

Find right school shoes for your child

AS another school year rolls around, children and parents around the country will be preparing for what lies ahead.

Little thought is often put into what shoes your child will wear beyond making sure they meet school requirements (and making sure they meet the latest fashion requirements).

But when you consider that your children will spend more than 1200 hours in their school shoes each year, it's worthwhile mak-

ing sure your child has the correct shoe.

These tips will help ensure you get the right shoes for your kids.

1. Fit – this is by far the most important factor. There is more than just the length to consider. Other factors are foot width, depth, arch height and any bony prominences. Correctly fitted shoes can help promote correct bone and muscle development and prevent life-long foot and leg problems.

2. Make sure your child tries both shoes on – often feet can differ in size. Don't buy your child's shoes too large thinking they'll grow into them. Overly large shoes can allow your child's foot to roll over in the shoe during play, causing injury. The widest part of the foot should correspond with the widest part of the shoe. There should be a space the width of your child's thumbnail between the end of the shoe and the tip of the longest toe on the longer

foot. Your child should be able to wriggle their toes freely.

3. Look for a stable shoe – a shoe shouldn't bend in the middle (the area that corresponds to the arch of the foot). It should bend at the ball of the foot. Look for a firm heel counter. The heel should be snug, but comfortable.

4. Know what foot type your child has – if your child has flat feet (about 50 per cent of children), they may roll inwards

excessively (pronate), which causes strain on ankles, legs and hip joints. If your child has high arches (about 20 per cent), their feet may not roll enough (supinate), which can send a severe shock up through their legs.



Kent Sweeting

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