

Toileting

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1. Toileting - Developmental stages for toileting, regression, rewarding

Kia ora, my name is Demelza. My name's Holly, I'm a Public Health Nurse employed by Te Whita Ora. Kia ora, ko Marcia Kashizuka toku ingoa, my name is Marcia Kashizuka and I'm a Deputy Principal and SENCO, Special Education Needs Coordinator at a local school in Ototahi Christchurch. Holly, what are the developmental stages for toileting, what is normal? Good question Demelza. What is normal is children are usually ready to start toilet training from about two years of age. Some can be a little bit earlier, around 18 months, or some even older than two. But the most important thing is to look for signs of readiness in your child.

And that can range from being able to follow simple instructions, or that you notice that they can start to undress themselves or redress themselves. Some of the other things that children need to know about toilet training is that they need to know how to use the toilet. One of the things to look forward to is they actually start to show an interest in their parents going to their toilet, or the sibling. And

that's how children do learn, they learn from seeing what others do. So it's really important to be able to encourage them to observe what's going on for them, so then they know what's happening in the toilet as well.

And children around the age of two to three years of age. Should be able to hold on for up to two hours as well. So what you might also notice is that they start to have periods of being dry during the day as well. My child was toilet trained but has regressed. What is this about? It can be related to a lot of different things. Sometimes significant life events that are happening for that child. It may be a change in preschool, or starting a new school. Or they may have been unwell with an illness. Or also they may have a new sibling that's come along too. So regression is normal and part of toilet training as well.

And it's really important to expect accidents when you are toilet training your child. It's a learning process that they need to go through. So if you do notice any regression, take a step back and set the scene again about what toilet training is. About what you're expecting. What your expectations are as well. And making it fun and positive. As in wheeze and poos goes in the toilet. Let mummy or daddy or parents or caregivers help and step up as well. And really praise and reward the intent of going. So even if they try to get there and not quite make it. It's really sending that message home about how proud you are that they try.

Even flushing the toilet. Washing their hands. If there's no result in the actual toilet, it's still significant steps to reward and praise for. With toilet regression, my recommendations would be is just making sure that they're drinking enough during the day. So their drinks are evenly spaced. And you could implement some routines around offering or suggesting to go to the toilet between every two to three hours. So just keep on pushing through. My child doesn't seem to recognise that they have sores. Or are wet. Why can't they feel this? And why can't they smell it? Yeah that's quite a common thing for children as well.

And especially in the work that we do. If a child has never been fully toilet trained before. What's normal for them is to actually do poos and wheeze in a pull up or a nappy. So that's close to them. And that's a normal sensation. And so as a parent or caregiver. It's about supporting your child to identify. What it feels like to be clean and dry. And what smells nice. And what doesn't necessarily smell so good either. And there's often some signs that you can start identifying as a parent as well. Of them maybe delaying their toileting. Or not quite getting there in time to look out for as well.

Should I be rewarding my child every time they use the toilet? And should I punish them? When they have had an accident? Yeah absolutely reward. Reward doesn't necessarily make sure it's sustainable. So it doesn't necessarily need to be a physical thing. That you're rewarding your child with. It's once again about that positive praise. That mummy is so proud of you for doing the toilet. Or dad's so proud of you. And involving your wider family as well. Like saying to your child do you want to ring nana and grandad. And let them know that you've used the toilet. So absolutely praising is fantastic.

Children love that from their parents. And it's how you're going to get more engagement from them as well. We absolutely wouldn't recommend punishment. And look it can be frustrating. As a parent having to manage wet or soiled clothes. But once again it's expected to have those accidents along the way. And instead of punishment engaging with your child. And speaking calmly about once again. The expectations of wheeze and poos go in the toilet. Next time do you want mummy or daddy to come with you. To help you as well.

2. Toileting - Limiting water intake, before bed, bowel diaries

How is water intake linked to this? Surely if I limit their water intake they won't have as many accidents? Actually it's the opposite. So quite often we think as parents that if we get them to drink less they won't wet as much or they may even be dry overnight. But what ends up happening is your bladder is like a muscle and we want it to really stretch and really empty. And I often tell kids your bladder is like a balloon and have you ever tried to blow up a balloon before? So the best thing is looking at good bladder habits in children and that's actually having five to six evenly spaced drinks of water a day.

And I tend to encourage kids to drink them in volume so give your sibling a race to see how quickly you can drink your drink. What we're looking for for a healthy bladder is I often say to children, there's actually a really good book about when it's time to go, it's time to go. And it's really relatable to children but also in the back of it it's got a wee checker and it helps them to identify what colour you would like your wee's to be to know that you're drinking enough. So I often tell children look for that really pale yellow colour and if we get them to drink less during the day it means it's more that dark yellow.

So it's really concentrated and that actually irritates and tickles the bladder which will often result in them being more wet during the day or needing to go to the toilet more frequently than others. On that note, before bed, recommendation having drinks before bed if trying not to wet bed. Yeah once again we definitely wouldn't recommend restricting fluids during the day. It's about looking at what you're drinking over the whole day and the recommendation is having those drinks before bed. Yeah once again we definitely wouldn't recommend restricting fluids during the day it's about looking at what you're drinking over the whole day.

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Yeah once again we definitely wouldn't recommend restricting fluids during the day it's about looking at what you're drinking over the whole day. Yeah once again we definitely wouldn't recommend restricting fluids during the day it's about looking at what you're drinking over the whole day. say breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner time and what will happen then is you shouldn't need a lot of fluid before bed because you'll be well hydrated. What we're trying to avoid is making sure that if you don't drink enough during the day that you then what we would call fluid load in the evening so you get home maybe from school or preschool and drink the bulk of your fluid in the afternoons and evenings because you're really thirsty and then your body's not going to be able to process what it needs to.

So rule of thumb would be not to restrict fluids but to make sure that you try and manage to have them evenly spaced throughout the day. Yeah and the wee chart there that you had with the wee's and I was saying there was little pictures of the booth. I think that they actually have helped my daughter. My daughter, it sounds crass but she loved to see what shape her foot was and it's helping her. She wants to see what shape her foot is. She wants to go to the toilet now. Absolutely and so we've created Good Bound Bladder Habits resource for children. This has got a range of information on it as to what is the daily recommended fluid intake for an age group.

So for example four to eight year olds should be aiming to have around 1200 mls in a day. It talks about what a good time daytime bladder habits so that's looking at going to the toilet between four to seven times a day to wee and it also talks about what you've said with bowel motions and I find with a lot of people that I work with and myself what is normal for bowel motions as well. So it's about looking at the type. So would be a type four to a type five. Soft like a snake and easy to pass as well and you're right kids do tend to find a fascination with this and this is really important because we're all going to have to go to the toilet.

For children with any daytime wetting or poo accidents that we may have we would always recommend that they would do a two-week bowel diary to help to identify what's happening for them.

3. Toileting - Dry overnight, waking children, rewarding dry nights, alarms

What is normal as far as being dry overnight? Yeah, so what's normal for that is we will consider it developmentally appropriate to have bed wetting up until the age of seven years. A lot of children will get dry before that, though. So once again, it's looking at what they're drinking during the day, making sure that they're not constipated. But also if you notice that their pull-up might be getting dry overnight, not as heavy in the morning when they wake up. Some children will just decide to refuse to wear a pull-up at night time. And it's really good to give your child the opportunity to see if they can get dry at night.

So what I would recommend is that you have a really good mattress protector and an incontinent sheet that you would use as well. And expect there to be some wet paper. And make sure that you have beds along the journey, too. If your child gets really upset or despondent with the bed wetting or you're not making progress, pop them back in a pull-up for a month or two, but absolutely try again. So us, the Public Health Nursing Service, we run a 12-week bed alarm programme for children over seven years of age. And look, it's very time intensive. And it will be a lot of broken sleep along the way.

So it's important that your child is motivated, is wanting to be dry at night time, and is well supported at home by a parent or caregiver as well. Would that be harder for children that are deep sleepers? Absolutely. So bed wetting, that's exactly right. And so what we're doing with the bed alarm, it's a conditioning effect over time. That as soon as your child starts to wet, the alarm rings. And wakes them up. And they will finish going to the toilet, wheeze in the toilet. And they'll come back to bed and go through that process again. And over time what ends up happening is that their body then wakes up to that sensation of having that full bladder.

And will either wake up to toilet overnight or they'll be able to hold on to what they need to as well. Very common, absolutely, for deep sleepers. And also if you've got a family history of bed wetting. So if you were a bed wetter yourself, or dad was a bed wetter, then absolutely your child can be more prone to wetting. Doesn't necessarily mean that their journey is going to be the same as what yours may have been. But yes, it does run on families as well. Should I take my child to the toilet in their sleep? Am I waking them up at midnight? Yeah, so we wouldn't recommend that. What that does is, yes it can help you.

It can help to manage the bed wetting and the amount of wet beds and the washing that comes along with that. But what often happens is the moment that you stop waking them overnight they will wet. So it's not going to resolve the bed wetting for you. It can help to manage with the washing. We tend to just say absolutely leave them to sleep. Because what can also happen is you even entering their

room can be enough to disturb them. And for that wetting to happen as well. So we tend to say just leave them be. If you go in and notice that they have wet, then absolutely you can help to wake them up to change.

The other thing is with those really children that are heavy sleepers, that if you ask them what you said to them overnight when you woke them up to toilet, they probably won't have any recollection that you've woken them up at all. I mean would it make that much of a difference if you were taking them to the toilet just before they go to bed than if you're waking them up at midnight? I mean is there that much of a difference? So I would recommend absolutely that toilet before bed is vitally important. And again toilet when you first wake up in the morning. Apart from that absolutely not. Like with bed wetters they need to have a hormone that concentrates their urine at night time so they're not producing as much.

So they can hold on what they need to. And us as parents if we go in and wake our child up, we don't know whether they've got a full bladder or not. So we're kind of stopping that from happening for them and them learning over time of that sensation of having a full bladder and needing to go to the toilet. And speaking from experience, a broken sleep makes you very tired the next morning. Absolutely. Sure, same for a child. Yeah definitely. And it can be a bit of a process with that bed wetting as well. And the other thing that we would recommend is don't reward dry nights because your child's got no control over whether they're wetting or not.

So reward them for things that they do have control over and that's going to the toilet before bed, helping to remember to have their drinks during the day as well. They might be more than happy to help you change the bed during the night and be an active participant in that as well. Yeah. Okay. Do the night wetting bed alarms work? Yeah, absolutely. They're a really safe and effective way of managing bed wetting. 15% of children will get dry on their own accord every year as well. But as I said earlier, the most important thing is the child themselves is motivated because it is their body that it's happening to as well and we really need their buy-in with the process too.

Because as I said earlier, there may be multiple times that bed alarm goes off overnight or it may only go off once a night. But it's about making sure that they have got that support within the home as well to support them through the programme. And what is a bed alarm? So there's different bed alarms that you can get. There's some that just sit just inside the undies or knickers or pyjamas. As a service, we use a bigger bed alarm. So it's about a metre wide by about that big. It's a rubber mat that they sleep on. It's got wires that run through it and it then connects to an alarm box that we have far enough away from their bed.

What ends up happening is as the child wets, so it's different than you waking them up as a parent because we don't know when they've got a full bladder. So when their bladder's at the capacity that it can hold and they start to wee, their salt in their urine triggers the alarm and it wakes them up. And so we work over 12 weeks. Some children will get dry a lot earlier than that. And what we're looking for is 14 consecutive nights in a row of that alarm not going off and them being dry.

4. Toileting - Holding on, being naughty or lazy, clean up after soiling, fear of toilets

My child seems to hold on to the last minute and then they don't have enough time to make it to the toilet. Why can't they recognise this earlier? And sometimes it is obvious to me that they need to go. They might be rippling around or holding themselves, but they haven't even realised themselves. Yeah, absolutely. And I find this a lot, especially around that toilet learning age as well and even a bit older. Especially if children are really active or focused on a task that they're completing as well. And that's where we come in as parents and caregivers to help to teach our children what the signs are and what they're feeling in their bodies when they need to go to the toilet.

So what you've mentioned there, absolutely, that jiggling, they may start walking on tiptoes, they may be holding themselves as well, are all signs that they are withholding going to the toilet. And that's when I'll be really promoting and encouraging that positive language and the communication as in, oh, it's time to go to the toilet, let's go together. And teaching your child what those signs are of needing to go. Are they being naughty or lazy or do I need to just be tougher on them? Look, we get asked that question a lot. For the majority of children, that have daytime wetting or poo accidents, they're not being naughty at all.

It's about helping them and having that positive language around toileting. And I can't emphasise that enough about negative language or negative talk about toileting, how that can really impact on a child. So it's about having that positive communication and that support around that as well. Yeah, I agree. I mean, it is very hard. Yeah, absolutely. And it can, and once again, I always say to parents too, we can't underestimate the impact that it has not only on the child, but also on the family as well. And it's one of the biggest life events that you're going to achieve with your children as well, to do toilet training.

And I like to call it toilet learning. Yeah. It's about learning to use the toilet and to really expect those accidents, but be really calm about those as well and keeping it positive and fun. And what can also help is having a wee bag that the child gets to take with them that may have a special book in it that they can read for toileting or blowing bubbles. And it's also about making sure that your child's well supported on the toilet. I would always recommend a toilet insert. And a step and making sure they're in the correct toilet position, which would mean that their knees are slightly higher than their hips and their feet are touching that foot still.

Because if you or me tried to sit on the toilet without being able to touch the ground, it can be quite scary for them as well. I like to hear you call it toilet learning because you're right, because we are the teachers, we're teaching the children to do that. Yeah. Should I make my child clean themselves up? Or clean themselves up when they have soiled or wet themselves? Yeah, absolutely. To promote and encourage their independence with it. A lot of children will still need our help and that's absolutely fine. It's also setting the scene around when they have wet or soiled as an appropriate place to get changed.

My recommendation would be if you've had a wetting accident or a poo accident is to go and get changed standing next to the toilet. Yeah. And making sure that your child's standing up and really encouraging and praising them for the effort of cleaning up. Absolutely, if you need to help as a parent, that's really fine. Also about setting the scene around flushing the toilet, washing your hands in that toilet area as well. Not in the lounge next to the TV or laying down on the floor would be my recommendations. Yeah. I started getting my daughter to start cleaning herself up after she would soil herself.

She was only five or four or five. Yeah. And I didn't want it to look like it was a punishment her having to clean up after herself. Yeah, so being there with her, that real positive praise and reinforcement and keeping all toilet interactions fun and enjoyable. And that's how children learn. Yeah. And absolutely not a punishment and be there to support her as well. Just letting her know like why we were doing that and why she had to do that as well. Yeah. And that it's not her fault that it's happening either. And it's about her body learning and her learning with that as well. Yeah. My child is scared of going to the toilet.

They hate the flushing noise. How can I teach them to go when they're so scared? Or they hate public toilets. My son, just, I don't even like taking him to public toilets because of the hand dryers. He freaks out. Yeah. Or those flushing urinals that go off without even expecting them as well. Once again, it's just that positive communication. Even not to expect your child to use the toilet but to pop into those toilets in unfamiliar environments even if they're washing their hands or just flushing the toilet. And once again, it's about keeping those, that communication as positive because any talk about negativity around toilets that they hear from other people definitely impacts on them.

And so that would be my recommendation, just about getting familiar. Once again, like starting school. Or going somewhere new. As a parent, it's great if you take your child to show them where the toilets are located and that they feel comfortable using them as well. Staying with them and making sure that you're using that communication effectively with them.

5. Toileting - Toileting programmes

What is a toileting program? How would this work in a school setting? Yeah, absolutely. We both probably can talk to that one, can't we? So I guess that's where quite a bit of my role comes in at times. So at the moment we work with children if toileting impacts on their schooling. And so a toileting routine to me would be offering or prompting and reminding to go to the toilet for weeks between that two to three hours. So at school that might look like at the end of morning tea or the end of lunchtime. And just having those good bowel habits throughout the day, so toileting every two to three hours. If you're looking at bowels or poos, your body's got a natural reflex to empty 20 to 30 minutes after you eat as well. So I would be recommending then offering a toilet sit after meals. So that might look like after breakfast, after lunch or after dinner. And making that a fun experience of reading books, blowing bubbles, helps to relax when children need to do a poo as well. And offering a toilet sit of no longer than five minutes. If there's no result, absolutely still praising positive encouragement and support around that as well.

6. Toileting - Are incontinence problems increasing_

How common are incontinence problems? Look, in the work that I do, I've significantly noticed an increase. And there's a lot of research out there worldwide that the prevalence of it is getting more and more. And also the age for children to be fully toilet trained can be a bit later as well. So it's just about looking for those signs of readiness in your child. Some children will leave that themselves, but others need that coaxing and reminding and support along the way. So, I mean, back in the day, Grandma and Grandad's day, I feel that there weren't these problems. Well, there was, but it was never spoken about or it just wasn't as much.

Yeah, absolutely. Why is that, do you think? Yeah, well, a lot of it comes down to pull-ups. Pull-ups are like a portable toilet. And if you look at the Continence New Zealand website, Lisa Smith, who's a Continence nurse specialist in the North Island, has recently uploaded a number of free webinars for parents to have a look at as well. And I like her analogy of, you know, I'm a nurse. And I like her analogy of what she calls a pull-up to be a portable toilet. And compared to the cloth nappies that our grandparents or generations before us may have been more prone to use, the child physically feels wet.

If you looked at a child that had a wet nappy back then, it was often round by their knees and really uncomfortable for them. Whereas now with the pull-ups, their job is to pull the moisture away from the child, so they often don't have that sensation of feeling wet and uncomfortable. So there's not as much of a drive for them to get out of them as well. That's so true, because compared to putting a

child in undies or knickers, compared to in the nappy, they'd go in the nappy, but straight away if they went in their underwear, they wouldn't get out of it. No, exactly. And they don't like the feeling.

Yeah, and so sometimes what can help in that lead up to see whether your child's starting to be ready to be going through that toilet learning process, as I often say to parents, sometimes put a pair of undies or knickers on underneath, and then they pull up on over top, and they quite quickly know that sensation of what it feels like to be wet as well. And give it a go.

7. Toileting - Are children sent home after an accident_

Will they get sent home every time they have an accident? Schools are used to this, but this is a very case-by-case business, and it's always to do with the child's mana and wellbeing. Schools... This is where I'd encourage, when you go on those school visits, if toileting is a concern and things are going all even closer, a turnout to come and visit the school and look at the spaces, and it's a perfectly valid question to ask about, if my child has an accident at school, where would they be able to be changed, get changed in things? So in that case, it would be, the more knowledge we have before your child starts.

But certainly, no, not every time your child has an accident. One thing for all whānau, for anyone, even if your child hasn't had a toileting accident since they were three, we always recommend a Ziploc bag in every child's bag that says, Socks are really important. Socks, one or two pairs of underwear, and a change of clothes. What we find the issue is, can be for a child having to go to the office and having a pair of underwear. We have those, but it's not their underwear, and especially if this is related to sensory issues, and some children, for example, have preferred colours and things, the most upsetting thing for a child is not to have their clothing there, ready for a change.

And what Holly was saying about keeping things a positive experience, that's what schools need to do with this too. So the way that whānau can support that is by having that stuff in a bag ready to go. So if there is an accident that the child has their own clothes to wear, can be supported. In some cases, you may need to be called, and this is around resourcing around in our school, because again, one adult with 23-odd children, but this is a conversation that the SENCO would have with you before the child started. But it would be, it's not a common occurrence, it would be something in an individual case by case.

So if this did happen, let's say a child soiled themselves, is it when a teacher aide would maybe come in and help them, and then if they have the change of underwear in their bag? Depends on the child. Depends on how your school's run, and this is where, you know, and if we're talking about, we would already have a plan in place if this was a known toileting issue, as opposed to a one-off, which would be a very different case, where the child would, yeah, let's go and visit over in the office, where there are often bigger changing areas. Absolutely.

And there's a continence toolkit that's available, and it's available to schools on Stronger Schools or Leading Lights, and it was developed around routine, so this is the one that we give families at home, that's also got some information around basic activities of daily life, bladder and bowel, as well as the importance of eating five-plus a day and well-balanced diet. But the schools one is a modified version of this that sits more around the timed toileting and the drinking to try and reduce those accidents from happening during the day.

And one of the goals that's on there is also, like you've said as well, is identifying a safe place that your child feels comfortable to get change that maintains their privacy and their dignity as well, and somewhere to store any of those wet and soiled clothes as well during the day that's not necessarily, don't want it back in your school bag with your lunchbox, but making it somewhere that's safe for that child. And I guess dependent on the school, usually have a toilet, I know that this school that my daughter goes to, they have a toilet near the office area that's like a safe spot for the toileting.

Will they have to wear pull-ups? No. No, this is, if it was something of a serious toileting concern, we would be taking guidance from a public health nurse or anything else. There are some cases where children do start school in pull-ups, and that is set up. If a child is starting school in pull-ups, 100% we need to apply for some funding to support the change, the changing of pull-ups, and have that routine and those things in place. So there is a health needs fund that schools need to apply for where we detail the plan, and that is signed off by a medical professional, contributes to that funding.

But your child may start school in pull-ups, schools do not enforce pull-ups for accidents. And we would encourage, if they're having daytime accidents, to go in undies or knickers, but as you've alluded to before, make sure that you send ample changes of clothes and a wet bag to store anything in as well. But yes, there are some children that do as well. How can a school support my child's dignity when other children notice the accidents? Yeah, so that's what we were talking about earlier around the inclusive environment. Usually at a younger age, children are very busy, but we do read those books, and we don't make a big deal.

It's an OK thing to happen. We do like to let whānau know. Unless we have just wee slips, we just say, today, you know, Bob had an accident. We just tick, you know, it could be what was happening at the time or something, and date it just so that whānau know, so that you know, and just go in the reading folder and go home. With older children, usually there's already been a plan being put in place that may, you know, Emily followed through with the plan, and for example, some children, it may just be a weak signal to the teacher. Thumbs up means I need to go over to the office, and that's where their clothes are, and that's where they go through.

With other children who need toileting reminders, and we do do this from five-year-old too, we may just have a little, again, a hand signal or a visual, and we just might walk past and show that visual, and we have an agreement that that means we go and try on the toilet. So there, it's definitely handled that way in partnership with whānau.

8. Toileting - Toileting and school

So these ones are for Marzia. Can my child start school if they are not consistently toilet trained? So I'd like to start by discussing, as Holly said before, that toileting is learning. And, of course, we're in the business of learning that for any whānau, whoever's raising children, to not fear any judgment or worry around toileting in regards to school, that schools are set up to support students. But there are some things that it does require, and that is really open and honest communication from whānau quite early on. If there are significant challenges for your child around toileting, the sooner that the school knows that, the sooner that they're going to be able to learn about it, the sooner that we can put supports in place, such as public health nurse, who may or may not already have knowledge of the child, and other things that we can do.

So I always encourage whānau to enrol your child on that fourth birthday. It's really good practice to let your school know that your child is coming. It goes through for a lot of decisions around funding and ratios, and it's for the benefit of your child for us to know that they are coming, so we can make decisions. So all schools work very differently. Some schools have a cohort entry where children start in the beginning and mid-term as a group. Other schools still have children starting at the age of five. But knowing that your child is coming allows us to make those decisions around ratios, because some children's new enrichment classes can start up, alternatively some schools, such as the one where I currently work, children are moved down to join other students based on the number of students.

So, when you're filling an enrolment form for a school, if your child has toileting challenges, I really welcome whānau to write those down, because my role as a Special Education Needs Coordinator in a school means that I can look at that. It means six months out from your child starting school, I can give you a phone call, and I can just touch base, and it's with no judgement, and it's to touch base and say how are things going now, and we can move forward from there. And that's putting your child at the centre, the decisions. If school does not know that your child is facing significant toileting challenges, we can come back to funding later.

But the thing is, it's around us being a village around your child. So if we know in advance and we discuss six months out, we can prepare and get things ready. We can invite you onto the school site to come and visit the toilets as part of a daily routine. We can send home the social stories with photos of our toilets in them for you to share at home. We can. The school I currently work at visits preschools before your child starts. We, in many schools, will call as well to speak to preschool teachers. If we know that toileting is something that your child needs support with, the same as if your child needs support with anything else, we can get in early and be very proactive.

The school support, I'd just like to reassure everyone that it's something that we do. And that we can go to those preschools, for example, and the visuals and the reminders that they are using, we can put them up in our toilets in school. So it comes back to early, open, honest communication. And please don't, for whānau not to have any concerns about that. It's really helpful for your child if we know these things in advance. And chances are, when I call you six months out, your child may have had some progress with toileting and that's great too. So it's about not being fearful of letting us know.

Because if your child starts school and we find out on that first day, one of the biggest challenges that students face is going from an early childhood setting where you have someone rostered on for toileting for a day, but centres run differently of course, that your child is coming to an environment where typically there is one adult and there can be 10, 15, 20, 24 other children in that space. So it is a big difference in terms of one adult's capability to manage a range of needs. So as Holly said, with an increase of children being trained at a later date. So that open and honest communication.

And to know that your child's not going to be the only child that has got toileting concerns. And I 100% can't stress enough the importance of getting in there early and it just helps to really support your child to have a successful transition to school. So it means that we can have, so, schools take their guidance from the health professionals in many cases. So it allows us to open up those pathways. And that can just be an advisory questions or advice that we seek. Or it can be more in depth in terms of a referral. But it's definitely a village around your child. Recognising that in schools these days there are a range of needs that present.

So open, honest communication. But absolutely your child can start school. It's just really helpful if we know in advance. I mean it seems daunting having to enrol child first day of school anyway. But yeah, as you said, it's just about talking to the teacher. And you guys have seen it all before. Yes. All along the board. And yeah, you guys are very, you cater for all of the needs. Yeah, we do. So in each school we'll have a special education needs coordinator. Some schools have that as the deputy principal. But in other schools it is a different role. But that is the person who coordinates and puts referrals through, seeks advice and assigns teacher aid times and looks at funding.

So always your child's homeroom teacher would be your first port of call. But the SENCO will usually participate as well in meetings and catch up with you. And help set up any systems. Sounds like there's a lot of support. That's good. How do I stop other children from teasing them at school? So this is a really good question. This is around teachers' strengths in their classroom environment. And establishing a very nurturing classroom environment. So this goes alongside the idea that toileting is learning. The same as everybody else. And five-year-olds are actually wonderful if we're looking at the area where most of the accidents are happening.

Although it can help, of course, some toileting concerns persist. But this is around if your child is coming home and saying that they're being teased, then it's really important to let your child's teacher know that that's happening. In some cases in busy environments, for example, and this goes alongside with also letting your child's teacher know if they're coming home with wet underwear. Some children, we've discovered, they do get to the point of managing themselves that we don't know that they've had an accident. There are quite a few smells in a classroom environment on some days. So just that communication.

So certainly if your child is coming home and saying things, please, please talk to your child's teacher. Usually, hopefully, they'll already be aware. But teachers are very good at setting up their environment where we're a team and we're working together. About moving children away to private areas, keeping it positive and things like that. There are picture books that we use to talk about toileting as well. And it's for everybody. But certainly if something is upsetting your child in regards to anything happening at school, please ensure that your child's teacher already knows that that's happening.

And in many cases, your child's teacher may already be talking to you about these things and how they're managing it as well. Can my child attend school if they're not toilet trained? Yes. Yes. Yeah. Absolutely. But just start that conversation with school early. Yeah. Yes. So I think it may not be anything at all of serious concern, not toileting, but it is something to take seriously in terms of your child's wellbeing in a new environment with one adult. And just being open to having that conversation and seeing what schools can. And helping and starting that conversation early.

9. Toileting - How can schools help, funding

How can the school help when talking? Yeah, there's a lot over the years as teachers become more upskilled in this area. There are lots of things. One of the, quite a few of the things, one of the things, and Holly mentioned before, and you mentioned too, about being fearful of things. There are some tips that we've picked up in schools. For example, if a child says, I'm scared, or I'm this, we can say, well, actually, you feel scared, and putting it onto a feeling. So the same as if a child's saying they're shy, well, actually, you're not shy, you know, you're Bob. But you're feeling shy, and that's a feeling, and those feelings come and go.

So it's acknowledging that. We certainly come alongside preschools. If preschools have a routine that has worked well for them, in terms of timing, well, this knowledge is very important, we stick to those times at school when a child is scared. When a child is transitioning to school. And in some cases, when a whānau has also stuck to the same times, it's been really successful around what is happening at school, when whānau stick to the same thing. We've had a lot of success with that. If specific visuals have been used at preschool, we will often take a copy of those visuals and put them up in our toileting areas, so that any routines that have been set up, toileting songs or toileting video clips that have been successfully used by whānau, and or preschool early childhood settings, we will copy those so that it transitions there.

We will sometimes use soft toys, especially if there's a feeling from a child of being scared of the toilets, or something like that, we may bring in a soft toy, and, well, you know, this toy here is feeling really scared about going to the toilet. Like, Bob, have you got any advice? For the toy. So then, sometimes if a child is unable to verbalise for themselves, you'll find out, and then it could be, oh, what do you think Bob's feeling scared about? And it can be, then you can get around that, and actually we can take Bob to the toilet initially first. There are lots of things that we do around practising, and I'm sure you did the same, when your child does not need to go to the toilet in a high-pressure situation.

So we can go and practise these things, when your child is feeling calm, in the same way that we learn other things. So in that, and what Holly's talking about, about being a positive experience, that actually just go and practise walking to the toilet, and then being a reward in there. Trying to think of everything else, but another one is seeking referrals where needed, and around communication. So whether that's a daily log that can go between home and school, which is that communication, it can be time, and things, some whānau support us, support schools really well by the reward system that we're using at school and home, it can go between, that's when, and

that's what we're kind of talking about, around the village or around your child, because your child's teacher may have quite a few needs going on at the same time, so of course we try to do our best for your child.

It's really great to have a village approach, to that, so that, that communication. We can support better if you keep us up to date with how things are going, and especially if there is a regression. So not being fearful of, if there is a regression. I certainly know when my children start school, if they have an accident, it can feel, but by nature, it is what Holly alluded to before, big life changes. Big life changes can result in toileting regressions. So of course, starting school, and suddenly you have new eating routines, new friends to make, eating at different times, and one of the big changes is that at early childhood centres, the time for eating could be quite different to at school, where the eating time could be quite short, especially when you've just learned that you go to the toilet and wash your hands first or by yourself.

So, yeah, we can help in lots of different ways, but we do seek support and guidance, and it is case by case. But certainly, allowing children, cluing into what children are telling you, even if they're unable to tell you, it can be trying to knuckle down to the part of the toileting routine that your child is fearful of, because sometimes it is, a small part of it, like, you know, how much toilet paper to use. Like, we can actually, it is learning, and if we take Holly's approach that it's learning, there can be things. So even if your child could point or, is it this part, or taking that curious approach to toileting, rather than assuming that it's the noise of the flush, or it may be something completely, it may be like the feeling of wind.

And it's really important to gain your child's perspective of what's happening for them, because it is, it's happening to their body, and to find out what their reservations are, or what's happening, and not just think, we know, as well. Is there any funding to help my child with toileting? Yes, yeah, there is. And we do engage support for that. So if your child does, is starting school in pop-up and pull-ups, or does require additional support, then we do need support. We do need to have personnel behind that, so we do need to apply for funding. And again, that's why that you're the enrolment and the touching base before your child starts about how things going.

And that's not to concern or worry anyone. It's really if you have a significant concern, or you feel that your child is unable to toilet. If your child cannot toilet independently at school with one adult in a room, we need to allow for that and account for that. And we can do, we just need to know, and be able to have those conversations. Schools can have a lot of success because of the routines at school, and because learning through observing others. When you're in a group, in early childhood centres, of course, you're called for toilet times to come over, but you don't necessarily, you're busy playing with your mobilo, or having the best time of your life in the sandpit.

Whereas at school, you're really, we talk to children often, when they start, you're now a team, and we hang out together. So for example, which is a big step, not on your first day, not just running out the door when you're used to. So we're a team, and we do things together. So in fact, the whole team goes to the toilet at set times in new entrant classrooms. And so that can lead to a lot of success with toileting as well. So just like to encourage whānau not to be fearful, that we can be positive about this, and your child by seeing others do that, and it actually becomes, you know, we can do it.

We line up, and we go to the toilet, and it's very routine based, which I think provides a lot of security for children, and learning from others. They may not learn from us adults, but they may see their friends going to the toilets next door, and okay, well, they're doing it. Yeah, I'll do that too. Kids love routine. Yes, they do.

10. Toileting - School camp

How can my child go on school camp if they are not dry overnight? We manage honest and open communication, there's no judgement. We work with whānau, the ones that know their children best, and we have that conversation with the child and with whānau and how we're going to manage it to make it a positive experience. We're well equipped to support whānau and so that children have a great time on camp. Parents can go on school camps too, would that be detrimental if the parent came along or I guess it would be the child, wouldn't it, you know, the child, maybe mum or dad. Parents help the camp as a whole, yeah, we have, yeah, sometimes we have.

It's certainly... At least in response I would say it's not a requirement for a parent to attend if your child is still bedwetting at Camp H, it's that you can seek medical advice, but at the very least let us know so that we can prepare with that. So it's certainly not a requirement for a parent to attend. And it's just to know that at that age group your child's not going to be the only child that wets the bed at night time too, that it's more than likely there'll be one or two other children in the class as well. And it's not something that... It's not something that we talk about and it's about, but we should talk about it more, it's about supporting your child to make sure that they're going to have fun in a successful camp as well.

So of course it's not something we would know as teachers, so certainly we would hate to think that if a child tried to manage it themselves at camp in a totally different environment and to feel embarrassed and feel that they had to hide that, you know, and some children may want to manage it. And that's okay too, but it's just a weakness in that so that we can be prepared for that.

11. Toileting - Schools and the role of family whānau

What support can be offered by the school? Yeah, a range. Yeah, the visiting the preschools, definitely photos, social stories we often use these days, and that's just a story which would include, and it can include, and this is one of the things you can offer if a child comes for a visit, would take photos of the toileting routine, would type it up and send it to preschool and home, and that can be read to the child before they start. Something we have done for some, that schools have done for neurodiverse students, is film them doing the routine with whānau permission, and then you can have a wee QR code, for example, and the child can watch them doing the routine.

Certainly all of those things like that are really helpful. Yeah. We've done lots. We can, we've used, I've used food colouring to dye clothes and some things, again, yeah, using soft toys, visuals, trying to knuckle down what part, and also schools asking whānau to support us with this, have a really, whānau, have a really important role. Absolutely. Yeah, and it's that consistency between home and school and other people that are involved in the child's life as well, so bringing on board grandparents or other carers as well, that that child or tamariki is supported in every environment that they're in.

Yeah, so we often talk a bit, about sometimes, when things are really frustrating for children, but also for adults about tapping out and that's a village approach, so many of us find toilet training very frustrating and as we've acknowledged, if it's not a positive experience, especially later on, the older your child is, it's going to be even more challenging, so I think it would be so good great if whānau can tap out to another family member to someone else in the village around to help you if needed because it can be very frustrating yeah when toilet training my daughter I always say remember at school they do this remember the doctor said and at nan nans you do this so it doesn't just look like that mum's just making her do something she doesn't want to do you know yeah we sometimes talk about being a big school kid now yeah and we can do this without pressure I don't know if I can speak to putting too much pressure on children yeah what they can result in yeah absolutely it's once again it's just that stressing that positive fun learning experience as well and if you're getting resistance or really the child's digging their toes and just step back for a little bit everyone take a breather but then try try again from there as well and progress may be that they're no longer hiding behind a couch to go to the toilet and progress may be that they've made it to the doorway in the lounge and then from there it's slow progress to setting that scene of what's expected and that's even standing next to the toilet and then slowly progressing from them and really praise and reward those steps along the way as well and they can be really small steps but there's a way to think about the flushing sounds seems to be and the sound of hand dryers so again if that's something public toilets some schools have hand dryers yes in our bathrooms and so I don't know you know when children are calm would it be a good idea you can find flushing sounds on YouTube clips for example in a very low level and you're stepping it up if someone has and I think it's just that conversation that it's not a scary thing and to talk your child through what's happening and what they're experiencing and that it's okay for them to have those feelings but to make sure that they feel safe and supported through that as well.

12. Toileting - The GP, the Public Health Nurse and the school

Hi, I'm Dave Pilrama, GP, and toileting is a big issue in general practice, and often it's not well managed, mainly due to time constraints, and that it's a long-term problem, and it can take months or years to solve, and it needs a full team approach. And basically, having a good team around you, and people who you can talk to, such as the public health nurses, the schools, and having the whānau on board, is really important. In regards of at school, should I keep my child home if they are due for a clear-out? I guess that would be case-by-case, and the parent knows their child the best. But from you guys' perspective?

Yeah, so I'll just jump in. The child's wellbeing is paramount to any decision made, so schools would really encourage whānau to have a really informed, be able to make an informed decision. And that means seeking advice of the people that are guiding you with that process, so that your child, that we don't cause any undue suffering for the child. So we would seek support from a medical professional. Yeah, definitely. I think if you're having a disimpaction or a major amount of laxatives, doing it, say, on a Friday, not going to school, and having the whole weekend for the family and the child to go through the treatment, and hopefully be ready for school on Monday.

But yeah, we don't want the child to be either in pain or very embarrassed, and actually hurt. They hardly go to the classroom because they're in the toilet most of the time. Yeah, so we certainly wouldn't want a child to feel embarrassed at school, so especially knowing that toilets, to be in the comfort of your own toilet at home, compared to being in, perhaps, the cubicles at school. My GP has said this is just poor behaviour or attention-seeking. Is this true? No. Eva? No. When I say no, it's not, but changes in what's happening in the family, if there's been a big trauma or something like that, so can cause a regression, but it's not sort of done on purpose, so to speak.

Yeah. Behavioural and environmental things can definitely cause change in toileting, but it's for the family. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But it's really important to sort of help address those things, and then usually things will hopefully settle down again. Does that make sense? Yeah. I mean, we have to ask ourselves why first. Yeah. Yeah, exactly why. Just assume. Yes. Yeah. What is the link

between toileting and neurodiversity? Well, children who are neurodiverse, most of them can toilet fine. They may take longer. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's a bit different. It's just that it's harder for them.

Yeah. Yeah. It's harder for them to just take longer, and you may need different strategies to help, to help them. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So it's not, if you say it's hard, then it's hard to get it done. Anyway. So in this case, you're not just talking about the pain and depression you're feeling. Yeah.

13. Toileting – Overflow soiling little bits, bowel motion frequency

David, my child seems to poo tiny bits several times a day. What is going on with that? That's usually overflow. So often a child is actually very constipated. And so they've basically got this big ball of poo which is stopping everything coming down and just little bits are seeping around the side. And often the child doesn't even feel that the poo is coming out. And so, yeah, people think, well, they can't be constipated because they're actually pooing, but they're not really pooing. This is just a little bit which comes around the side and causes the soiling in their pants. And, yeah, but they don't feel it.

So it's not their fault. That's the key thing there is they don't feel it. No, they don't feel it. So there's no punishment for soiling. No. Yeah. So in that case, maybe it would be popping on a nappy until the poo has passed because the overflow is not going to stop, right? No. Until the poo comes out. So that's where you, there's sort of steps and you're treating people according to their sort of symptoms. But in that situation, you would need to sort of disinfect the child. And disinfecting means basically getting rid of the plug. So it's getting rid of the plug? You're not going to touch it with your hand, you're not going to touch it with your hand.

And then you're not going to touch the baby's shoe, and that can take a little while. And then you go on to your maintenance treatment after that, which I've said takes, is going to last at least usually six months, but more often, much longer. And what can end up happening with that?

quite varied from three or four times a day doing a bowel motion to three or four times a week but what's not normal or would be considered out of range with these children that only poo once a week as well but it's for parents and caregivers to know and that's where the bristol stool chart comes in again as the different types um checking in with your child when they're independent with their toilet and to see if they've been poos has it hurt their bottoms at all have they had to push really hard to get out and especially in our job which helps um is to get parents to do a two-week bowel diary because we're all busy and we don't know whether they went the day before or three or four days ago and it's not uncommon for us to do a bowel diary with a child and they haven't pooped for two weeks even though they might still be having those little accidents or marks in their day but it's also looking for um so that type four the snake soft easy to pass light brown quite often with the overflow or the soiling accidents it can be quite sticky really old and dark as well and really hard for your child to be able to wipe their bottoms themselves because yeah like that too how is constipation linked with wetting well constipation when you're really constipated it actually presses you've got in the rectum which is the lower part of the bowel just before the anus where the poo comes out it gets very it gets very enlarged and it actually presses on the bladder and it irritates the bladder and it also can increase bladder infections as well but it irritates the the bladder so i'll and children can sometimes start wetting during the day as well because of this irritated bladder which then squeezes down and they get a release of urine my child's tummy gets really distended and they end up in a lot of pain how can i help them to feel more comfortable basically i think it's the most important thing is to to really clear the bowels you know you can use a bit of paracetamol and hotties and things like that but that is a real band-aid it's we need to help clear the bowels and keep them clear because one of the problems is people sort of get cleared and then they think oh i feel all right now and they stop their treatment and that's why you have to have with the whānau to just keep them on a maintenance treatment to allow that um bowel to which has been really stretched to get its tone back and and and start working properly which like i said can take months and months

14. Toileting – The role of diet, demystifying toileting

How does diet impact? My child has a very limited food range. I know that bananas and apples are made for constipation, right? I'm not sure about apples, but I think we're wanting more fibre in the child's diet. And children often have quite a limited range of foods that they like to eat, and we slowly keep reintroducing foods. But looking at food which is higher in fibre in their various foods, and that's where getting advice, the public health nurses will be great, they'll have good resources, but there's good resources, the health coaches in a number of general practices can help with this, or dietitians.

And so you're basically trying to work with the child to find out what they do like, which is fibre, and then also start adding in other things, and explaining that the first time you try something, you often don't like it, and it can take numerous tries of new foods for them to start to like them. Absolutely, and Kids Health have got some really good resources on diet and nutrition in children as well. Is it a

website? Yeah, it's a website, kidshealth.org.nz. And there's a lot of information on fussy eating and picky eating, which tends to be quite common around children, and just advice to help navigate that, and to introduce different types of foods as well.

And what I found worked is also writing it down. If you find something that has fibre in it, the child, like, write it down so you do not forget, and then you can keep on using it the week after. Write down when they last did a poo. Yeah, I think we need to demystify toileting and poo and, you know, doing bowel diaries and things like that, and having children and families comfortable talking about poo, looking at poo, and all those things. It's really important. Yeah, because sometimes, you know, like, going through, with a child, with constipation, it gets hard, but if you have got something written down, you can go back to it, then you, you know, you just know that I've got these things in place.

Yeah. It's actually, I'm not, I am getting somewhere. Totally, you've made your plan. That's it. And you're adding to your plan. You're adding to the plan, that's it.

15. Toileting - Teaching children to recognise body signals

How can I teach my child to recognise their body cues? Well, everyone will have some advice here. I think making them aware, if you see them starting to jiggle, you might say, often when people start jiggling they may need to go to the loo. Why don't we head off to the loo? Or, you've got a bit of a sore tummy again. Maybe we need to go to the toilet. You can start discussing those various things. I'm sure you guys have got some other cues. Schools these days are doing a lot more interception type activities about tuning in to our bodies across a broad range. Some of that's related to emotional regulation as well.

Schools are attempting to work with children now to notice sensations in their bodies. Some of that is related to being able to calm our bodies. So, those types of things. As well as gross motor programs and things like that, and noticing how we feel in those types of things as well, which we hope is supporting. And it's just about bringing it into everyday language with your children and to not be afraid or embarrassed to talk about what goes on in the toilet, and about poos and about wheeze, and getting down to that level and saying, oh, my tummy or daddy knows how it needs to go to the toilet when you feel that rumbling in your tummy.

And things like that. And it's about teaching them the toilet language to use as well. And it's vitally important when you're starting the toilet learning too, is to equip your child with the language around toileting. And it may be a special word that you guys use as a family, or it's just about... And children learn from role modelling, and they learn from talking, and also there's some great videos out there, there's some great books out there as well. I've brought some along today that we can show you at the end as well. So that would be my advice too, if you're feeling nervous and it doesn't quite...

You may be feeling anxious about saying these things, that using the picture books or the video clips puppets, you can remove it from yourself, or a soft toy as well, if you're feeling uncomfortable. But ultimately we want to normalise it. I find the wording, um, to my kids, the way that you word things, when I say to them, if I notice that you need to go toilet, and I say, you need to go toilet, come on, let's go, doesn't really... If I say, come on, I think it's time that we try, completely different. Or even toilet time, because quite often if you ask your child, and I've got children myself, it's time to go to the toilet, and if they're busy in an activity that they don't want to put down, they don't know.

And it's about getting them to tune into their bodies, like you're asking, and like your body's got a natural reflex to empty after you eat, so instead of having afternoon tea, and removing that screen time, for that time, to allow them the opportunity to know what's going on with their bodies, and just changing your routine during the day. I mean, it's about like, wanting them to go, when I say, you need to go, I've already taken that chance away from them, for them to make the decision that they want to go. Or if they're further along, they may not be feeling those signals in the moment, and that would be quite frustrating, like as adults, if you actually don't feel the urge to go, but you have someone, it takes away that as well.

Absolutely, and that's when it comes back too, with these children that have poo accidents, because their bowel's so stretched, and they've lost that sensation, that if you ask them that they need to go, they're automatically going to say no, because they don't have that sensation there. So that's when it's really important to establish those toilet sits after meals, and really praise, for the attempt and trying, even if you don't get a result from it.

16. Toileting - Dealing with constipation

My child has severe constipation and often has issues with overflow, so this is what we're talking about. So basically with the overflow, we need to treat it with the disinfection and then start on the maintenance with various things. But it's a lot of things, making sure there's enough fluid in the diet, there's enough fibre, there's the regular toileting. And we've got the whole team involved here. But also

too, it's regular follow-up. And I think that's sometimes where general practice is not so strong. You really need to catch up with people every week or two initially to see how things are going and adjust.

And often, say the medication, if we were using something like Lactulose, needs to be adjusted. And the family needs to know how to adjust it to get to the type of bowel motion that we're aiming for, you know, a soft snake sort of thing. And so there needs to be regular follow-up. But there's other, you know, there's the... I don't know. Public health nurses in the school. But also too, the health coaches in a number of practices can be involved in that. So it's a team approach. But making sure the family understands. Because the family's actually providing 90% of the care and treatment. So making sure the whānau knows what they're supposed to be doing.

Absolutely. And with a lot of families, whānau, that we work with as well. I come across quite a few that feel quite guilty for what's happened to their child. And constipation is not necessarily diet-related or physical activity or fluid. They all play a really important role in a healthy bowel. But all that it can take is a child that doesn't feel comfortable going to the toilet at whether school, preschool, public toilet. And then they forcefully hold on. And then by the time they get home, they then poo and it's dried out and it's sore. And so then what ends up happening, it's what we call a bit of a cycle.

Is that they then don't want to poo again because that hurt me last time. So they get into this cycle and it gets really, really painful and uncomfortable for them. So it's about trying to remove that. And it's more about having the conversations about how we can wrap around and support them. How we can wrap around and support your child to feel comfortable again to use the toilet. Just going back on the visits to the doctor, to the GP in regards of the child having constipation. I can't stress it enough about just because it's everyday life for the parent doesn't mean that you need to kind of give short answers, sugarcoat it.

Oh yeah, my daughter, she was okay. It's okay. The laxatives are okay, blah, blah, blah. The doctor needs details because do you know what? There are multiple laxatives out there that do different things. And all it takes is for you to be honest and hey, it's actually not working. Wow, we'll put you on something else. And then, you know, we're on to the road. Or they don't like the taste. You know, there's basic, there's some really basic things. So like you said, there's lots of different things. But yeah, nice clear communication. And often you don't have to come in because that's a hassle. A lot of this can be done over the phone, these adjustments.

And that's where that bell diary comes in handy as well. The bell diary. Yeah, and look, you don't have to have a formal template for it. You can jot it down on your phone or a piece of paper. But especially if you're on that laxative medication as well, what we find is helpful is to not only look at the frequency that they're going, what it looks like, but also how much medication you gave them. Because then you've got that visual aid to take with you when you go back to the GP or have those consults that you can talk about how much medication and what the result was with that as well. A hundred percent.

Because when I'm going to the doctor, I'm kind of filling in bits that I can't remember. And yeah, so, and it might be something. It might be severe to someone else. But for me, because it's everyday life, I'll just kind of, oh, it wasn't that bad. But you know what? Like if I had have written it down, it was, I remember, I know it was a little bit out of the blue, you know. So yeah, writing it down is good.

17. Toileting - Age at milestones - the impact of family history

What is the normal age for a child to be dry overnight? Well that, it varies. There's a whole lot of things going on here. I think sort of 80% of children are dry overnight by the age of 5. But that's 20% of children who aren't. And it depends on, often there's a family history of night, waiting at night, and so it's really important to ask the family if either of the parents wet their bed until a bit older. Because if that's the case, it's very likely that the child is going to follow suit. And so I think there's 90% are dry by 6. But... You don't really, from about 7, you can start trying things like alarms and things like that.

Yeah. But it is very variable. And it's a brain reflex. And this brain reflex needs to develop. So, yeah, it's tricky. You can't just magic it to happen. And what I mentioned before too, with the bedwetting process, is there's a lot of ways that we can do that. So, if you're a child who's worried about their bedwetting, we have a bed alarm program, or a bed alarm program that we run as well. For children over the age of 7, that if your child is bothered by the bedwetting, a wait and see approach, we wouldn't recommend that. That if you are bothered, and I should mean, sorry, if the child is bothered by their bedwetting, absolutely get onto it.

There's things out there to support them as well. And also, when coming back to school camps that we spoke about before, for some children, it may be appropriate to have a bedwetting program. To have some medication that may help them to be potentially dry overnight for a school camp. And we would recommend going to see your GP to have a conversation about that as well. It's not necessarily for everybody, but there are things out there that will help. And it really gives people confidence, you know, that they can have sleepovers and things like that.

18. Toileting - Key messages

So reflecting on what we've spoken about today, I can't stress enough and what my key messages will be is keeping all those toileting interactions positive and fun, as well as if you do have any concerns with starting school or with your child's toileting, is involve the people that are around you. So absolutely starting that conversation early with school, booking an appointment with your GP, if you've got concerns if your child's having accidents during the day as well. But reward for the effort, it doesn't necessarily mean you'll have a result straight away and toilet training takes time and accidents are normal.

Building upon those messages, so I think it's really important that whānau have no, don't fear judgment in engaging with any service in regards to toileting. I think it's important for schools and medical professionals that early and honest communication allows us to best support children and maintain their wellbeing and their mana. That schools are different to early childhood education centres, so when your child is four and coming up to that to start looking at their toileting through the lens of one adult in a room with space so that we can have those conversations to take that village approach for whānau and school to support each other.

With the toileting, those routines and as much as the consistency across settings that we spoke a lot about today was really beneficial. Yes and just adding to that yeah, the team approach is really important and that it takes time. So you're really going to need to be aware and that you might need to manage this for at least six months, but often quite a few years but everyone gets better at managing it with time. What I've taken away from this is definitely not the only ones as a parent definitely not the only one going through this and it is a time game nothing lasts forever and you know the child is just learning and the child will pick it up and writing stuff down most definitely yeah I forget everything so yeah the writing stuff down is.