

Childrens Footwear

John Charles - Podiatrist

It's that time of the year when children go back to school so here are some key things to look for when getting new shoes:

1. **Fit** – children's feet are constantly growing so we need to allow for this to naturally happen. Excess pressure on the toes and forefoot can cause pain, lead to ingrown toenails, and contribute to the development of bunions and clawed toes.



Children's feet are typically wider in the forefoot. A shoe like this will squash the forefoot causing changes in structure and abnormal function. Next time you get shoes check that the width and depth of the forefoot is adequate for the foot. A good way to do this is to trace around the foot and compare it to the insole of the shoe. The length of the shoe should allow for a thumb widths of space at the toe.



2. **Comfort** – children's shoes should be comfortable from day 1. Whilst this sounds obvious it's important to check this when buying them. A good shoe should require minimal wearing-in and your child should want to wear their shoes. Uncomfortable shoes can adversely affect function and also won't be worn. If you are not sure then don't buy the shoes!



3. **Rigidity** – a growing foot needs to be allowed to grow. Whilst rigid shoes may provide a solid base and last a long time they won't allow the feet to function normally. Even in children with flat feet a rigid shoe often isn't the best option. A combination of exercises and the appropriate supportive insole can ensure the best outcome without the need for solid and thick shoes. If the shoe can't be bent through the midfoot it's too rigid!



A rigid shoe with a thick heel may last a long time but can adversely affect foot function.

If you have any questions about school footwear or your child's feet contact our Podiatry team on 9810 3000 or podiatry@accesshc.org.au