

- If possible, do not put your child in the same shoe every day. This allows them to dry out particularly if the foot is sweaty
- Avoid the use of plimsolls in school all day every day. If a change of footwear is required in school, a fitted pair of lacing trainers is best
- Be aware that blisters and sores may develop with new shoes
- Inspect children's feet regularly for inflamed nails, red pressure marks on the top of the small joints of the toes, below the ankle bones and at the back of the heel.
- Remember that teenagers in particular can be secretive about foot problems and a trivial, easily rectified problem can be more serious if neglected
- If they complain of itchy or painful areas or you see any rashes or hard, raised areas on the skin, seek professional advice
- Wash feet daily and dry well, particularly between the toes. After drying, a small amount of talcum powder can be used
- Children have naturally sweaty feet but smelly feet may be an indication of poor hygiene
- The toenails should be inspected regularly and trimmed as required. A good investment is a pair of nail clippers from your local chemist. Never cut down the side of nails or cut them too short. When cutting, follow the line of the nail at the tip of the toe and always leave the corner of nail just clear of the fleshy part of the toe.

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# Childrens Footwear



Podiatry Department

In the newborn, the foot is composed mainly of relatively soft and flexible cartilage which gradually converts to bone with age.



During this period of development, the foot can be at risk from injury and deformity due to ill-fitting footwear and great care should be taken with shoe types and shoe fitting.

There are several features to a shoe that should be considered before buying for a child. These features are important to all of us but are much more important for the developing foot.

The features are size, heel cup/counter, fastener, toe box and sole.



### Size

It is important to consider the length and the width of the shoe. The best way to make sure of this is to visit a shoe shop where they offer a fitting service. Poor fitting shoes for young children can lead to foot deformities, toenail and skin problems.

### Heel Cup

The heel of the shoe should hold on to the child's foot, this reduces the need for the foot to claw onto the shoe and it adds stability to the child's walking pattern (Gait).

### Fastener

The best shoes hold onto the foot, rather than the foot holding onto the shoe. The best place for a fastener is on top of the shoe and it should be adjustable like laces, velcro or a buckle. Current fashion of not fastening laces can lead to a foot moving around excessively in a shoe and not benefiting from its support.

### Toe Box

Look at the shape of the toe box. Is it foot shaped or pointy? Foot shaped shoes, not shoe shaped feet is what you should remember. Also ensure the toe box is deep enough too. This will reduce toenail problems.

### Sole

The right shoe for the job will also decide on the type of sole. Generally children's activities mean that a sole with a grip will suit them better.

## Childrens' shoes

### Pre-walkers

Booties or pre-walking shoes that don't restrict foot's movements.

They should be flexible and not supportive, and conform to the shape of the foot.



### Toddlers

The first 'real' shoes can be used when the child first starts to walk unaided (usually around ages 9 to 18 months).



Fitting toddlers shoes should follow the guidelines of pre-walkers too. Encourage bare foot in protected environments (eg. indoors).

## Top tips for children's feet

- Always have your child's feet measured for length and width
- Check the sock size
- Inspect shoes regularly for unusual wear and seek professional advice if you are concerned
- Unusual wear on a good supporting shoe, may be an indication that there is a problem with foot posture or general posture. This can be investigated by a registered podiatrist
- Normal wear is at the back of the heel or between the back and the outside. Look out for severe wear on the inside or outside of the heel which may carry forward onto the sole or the upper. However shoe style and make can also affect wear marks and unusual wear maybe a result of a poor shoe, rather than the foot itself.