

Footwear advice for Children



Importance of Good Footwear

Correct supportive footwear is important to give a child the stability and support that they need to help meet their motor milestones. A child is ready to wear shoes once they have been walking for a few weeks. Shoes are not necessary initially when walking indoors unless extra support is needed

Things to Consider

Fit

Shoes should fit well and there should be enough room to wiggle their toes. Get their feet measured by a professional to ensure correct fit. There should be a gap of about thumbs width between the end of the longest toe and the tip of the shoe. Their heel should not slip forward or back.

Take the 1,2,3 Test:

1. Look for a stiff heel counter-push on both sides of the heel and it shouldn't collapse.
2. Check the sole-it should bend with slightly but not fold over. This allows your child's toe to move
3. Flexibility- Can you twist the shoe? It should never twist in the middle



Laces/Velcro:

Laces or Velcro both work well as long as the shoe is good fitting. Always remove shoes by opening the fasteners instead of slipping them on/off your feet. Make sure to tie laces all the way to the top and that Velcro straps are pulled tightly.

Shoe v Trainer:

If your child is hypermobile or flat footed or has delayed milestones your therapist may recommend an ankle boot. A boot that rises to the ankle will give your child more support but make sure to take the 1,2,3 test above.

Flat Feet:

Flat feet is very common in children and an arch may not be fully developed by 7-8 years of age. Your child may need some extra support in their early years and your therapist may recommend orthotics if required. Following the steps above with an ankle boot can often give them the support that they need.

Foot Development:

Allow your child sometime barefoot to allow the small muscles in the feet to develop. You can encourage this by getting them to walk on different surfaces e.g. sand or grass, climbing, walking up and downhill or by getting them to rise onto their tiptoes.

Tips and Advice:

- Take your child show shopping and get their foot measured each time you are buying shoes.
- Make sure that they are wearing socks/tights etc when they are trying them on if that is how they will normally wear them.
- Shopping for shoes later in the day is better as feet often swell as the day goes on and this will ensure the best fit.
- Avoid fashion shoes or high tops if there is any leg or foot issues as these do not support their foot.
- Make sure that they open and close their shoe properly instead of slipping feet in and out as this will affect the fit.
- Always check your child's foot for redness or marking to make sure that there aren't any pressure areas with new shoes
- If you are prescribed orthotics make sure to bring them with you to buy shoes as they will take up some room in the shoe.
- Get the child to try on both shoes and walk in them as one foot can often be larger than the other and make sure that their foot is not slipping around in the shoe.

If you have any further questions please feel free to ask your therapist who will be more than happy to give you more advice.