



Shopping for Children's Clothing: Shoes

Shoes conform to the shape of one's foot. Therefore, it is important to shop carefully for them. This is especially true for children because their feet are soft and pliable. Also, their feet are growing rapidly. During the first year the feet grow to almost half of their adult size. The American Foot Care Institute indicates that average size changes occur:

| Age | Size Changes |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1- 6 | about every 1-2 months |
| 6-10 | 2-3 months |
| 10-12 | 3-4 months |
| 12-15 | 4-5 months |
| 15 and over | 6 or more months |

Every child is different, so it is impossible to predict exactly when to buy a larger size. Plus, there is no standardized shoe sizing in the U.S. Improperly fitted shoes can hinder a child's normal growth and comfort.

The purposes of shoes are to protect from sharp objects and hot sidewalks, and to provide support. Shoes are unnecessary until a child begins to walk.

CHECK THESE CONSTRUCTION FEATURES

- MATERIAL**—Firm, but pliable. Should breathe.
- HEELS**—Sturdy. Absorb sound and shock.
- HEEL COUNTER**—Firm, springs back after being pressed down. Holds heel in place.



SHANK—Firm, but flexible. Supports arch.

LININGS—Smooth. Covered seams, no rough edges. Absorbs perspiration.

WELT—Holds upper to sole. Helps make waterproof.

WELL-FINISHED—No raw edges or bulky stitching. No exposed tacks.

SOLE—Firm, but flexible. Rough surface for toddlers.



STITCHING—Close, even. Strong thread.

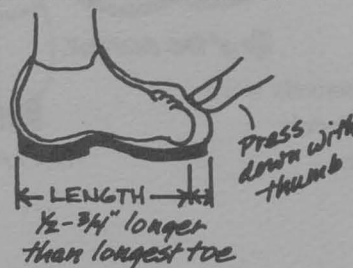


LAST—Straight shape with top of shoe lined up with sole.

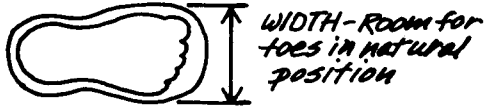
LABEL—Required to list materials used.

CHECK THESE FITTING POINTS

LENGTH—1/2 to 3/4 inch longer than longest toe. Test: Press down with thumb.



WIDTH—Room for toes in natural position. Widest part of foot at widest part of shoe. Test: Pinch a crease.



TOE HEIGHT—Toe box deep enough. High and wide enough. Should not touch toes.



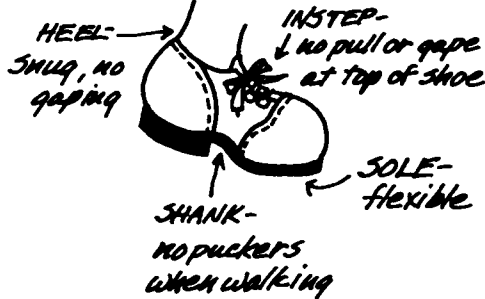
LENGTH FROM HEEL TO BALL
Ball of foot & arch base of shoe should meet

LENGTH FROM HEEL TO BALL—Ball is widest part of foot. Ball of foot and arch base of shoe should meet.

SHANK—Narrow part of shoe in front of heel. No excess puckers or wrinkles when walking.

INSTEP—No pulling or straining at top of shoe. Bend foot. Check for gape at instep area.

HEEL—Snug, no gaping. Should not cut into heel or rub on ankle bone.

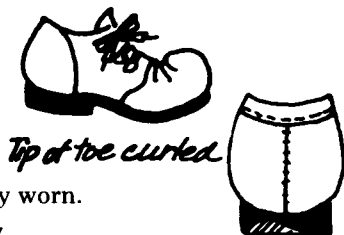


SOLE—Flexible.

SIGNS OF IMPROPER FIT

Improperly fitted children's shoes may show one or more of the following:

Tip of toe curled.



Tip of toe excessively worn.

Soles worn unevenly.

Heels run over.

Heels worn on either the inside or outside edge.



Heels worn on inside or outside edge

Shoe upper bulges over sole.



Shoe upper bulges over sole

Toes have worn pockets in the lining.

Heel counter broken down.

Be sure to always wear socks when trying on and checking fit of shoe.

WHAT ABOUT SNEAKERS?

Sneakers, if of good quality, give greater freedom for the feet to develop. They provide good resiliency. For normal feet they have a comfortable shape. When shopping for sneakers be sure they:

Are well-fitted.

Are of heavy canvas.

Are well-constructed with double stitching.

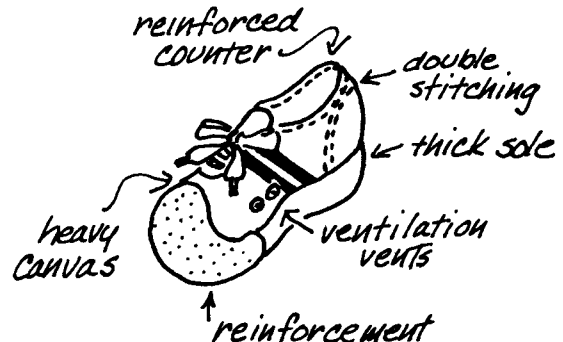
Have an arch support.

Have rubber reinforcement at toe and heel.

Have a thick, resilient sole.

Have reinforced heel counters.

Have ventilation vents.

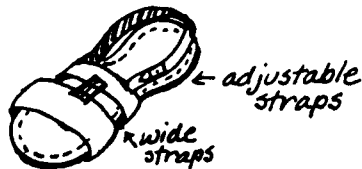


Parents should be aware that rubber soles may puncture, that canvas does not "breathe," that there is less depth in toe area, that sneakers should be kept clean, that there is a tendency to buy too small and

that care must be given to prevent shrinkage when they are washed.

WHAT ABOUT SANDALS?

A sandal that is well-fitted allows freedom for the feet to develop naturally. Contrary to popular belief, they do not make the feet spread. Sandals for children, especially for play, should have closed backs and wide straps for safety and greater durability. Straps on sandals should be adjustable.



CARE

Proper care of shoes will prolong their wear life. Polish before wearing to protect from dirt or wetness. If they do get wet, stuff with paper and allow to dry at room temperature. Re-heel when edges wear down.



SAVE MONEY BY:

Avoiding slip-ons that break down easily.



Avoid slip-ons that break down easily

Avoiding narrow straps that break easily.

Avoiding high heel lifts which are impractical and unsafe.



Avoid high heel lifts - impractical and unsafe

Avoiding black patent, bone or colored shoes that show scuffs.



Avoid colors that show scuffs

Avoiding poor quality shoes that quickly lose their shape.

REMEMBER: Purchase well-constructed and well-fitted shoes.

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