Rapid Toilet Training
(condensed from Azrin & Foxx, 1974)

**Readiness**
- Bladder control: urinates a lot at one time (not dribbles repeatedly), stays dry for several hours, and preferably seems aware when he/she needs to "go" (facial expression, special postures, etc.)
- Physical readiness: has enough finger & hand coordination to easily pick up objects easily, walks across room easily without assistance
- Instructional readiness: can do at least 8 of the following 10 instructions when given verbal instructions only (without demonstrating): point to nose/eyes/mouth/hair, sit down in chair, stand up, walk with you to another room, imitate you in a simple task (like pat-a-cake), bring you a familiar object, place one familiar object with another (put doll in wagon, etc.)
- Healthy: if child is sick (has cold, flu, ear infection, etc.), wait until child is feeling well to begin training
- Well rested: begin training soon after waking up. If child begins acting tired during training, have child take a nap and resume training immediately after waking up.
- Appropriate dress: loosely-fitting underpants/training pants (legs and waistband should hang, almost falling off), a short shirt (rolled up and pinned above waistband of pants) or no shirt at all, and no other clothing.

**Materials**
- doll that wets with method for getting water in doll (bottle, etc.)
- 2 pairs of loose-fitting underpants for doll
- 8 pairs of loose-fitting training pants for child (must be easy for child to pull off)
- variety of child’s favorite snack foods, especially ones that are a special treat (be sure to include salty snacks, like pretzels, chips, to make child thirsty)
- variety of child’s favorite drinks (not milk), especially ones that are a special treat
- list of people the child likes, including movie/TV characters

**Setting**
- kitchen or other location easily observed by trainer with easy-to-clean floor
- free of distractions (no radio/TV/visible toys, no adults talking to each other, etc.)
- free of commitments (pre-prepared meals, no appointments, no phone calls, no visitors, no siblings, no other adults–except if focused on toilet training)
- free of talk about anything other than toilet training (redirect child’s conversation)

**Extra fluids** Prior to beginning training, give child as much to drink as he/she wants, in order to create a need to urinate. When giving drinks as a treat during training, let child have as much as he/she wants each time. Child should drink at least 8 ounces (one cup) of fluid every hour.
**Dry pants checks** Throughout the training (imitation training and behavioral training), do “dry pants checks” every 3-5 minutes. Ask child “Are you dry?” and have him/her feel crotch of own underpants (you check, too, to verify child’s report). If dry, praise child “Big boy [girl], you are dry!” and give small snack/treat (one M&M, pretzel stick, chip, cup of soda, etc.). After child initiates toileting him/herself, fade dry pants checks to every 15 minutes. After 3 completely independent successful toileting trials, reduce pants checks to every hour.

**Effective instructions:**

a. Get close to child (within arms reach)
b. Have your face near eye level, by kneeling, squatting, bending over
c. Use child’s name to get his/her attention
d. Point and use gestures to help communicate what you are saying
e. Be brief
f. Use the same words each time to describe an action (don’t say “go to the potty” then change it to “go sit on the little toilet”)
g. Break tasks into smallest components if child doesn’t seem to understand (pull up pants breaks down into grabbing front of pants, grabbing back of pants, pull up over bottom)
h. Be enthusiastic
i. Use manual guidance if child doesn’t understand or is reluctant to do the action him/herself (take child’s hands and move his/her hands to do the requested behavior). Use least touch as needed, and let go as soon as child is doing the action him/herself.
j. Even when instructing child after a toileting accident, never show anger. You should show disapproval for the accident, but not anger.
Imitation training procedure (about 1 hour)

1. Put underpants on doll and fill with water (or fill bottle or other method of having doll “urinate”)
2. Tell child that doll has to “pee pee” (or whatever term you choose to call urination)
3. Instruct the child to take the doll to the potty chair, pull down the doll’s underpants, sit doll on potty, and have doll remain quietly on the potty chair.
4. Instruct child to look between doll’s legs, because she is about to “pee pee.”
5. Force doll to “urinate” (different dolls use different methods to do this)
6. Make sure child sees the water coming out.
7. Instruct child to praise doll enthusiastically for “pee pee” in the potty (cheer, clap, hug, kiss, etc.)
8. Instruct child to give doll a snack.
9. When child sees that doll cannot eat snack, tell him/her that he/she can have it if he/she will be a “big boy” (or girl) and go “pee pee” in the potty, like the doll.
10. Give snack to child after he/she indicates that he/she will do so.
11. Instruct child to pull up doll’s underpants.
12. Instruct child to help doll to empty the pot. Guide child to pick up pot, take it to bathroom, dump it in the toilet, and flush (using dominant hand while continuing to hold pot in non-dominant hand)
13. Guide child to return the pot back to the potty chair.
14. Instruct child to ask doll if pants are dry, then have child check doll’s pants.
15. Instruct child to praise doll for dry pants and offer doll a snack.
16. Ask child if his/her pants are dry. If so, give him/her the snack for being a “big boy” (or girl) with dry pants.
17. Repeat steps 14-16 with a favorite drink.
18. Wait 3-4 minutes, then repeat steps 14-16 with both snack and drink, for 2-3 more repetitions.
19. When child is not looking, spill water on doll’s underpants. The child should notice that the doll is wet on the next pants inspection.
20. Instruct child to give disapproval to doll (“No, Dolly, big girls don’t wet their pants.”)
21. Tell child that doll needs to practice going to the potty because she wet her pants.
22. Have child take doll to potty, pull down doll’s underpants, and sit on potty for a few seconds, pull up underpants, and return to site of the “accident.”
23. Repeat step 22 two more times (total of 3 “practices”)
24. Have child ask the doll if its pants are dry, guide the doll’s hand to feel the wet underpants, and say, “No, your pants are wet.”
25. Have child feel his/her own underpants, and if dry, give him/her a snack.
26. Repeat step 25 using child’s favorite drink.
27. Have child help doll change into dry underpants.
28. Instruct child to show the doll where it should “pee pee.” Guide child to point to potty chair, if child does not do so.
29. Wait 5 minutes then tell child that doll is ready to “pee pee like a big girl,” repeat steps 3-13 for 3 additional trials, waiting 5 minutes between each trial.
**Behavioral training procedure**

1. **Verbal rehearsal.** Create an understanding of the expectations, rewards, and process of toileting.
   a. Have child agree to “go” in the potty (“Mommy will be happy when you pee-pee in the potty. Will you pee-pee in the potty?”).
   b. Have child agree not “go” in his pants (“Will you pee-pee in your pants?”)
   c. Have child point to the potty to show where to “go” (Where will you pee-pee? Show me?)
   d. Have child say what the reward will be for correct toileting (“Will you get cookies if you pee pee in the potty?”)
   e. Have child acknowledge that there is no treat for “going” in pants (“will you get cookies if you pee-pee in your pants?”)
   f. Have child say that “friends who care” go in the potty, not in their pants (“Does Daddy go pee-pee in his pants? “Does Mommy go pee-pee on the big potty?”)
   g. If child answers incorrectly or does not answer, make sure that you have child’s attention (say child’s name, make eye contact), give the correct answer (“No, Daddy does not pee-pee in his pants”), and ask the question again (“Does Daddy pee-pee in his pants?”)
   h. Praise child for each correct answer, either verbal or head nod/shake. Give a snack and drink after the series of questions answered correctly “Mommy is glad that you are going to pee-pee on the potty”
   i. Use verbal rehearsal for any part of the training that the child is resisting. For example, if child insists on wearing diaper/pull up, say “Babies wear diapers. Does Daddy wear diapers? Does Mommy wear diapers? Does [older sibling or friend] wear diapers? Are you a big boy like [older brother/friend]

2. **Behavioral rehearsal.** Instruct child to walk to the potty chair, pull underpants down past knees, and sit on potty for 10 minutes.
   a. For the first trial or two, praise child as soon as he/she begins to comply with each step (“Good job walking to the potty!” “What a big boy you are to pull down your pants yourself!” “I am so proud that you can sit on the potty quietly, just like Mommy”)
   b. When child has begun doing these steps willingly, begin praising after each step is complete, then after every 2-3 steps of the process, finally after the entire process is complete.

3. **Relaxation:** Keep child in relaxed state while sitting on potty by praising child when he/she is not moving (“That’s good, you are sitting quietly”).
   a. If needed, gently hold child’s hands or knees to encourage holding still.
   b. If child resists sitting the entire time on the first trial, allow him/her to get up after 1-2 minutes, but require a few seconds of relaxation before letting him/her up.
   c. If child plays with his/her privates, hold his/her hands or give a small toy to hold for that trial only.

4. **Immediate detection:** Sit on the floor right in front of the child and watch between child’s legs to see if child “goes.” It might be helpful to put a piece of colored paper in pot (it will turn dark, so you can see even a small amount of urine)
5. Repeat this procedure every 15 minutes until child successfully urinates in potty. Try to time the instructions when child appears to need to “go” (crossing legs, holding privates, facial expression, etc.) to increase chance of success.

6. **Successful trial:** If child “goes” in potty, do all of the following:
   - a. Use all 5 types of approval: praise enthusiastically (be sure to include what behavior you are praising), give snack, give drink, nonverbal approval (high five, hug, kiss, stroking, ruffle hair, tickle, clapping, etc.), say that “friends who care” will be happy/proud/excited
   - b. Instruct girls to wipe front to back with toilet paper (boys only if defecating)
   - c. Instruct child to get off potty, pull up underpants, remove the pot, dump it in toilet, flush the toilet, and replace pot on potty chair.
   - d. For the first 1-2 trials, praise each step of the process, then after every 2-3 steps, then at the end of the whole process, and finally only for dry pants checks.

7. **Reduce frequency of trials.** After 2 successful toileting trials, begin increasing length of time between practice trials.

8. **Reduce time on potty.** After the first time he/she urinates in potty, reduce the sitting time to 5 minutes for each trial and increase the time between trials.

9. **Fade instructions.** Start with direct instruction the first 2-3 trials (“time to go potty”), then phrased as a question for the next 1-2 trials (“do you want to go potty?”), then as a general statement about the potty for the next 1-2 trials (“show me where you go pee pee”), and finally just a statement about having dry pants (“are your pants dry?”)

10. **Child initiation of toileting.** If child starts a potty trial on his/her own without any reminders, let him/her determine the amount of time to sit on the potty. After the first completely independent successful toileting, bring some of his/her toys or games into the area for him/her to play with.

11. **Instruct child to tell you when he/she “goes”** (“Tell Mommy when you go pee-pee. What will you say when you go pee-pee?” or “Point to the potty when you pee-pee. Where will you point when you pee-pee?”)

12. **Friends who care:** Use the names of people he/she knows and likes to encourage toileting. Examples include “Grandma will be so happy that you sat on the potty,” “Your pants are dry, just like Daddy’s,” “You flushed the toilet, just like Tommy (brother),” “Does Mommy wear diapers?” “Are you a big boy like Uncle George?”

13. **Difficulty pulling up underpants:** Have child grasp waistband with one hand in front and one hand with palm facing backward to pull up back of underpants.

14. **Accidents:** Complete this 4-step process after child wets in underpants.
   - a. Verbal disapproval. As soon as you catch the accident, label the behavior (“Your pants are wet”) and briefly express you disapproval (“Big boys don’t like wet pants” or “Mommy doesn’t like wet pants”)
   - b. Positive Practice. Tell child that he needs to practice going to the potty (“When you wet your pants, you have to practice going on the potty.”) Have child quickly walk through steps of correct toileting (walk to potty, pull down pants, sit for 1 second, pull up pants). Repeat positive practice 10 times, starting from various locations in the house, at least twice from the location of the accident.
c. Wet pants awareness. Instruct child to perform 10 pants inspections (“Are your pants dry?”). Give disapproval for having wet pants (“Mommy doesn’t like wet pants. Wet pants are no fun.”)

d. Cleanliness responsibility. Instruct child to do all 3 of these steps him/herself: change into dry underpants, carry the wet pants to the location you wish him/her to put dirty/wet clothes (laundry room, clothes hamper, diaper pail), and clean up the urine on the floor (have child get a sponge and wipe up wetness as best as he/she can).

15. After training.
   a. For several days after the training day, continue to conduct dry pants inspections about 6-7 times each day, at the time of events that occur on a routine basis (before meals, before snacks, before naps, before bedtime, return from school, return from shopping trip).
   b. Give enthusiastic approval but not snacks for dry pants.
   c. If child has an accident, have him/her perform 10 Positive Practice trials as soon as the accident is noticed, but omit the wet-pants checks.
   d. After 1 week without accidents, discontinue dry pants inspections but continue to occasionally comment positively about his/herr toileting skills or dry pants.