

# SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

# TOILET TRAINING

PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS



TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE SERIES - 4



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE  
EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH  
INTELLECTUAL DIABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)  
(NIEPID)

## **MEANING**

What do you mean by toilet training ?

Toilet training refers to the training imparted to use the toilet appropriately whenever needed. This would include undressing, urination and defecation in the toilet or the appropriate area, cleaning self after toileting, pouring water in the toilet, and dressing.

Unlike feeding, bathing and dressing skills, toilet training is one that cannot be done at the time a trainer wishes to do, but should train the child when he has the physiological need to eliminate. Therefore it usually becomes the responsibility of the mother/care taker at home.

## NEED

What is the need for toilet training?

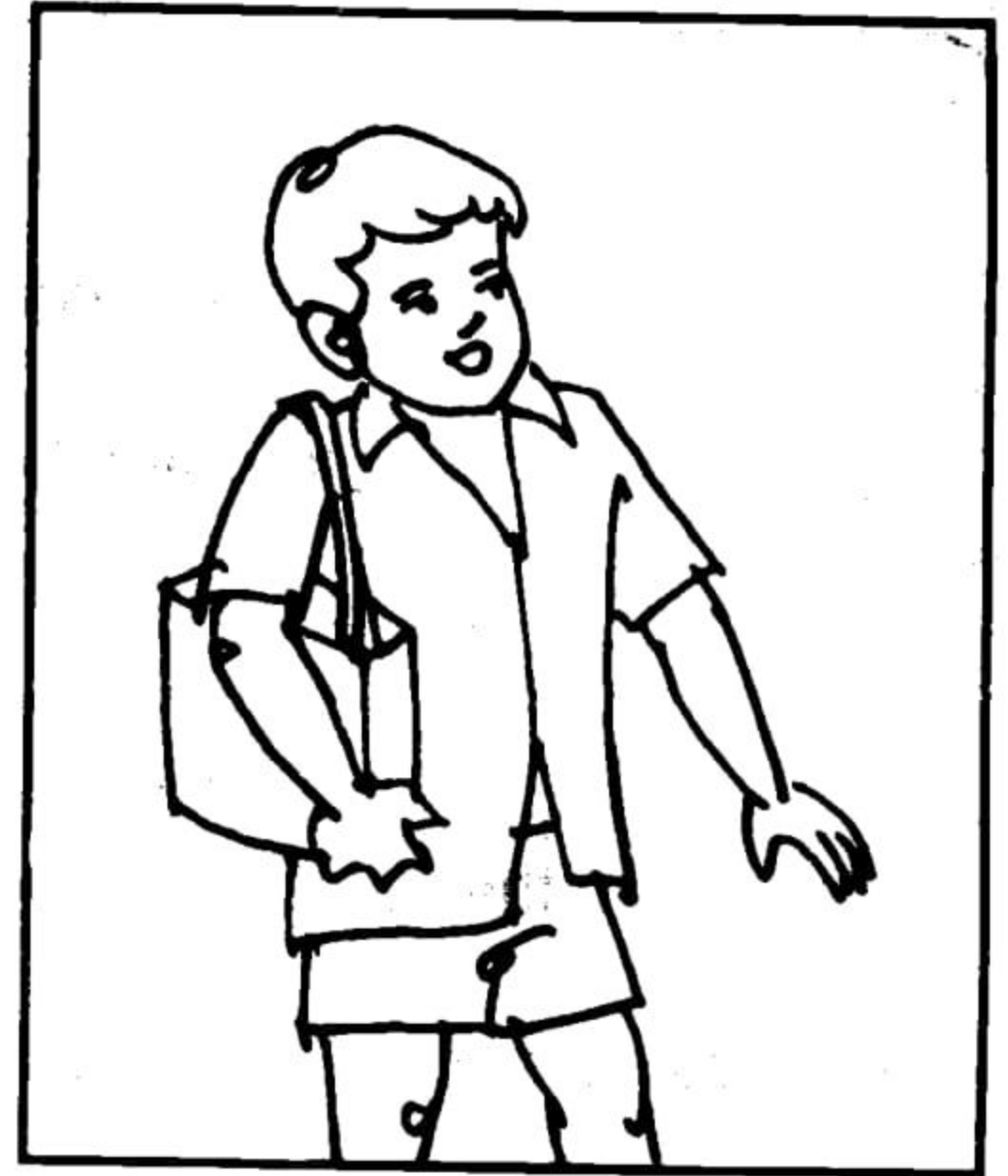
Consider a 15 year old mentally retarded person who is not toilet trained.

Taking him to the toilet, washing his soiled clothes and body are difficult, embarrassing and unpleasant tasks to the care taker.



He might even get skin infection.

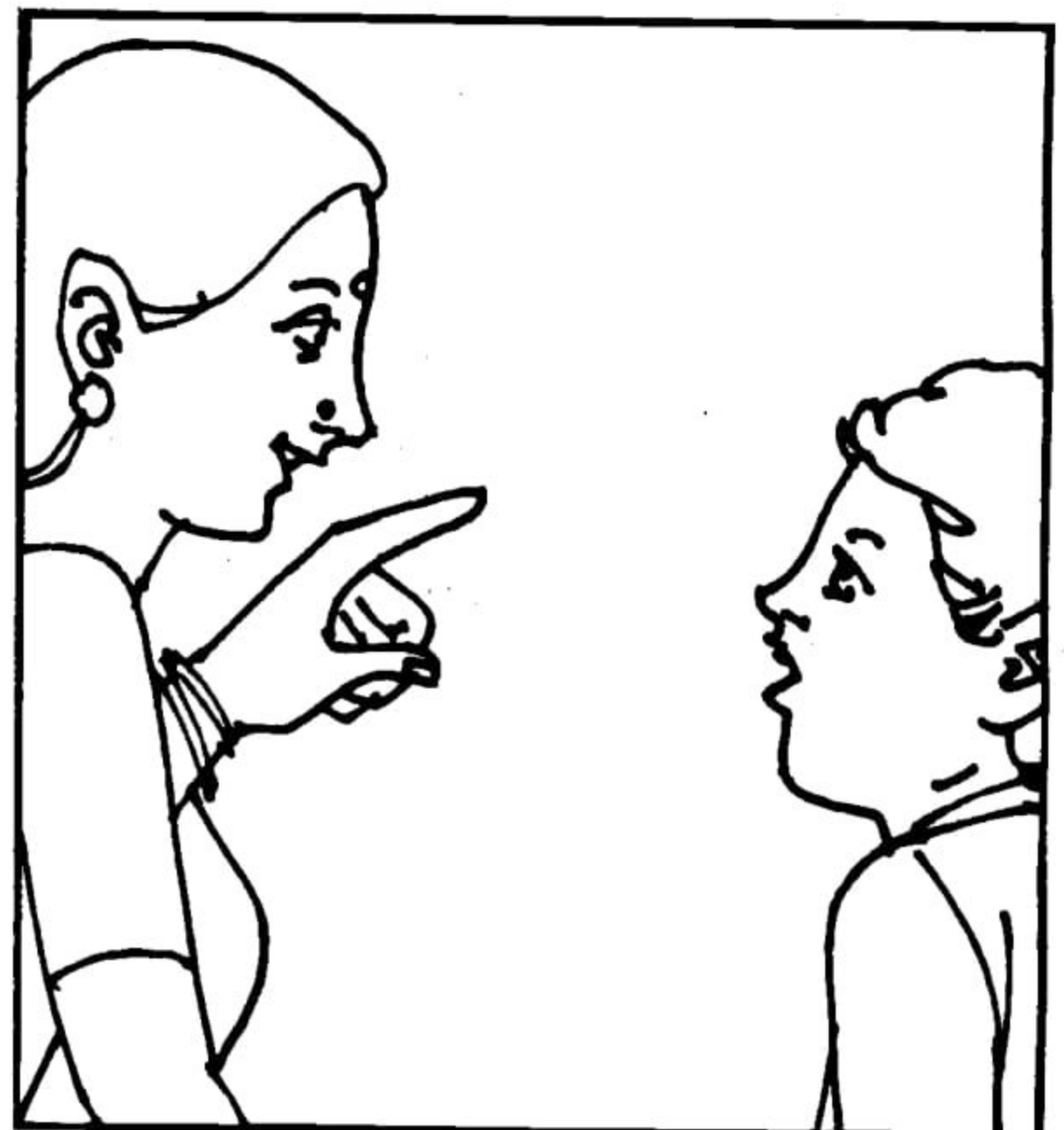
Getting admission in a school is difficult. So he will not be able to learn like other children who go to school.



He will be deprived of opportunity to socialize. When his parents go for outings and take part in social and cultural programmes, they would leave him at home.



He would be treated as a small child. As a result he becomes totally dependent on others.



## **READINESS - HOW TO KNOW ?**

How will you know whether the child is ready for toilet training?

1. **The child's physical condition is an important factor in toilet training.**

Check whether the child can consistently stay dry for one hour, with normal intake of fluids, in a non-rainy season.

Make sure from your doctor that the child has no physical problems for bladder and bowel control.

2. **The child's level of comprehension is another factor for toilet training.**

See whether the child is able to understand what a two year old child can understand.

If he is not able to follow simple instructions, train him in it by physically guiding him/doing along with him, **simultaneously** saying the word for the action (example : come, go, sit, wash etc.)

3. **Ability to reach the toilet, and motor ability to undress and dress are also important factors in toilet training.**

## **READINESS - HOW TO CHECK ?**

Use the check list to know his readiness.

Before starting the training programme, check whether he is ready for toilet training.

Sl. No.	Readiness skills	Yes	No
1.	Can stay dry for one hour		
2.	Can follow simple instructions		
3.	Can reach the toilet area		
4.	Can locate the toilet		
5.	Has enough motor ability to sit, stand, walk, undress and dress		

If the items in the above list are scored 'Yes', he is ready for toilet training. A child who cannot walk can be trained to indicate toilet needs and to use the toilet appropriately, by assisting him in going upto the toilet. If he has problems in squatting, adaptations in the toilet, like providing railing at the side, to hold, will be of help.

## **FIND THE LEVEL**

Use the check list to know the level.

Before starting the training check what he can do and what he cannot do. The following check list will help you to know where to start training.

Sl. No.	Tasks	Yes	No
1.	Can indicate the urge for toileting		
2.	Can find the toilet		
3.	Can open and close the toilet		
4.	Can remove the pant/pantie		
5.	Can sit/squat on the toilet		
6.	Can recognise when elimination takes place		
7.	Can wash his bottom and hands after toileting		
8.	Can flush the toilet		
9.	Can wear pant/pantie after toileting		
10.	Can return to the previous activity		
11.	Can use public toilet independently		

## **POINTS FOR TEACHING**

**First, train him to indicate  
the need for toileting**

**Step by step teaching  
is the key to success**

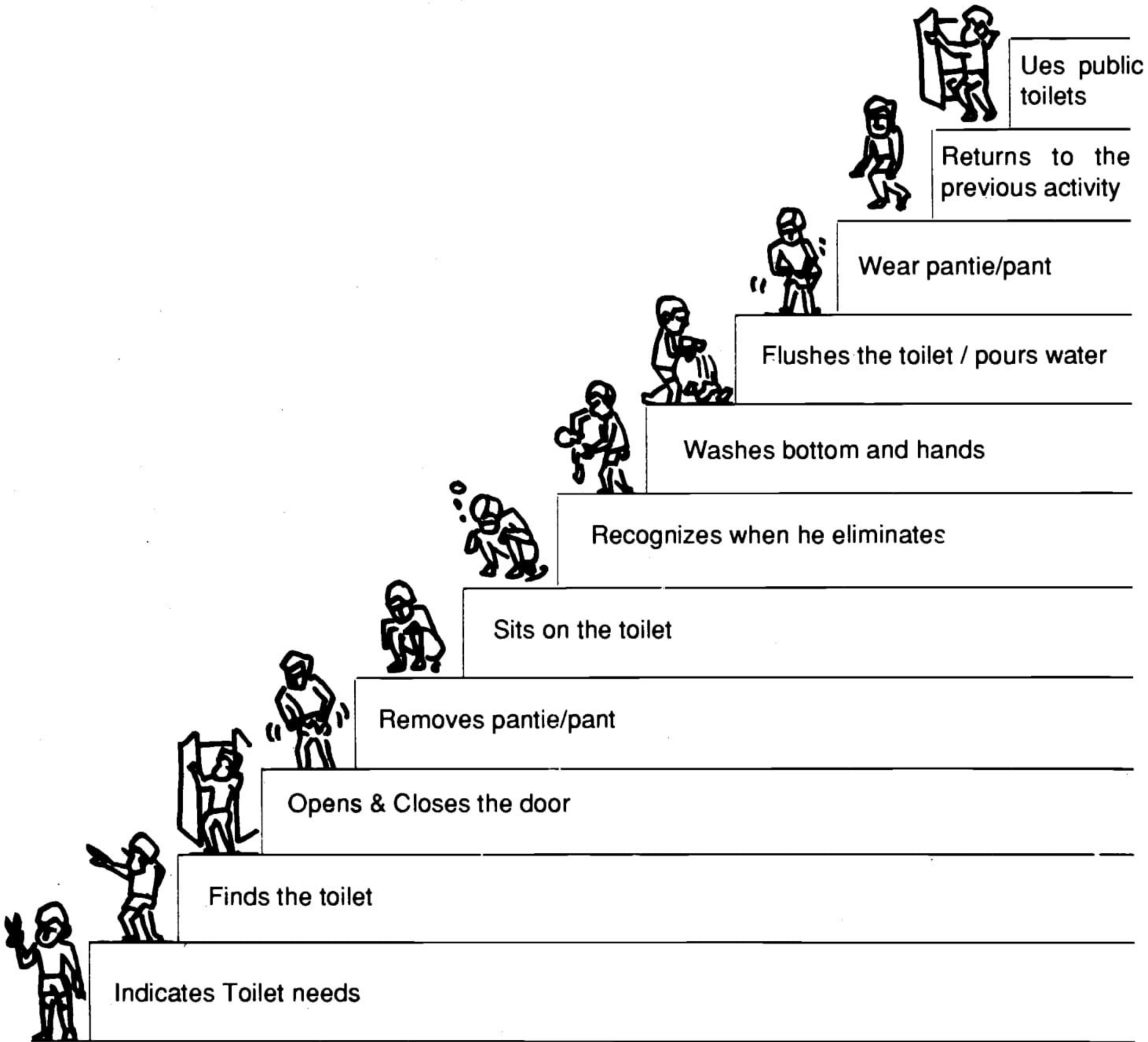
**Praise the child for his  
co-operation and  
attempts**

**Appreciate even  
the near success**

**Praise him during the  
day for keeping the  
pantie dry**



# STEP BY STEP THEY LEARN





**STEP - I**

## **INDICATES TOILET NEEDS**

### **Procedure :**

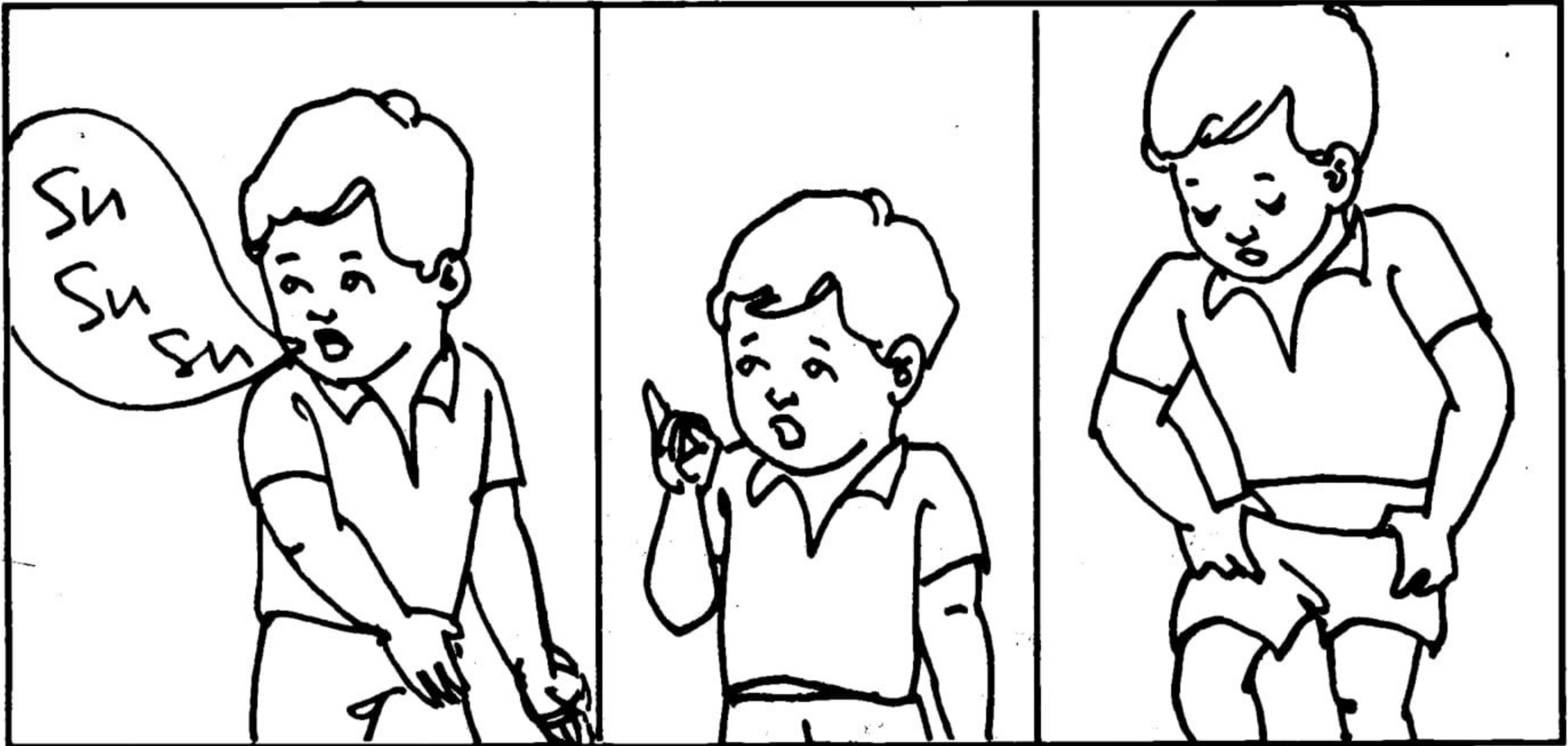
1. Observe the child and try to pick up a signal which indicates that the child is about to begin or in the process of defecating or urinating. It might be a change in the expression, or a sound produced by him, or a gesture.

2. Once you pick up the signal, take him to the toilet / potty / place where he has to go for toileting.



3. In case you are not able to pick up any signal, note down the timings for a week when he urinates and defecates. Take him to the toileting area around the time he is expected to urinate / defecate. Pick up clues to associate toileting with an activity that precedes or follows it, such as on waking up from sleep, after breakfast and so on.

4. While taking him to the toileting area, develop a signal which can be used by the child to indicate his needs. It can be a word or a gesture. Example : a word 'su-su', showing his little finger, or lifting his dress a little.



5. Usually children urinate right after waking up and before going to bed. Use these timings constantly for toilet training in the initial stage.
6. Use the same toilet and same word for urinating all the time when the child is expected to urinate so that he associates the word used and the place with the act of urinating. This clue would help him in learning that any time he is taken to that place and the word is used, he is expected to urinate.

7. If the child attends the school, tell the teachers, the method you use at home, so that the child will not be confused by different ways of indication.
  
8. If you take the child to your friend's house, be alert to look for his signal for his toilet need and help him.

**Mentally retarded persons  
learn better by experiences.  
Therefore give them chances  
to learn by experiences.**



## STEP - II

### FINDS THE TOILETING AREA WHEN NEEDED

#### Procedure

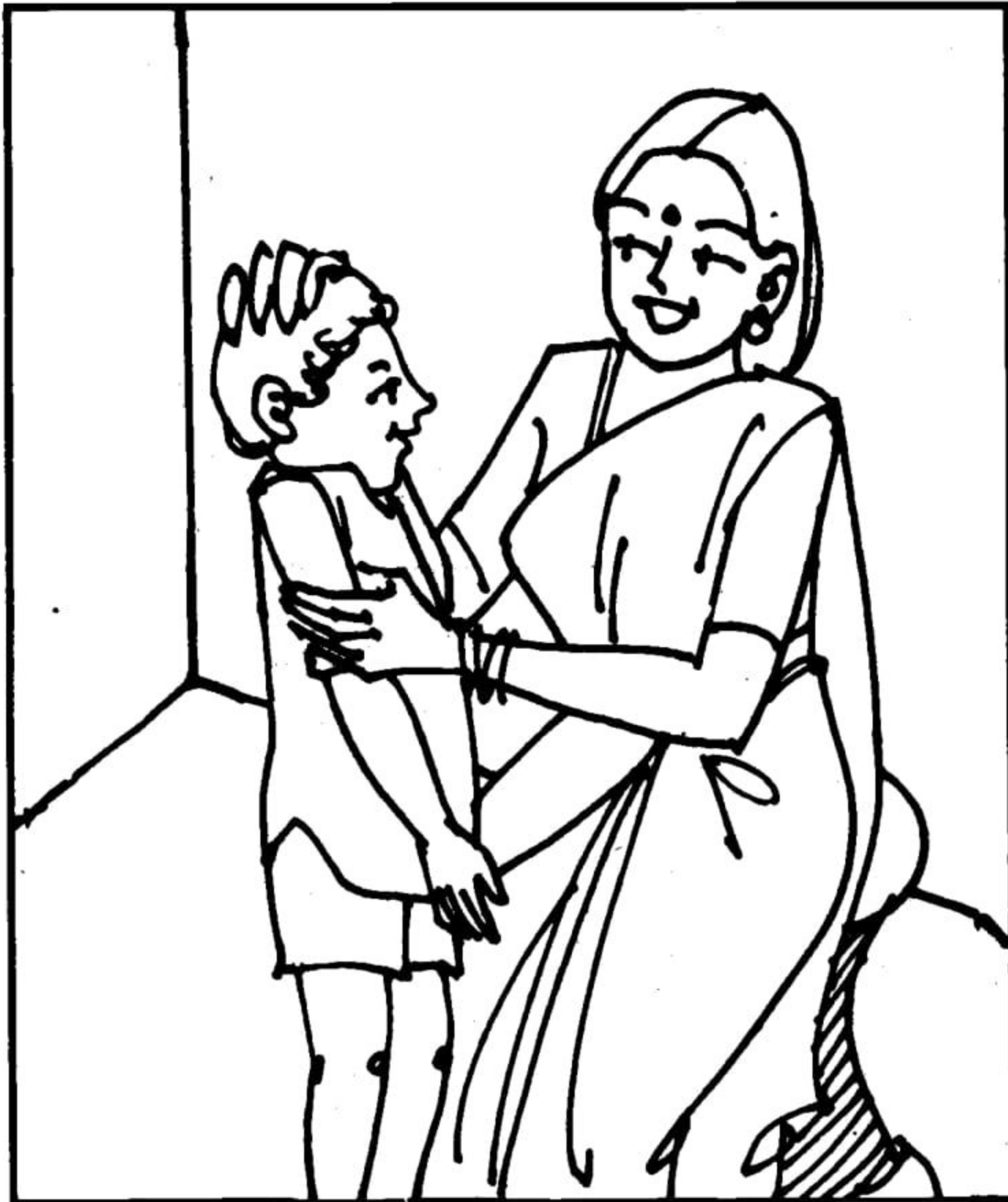
1. Decide which area you are going to use to train your child. It can be a potty / a regular toilet / an outside area, depending on the resources available and the circumstances.



2. Take the child to that particular area as per the timings / signals / indications. Use the same toileting area, till he recognizes that place as toileting area.
3. After recognizing the need for toileting, check whether the child goes to that particular place always.

4. If the child goes to that place consistently for toileting, you can assume that he has learned to associate that place as one meant for toileting.
5. As a next step, show the child the regular toilets you normally use in your house. When he indicates his toilet needs, allow him to use the regular toilet.
6. In case there are no toilets in the house, show the child where he has to go, may be a place outside the house, when he needs to urinate / defecate.
7. If he attends school, one particular potty / toileting area in the school has to be used for training, during the initial stage.
8. When the child has learned to associate the need with the toileting area, show him the regular toilets in the school. Guide him to find the regular toilet when he needs to eliminate. Gradually, show him other toilets.
9. When you take the child out in the community, guide him to find the place for toileting, in case he needs to use one.

**Reinforce the mentally retarded Persons by rewarding them with appreciations and praises at every step of learning.**



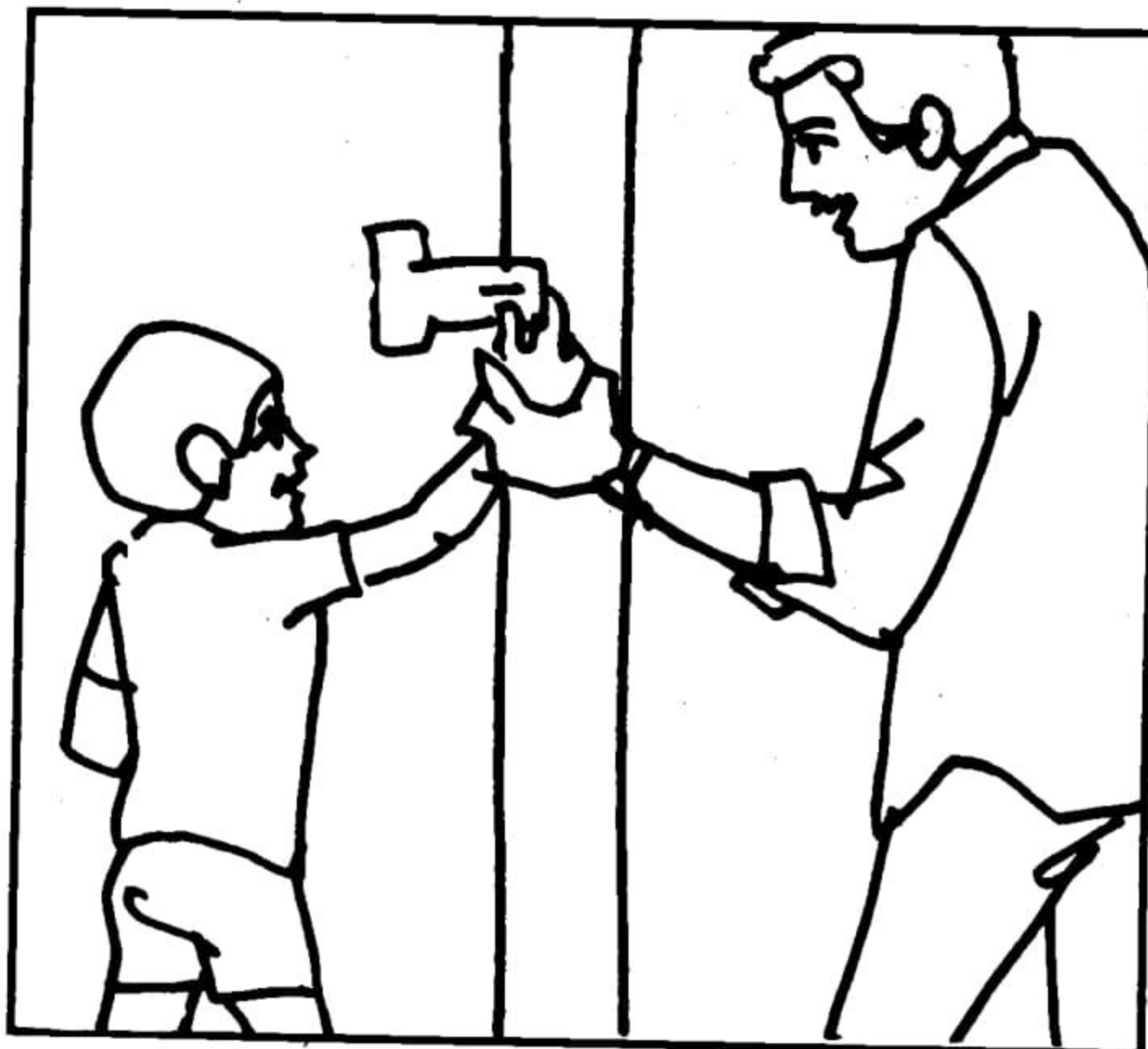


### STEP - III

**OPENS THE DOOR, GETS INTO THE TOILET  
AND CLOSES THE DOOR FOR PRIVACY**

#### Procedure :

1. When the child indicates the need guide him to find the toilet. Go with the child to the toilet.
2. If the toilet door is closed, demonstrate how to open the door. If needed, physically help him by holding his hands initially.



3. During the initial stages tell him to close the door without bolting. In case he is scared of closing the door, use the following steps.



a. Close the door and stand near the child when the child is toileting



b. Stand near the closed door inside the toilet so that he could see you.



c. Stand outside the closed door and call the child by name to make him understand that you are waiting outside.



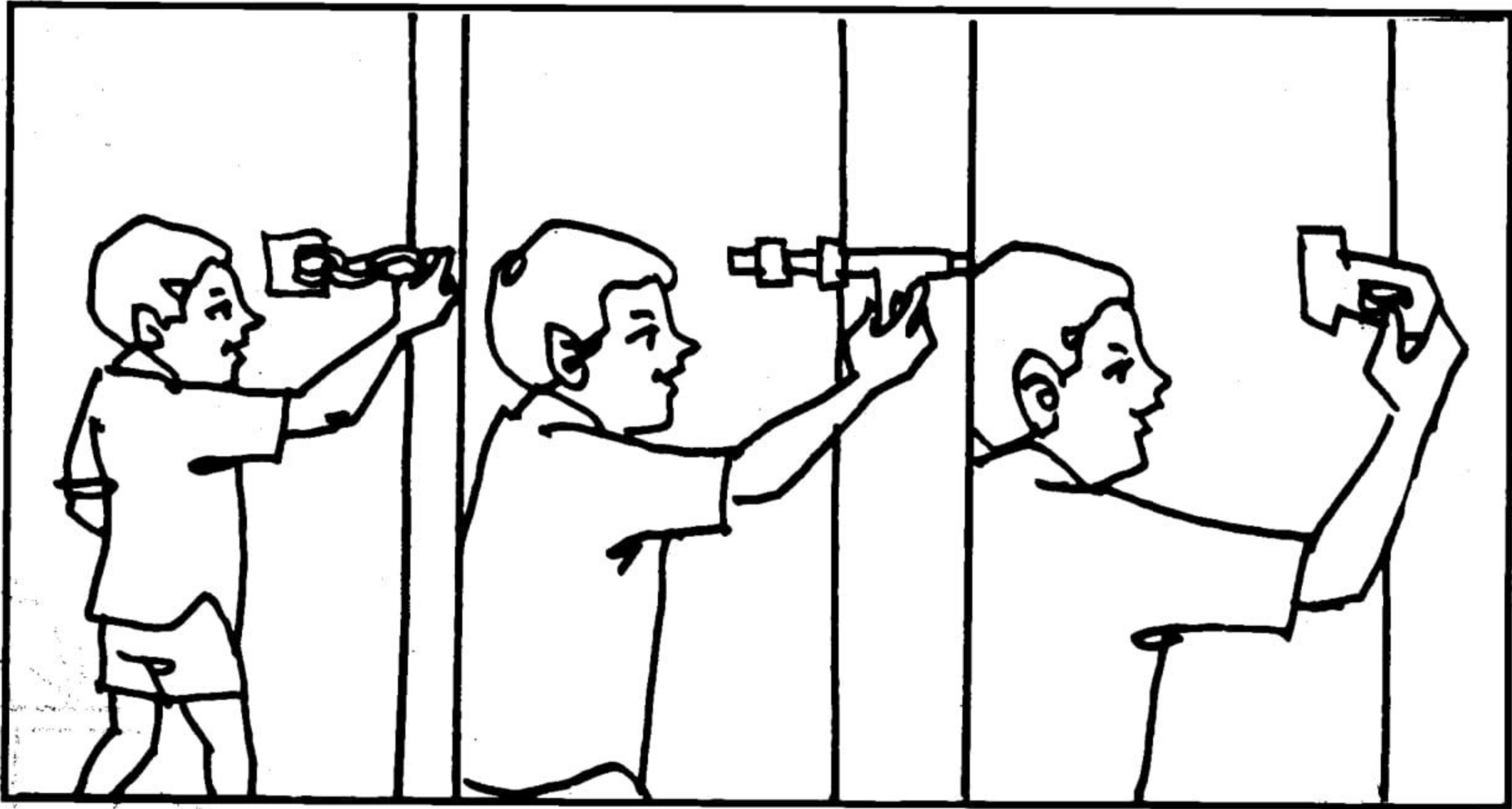
d. Reduce the number of calls when you stand outside the door.



e. Stop calling. Tell the child to call you after toileting.



5. Once the child is able to sit in the toilet alone, without fear, teach him how to bolt the door. Check the bolt to make sure that the child can open and close it easily.
6. If the bolt is too high to reach / too tough to open alternate arrangements may be made. Keep one stone inside the toilet, near the door, which the child can keep against the door after closing the door and remove after toileting.



7. Let him practice opening and closing the toilet door. Once he learns this, show him other doors which have different types of bolts. Train him to open and close.
8. During visits outside home, encourage the child to close the door before he uses the toilet.

**Let the mentally retarded person  
learn the need for privacy**



## STEP - IV

### **REMOVES / LOWERS / UNBUTTONS / OPENS APPROPRIATE CLOTHING BEFORE TOILETING**

#### Procedure :

1. During the initial period of training, let the child wear dresses which can be pulled down easily. If the child has problems in unbuttoning, use pant / pantie with elastic waist band, so that he can lower it easily.
2. Training to remove the dress could be done separately. Refer to skill training package on 'dressing' for detailed steps.
3. When the child indicates his need for toileting, guide him to remove / lower clothings only after closing the toilet door.
4. Gradually reduce physical and verbal assistance for undressing as the child gains confidence.
5. If the child attends school, during training period, use the dresses which he could remove by himself. Discuss your programme with the teacher in the school so that the same method can be followed in the school and home.



**STEP - V**

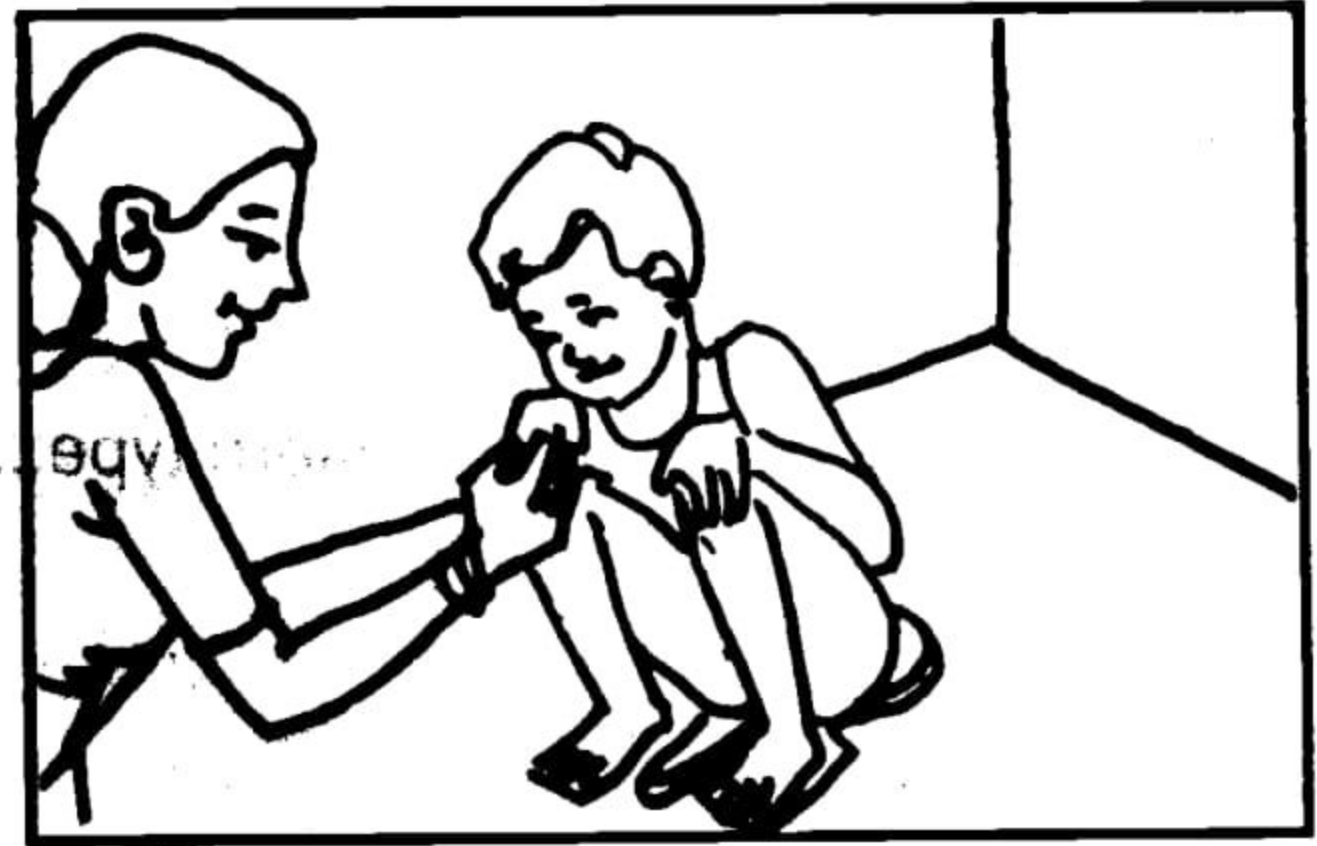
## **SITS / SQUATS ON THE TOILET**

### **Procedure :**

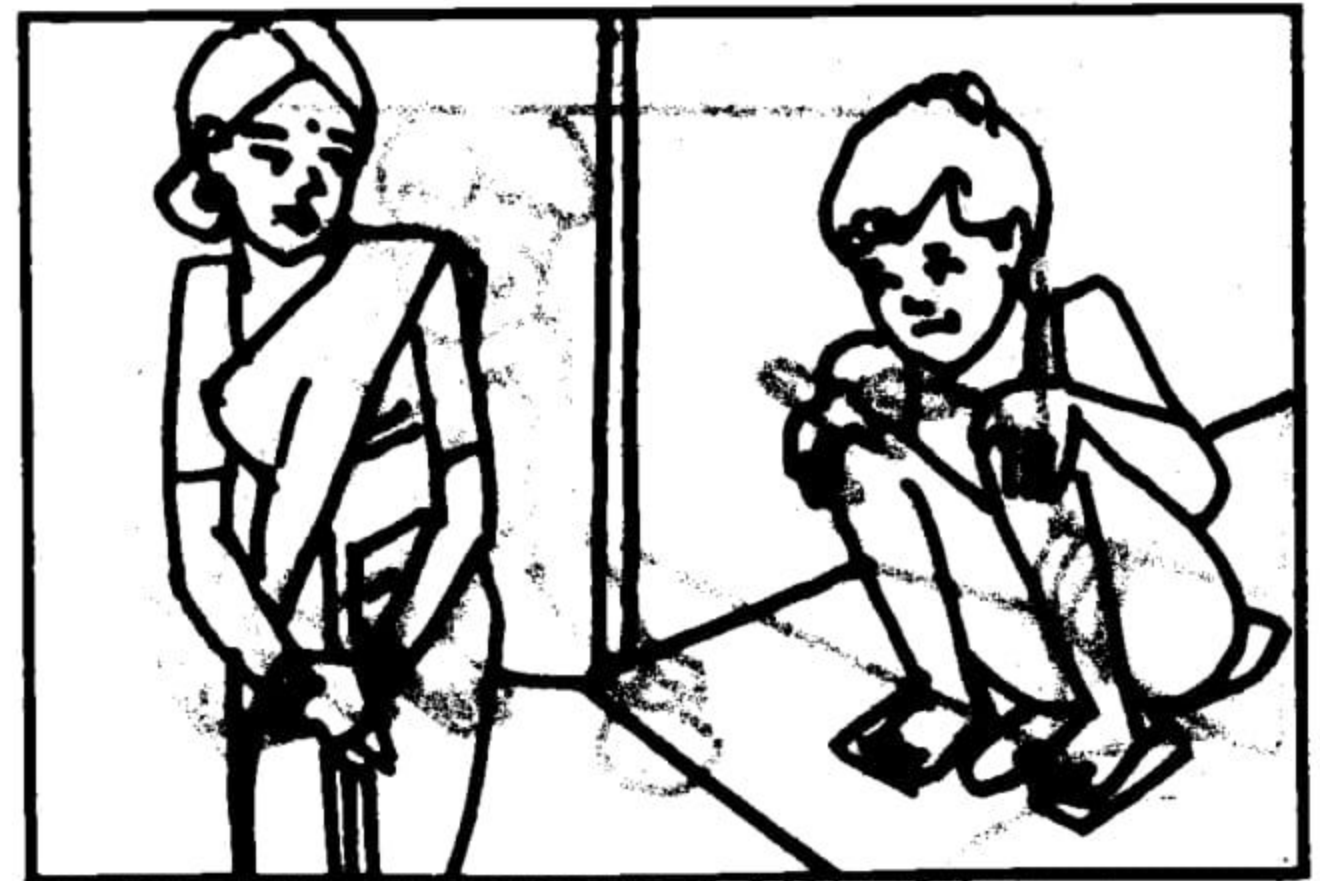
1. When the child indicates his need to go to the toilet, go to him and tell him to open the door.
2. After getting into the toilet, guide the child to close the door and remove his pants/ pantie before sitting or squatting.
3. Let him hold you. Holding him at his shoulders slowly make him sit / squat on the toilet.



4. Stand near him so that he could hold you, till he gains confidence.

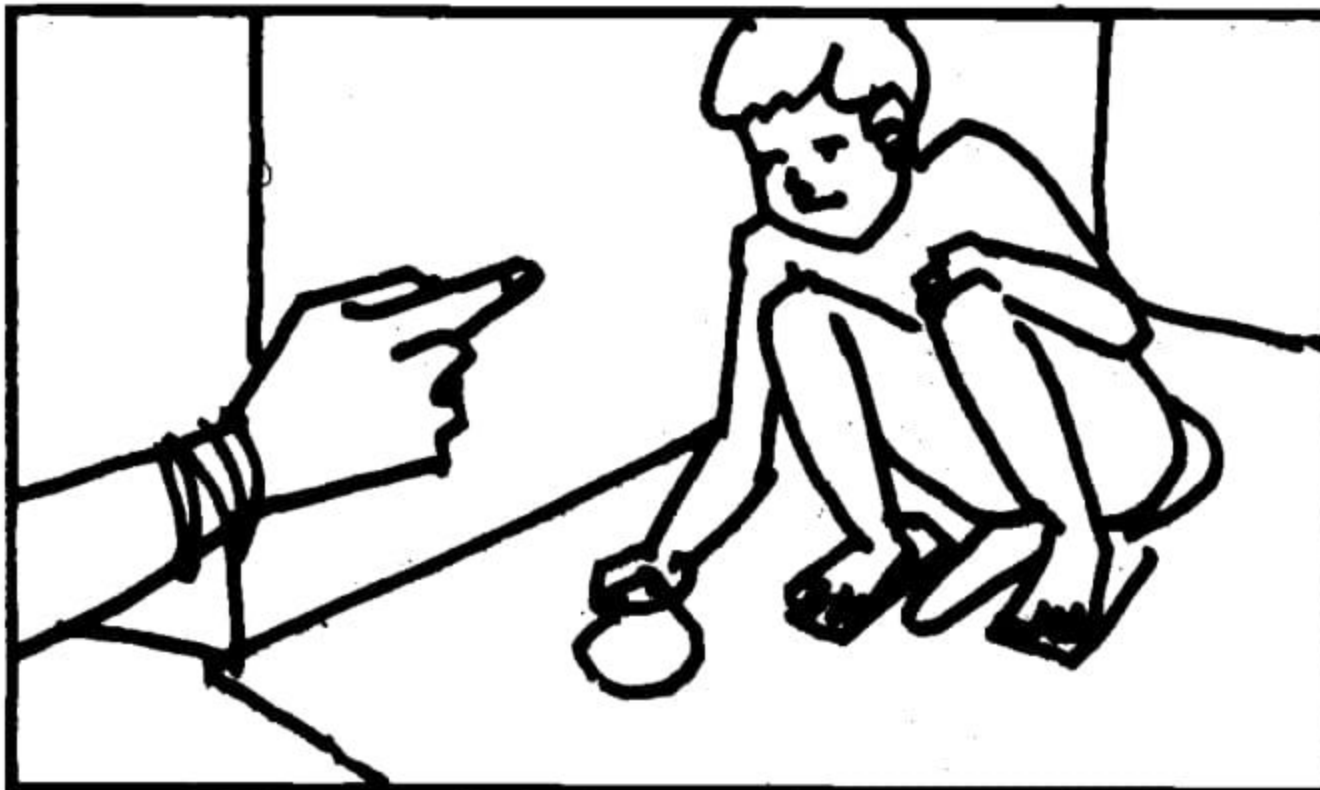


5. Gradually, let the child free his hands from you. Once he gains his confidence, stand a little away, may be near the door....



6. Train the child to sit/squat on the toilet according to the type of facility available such as .....

a. western type.....



b. ....Indian type

If he is scared to squat by resting his feet on either side, let him initially squat at the tip (not on the foot rest) of the toilet, and defecate into the bowl. As he gains confidence, gradually encourage him to rest the feet on the foot rest.

- c. In some rural and slum areas, there is no toilet in the child's house.



In case there are no toilet facilities as mentioned in a and b and the family members use open space outside the house, take the child to a place which he has to use for toileting. Guide him to squat. Stand near him till he gets confidence to squat independently.

Train him to cover the faeces with sand after eliminating.

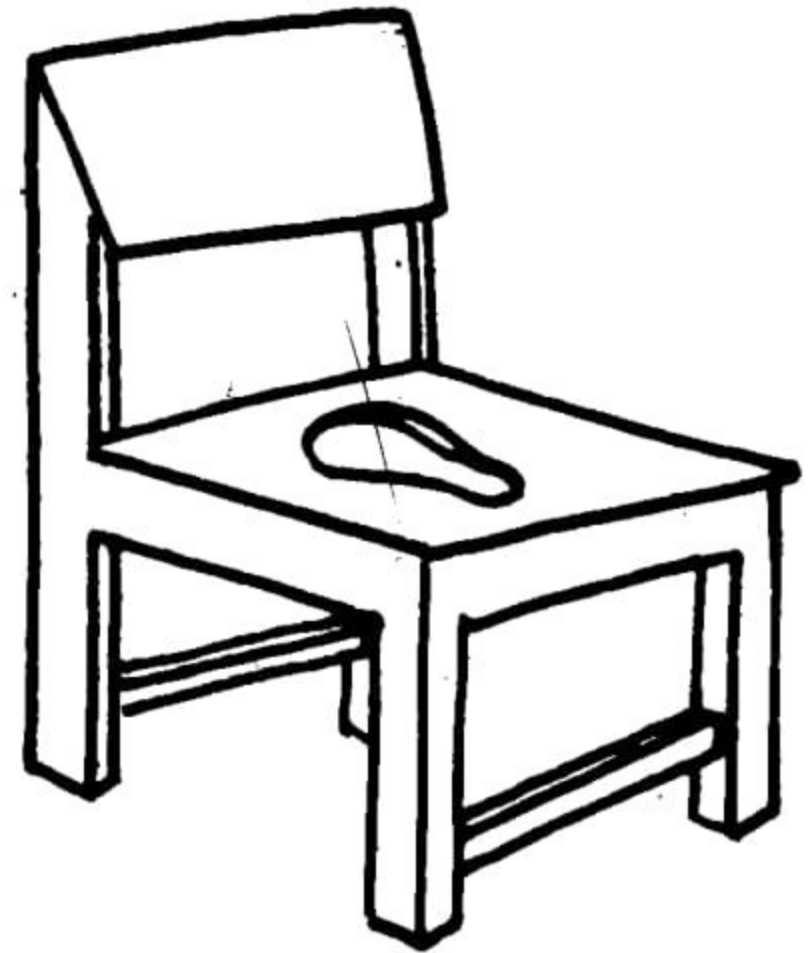


7. Once the child is able to use the toilet which he has at home, give him opportunities to use other types of toilets which he has at school, friends, relatives' houses / public places.
8. In case a child with physical handicap or one who is in the initial stage of training has problem to sit / squat on the regular toilet, arrange a suitable potty.
9. Once he gets used to the potty, shift the focus of training to use regular toilet. Potty can be kept inside the toilet itself during training.

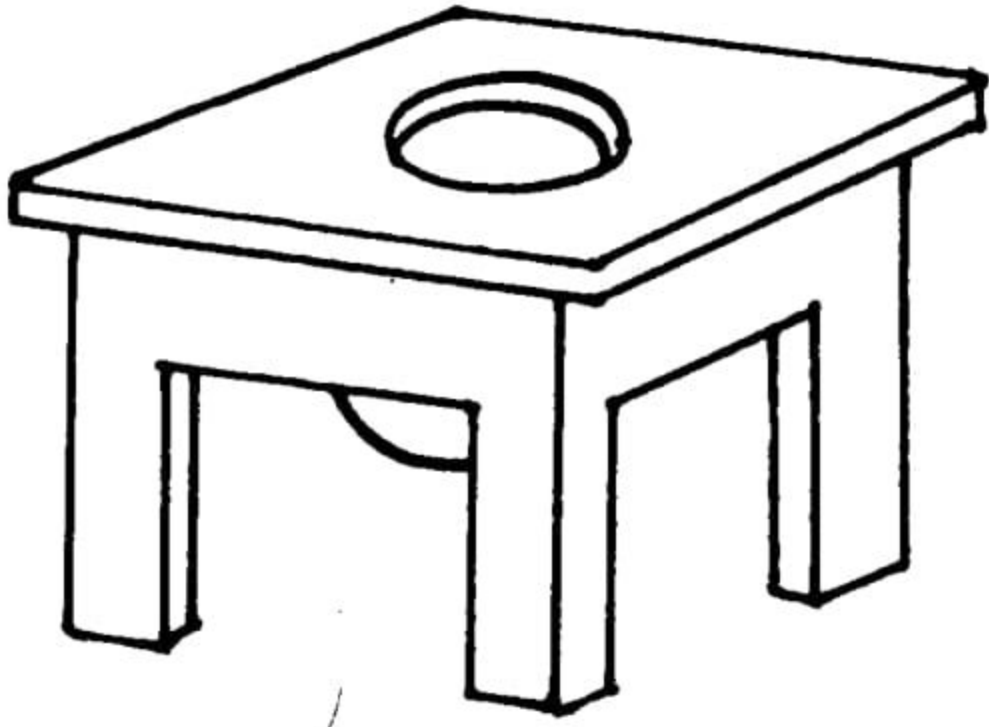
**Think, design and use appropriate equipment and materials to train the mentally retarded persons.**



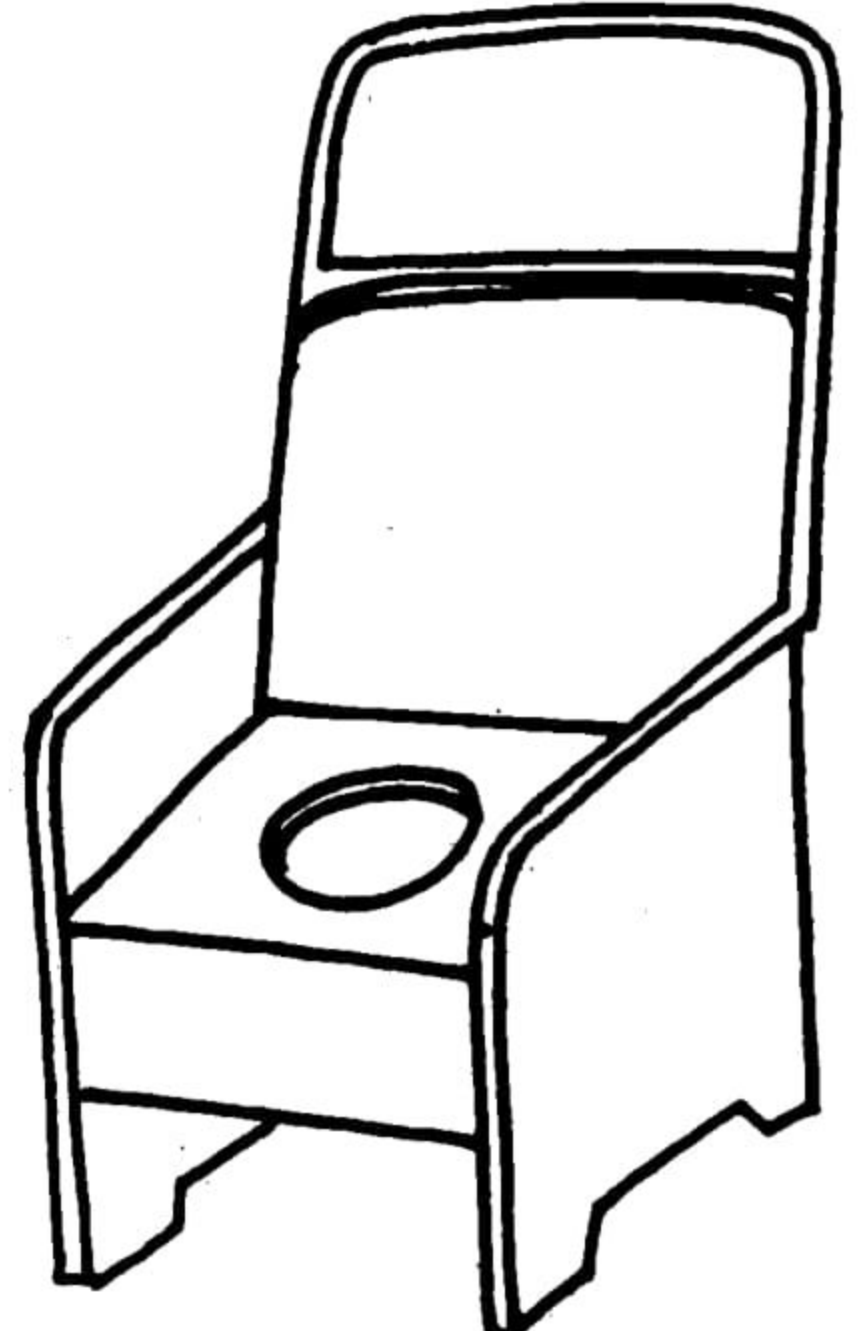
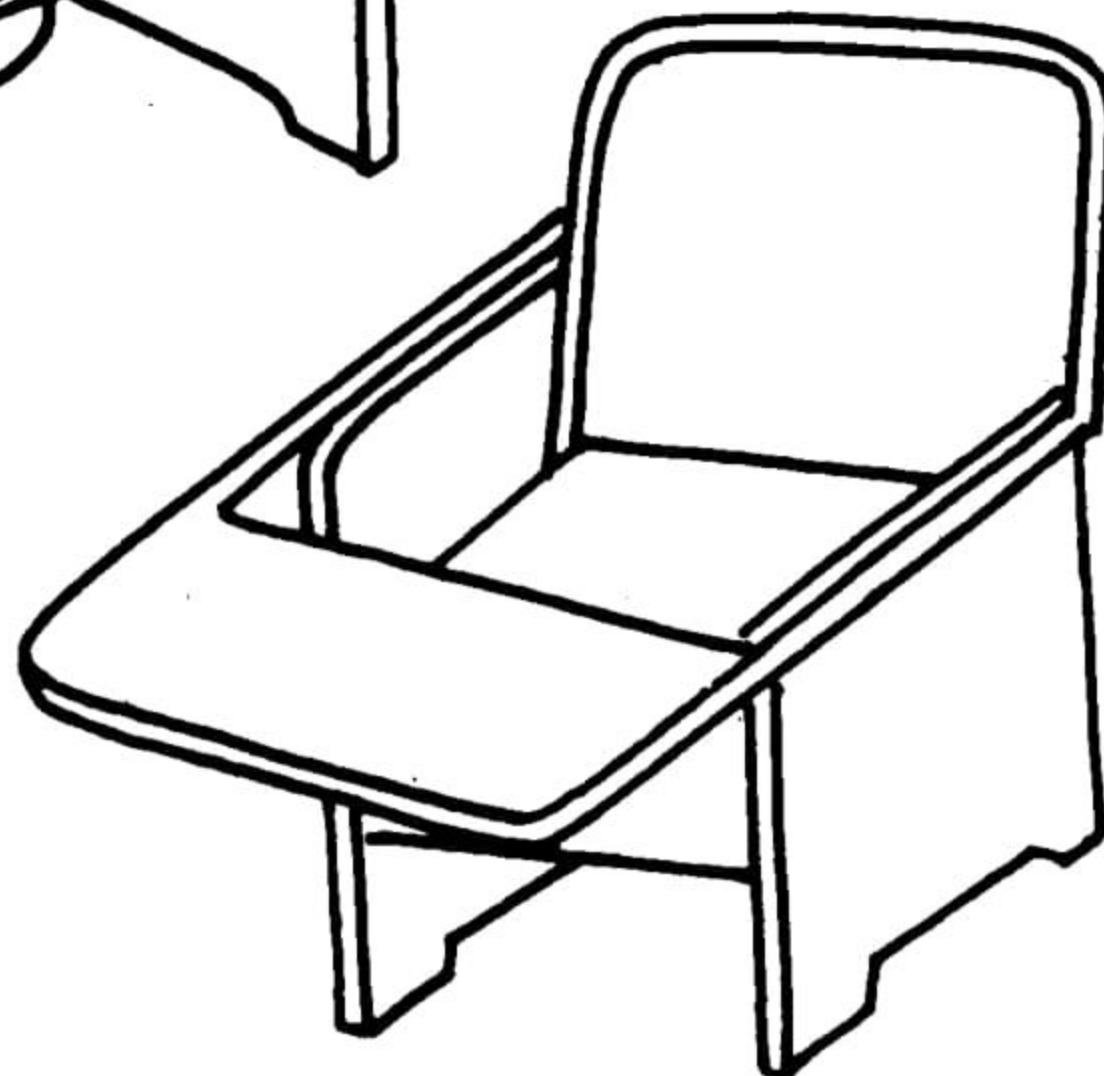
**Chair type Potty**



**Stool type Potty**



**Potty chairs with multipurpose use**





## STEP - VI

### **RECOGNIZES WHEN ELIMINATION TAKES PLACE**

#### **Procedure :**

1. During the initial stage, train him to stay for 10 to 15 minutes on the toilet, depending on the average time he takes for toileting.
2. Give him verbal clues till he is able to recognize by himself that elimination has taken place.
3. Severely and profoundly mentally retarded persons may have problems in recognizing when elimination takes place. Design a special potty for such children. Try the following. Many parents have reported success with this method; use a tin / bucket with a seat. When the child uses such kind of potty it will produce sound when the child eliminates, which helps him to know when elimination takes place. If he is a child who cannot sit, the above facility can be made below his cot with appropriate modification in the cot.



## STEP - VII

### WASHES HIS BOTTOM AND HANDS AFTER TOILETING

#### Procedure :

Once the child recognizes that elimination has taken place, the next step is to train him to wash his bottom and hands. The following steps can be used for washing.

#### 1. Taking Water :

- a. If there is a tap in the toilet, guide the child to open the tap and take water from the tap in a mug.



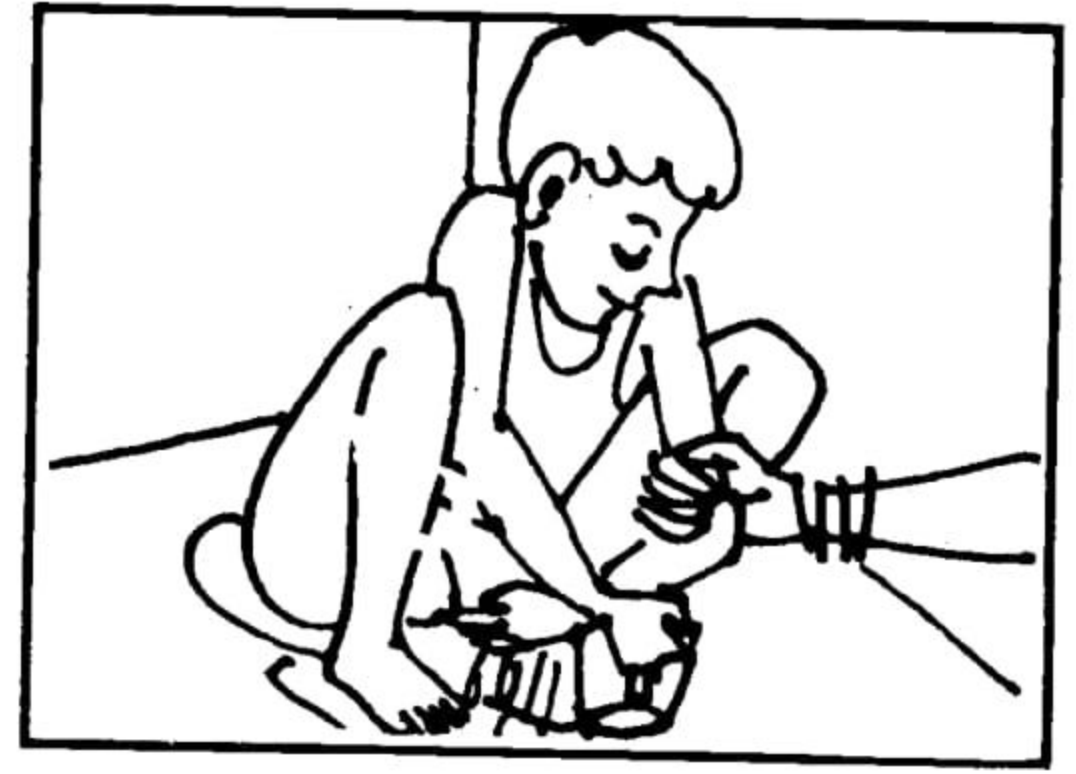
- b. If there is water kept in a bucket in the toilet, show him how to hold the mug in the right hand and take water from the mug.

- c. In case the child uses a toilet outside the house where there is no water kept handy, guide him to carry sufficient water in a mug / pot.



## 2. Washing bottom after toileting :

- a. After elimination takes place, physically guide him to hold the mug containing water in the right hand and to pour water to wash his bottom.



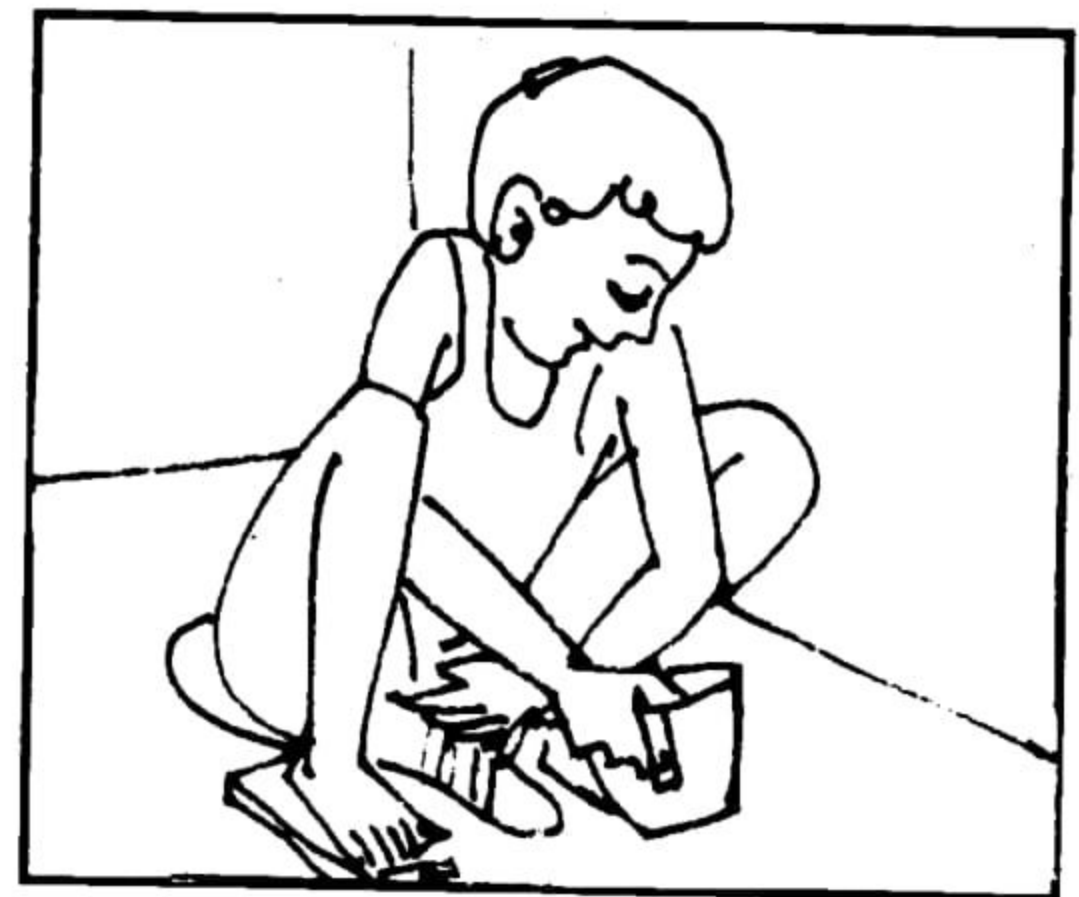
Note : It is easier to train him to clean the area with left hand when someone pours water. When he is competent with cleaning using left hand, pouring water with right hand can be taught.

- b. During initial stage, have your left hand over his left hand and help him to wash his bottom. Slowly reduce the physical help from hand to elbow and finally guide him verbally. Check for cleanliness.



- c. When he gains experience in cleaning with left hand, train him to pour water by himself, with right hand.

Appreciate and praise him when he washes by himself after toileting.



### 3. Washing hands after toileting

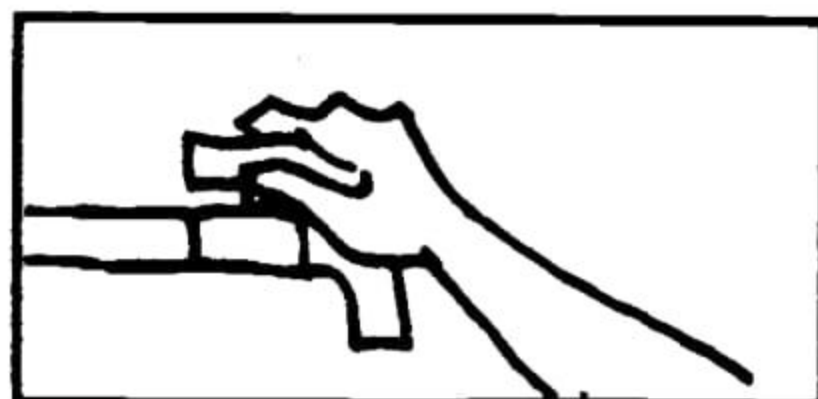
1. Opens the tap



2. Wets the palms



3. Closes the tap



4. Picks up soap



5. Applies soap



6. Puts back soap



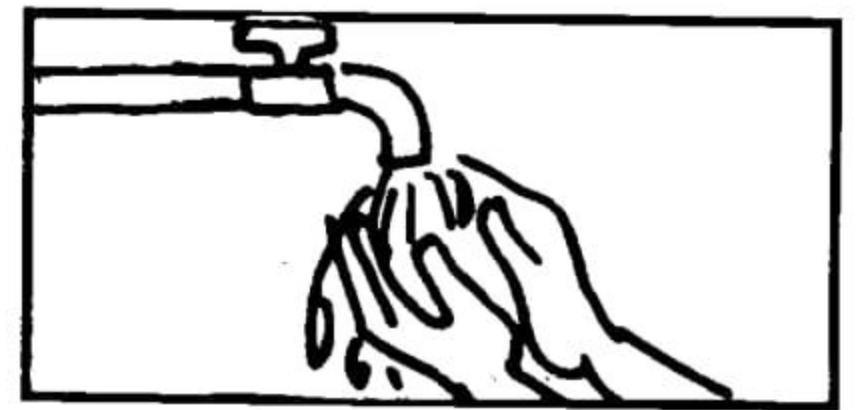
7. Rubs hands



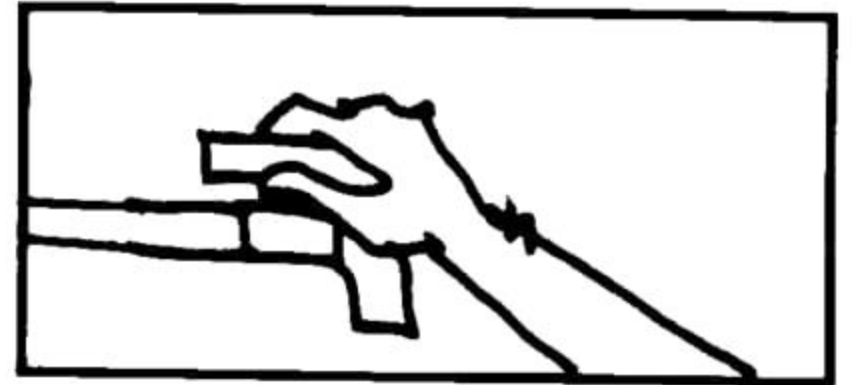
8. Opens the tap



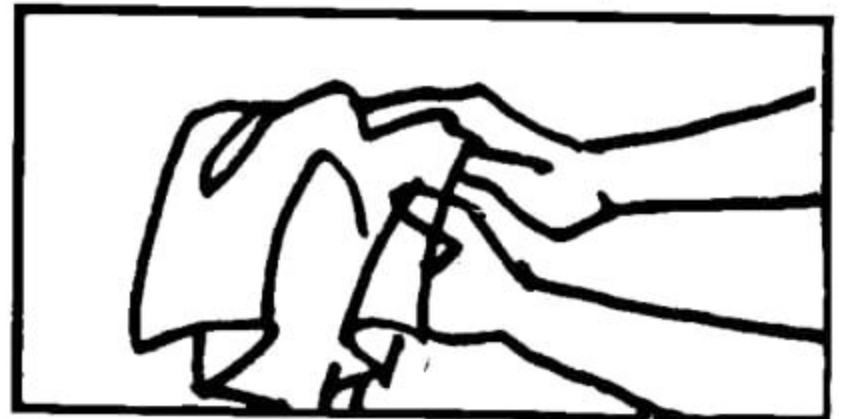
9. Washes off soap



10. Closes the tap



11. Wipes with towel



**Step by step  
The mentally retarded  
persons learn**

In case there is no tap and water is kept in a bucket, teach him step by step how to take water in a mug, wet his palms, apply soap and wash his hands.



If he takes water with him when he goes for toileting, train him to keep enough water in the mug to wash his hands after toileting.

**To wash hands.....**

**Do the task yourself - Let the child watch,**

**Then physically help him to do the task,**

**Verbally, tell him what to do,**

**Finally let him do the task by himself.**

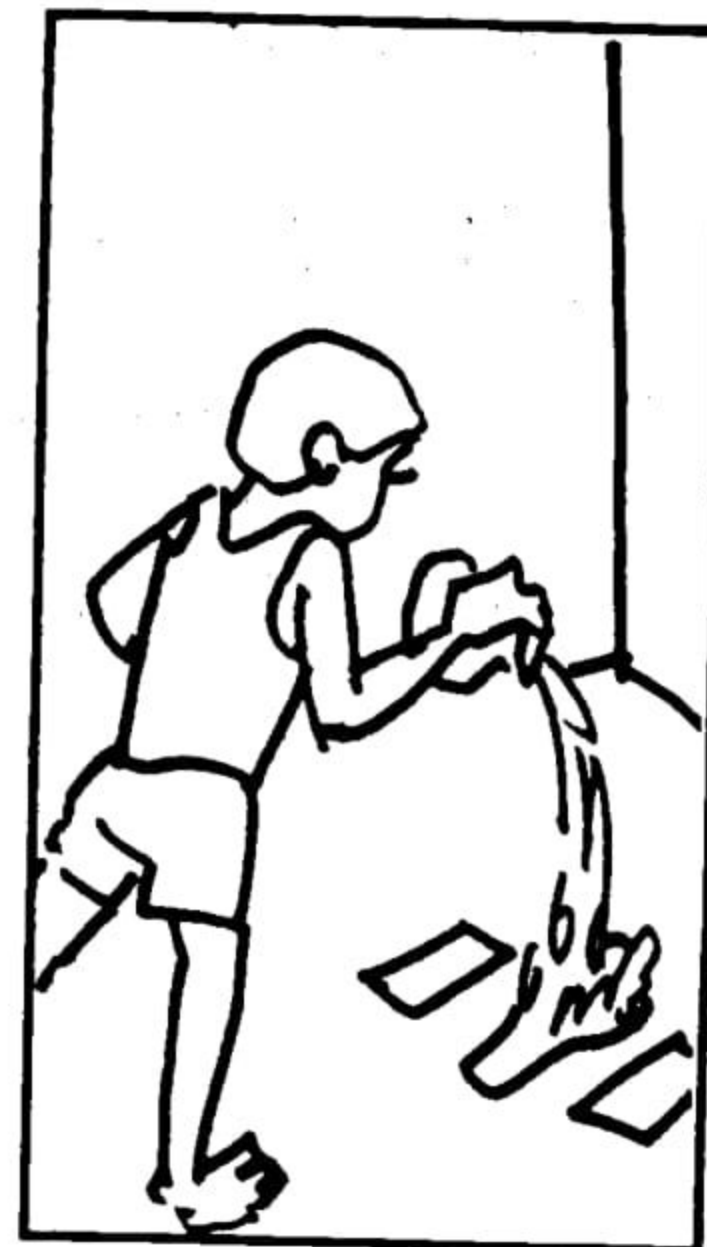


## STEP - VIII

### FLUSHES THE TOILET AFTER TOILETING

#### Procedure :

1. After the child is through with toileting show him how dirty it is, and how badly it stinks.
2. If there is facility to flush, flush it yourself and show how it is getting cleaned. Tell him that he has to flush it every time after using the toilet.
3. If there is no facility to flush, demonstrate how to clean by pouring water from a bucket. Guide him to do it.







## STEP - IX

# DRESSES AFTER TOILETING

### Procedure :

During initial stages of training use dresses which can be easily lifted / buttoned. Refer to the training package on dressing.

#### 1. Lowering the dress :

If the child wears a dress which can be lifted as in frocks, train her to lower it properly before leaving the toilet.



#### 2. Buttoning the dress :

If the child wears a dress which can be unbuttoned before toileting, teach him how to button it before he comes out of the toilet.



#### 3. Wearing the dress :

If the child wears a dress which has to be removed before toileting, guide him to where it has to be kept, to take it after toileting and to wear it before he leaves the toilet area.

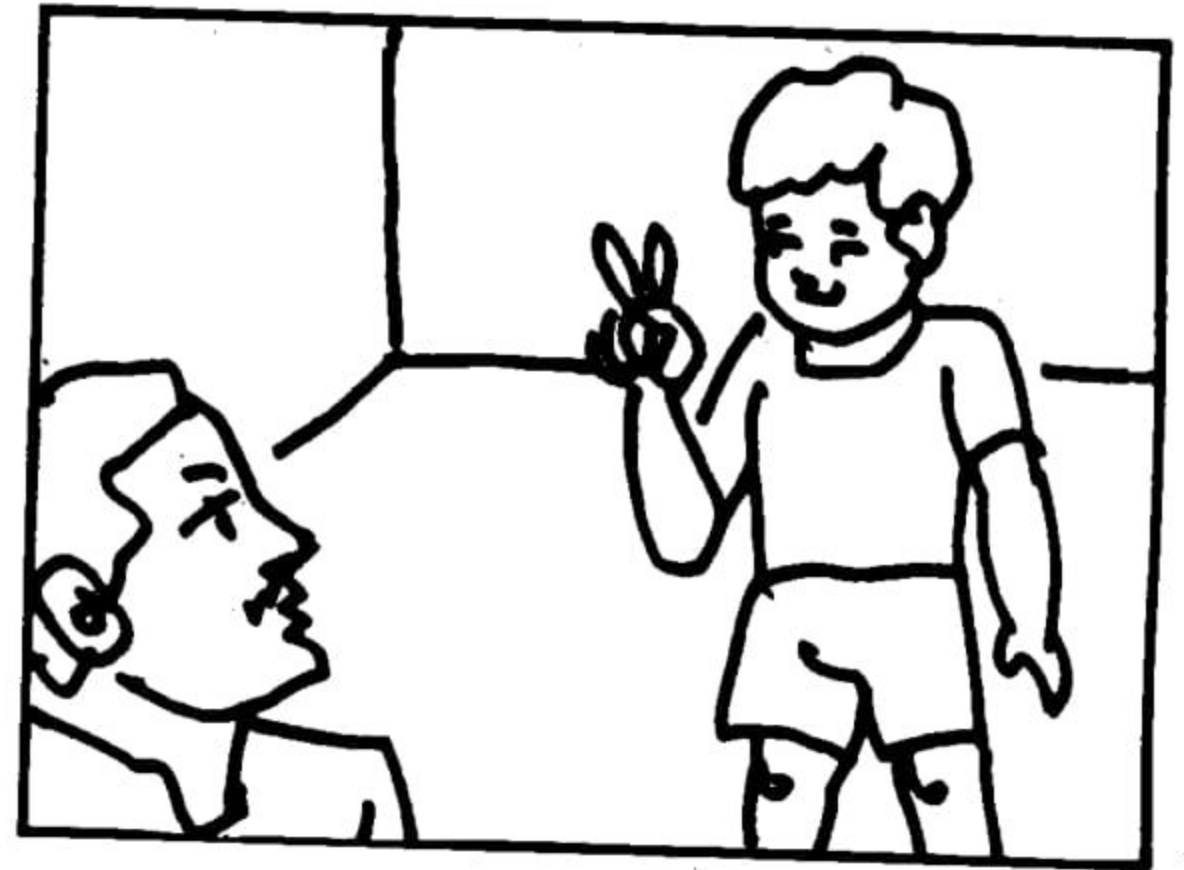




**STEP - X**

**RETURNS TO THE PREVIOUS  
ACTIVITY AFTER TOILETING**

1. If the child indicates and goes to the toilet during an activity, he has to come back to the activity after toileting. In case he forgets, remind him and guide him.



After training step by step, chain all the steps. When the child indicates his need for toileting, tell him to find where the toilet is. When he reaches the toilet, guide him to open the door, get into the toilet and close it before he sits / squats on the toilet. After elimination tell him to wash his bottom and hands, get up and dress properly, open the door and come out.





## STEP - XI

### **USES THE TOILETS IN PUBLIC PLACES INDEPENDENTLY**

#### **Procedure :**

1. Step by step teaching and chaining all the steps help the child to become independent in toileting.
2. Once he becomes independent to use the toilet, at home and school, train him to find the appropriate toilets in public places. For example, toilets in a bus stand / railway station, where the toilets for men and women are separately indicated.
3. Explain to the child that the toilet which has the picture of a female on the door is meant for the use of ladies only. Males like him should not use it.
4. Similarly if the child is female explain which toilet is to be used by her and which is not to be used.
5. During the initial stage of training take the child with you and show the appropriate toilet.
6. As a next step, go with him and ask him to show the toilet he is expected to use.
7. Check whether the child uses the correct one when he goes to the toilet in a public place.

## **CHAIN ALL THE STEPS :**

**After training step by step, chain all the steps.**

- \* When the child indicates his need for toileting tell him to find where the toilet is.
- \* When he reaches the toilet, guide him to open the door of the toilet.
- \* Guide him to lower pants / pantie.
- \* Tell him to get into the toilet and close it before he sits / squats on the toilet.
- \* After elimination guide him to wash his bottom and hands, get up, dress up properly, and open the door and come out.
- \* Guide him to the activity in which he was engaged before going to the toilet.