Toilet Training

Remember:
Becoming independent in toileting is a complex task.
A child can be considered completely toilet trained when he is able to anticipate the urge to use the toilet, pull up his/her pants, and wash up after him or herself.
This is a complicated process that takes time to learn.
When approached at the right time, toilet training can go quickly and easily.
The average age a child is toilet trained falls between 2 ½ and 3 years for daytime dryness and between 3 and 4 years for nighttime.

Is The Child Ready to Toilet Train?
Sometime after a child’s second birthday, begin to watch for the following readiness signs:
Wants to imitate and please adults.
Understands and follows simple directions. Stays dry for longer and longer periods of time. Seems aware of urination and bowel movements. Prefers to be clean and dry.
Tries to pull pants up and down.

Is the Child Showing An Interest In Using The Toilet?
Talk to the child about “peeing” and “pooping” by using the words agreed upon by the parents.
Avoid using dirty or icky words to describe this natural function.

Is It Time To Begin Toilet Training?
Be ready to make a concentrated effort for at least three to four weeks.
Take the child to the bathroom after meals, waking, and periodically throughout the day.
Stay with the child singing songs or reading books so that he will consider going to the bathroom a positive time.
If there are no results after five minutes, praise his/her effort and comment that maybe next time the “pee will come out.”

Does The Child Have Accidents?
Even if the child uses the toilet, accidents are common and should be treated in a matter-of-fact manner. Clean up and change the clothes.
Support the child by saying, “Accidents happen. Next time we’ll have to stop playing earlier and get to the bathroom on time.”

Does The Child Resist Using The Toilet?
Say, “Let’s go to the bathroom” rather than asking if he/she has to go (he/she will likely say “NO”).
Some children do not like the flushing noise. Wait until the child leaves the room to flush.
A child may fear falling in. Use a potty chair or a toilet seat adapter, or step stool.
If you use incentives such as stickers, be clear that when the supply is gone, he/she won’t need them any more because then he’ll/she’ll know how to use the toilet. Involve the child in another activity as soon as he/she is done so he/she won’t notice the lack of an incentive.

Condensed from So This Is Normal Too?
By Deborah Hewitt.