

## To Potty or Not to Potty?

That is the question on you and your toddler's minds. Training your toddler to use the potty may seem like it goes on forever, and that's because it *is* a long process. There will be a stage that your little one does great, followed by a time where he won't sit on the toilet even with your best bribe. Remember that coercing a toddler to do something they don't want to do (including potty training) results in a power-struggle, and this is one struggle I do not recommend entering. Research shows that a coercive approach over a *laize-faire* approach does not speed up the process of potty training. A child with the most defiant attitude towards toilet training can literally change his mind in a day. Be sure not to make potty training an issue of your child being told they are a "good" or "bad girl." These words can cause a regression in using the potty from feeling like they disappointed mom or dad, which causes a loss of self-esteem. Use phrases such as, "You did it!" or "Way to go!" These don't pass judgment on their character. Try using techniques at home that increase their awareness of when they go to the bathroom, like having on cotton training pants or just going bare bottom in uncarpeted areas of your house. Being in a comfortable environment, where you're not stressed if they mess the floor (or grass outside), will take the pressure off both of you. Any pressure or tension they feel around pottying can reverse any progress they've made, and even cause constipation and Urinary Tract Infections from holding it to avoid the issue. Remember that just by being at The Goddard School they are seeing their friends go daily, which can be very helpful as it encourages them to want to do what their friends are doing!

Crystal Stevenson, MA, LPC-I  
Individual, Family, and Child Play Therapy