

**CARE & LEARNING SERVICE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ADVICE FOR  
BOTTOM WIPING**

**Key Message:**

Bottom wiping is a skill that often needs to be taught, rather than children learning it for themselves.

**Consider the way the child sits on the toilet:**

- Make sure your child is comfortable and secure when sitting on the toilet with their feet supported on the floor or on a step
- Ensure they can easily reach the toilet roll
- If your child finds it difficult to balance on the toilet, try a toilet insert or “next steps” toilet seat (sometime referred to as family toilet seat)



**Step-by-step breakdown:**

The skill of bottom wiping includes lots of little steps. These include the following:

1. Pull down the toilet roll to correct level
2. Tear off toilet paper and fold
3. Reach around your back to your bottom
4. Wipe once in a front to back motion
5. Check if the paper is clean
6. Drop the paper into the toilet
7. Repeat this sequence until the toilet paper is clean

**Ideas to develop reaching skills:**

- During dressing routines practise reaching behind to pull up and pull down underpants, skirts and trousers
- Play games with animal tails or scarves that tuck loosely onto the back of their pants to reach around and pull off; practise in a sitting position
- Place large stickers or rolled up balls of masking tape on the back of your child's pants to reach and pull off; practise in a sitting position
- Clip pegs on the clothing on the back of your child, on the bottom of their top or on the top of their trousers, and encourage them to reach and take all the pegs off.

### **Ideas to develop wiping skills:**

- Pretend play using dolls. Pretend that the doll has been to the toilet and encourage your child to wipe the doll's bottom.
- Practise the wiping action by asking your child to wipe down the table after dinner and ask them to do other chores which involves the wiping action.
- Practise wiping "clean" other surfaces using toilet paper, such as wiping felt pen off a white board or chalk off a blackboard
- Make up a "target" with small numbers in the middle and getting higher as you work your way out. Squirt moisturiser/mousse/custard on the middle of the target and play a game to see who can accumulate the lowest number points as they try to wipe up the moisturiser.
  - Start off playing the game on a table and then start making it trickier by moving the target to the side of the body, eventually aiming to play it behind your back.
- Practise the wiping action in the shower / bath using a wash cloth or small sponge.
- Encourage your child to wipe their bottom dry after a shower / bath.

### **Other ideas to try:**

- Consider visual cues (photos or symbols) for each of the steps
- If you feel it is appropriate, allow your child to watch other family members using the toilet to reinforce their understanding
- Use a children's storybook or video about toileting that have bottom wiping in them
- Use mirrors when bottom wiping so they can see what they are doing
- Use flushable wet wipes as they are more effective when wiping
- Some children find it easier to stand up to wipe
- To help children learn how much toilet paper to use, make a mark on the wall using coloured tape or colourful stickers
- Put your hand over the child's hand to show them how much pressure to use when wiping

### **Resources:**

<http://www.visualaidsforslearning.com/free-sequences/91-toilet-training.html>

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