

# COLLECTION OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS



**MARTA  
AGAINST THE TOILET**

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This document contains supporting materials aimed at family members and professionals to work on situations similar to those described in the book "Super Marta against Mr. WC". This material includes information on strategies and techniques, guidelines, social stories and pictograms, among others.

## Content

<b>1. TACTILE STIMULATION STRATEGIES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. GUIDELINES FOR APPROACH AND SHAPING</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. PHYSICAL GUIDELINES TO FAVOUR THE PROCESS OF DEFECATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. ANTICIPATION</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1. ANTICIPATION NAPPY / DIAPER	7
4.2. SOCIAL HISTORY	8
<b>5. TOKEN ECONOMY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. SPHINCTER CONTROL</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. INSECURITY STRATEGIES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING ADULT</b>	<b>11</b>
ANNEX 1A: BOY'S DEFECATION SOCIAL STORY	13
<b>ANNEX 1B: GIRL'S DEFECATION SOCIAL STORY</b>	<b>15</b>
ANNEX 2: SOCIAL STORY FOR HANDWASHING	17
ANNEX 3: BYE-BYE NAPPY PANEL	18
ANNEX 5: WET & DRY NAPPY REGISTER	24
ANNEX 6: SPHINCTER CONTROL REGISTER	26



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## 1. TACTILE STIMULATION STRATEGIES

Here are some activities that can be done to increase the acceptance of tactile stimulation.

- **During or after bath time:**
  - Take advantage of the bath-time to gently rub with different sponges, softer or rougher.
  - Use towels with different textures for drying the body. It might be good to dry the child by making small touches with a little pressure, instead of rubbing intensively.
  - Add hair styling and drying strategies at this time.
  - After the bath, perform a relaxing massage, if tolerated. Preferably performing light pressure in the movements, avoiding tickling initially.
- **At mealtime:**
  - Make simple recipes with dough, jelly, minced meat, bechamel, egg, fruit, or spreads; for example, pizza dough, bread, cookies, meatballs, croquettes, dumplings, fruit skewers, sandwiches, etc.
  - Allow small moments of experimentation with food: eating with your hands, making imaginary recipes by mixing foods, etc.
- **At playtime:**
  - Hide small toys in a container with rice, noodles, lentils or similar, and look for them. If the container is large, it will also allow us to put our feet in it. Another option is to use a removable paddling pool, which allows us to experiment with the whole body.
  - Playing at painting with shaving foam or finger paint, both with hands and feet, or painting the body. There are textured paints on the market, or can be homemade, adding products to the paint that are safe for the skin, and always under supervision, such as sand, sawdust, salt, etc. Another option is to use brushes or sponges with different textures to apply the paint.
  - Play with plasticine, kinetic sand, slime, modelling paste, clay, porexpan ball plasticine, or different similar options that exist in the market. Each of these elements provides a novel texture and the possibility of experimenting with them and relating these textures to fun moments. In addition, you can find many tutorials on how to create some of these materials, so it can be a very fun family game moment in which the child is more involved and generates greater exposure to textures and favours the acceptance of the final product.
  - Create a texture panel and put different textures with which the child is familiar, for example: cotton, scouring pad, cloth, mesh, foam rubber,



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aluminium, sandpaper, cardboard, etc. Play at touching the different textures, both with hands and feet, and describe them. In this way, it also encourages the learning of basic concepts.

- Create a sack or bag in which we introduce different textures, along with objects, and play at guessing which object it is, before taking it out of the bag.

- **In the park:**

- Play with sand, mud, grass, leaves and other natural elements available in this context.
- There are balls with different textures, which can be fun to play with.

### **AT A GENERAL LEVEL:**

- Be aware of the signs. If the child is showing signs of being altered, consider performing some activity that involves some force or pressure, such as jumping or running.
- It is important NOT to force the child to perform the proposed activities, everything must be progressive and respecting the times and tolerances of the child.



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## 2. GUIDELINES FOR APPROACH AND SHAPING

When we want children to adapt their behaviour to a situation that they have never experienced before, we adults need to have some clear ideas about how to do it.

First of all, we need to be aware that in order to achieve a final behavioural goal, it is necessary to work gradually, that is, little by little. We call this way of working what we call approximation, and as the word indicates, we approach the behaviour we want step by step and in a gradual way.

In order to do this, we will first of all consider what series of steps we are going to implement until we reach the final objective. It must be taken into account that each step is as important as any other and must be reinforced when it is achieved. In other words, each step achieved (equivalent to a smaller goal) will be praised and the child will be congratulated for having achieved it.

The planning of steps will be created for each individual child and will depend on the level of difficulty of the new behaviour. For example, if it is a behaviour that the child has never done and has never seen done, it will be a more complex behaviour to achieve than one that has been seen or achieved in another context and that we want to extrapolate to other situations.

In the case of the story, the first step is to visit the toilet and sit on the toilet every so often, a step that is congratulated and reinforced with a sticker. This is just one example, as if our children were to go to the toilet and sit on the toilet every so often, they would be rewarded with a sticker. This is just one example, because if our child has more difficulty sitting on the toilet, the first step should simply be to go to the toilet.

Before moving on to the next step, it is important to have acquired other, easier steps. Even if we think that the child is ready, we can make the mistake of adding more information to the progress made and going backwards, thus losing what has been learnt.

To know when to introduce the next step, we should assess the child's reaction, observing if his/her behaviour avoids carrying out the task, if he/she gets stressed, or if signs of insecurity appear: withdrawing into him/herself; looking at the adult with a fearful expression or being suspicious of the practice we are doing.

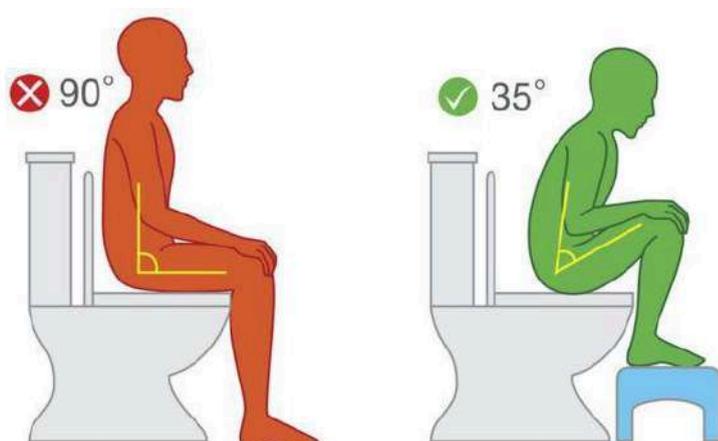
To record this, we can score the attempts at each step with "Does it", "in process" and "Doesn't do it". And once we get "He/she does it" continuously in an activity, we will move on to the next step.

### 3. PHYSICAL GUIDELINES TO FAVOUR THE PROCESS OF DEFECATION

Although the protagonist of the story, Marta, presents difficulties to go to the toilet more related to a psychological origin, in the following we will explain several strategies that facilitate digestion and the time to go to the toilet.

Management includes:

- Maintaining a balanced diet and drinking enough water helps to maintain good digestive health and keep stools soft and facilitate their passage through the digestive system.
- Establishing a routine based on toilet training guidelines.
- Adopt a proper posture: the squatting position is considered the most natural position for defecation. You can try raising your feet with a small stool or using a stool to simulate this position.



- Avoid excessive tension: excessive force should not be used during defecation, as this inevitably leads to apnoea, which makes the process more difficult, so it is important to take advantage of the expiratory phase to facilitate expulsion. By following these guidelines, we can avoid possible haemorrhoids or anal fissures. If you find it difficult to have a bowel movement, you could try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or gently massaging the abdomen.
- Exercise regularly: regular physical activity stimulates bowel movements and helps regulate the passage of food through the digestive system. It is recommended to try to do moderate exercise several times a week (walking, jogging, cycling, etc.).
- It is essential to avoid stress and take your time: do not rush to the toilet. It is recommended to allow yourself enough time to relax and evacuate

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completely. Moreover, stress and anxiety can have a negative effect on the functioning of the digestive system.

- Do not postpone the need to evacuate.

In addition, a massage can be used to help the process of digestion, expulsion of gas and to improve constipation. To perform the massage, we must find a time when the child is relaxed. The position should be lying on the back with the knees bent and the feet supported. Some of the manoeuvres to be performed are explained below:

- Hands resting on the abdomen: we place our hands on the abdomen and begin to accompany the child's breathing, focusing our attention on taking air in through the nose and releasing it through the mouth, noticing how the abdomen swells.
- Mobilisation of the legs: take the child's feet and make movements, bending the knees (keeping them at maximum flexion) and extending the legs.
- Circles with the hands: First of all, complete circles, clockwise. From the right leg towards the ribs and from the ribs towards the right leg.
- Circle and semicircle with the hands (Sun and Moon): With one hand a complete circle and with the other a semicircle (from under the right ribs to the left pelvis).
- Manoeuvres with the fingertips. You can start with the "I Love you" manoeuvre, so called because the aim is to "draw" the letters "I", "L" (inverted) and "U" inverted, on the child's belly. To make the "I" we will do it from below the left ribs to above the left legs. To perform the inverted "L", start from below the right ribs to below the left ribs and add the "I". Finally, to complete the inverted "U", start from above the right legs to below the right ribs and add the previous manoeuvre. It is performed in this direction to encourage emptying following the direction of the intestine. Another manoeuvre would be "toe walking" along the same route.



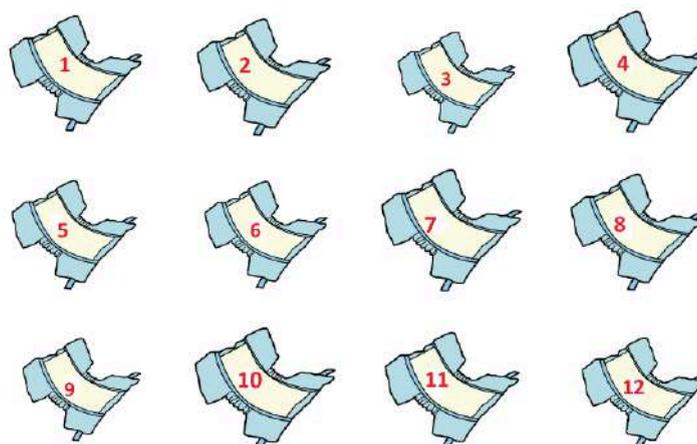
## 4. ANTICIPATION

Anticipation is the action of anticipating an event before it happens. In the case of children, it is preparing them and informing them that something out of their routine is going to happen.

It consists of establishing a visual agenda that represents activities or tasks that are scheduled using visual aids or pictograms, the ultimate goal of which is to reduce stress and anxiety and thereby improve learning and behaviour. It helps children to understand their daily routines in the environments they frequent (home, school, etc.) and in unfamiliar environments. It is based on breaking down tasks into different steps in order to facilitate learning for children.

### 4.1. ANTICIPATION NAPPY / DIAPER

In the case of Marta, we recommend the use of an anticipation nappy, which gives the child the opportunity to visually know when the nappy is going to be removed. By putting the number of nappies left and storing them, the child can see and become progressively aware of the removal of the nappy.



### 4.2. SOCIAL HISTORY

An example of anticipation would be the use of a Social Story: a short, individualised narrative with the use of visual aids or pictograms that is used to explain in detail and clarify specific social situations that may be difficult or confusing for children, in order to anticipate how to react and/or act in that particular situation that they are not familiar with.

In the case of Marta, the use of a social story would be recommended to facilitate her understanding and reduce her anxiety about going to the toilet, and to facilitate the handwashing routine.

*Annexes 1, 2 and 3 include three examples of social stories that may be useful.*



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## 5. TOKEN ECONOMY

Token economy is a behaviour modification technique, which aims to produce a change in the child's behaviour, encouraging the performance or cessation of some specific behaviours.

It is based on the exchange of tokens (stars), without value for the child, for reinforcers (interests). The performance of the expected behaviour or its cessation, as the case may be, will be accompanied by a token. If the agreed number of tokens is reached, they can be exchanged for a reward or reinforcement. In order to keep track of the tokens, a recording system is used in which the child can see, understand and participate in the management of the tokens. In Marta's case, she does it by means of a panel\*.

We must follow a series of steps in order to be able to apply it correctly.

- The first step is to explain to the child the procedure to be carried out.
- Then, agree on the reinforcers to be obtained with the stars and the number of stars needed to obtain them.

At the beginning, it is advisable to implement this system with a single behaviour and with little need for tokens, so that the child understands the system and sees its usefulness; little by little, we will increase the behaviours and/or the number of tokens required to obtain a reward.

The rewards can vary from daily, weekly or monthly, depending on the child, the behaviour or task to be worked on. Therefore, at the beginning it can be interesting to reward a simple action on a daily basis and gradually increase the time for the enjoyment of the reward.

Although initially the rewards are usually material: sweets, a doll, more time playing with the tablet or the television, etc., it is important to replace these reinforcers as the child grows. It is important to gradually replace these reinforcements with more social aspects such as: playtime with mum or dad, telling a story, a massage, etc.

We must bear in mind that the reward should align with the difficulty of the task and that it cannot be obtained by any other means. We must be very conscious of the prizes that are agreed upon, because if we commit ourselves to giving a prize and it is not rewarded, the child may feel that his or her effort has been for nothing and will not return to perform the tasks, so the token economy will fail.

On the left side of the panel, we place the image of the behaviour we want to encourage, in this case pooping in the toilet. We will explain to the child what he/she has to do to get the star. When the action is achieved, we will go to the panel and place the star on the corresponding day of the week.

At the end of the day or week, as agreed, we will count the number of stars we have, together with the child, and check if there are enough stars to receive the prize.



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If they are not enough, talk to the child and assess whether it was a lack of routine, so that we could maintain the number of stars to get the prize; or if, on the contrary, we have demanded a high number of stars, which he/she cannot achieve even if he/she performs the task consistently.

The final idea is that the child acquires autonomy and initiative to perform certain actions, so that over time, we will have to withdraw the economy of tokens, or replace the tasks with others.

*Annex 4 includes material for working on token economy.*



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## 6. SPHINCTER CONTROL

The following is a list of guidelines that we can use to initiate toilet training:

- The first week should be taken as an observation period. Every 30 minutes we will check the child's nappy and note whether it is dry or wet on the "Wet-Dry Nappy Record Sheet" (see Annex 5).
- Writing down the approximate times when the child pees helps us to anticipate and take the child to the toilet at those times, avoiding unnecessary sitting on the toilet, and achieving a more accurate pee-wet association.
- It is advisable to use a toilet adaptor and a stool that allows the child to sit on the toilet with minimal assistance.
- We will try to avoid the potty. If the child associates that the pee-pee is done on the potty, then we will have to carry out the next task, which will be to associate pee-pee and wc.
- In the first week of observation, we will change the nappy in the toilet, as much as possible, so that the child will associate that this is the place for the pee-pee.
- It is interesting for the child to carry out small tasks when changing the nappy, for example helping to pull up or pull down the trousers or throwing the nappy in the bin.
- In the following weeks we will remove the nappy and take the child to the times we have observed that he or she has to pee.
- Once seated on the toilet we will encourage the child to pee.
- If he/she pees in the toilet, we will congratulate him/her in a very encouraging way, and we will write it down on the "Sphincter Control Record Sheet" (see Annex 6).
- If he/she does not pee in a couple of minutes, no problem, we get up from the toilet and try again later, noting in the record that there has been no pee-pee.
- Watch for warning signs that the child wants to pee and try again a few minutes later.
- If he/she leaks, this is normal, he/she is learning. We will take him/her to the toilet to change, and we will try again at the next planned time slot.
- We will write down the time of the leakage on the "Sphincter Control Record Sheet" to keep it in mind for the following days.



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- It is interesting that the child also participates in the cleaning of the leakage as much as possible. If it is difficult for them to clean the toilet, they can reinforce the idea that it is more comfortable if they pee in the toilet.
  - If the temperature at home allows it, the child can wear lightweight clothing to make sitting on the toilet quicker and more comfortable. It also makes it easier to change clothes in case of leakage.
  - The removal of nappies is an undetermined process, it can last for weeks or days. We must be aware of this, be very patient and respect the children's time.



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## 7. INSECURITY STRATEGIES

Marta is a girl who has a lot of difficulties in facing the use of the toilet. In this section we will deal with the emotional insecurity she has when faced with activities that, a priori, are stressful for her and her family.

All children can feel insecure when faced with certain activities, so it is important to praise the small achievements as they happen. Marta, you sat on the toilet, you did very well". This can help Marta to feel self-confident. Avoid criticising or attending to negative behaviours: "Marta, I saw that you were very nervous when we changed the nappy" or "Marta, you pooped in your pants again". If we want Marta to trust herself, we must transmit to her that we trust her.

We must try to give her responsibility according to her age and give her challenges that can be overcome. Marta is small and probably needs some help sometimes. A gesture of affection can make her feel more confident and convey to her that she is not alone in this difficulty. "Marta, if you feel afraid, you can hold mummy's hand". We must encourage her autonomy, but assuming that she may need our help and support at many times.

Marta will probably not achieve the proposed challenges the first time, and therefore, it is important to minimise failures. Children have to experience failure and tolerate frustration in situations or games that will not always go well, but we must also make them see it as a challenge. "Marta, today we counted to 5 sitting on the toilet, how about tomorrow we count to 10?" We can even ask her what is the best option to get a little closer. "Marta, what could we do tomorrow to try to poop in the toilet?"

In another section we deal with the game in more detail but we can keep in mind that we can use these strategies while playing with the child at home. We can also teach them to laugh at themselves and thus increase their self-esteem. Dancing, playing, jumping, laughing, dressing up. Teach them to have fun and thus reduce their rigidity when faced with new situations that they share with other people and children.

Finally, the discourse that adults and children use in the face of failure is usually negative. Negative thinking and self-reinforcement can also be trained, and thus we can give positive messages to ourselves. We can start by changing or modelling "I didn't manage to poop in the toilet" to "I tried" or "I can't" to "What if I try it?".



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## 8. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING ADULT

The adult accompanying the child to toilet training is an important factor in the process. If we take certain aspects into account, foresee and have a number of tools at hand, we will be able to deal with possible difficulties in a safe way. In the following, strategies for accompanying the child in this challenge are described.

First of all, it is important for the child to know the circumstances surrounding the child. Their previous history with nappy removal, their diet, their character, etc. We must also let him/her know what is going to happen, or what behaviour or action is expected.

In order for the child to understand the process in a simpler and more visual way, we can prepare a social story. With the social story, we can tell the complete activity in a very concrete way using pictograms. It is used long before the activity starts. For example, we can select a time of the day to show it to them and tell them about it. If he/she knows what is going to happen at each moment, he/she will feel much more relaxed.

We can also provide instructions so that the child knows what to do in stressful situations. An example of an instruction is, "If Marta is nervous while she is in the toilet, she can shake hands with mummy" or "If Marta gets tired of being in the toilet, she can say THAT'S IT".

The approach to the toilet activity, in these cases, has to be progressive. The child will set the pace and if at some point we see that he/she is not doing well, we must reduce the demands. For example: Marta enters the toilet, but she does not want to sit on the toilet, as we see that she is starting to get very nervous, we can go into the bathroom and invite her to sit down. Once she sits on the toilet, we move on to the next step, always observing the child's emotions.

Having different strategies and materials is very important. One of the things that can make the child feel calmer is to be able to use elements that relax him/her. Marta sits on the toilet, but when she cannot poo she moves her legs a lot and her gesture changes. On this occasion we can say: "Marta, do you want a toy?" while we offer her objects.

We have to try to anticipate possible behaviours that may have repercussions or cause us to regress in the process. Knowing the signs of stress, nervousness, frustration or discomfort means that we can prevent many situations. If we see that the child is becoming restless, we can validate his or her nervousness and offer an alternative. "Marta, your feet are moving a lot, do you want us to get up from the toilet?"

In general, it is important to address the child in a clear, precise and calm manner, using short sentences and concrete terms, using positive language, with calmness and little gesticulation, in as quiet an environment as possible, speaking at their level

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and with eye contact, making sure they understand what is happening. We adapt to their processing pace and allow time. We validate their emotions, showing understanding of their anger, fear... accompanying them and putting a name to what they feel and being by their side. We include them in the process of looking for solutions, showing them options and letting the child choose one of them.



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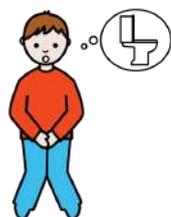
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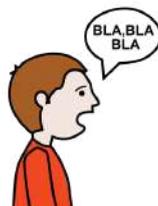
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## ANNEX 1A: BOY'S DEFECAATION SOCIAL STORY

1°



**I FEEL LIKE  
POOPING**

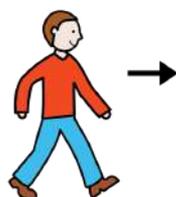


**AND I TELL**



**A RELATIVE**

2°



**I GO**

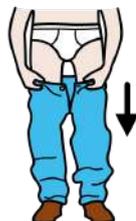


**TO THE BATHROOM  
AND**

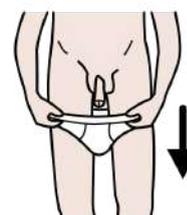


**I LIFT THE LID OF  
THE TOILET**

3°



**I PULL DOWN MY  
TROUSERS**



**AND MY  
UNDERWEAR**

4°



**I SIT**



**AND I AM CALM**

5°



**THE POOP COMES  
OUT**



**I WIPE MY ASS**



**I THROW THE DIRTY  
PAPER AWAY**

6°



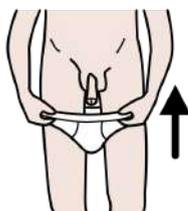
**IT SMELLS A BIT  
BAD**

**BUT**



**I AM CALM**

7°

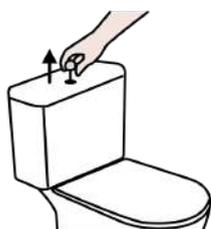


**I PULL UP MY  
UNDERWEAR**



**AND MY TROUSERS**

8°



**I FLUSH THE TOILET**



**AND WASH MY  
HANDS**

## ANNEX 1B: GIRL'S DEFECAATION SOCIAL STORY



**I FEEL LIKE  
POOPING**



**AND I TELL**



**A RELATIVE**



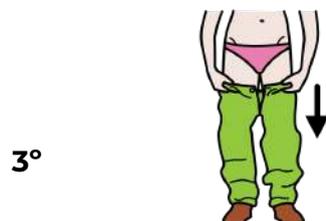
**I GO**



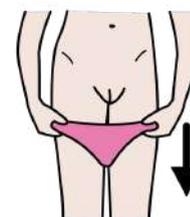
**TO THE BATHROOM  
AND**



**I LIFT THE LID OF  
THE TOILET**



**I PULL DOWN MY  
TROUSERS**



**AND MY  
UNDERWEAR**



**I SIT**



**AND I AM CALM**

5°



**THE POOP COMES  
OUT**



**I WIPE MY ASS**



**I THROW THE DIRTY  
PAPER AWAY**

6°



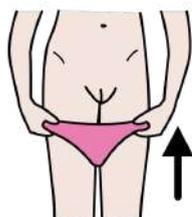
**IT SMELLS A BIT  
BAD**

**BUT**



**I AM CALM**

7°

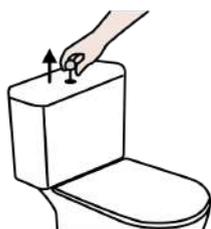


**I PULL UP MY  
UNDERWEAR**



**AND MY TROUSERS**

8°



**I FLUSH THE TOILET**



**AND WASH MY  
HANDS**

## ANNEX 2: SOCIAL STORY FOR HANDWASHING

1°



**I ROLL UP MY  
SLEEVES IF I NEED  
TO**



**I TURN ON THE TAP**

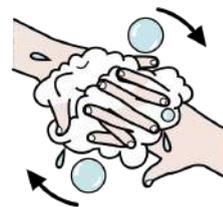


**I WASH MY HANDS**

2°

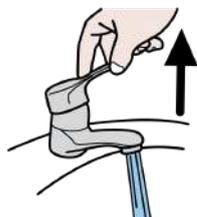


**I TURN OFF THE TAP**



**I RINSE**

3°



**I OPEN THE TAP**



**I RINSE**



**AND DRY MY  
HANDS**

---

## ANNEX 3: BYE-BYE NAPPY PANEL

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cut out and paste it on the child's drawing.

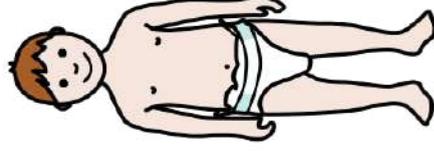


2. Cut out the nappies and glue them to the panel with material that can be easily removed.
3. With each used nappy, we peel off a nappy, starting with the last one, and put it in the pocket created with the first nappy we cut out.



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# HOW MANY NAPPIES ARE LEFT?



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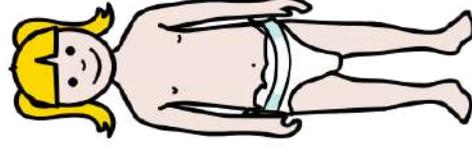
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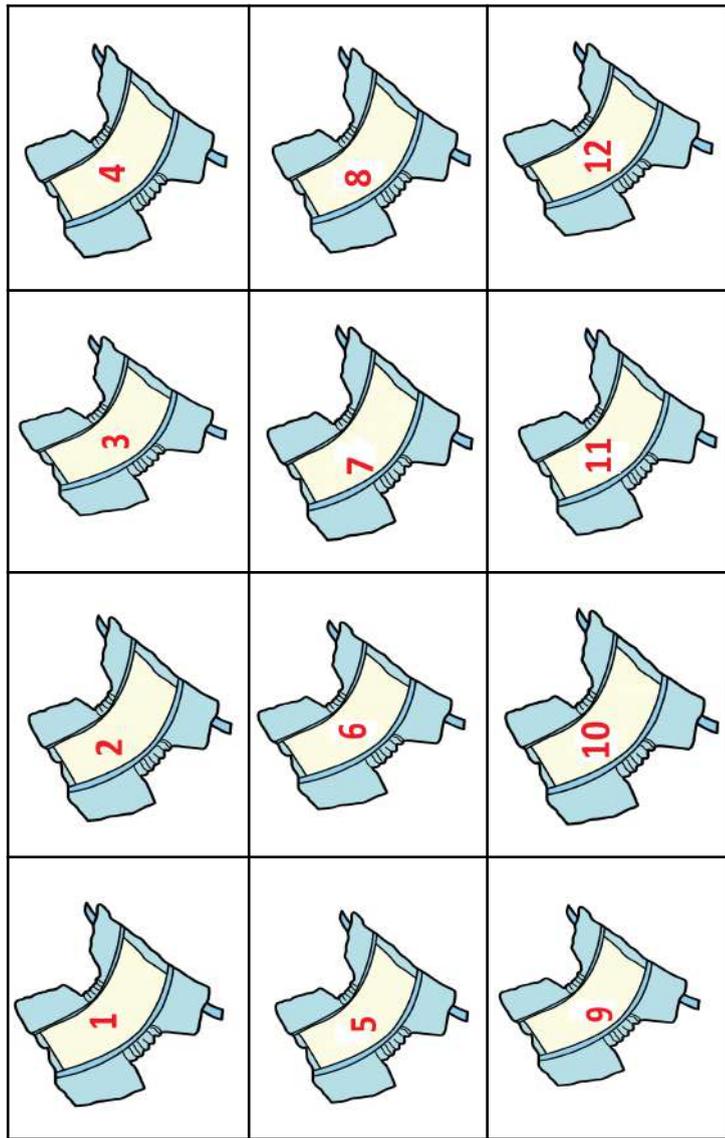
# HOW MANY NAPPIES ARE LEFT?



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**ANNEX 4: TOKEN ECONOMY PANEL**

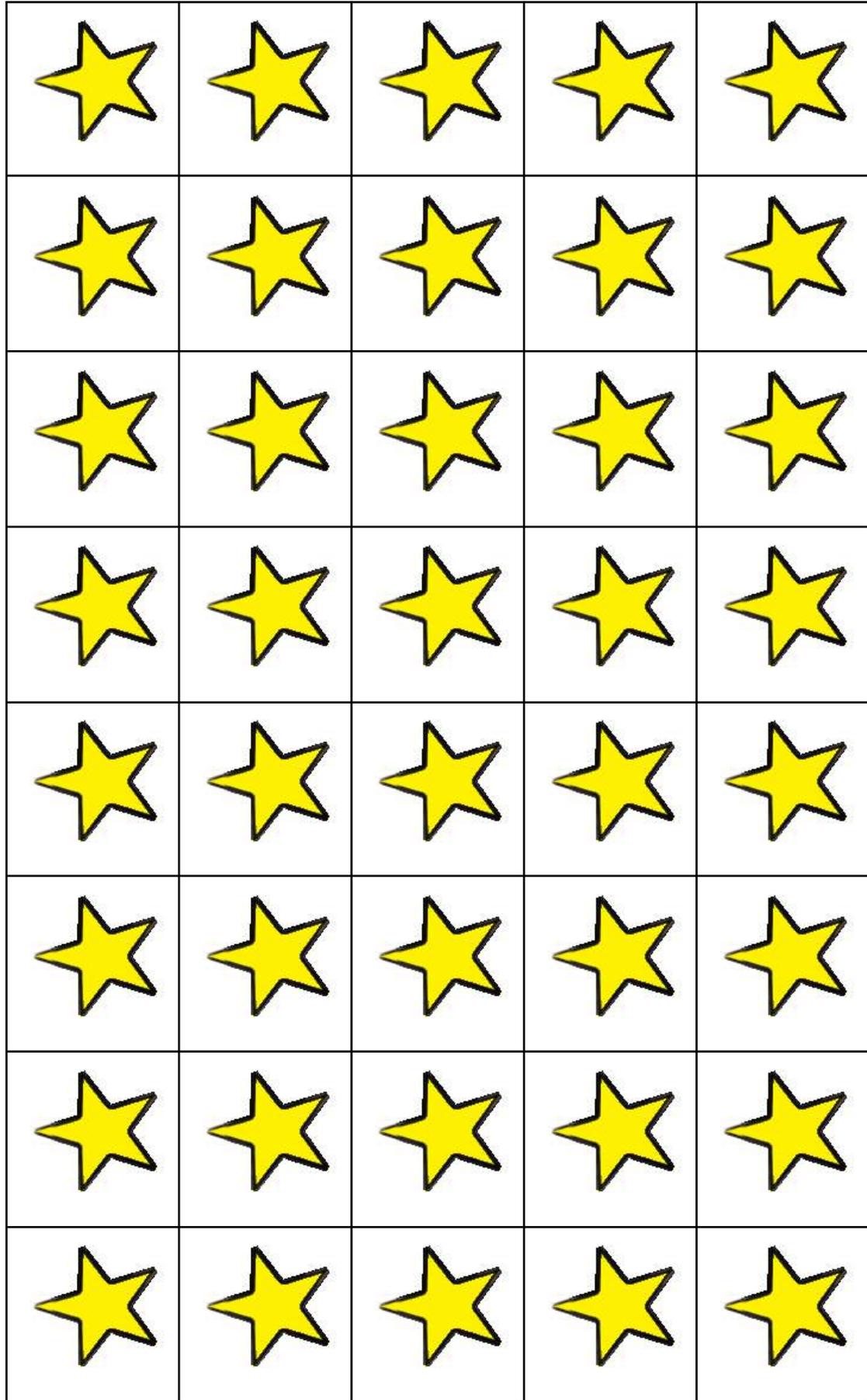
<b>I CAN!!!!</b>							
TASK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
							



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## ANNEX 5: WET & DRY NAPPY REGISTER

Every 30 minutes we will check the child's nappy and note whether it is dry (D) or wet (W), so that we can get closer to the time of urination. We will do this for one week.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							
10:30							
11:00							
11:30							
12:00							
12:30							
13:00							
13:30							
14:00							
14:30							
15:00							
15:30							
16:00							
16:30							
17:00							
17:30							
18:00							



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18:30							
19:00							
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21:30							
22:00							
22:30							





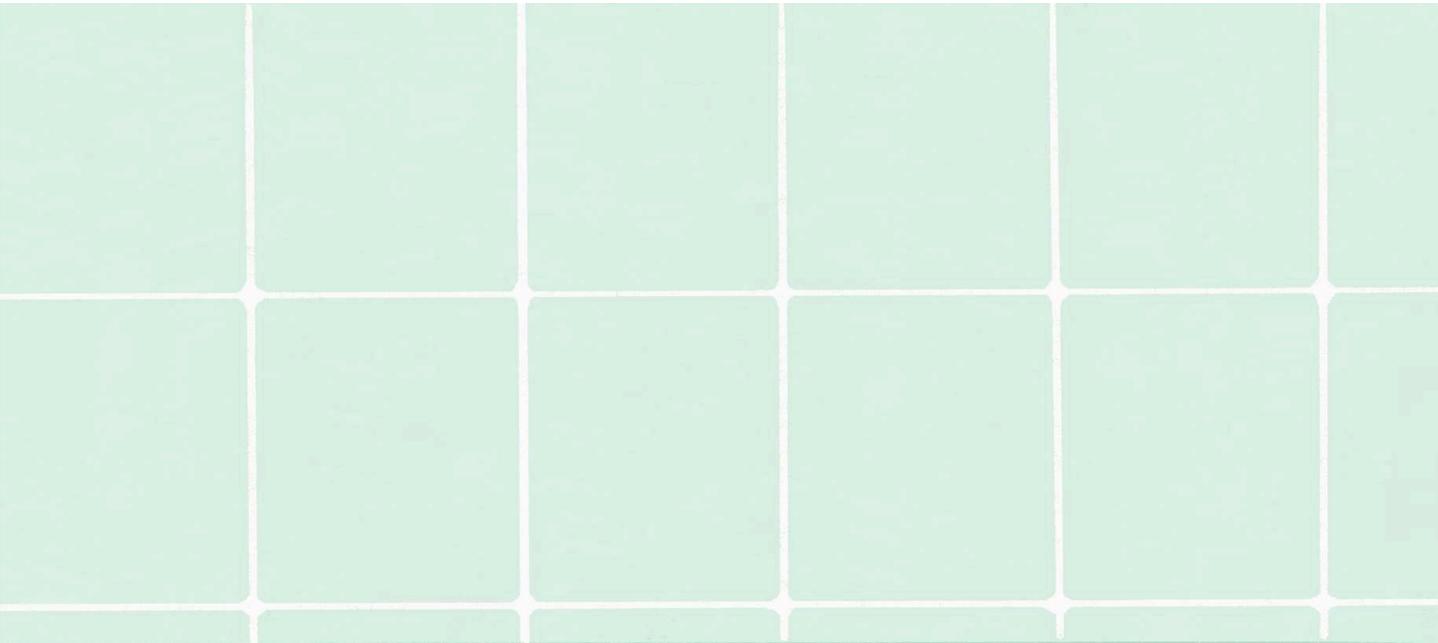
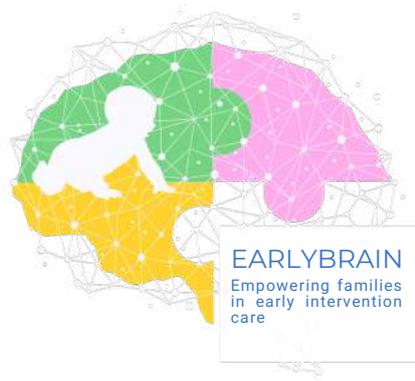


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