



Children's Shoe Shopping Tips

Parents everywhere know the drill — running to the nearest shoe store to outfit their children in the latest pair of shoes for school, play or both. But before parents invest in a new pair of children's footwear, some foot factors need to be considered.

A child's feet change as he/she ages. It may be necessary to change shoe and sock sizes every few months as his/her feet grow.

Shoes that don't fit properly can aggravate the feet. Always measure a child's feet before buying shoes.

Never hand down footwear. Just because a shoe size fits one child comfortably doesn't mean it will fit another the same way. Not to mention that the practice of sharing shoes can spread fungi like athlete's foot and nail fungus.

Watch for signs of irritation. If your child always wants to remove one or both of his/her shoes, this may be an unspoken sign that the shoes don't fit properly.

Examine the heels. When children begin to slow in growing, they may wear through the heels of their shoes much quicker than outgrowing the shoes themselves. Uneven heel wear can indicate a foot problem that should be checked by a podiatrist.

The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) recommends five shoe buying tips for children:

1. **Take your child shoe shopping.** It's important to have your child's feet measured before buying shoes. Every shoe fits differently. Letting a child have a say in the shoe buying process promotes healthy foot habits down the road.
2. **Shop for shoes later in the day.** Feet tend to swell during the day; it's best to be fitted while they are swollen.
3. **Buy shoes that do not need a "break-in" period;** shoes should be comfortable immediately.
4. **Always buy for the larger foot.** Feet are seldom precisely the same size.
5. **Have your child try on shoes with socks or tights,** if that's how they'll be worn.

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Do Your Child's Shoes Make the Grade?

Take the '1,2,3' Test:

1. Look for a stiff heel—Press on both sides of the heel counter. It shouldn't collapse.



Correct



Incorrect

2. Check toe flexibility—The shoe should bend with your child's toes. It shouldn't be too stiff or bend too much in the toe box area.



Correct



Incorrect

3. Select a shoe that's rigid in the middle—Does your shoe twist? Your shoe should never twist in the middle.



Correct



Incorrect

For more information, visit www.apma.org/pediatrics.

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