



Suffolk Podiatry

Children's footwear advice

Children's feet are different from adults' feet because they are still growing and developing. Well-fitting footwear is important for comfort, healthy foot development, and everyday activities.

It is recommended that children's shoes are fitted professionally where possible. Regularly checking shoe size and width can help ensure shoes continue to fit correctly as your child grows. The Society of Shoe Fitters recommends measuring children's feet regularly throughout childhood.

When choosing shoes for your child, make sure they:

- Provides a stable base for walking, running, and playing
- Fits securely with adjustable fastenings
- Offers enough grip to help prevent slipping
- Has a supportive heel counter (the back part of the shoe)
- Has a sole that is flexible enough to allow natural foot movement

What makes a good shoe?

Room for your toes

A good shoe should have about 1cm of free space at the end of the longest toe. There should be enough depth and width in the toe box to allow you to freely wiggle your toes without touching the lining



Good Fastening (Laces or Straps)

A good shoe should hold the foot firmly at the heel and ankle, with a fastening that prevents the foot from sliding forward. Laces are always the "gold standard" because you can adjust the fit of the shoe easily. A Velcro strap is a good substitute if you cannot manage laces

Removable foot bed.

This allows more room in the shoe to fit an insole. Some manufacturers almost always have removable foot beds, whereas others will clearly label this on their websites

The Heel and Sole

Heels should have a broad base with firm heel counters. Soles should be cushioning with enough grip (or tread) to prevent slipping. Heels should be no greater than 2.5cm in height

Good everyday shoes



Shoes for occasional use



General advice when buying new shoes for children

- Shoe sizes vary between brands, so fit and comfort are more important than the number size alone
- Ensure your child can comfortably wiggle their toes inside the shoe
- Always try on both shoes and observe your child walking in them
- Shoes should feel comfortable from the start and should not require “breaking in”
- Avoid shoes that pinch, rub, or slip excessively
- Feet can swell slightly during the day, so shopping later in the day may help achieve a better fit
- Measure both feet while standing, as one foot is often slightly larger than the other
- Shoes made from breathable materials may help improve comfort
- Choosing shoes available in different width fittings may improve fit, particularly for children with narrower heels or wider forefeet
- Adjustable fastenings (laces, Velcro, buckles, or toggles) help keep the foot secure
- Second-hand shoes are generally best avoided, as they may have moulded to another child’s foot shape
- Well-fitting socks can also improve comfort and fit
- Plimsolls offer limited support and cushioning, so supportive trainers are often a better choice where school policies allow

Suffolk Podiatry
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