineal area (groin area) or toilet paper. The use of paper towels is not recommended as they can irritate the skin in the perineal area.
- Dispose of the used wipes in a trash bag, and used toilet paper may be flushed.
- After cleaning the student or assisting the student to wipe after using the toilet, staff should remove gloves and wash hands again before assisting the student with putting on clean undergarments, or clothing.
- Lastly, staff should encourage (and assist as needed) the student to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Wet or dirty clothes should be placed in a plastic bag that can be sealed tightly and stored out of reach of children until sent home to be laundered. Rinsing children's clothing or laundering soiled clothing at school is discouraged because it provides an opportunity to contaminate hands and other surfaces.

NOTE: School district administration should ensure school personnel are familiar with blood-borne pathogens and the use of Standard Precautions when dealing with blood and body fluids in accordance with the school/school district's Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) plan and training. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Standard Precautions provides more detailed information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Early Learning at OEL@nysed.gov or (518) 474-5807

References:

<https://www.nysed.gov/memo/early-learning/prekindergarten-and-kindergarten-guidance-supporting-toilet-learning>