

# School shoes for children

**Our children spend 30 hours a week in school shoes, that's in excess of 15 000 hours in a school child's lifetime. Choosing the right shoe for your child is extremely important.**

Poorly fitting children's shoes can be problematic and may lead to problems in adulthood such as hammer toes, ingrown toenails, corns on the feet, callus and possibly bunions.

These problems can be painful and may require treatment ranging from simple consultations with a podiatrist to surgery. It therefore makes sense to, where possible, ensure children's shoes fit properly.

Generally, most podiatrists when fitting footwear to children for school would recommend you look for the following features.

- There should be a child's thumb width between the end of the shoe and the end of the longest toe.
- The sole of the shoe should be fairly straight as the foot is straight
- The fastening mechanism should hold the heel firmly in the back of the shoe.
- The back part of the shoe should be strong and stable. This area is often referred to as the heel counter.
- The shoe should flex across the ball of the foot, not in the middle
- The sole should not twist.
- Lace up, Velcro or a buckle is best. Slip on shoes are not generally considered the best thing for long term use.
- Yes mum you are right. It is better for feet if you do up your laces!
- A Heel greater than 1.5 cm should be avoided for long term use.

## How often do you need to buy new school shoes?

A school shoe should generally last nine months to a year. However you should realise that if you notice your child has a growth spurt it is wise to check to see if their foot has also grown, as the two will go hand in hand. After the age of three it is generally thought a child's foot will grow about half a size every 6 months.

Large amounts of "wearing" noticed on the shoe, or shoes that now cause pain should be replaced.

You should not place a child in "hand- me-down" shoes.

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## When and how to fit a school shoe.

It is usually best to fit school shoes at the end of the day. Children's feet are often a little more swollen at the end of the day. This ensures you fit your child's shoe whilst feet are at their biggest.

It makes sense to try to fit the shoes wearing the socks the child will wear at school.

When checking the length ensure the child is standing. Ask your child to stand and go for a walk around the shop. Does the shoe hurt? It should not. Does it appear wide enough for the foot? You should NOT be able to see bulges from the toes on either side. The toes should comfortably be able to wiggle.

## Flat Feet and School Shoes.

A Step ahead is often asked about flat feet in children. Many times this has been picked up by a trained footwear fitter. Often children are referred to us as their parents are concerned that this is not normal.

It is normal for children to have fairly flat feet up until the age of about 7 years.

## It is NOT normal for children to have pain in their feet or legs.

This is often we believe mistakenly referred to as "growing pains". There are many causes of foot and leg pain in children. Of these, excessively flat feet, is one of them. MOST foot pain in children is preventable and a consultation with one of our podiatrists is recommended.

**We recommend you see one of our podiatrists if your child has any of the following.**

- Pain in the feet, heel, knee or legs
- Frequent unexplained tripping and falling.
- Uneven shoe wear
- Skin or toenail irritation or problems.

**A Step Ahead Podiatry is Western Sydney's leading foot and ankle clinic. Our highly skilled team are equipped to treat and assess all your foot and ankle needs. Why not call now to confirm an appointment time or check us out on the net.**

The information provided here should not be used for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. **This should not be construed as professional advice.** A registered Podiatrist or general practitioner should be consulted. We strongly recommended you contact one of our professional staff for a detailed diagnosis and treatment plan.

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