



Toileting and Neurodevelopmental Conditions

Toilet training and continence can be very difficult issue for a child or young person with a neurodevelopmental condition.

The sensory difficulties often experienced by the child will have a significant impact on their ability to master the skills necessary for continence.

Readiness is a key issue, and there may be sensory reasons why a child may not be ready for toilet training at the same age as their peers.

Communication difficulties will also make it very difficult, and it is important that you try to be clear and consistent in your use of language.

The need for consistency and structure is another factor that will influence a child's ability to manage toilet training. Using different toilets in different places can be distressing for some children, particularly those on the ASD spectrum.

Issues that can affect the approach taken in toilet training can be:

Physical:

- Is there infection present.
- Diarrhoea or constipation.

In both of the above cases it will be important to seek medical advice before trying toilet training.

Behavioural:

- Resistance to change, or to instruction.
- An over-dependence or lack of confidence in their own ability to succeed.
- Awareness of social issues may be diminished.

Sensory:

- Sensitive to smells or sounds.
- Interoceptive sense reduced; not aware that they need to 'go'.
- Difficulty with staying on task.

A clear and appropriate reward system, with understanding of the child's sensory issues will be crucial to the child's overcoming these difficulties.

A clear and structured approach will also be helpful for children who need support in sequencing the steps to successful toileting.

Remember that different techniques will work for different people, and you may try a number of approaches before you find the one that works for you and your child.

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