

Parent Resources

Toileting Toolkit

This is part three of a three-part resource for parents and carers on developing toileting in the Early Years. This is a **Toolkit** of useful resources, to make it easier for parents and carers to support their children.

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Now you have read our *What Is?* and *How to?* guides on developing toileting, it is time to choose the tools which will be most helpful in supporting your child.

This guide is **part three of three** resources for parents and carers on **Developing Toileting in the Early Years.** The **first** resource in the series looks at how strengths and support needs within the three areas of difference in autism can impact on toileting, and the **second** provides suggested strategies and advice.









Overview of the Tools in the Toileting Toolkit:

Tool 1 – Toileting Checklist:

This checklist tool can help you gather information about your child's toileting so you can think about how best to support them. You can also use the tool to form the basis of a discussion with Early Years staff about your child's current toileting strengths and support needs.

Tool 2 – Situation Stories Factsheet and Example:

Situation Stories are stories which help to explain how and why we do things in a certain way. This tool gives more information about **Situation Stories** and includes an example of a **Situation Story** to develop toileting.

Tool 3 – How You Can Help: Practical Strategies Factsheet:

This tool provides examples of common toileting situations and lists suggested strategies to help you support your child.

Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies? Factsheet:

Autistic children tend to be visual thinkers and they will often benefit from the use of visual strategies to support them. This tool explains what visual strategies are, why they are important and when they might be appropriate for you to use with your child.

Tool 5 – What are Visual Timetables? Factsheet:

This tool provides an explanation of what a *Visual Timetable* is, when to use it and how to use it.







Tool 1 - Toileting Checklist:

? What is it?

This checklist tool can help you gather information about your child's toileting.

When to use it?

The checklist can be used prior to identifying 'next steps' and putting in place strategies to support your child.

⊘ How to use it?

The checklist can help you gather information about your child's toileting so that you can think about how best to support them. You can also use the tool to form the basis of a discussion with Early Years staff about your child's current toileting strengths and support needs.







Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Readiness		
Does your child experience constipation and discomfort?		
Does your child feel and recognise the 'urge' to go to the toilet?		
Is your child indicating in any way that they need to do a wee or a poo or that they have just done one?		
Can you predict when your child will need the toilet? Is there a pattern? Do they hold their wee during nap times?		
Is your child receiving any medical input from the GP/Bladder and Bowel Clinic?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
At Home		
What are you currently doing with regards to nappy changing/ toileting?		
What is working and what isn't working?		
What language are you using around toileting? Have you tried saying 'toilet time' instead of 'nappy time'?		
How are you currently supporting your child to be successful with toileting? Have you considered		
whether the toilet area is acceptable to your child?		
How are you explaining the process of using the toilet to your child?		
How do you motivate your child to use the toilet?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Sensory Factors	·	
Touch		
Does your child react to being placed on the toilet seat?		
Is it too hard/soft/cold?		
Does your child react to the use of toilet paper? Is it too rough?		
How does your child react when splashed with water?		
Does your child resist being held when using the toilet?		
Does your child like their legs to be covered?		
Does your child like/ dislike the feel of their wee?		
Does your child like/ dislike the feel of their poo?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Smell		
Does your child have a strong reaction to toilet smells?		
Do they seek out strong smells or move away from them?		
Sight		
Does your child seek visual stimulation, such as from bright lights? Or do they prefer muted lighting and tend to avoid brightly lit busy places?		
Sound	·	
Does your child seek sound stimulation, such as loud noises, or do they actively seek quieter spaces?		
Does your child actively seek or move away from bathroom noises such as the hand dryer, the sound of the flushing toilet, running taps or other noisy children?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:	
Taste	Taste		
Does your child like/ dislike the taste of strong flavours? (This may include tasting soap, poo, or other substances).			
Vestibular/Proprioceptio	n		
Does your child balance well? Can they sit unsupported on a toilet?			
Do they appear anxious when placed on the toilet seat?			
Social Understanding an	d Communication		
Understanding			
Do you use any visual cues to support your child's understanding of how to use the toilet?			
Have you used / could you try using a visual timetable (picture timetable) of the steps involved in using the toilet?			
Have you used / could you use a symbol or picture of the toilet to show them that now they are going to the toilet?			





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Understanding		
Do you have / could you put a picture of a toilet on the toilet door, to remind your child where to go when they need to use the toilet?		
Which key 'toilet' words are used in your child's Early Years setting? Make sure staff in the setting are using the same toilet words that you are using at home to provide consistency of language.		
Expression		
Does your child indicate that they need the toilet?		
What signs/signals do they give?		
Does everyone who looks after them know their signals?		
Does your child lose focus on an activity if they need the toilet?		
Do they go to a quiet corner/outside?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Expression		
Do they pull at their nappy?		
Do they become grizzly?		
Other?		
Does your child use a communication system?		
Is this communication system accessible at all times, so that they can use it to signal they need the toilet?		
Flexibility, Information F	Processing and Understanding	
What supports your child during changes to their routine?		
Do you use any key motivators to encourage them with new routines?		
Are you using / could you use motivators to encourage your child with their toileting?		
What else supports your child to learn new routines?		





Questions to consider:	Comments:	Ways I could Help:
Flexibility, Information Processing and Understanding		
Are you using / could you use similar strategies to help them with toileting?		
What does your child respond to and recognise as 'praise?' Are you using / could you use similar praise strategies to support them with toileting?		
Any other information:		





? What is it?

This tool provides an explanation of the use of **Situation Stories** in developing skills. We have called them **Situation Stories**, but they are based on Carol Gray's social stories concept, and there is reference in the tool to the Carol Gray website where you can find out more information. The tool also explains how to write a **Situation Story** and the importance of embedding positive messages throughout.

Also included, is an example of a **Situation Story** about developing toileting.

() When to use it?

This tool can be used to support the writing of a **Situation Story** for your child, as one of the strategies to help develop their toileting.

⊘ How to use it?

Using your knowledge of your child, follow the guidelines on how to write a **Situation Story** to reinforce key toileting routines. You should also remember to support the story with appropriate images.









Purpose:

Each situation story aims to provide your child with answers to key questions about a situation and to support them to carry out appropriate actions for them and for others.

The idea was originally developed by Carol Gray. More details of her work can be found in: Gray, Carol, (2015), The New Social Story Book: Over 150 Social Stories That Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children and Adults with Autism and Their Peers (Future Horizons).

Why do situation stories work?

Situation stories use a visual approach and repetitive phrases to share ideas with your child about what they can aim to do in certain situations. The stories are always positive and supportive, and your child can refer to the stories time and time again.







Things to consider before writing a situation story:

Use the following as a guide:

- Gather information together about your child.
- Reflect on your child's attention span, age, and level of understanding and aim to capture their attention and engagement by considering their preferences and interests.
- Seek to understand your child's point of view.
- Select a topic, for example using the toilet, and think about:
 - 1. What does your child do? For example, they sometimes wee in the toilet and sometimes they go outside and wee on the grass. They usually wet their clothes in the process.
 - 2. When do they do it? When someone else is using the toilet.
 - 3. What triggers it? They need to go to the toilet quickly when they feel the urge.
 - 4. What happens as a result? They have to be brought back into the toilet area to change their clothes.
 - 5. Who is upset? Your child is upset when they are brought inside to change their clothes.
 - 6. What do you want to take its place? They wee consistently in the toilet.
 - 7. What must your child do to make that happen? Wee more frequently. Leave what they are doing in time to use the toilet.
 - 8. What will be the result of doing that instead? They will consistently wee in the toilet and not require changing throughout the day which takes them away from their preferred activities.
 - 9. Who will benefit? Your child (improved self-esteem, more time for preferred activities) and you as their parent.

Remember:

- Make it positive. There should be no 'must not' 'can't' or 'never' in the story.
- Autistic children often interpret what is said literally. Use simple, logical language.
- Remember to 'show' not 'tell.' Always use appropriate pictures. Photos of your child can be included.





Example:



Everyone needs to do wees. Everyone needs to do poos.



When we go to the toilet we sometimes do a wee. When we go to the toilet we sometimes do a poo.



James sometimes does a wee on the toilet. James sometimes does a poo on the toilet.

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When James does a wee or a poo on the toilet at home, Mum lets him play with the tiny dinosaurs.

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Sometimes James needs the toilet quickly. He hurries to the toilet. If someone is already using it, he runs outside. He wees in the garden.

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When he wees in the garden, his Mum brings him inside and changes his clothes. James does not like to change his clothes. Sometimes he cries. He wants to play.



Mum is going to show James when he will go to the toilet on his visual timetable. Mum will remind him to go to the toilet.

Mum will make sure that the toilet is not busy when James needs to do a wee or a poo. Mum will give him the tiny dinosaurs each time he uses the toilet.

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When James goes to the toilet using his timetable, he will not wee in the garden. He will be able to play with his toys. He will not need to change his clothes. This will make him happy.





⑦ What is it?

This tool provides examples of common toileting situations and lists suggested strategies to support your child to develop their toileting.

When to use it?

This tool can be used as a reference point when you are thinking about the best ways to support your child.

⊘ How to use it?

You can use this tool to identify what your child does now, to plan their next steps and to think about strategies to support them to achieve those steps. Suggested strategies can be discussed with your child's Early Years setting and adapted to suit the needs of your individual child.







- Preparation is the key to success.
- It is important to collaborate with all involved adults to provide a consistent approach for your child.
- All adults should plan and alter what they are doing to support your child **<u>before</u>** expecting any changes to toileting.

Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child is reluctant to go	Your child will feel comfortable	Recognise your child's anxiety and consider actions to reduce their anxiety:
into the toilet.	and safe in the toilet.	Consider giving your child simple choices that give them a sense of control.
		Establish routine using visual cues to support their understanding:
		This may need to be very precise, identifying each step.
		Recognise your child's sensory needs and make reasonable adjustments:
		Do not pull the flush at the beginning of toilet training if this is causing fear and distress.
		Consider recording the noise of the flush and playing this to your child very quietly at first and then increasing the volume until they are desensitised.
		Open the door before the toilet is flushed so that your child can see that they can leave the room.
		Turn off bright lights.
		Make the toilet area smell acceptable to your child.





Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child is reluctant to go	Your child will feel comfortable	Identify your child's motivators and consider how they can be used to support your child:
into the toilet.	and safe in the toilet.	Use your child's all time, favourite motivators, e.g. wheeled cars, bubbles, magazine/book, dinosaurs/ Lego (whatever!).
		Give your child their favourite toy and play with them just outside the toilet area. Do not use this toy at any other time of the day.
		Reassure your child and support them to remain calm.
		Over time, and guided by your child, gradually move playing with the toy across the threshold and into the toilet area.
Your child becomes upset	d toilet for a count of 10.	Recognise your child's anxiety and consider actions to reduce their anxiety:
when prompted to take their nappy off and sit on the toilet.		Establish a routine using visual support so that your child knows what is expected of them. This may need to be very precise, identifying each step. Identify a motivator at the end of the sequence. This may be flushing the toilet.
		Recognise your child's sensory needs and make reasonable adjustments:
		Consider seating: For example, a padded inset toilet seat or a step for your child's feet for security and stability. Consider providing arm rests for toilet support and/or back rest to increase stability.
		Use wet wipes or cloths to wipe their bottom (the same as those that have been used for nappy changing).





Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child becomes upset when prompted	Your child will sit calmly on the toilet for a count	Place toilet paper in the bottom of the bowl to prevent splash back.
to take their nappy off and sit on the toilet.	of 10.	Make sure that your child feels comfortable and safe when sitting on the toilet seat. Use motivators to support your child to keep them calm and relaxed.
		Take a small step approach:
		Sit your child on the lid of the toilet briefly (with clothes on if necessary) and reward them with a motivating activity. Gradually, lift the toilet seat and remove their clothes until your child is sitting on the toilet with their nappy on.
		Structure the time so that your child is clear when sitting is finished. This recognition can gradually be built up over time. Counting or singing a favourite song often works well.
		If your child is really reluctant to remove their nappy, gradually loosen it and/or cut a hole in it and gradually increase the size of the hole.
		Cover your child's legs with a towel as they sit on the toilet, if they don't like having bare legs.
		Give your child a cloth to wipe any wee off their legs.
		If your child likes the texture of the poo, give them an alternative whilst they are sitting on the toilet, e.g. clay, plasticine or putty.
		If your child dislikes the texture of the poo, show them that it can be got rid of quickly by flushing. Reassure them that 'poo all gone.'





Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child holds their poo and smears.	Your child will use the toilet and stop smearing.	Establish a routine using visual support so that your child understands what they are expected to do. This may need to be very precise identifying each step.
		Consider seating: a padded inset toilet seat or a step for your child's feet for security and stability. Consider providing arm rests to provide toilet support and/or a back rest to increase stability.
		Identify any motivating/relaxing activities that can be used.
		Remain calm and neutral in your manner.
		Ensure any medical and dietary advice is being followed and that your child takes any medication regularly.
		Holds:
		Once your child is sitting comfortably on the toilet, use a calming activity, such as blowing bubbles/ singing/fiddle toy to relax your child.
		Reassure your child that they are OK.
		Provide praise in the best way for your child if they use the toilet. Social praise is often sufficient.





Toileting Toolkit

Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child holds their poo and smears.	Your child will use the toilet and stop smearing.	Smears: Dress your child in dungarees and button through vests to give the adults time to substitute the smearing behaviour with another sensory experience. If your child likes the texture of the poo, give them an alternative whilst they are sitting on the toilet e.g. clay, plasticine or putty. If your child likes the smell, provide an alternative, strong smelling, substance. If your child dislikes the texture/smell of the poo and they are trying to get rid of it by smearing, show them that it can be got rid of quickly by flushing. Reassure them that
Your child has	Your child will	'poo all gone.' Make going to the toilet worth their while:
Your child has control but wees and poos wherever they are.	Your child will use the toilet.	Establish a routine using visual support so that your child understands what is expected of them. This may need to be very precise, identifying each step.
		Select motivators that your child can have when they have used the toilet. This can be absolutely anything but it must be kept for toileting only. Motivators can be social, or activity based. For example, engaging in a favourite rough and tumble/tickle song.
		Include motivators in the visual routine.
		Consider writing a situation story outlining the routine to support your child's understanding of what they need to do and why.





Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child has control but wees and poos wherever they are.	Your child will use the toilet.	Consider showing your child a YouTube video to support their understanding.
		Consider putting a ping pong ball or something else in the toilet that your child can direct their wee at to focus their attention and increase motivation.
		Share a situation story and video with your child to support their understanding.
		ALWAYS prepare your child for the transition into the toilet. Give time for your child to 'finish' an activity. Reassure them that they can return to the activity afterwards.
		Put into place key motivators.
		Take your child into the toilet showing them the motivator and when they can have it using the visual timetable. But do not give it to your child yet.
		Motivators may be different at home and in the setting, but they need to be consistently used.
		Consider identifying two motivators to be included on the visual schedule with one being more motivating than the other.
		Consider social motivators as well as activity motivators.
		As soon as your child uses the toilet, they can have the first (lesser) motivator.
		When they use the toilet and complete the whole toileting routine - including flushing and washing hands - then they can have the more exciting motivator.





Current situation:	Next steps:	Suggested strategies:
Your child uses the toilet but doesn't request to go.	Your child will communicate with an adult when they need the toilet.	Use your child's usual way of communicating their choices to establish a way of them communicating their need to go to the toilet (for example, you may use one of the following methods: Verbal, picture exchange, or pointing to an accessible picture).
		Establish a consistent way for your child to communicate that they need to use the toilet, at home and in the setting. Consider: How will they be taught? Identify tools that will reinforce what your child needs to do to communicate that they need to use the toilet.
		Share a situation story or video with your child to support their understanding of what they need to do /say to communicate that they need the toilet.
		Teach your child to communicate their need. Consider: prompting exchange of an object of reference/symbol to indicate that they need the toilet.
		Consistently model the language that your child needs to use. Model: 'I want toilet' and then proceed with the usual routine.
		Autistic children often have differences in the way in which they initiate communication. Even with a speaking child, pictures may be helpful to teach the phrase 'I want toilet.' When you observe that your child needs the toilet, you can encourage a response by asking your child 'What do you want?' and prompting the response 'I want toilet' using visual support to reinforce the process.





⑦ What is it?

Autistic children may have differences in communication, which means they may find it more challenging to process, retain or respond to information that is only supplied verbally. In addition, they tend to be visual thinkers. As a result, they will often benefit from the use of visual strategies to support them. This resource explains what visual strategies are, why they are important and when it might be appropriate for you to use them with your child.

() When to use it?

This fact sheet is a useful resource to refer to when thinking about the appropriate visual cues to put in place to support your child to remain calm when using the toilet and to understand the toileting sequence.

⊘ How to use it?

This tool can be used as a starting point to think about, discuss and agree the most appropriate and impactful visual support to use with your child at home and in their Early Years setting.







Visual strategies are a way of reinforcing information that is given verbally, with visual information so that the message being conveyed is easier to understand and remember.

Visual strategies can be used to accomplish a range of goals. You may use something visual to help your child to understand a situation, or to provide a visual prompt so that your child can accomplish a task more independently.

Visual strategies may take a range of formats, including signs, symbols, objects of reference, photographs and writing, or a combination of these strategies.

The needs and skills of your individual child should determine the size, format, quantity and complexity of the information being communicated.

Why Use Visual Strategies?

Autistic children have differences in communication, which means they may not be able to process, retain and respond to information only supplied verbally. In addition, they tend to be visual thinkers. As a result, they will benefit from the use of **visual strategies** to support them.

Using visual strategies will support your child, by:

- Enabling them to 'see' and remember what to do in any given situation. The visual provided will not disappear from their memory like spoken instructions do.
- Giving them additional time for processing information.
- Giving them the opportunity to process the information in their own time.
- Promoting independence by providing a visual tool to refer to, in order for them to identify and carry out a task or the stages of a task.
- Enabling them to refer back to the visual, helping them to sequence, rehearse and learn a skill.





When might you use visual strategies?

Visual strategies can be used in a range of situations. To:

- **1. Give information** To answer the who, what, why, where, when questions.
- **2. Explain social situations** Autistic children may have differences in social understanding. Providing social information, e.g. social rules, both verbally and with a visual support, can help your child to understand a variety of social situations.
- **3.** Give choices Let your child know what their options are, what is available/ not available.
- **4. Provide structure** Communicate what is happening and when throughout the day, week or month. This can help reduce your child's anxiety around the unknown.
- 5. Teach routines and/or new skills When we follow a recipe or the instructions for putting together flat pack furniture, having the steps broken down makes it easier. When your child can see what they need to do and in what order, this will help them to learn the routine.
- **6. Communicate rules** These might be generic rules or social rules. Your autistic child may have differences in social understanding, and visual strategies such as situation stories (also known as social stories) or simple cue cards can help with this.
- 7. Assist your child in coping with change When something in your child's routine is going to change, try to prepare them in advance. Preparing autistic children when something will be different from what they normally expect can reduce anxiety around the unknown. Use a 'surprise' or 'oops' symbol and build these symbols into the daily visual timetable used by your child.
- **8. Support self-regulation** Your child needs to learn how to cope when they get anxious or encounter a problem. Strategies such as looking at calming activities that they can choose from can help with this.
- 9. Aid memory Visual strategies help your child to remember what to do and/or when.





When might you use visual strategies?

- **10.** Communicate emotions Although autistic children will demonstrate a variety of emotions with their actions, they may struggle to recognise and name their emotions, and this makes it harder for them to manage them. Helping your child to translate emotional responses into pictures or written language gives an opportunity to explain, clarify or validate how they are feeling.
- **11. Clarify verbal information** Autistic children can interpret language very literally and they may struggle to infer what is meant from what is said and the way it is communicated. Using visuals can help clarify the message and helps to eliminate any confusion.







Tool 5 – What are Visual Timetables? Factsheet:

⑦ What is it?

This tool provides an explanation of what a *Visual Timetable* is, when to use it and how to use it.

When to use it?

This tool can be used when planning appropriate visual support to develop your child's understanding of what they need to do (go to the toilet), when they need to do it (e.g. before they leave for nursery), and the small step sequence of what they need to do to develop toileting (e.g., pull down pants, sit on toilet, do a wee, flush, wash hands, dry hands).

⊘ How to use it?

This tool can help you to make a visual timetable to support your child with toileting. The tool reminds you that one size does not fit all and that the timetable needs to be tailored to your child. You can share the visual timetable with your child's Early Years setting and anyone else who looks after them, so that they can reinforce the same toileting sequence as you are at home.







Tool 5 – What are Visual Timetables? Factsheet:

⑦ What is it?

A daily visual schedule or timetable is one of the most important elements of a visual support system. It provides accurate information about what will happen and when. It can be amended to include information about the day, changes from the expected routine or any other information that is important to or for your child. It can be adapted to reflect your child's level of understanding.

(When to use it?

To support your child to be able to 'see' and understand what is happening across the day / part of the day/ across the course of an activity, including being aware of any changes to their routine.

⊘ How to use it?

Begin by dividing the day / part of the day / activity into segments. For example: For developing toileting, you could divide the activity into the following stages:

- Needing the toilet.
- Going to the toilet.
- Removing clothes.
- Sitting on the toilet.
- Doing a wee/ poo.
- Pulling up pants.
- Flushing the toilet.
- Washing and drying hands.

You can add appropriate images to the visual timetable to represent each stage of the process.

Consider also using objects of reference, for example a nappy to indicate 'toilet time.'





Tool 5 – What are Visual Timetables? Factsheet:

Select a format:

The visual timetable can be vertical or horizontal.

Where will you keep it?

- On a wall.
- On a sheet your child has access to.

Decide when and how your child might use the visual timetable. This will depend on the individual child:

- Some children look at it once and remember all the information.
- Some children need to keep referring to the timetable.

Visual Timetable:

Toileting Visual Timetable Example









Next Steps:

If you haven't done so already, check out the other two resources in this series on Developing Toileting in the Early Years:



What is: The Impact of Autism on Developing Toileting, in the Early Years (From Birth to Five)?



How to: Support your Child to Develop Toileting, in the Early Years (From Birth to Five).







References:

Tool 1: *Toileting Checklist,* devised by Ann Wiseman, adapted by Julie Gibson, Autism Education Trust.

Tool 2: *Situation Stories Factsheet and Example* devised by Ann Wiseman, based on the work by Carol Gray on **Social Stories**:

Gray, C, (2015) The New Social Story Book: Over 150 Social Stories That Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children and Adults with Autism and Their Peers (Future Horizons).

Website: https://carolgraysocialstories.com

Tool 3: *How You Can Help: Practical Strategies Fact Sheet,* devised by Ann Wiseman and adapted by Julie Gibson, Autism Education Trust.

Tool 4: *What are Visual Strategies? Fact Sheet* adapted for the Early Years Foundation Stage by Ann Wiseman from the Autism Education Trust, Making Sense of Autism Module resource.

Tool 5: What are Visual Timetables? Fact Sheet, adapted for Early Years Foundation Stage by Ann Wiseman and Julie Gibson, from the Autism Education Trust Making Sense of Autism Module resource









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