



Buy Well-Fitting Children Shoes

On average children's feet grow at two sizes per year in the first four years of life and one size per year thereafter until growth is complete. However, a child's foot may not grow for a considerable period of time and then grow several sizes in a relatively short period. To ensure that shoes still fit properly for length and width a trained shoe fitter should check them every eight weeks. You may do this more frequently if you are aware that they are actively growing in height. In general, the main period of accelerated growth for in girls is between eight and 13 years with the peak rate at approximately 12 years of age. In boys this is slightly later between 10.5 and 16 years with the peak rate at approximately 14 years. This corresponds with puberty.

Checking that your child's shoes fit properly is best done by the shop where the shoes were bought, ideally by a trained shoe fitter who will also measure the feet. Some retailers will keep a note of the foot size and fitting or provide you with your own record card. An easy way to check the length yourself is to cut a strip of paper that is the same length as the inside of the shoe. Place this against the skirting board and get the child to stand on it. Measure the distance between the longest toe and the end of the piece of paper. A newly fitted shoe will be approximately 12 – 16 mm longer than the longest toe to allow for growth and the foot elongating when walking. Shoes that are only 5mm longer should be regarded as too short and replaced.

Not everyone is able to afford several pairs of everyday shoes for their child. Ideally, different shoes should be worn on alternate days to allow the shoe to dry out, as children's feet can be particularly sweaty. Wearing damp shoes all the time can make the child more prone to athlete's foot and verrucae.

Children tend to adapt to what they regard as normal and accept it. Peer group pressure and the dictates of fashion may also stop a child complaining. This is why skilled shoe fitting and regular checks are so important particularly with very young children.

There are four main warning signs to look for when checking your child's feet. These are skin, nails, deformities and posture.

- **Skin:** look for areas of redness and rashes particularly between the toes, in the arches and below the ankle bones indicating athlete's foot, particularly if they are itchy. Look for red marks and/or blisters at the back of the heel and on the tops of the small joints of the toes indicating ill-fitting shoes. Raised and painful hard masses on the soles of the feet may indicate a verruca.
- **Nails :** any inflammation around the nails should be taken seriously as it may indicate infection. Any discoloration of the toenails should be checked by your podiatrist.
- **Deformities:** Toes should always be straight in line with the foot and not drawn back or curled. The fifth toe may tuck under the fourth slightly and the fourth under the third toe but the big toe should also be straight.
- **Posture:** If the feet appear to be excessively turned in or out or the arch looks very flat, particularly if the child complains of pain, the advice of your registered podiatrist should be sought.

Medipod Clinics

Telephone: 01455 246 100

Email: contacy@medipodclinics.com

Address: 45 Rugby Road, Hinckley, LE10 0QA