

Are Your Kids Ready for Their First Pair Of Shoes?

The Ultimate Checklist & Why Getting the Right Shoes Is So Important.

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Your little one's first steps is such an exciting time for everyone and soon those first unsteady steps will turn into running, hopping, jumping, leaping, climbing and kicking balls. However, long before then you'll have the important task of deciding whether your child is ready for their first pair of shoes and which ones to buy.

It's easy to get excited about their special first pair of shoes, and in fact I've kept both my children's first pair, but when it comes to this important milestone – S-L-O-W DOWN. Children develop the art of walking at different times. It can be as early as seven or eight months or as late as two years old.

Whenever it is, it's important to give them time to master walking steadily before thinking about buying their first pair of shoes. Don't rush into those cute dinky pair of 'mini-me' trainers or high heels like Katie Holmes did with little Suri !

Barefoot is best for young children.

Wearing shoes at too young an age can hamper a child's walking and cerebral development. Toddlers keep their heads up more when they are walking barefoot & the feedback they get from the ground means there is less need to look down, which is what puts them off balance and causes them to fall down. Walking barefoot develops the muscles and ligaments of the foot, increases the strength of the foot's arch, improves your child's awareness of where they are in relation to the space around them and contributes to good posture.

You'll know your little one is ready when they are walking unaided for much of the day inside and outside so it's then that those tiny feet need more support and protection.

Which shoes should I pick for my little walker?

It's an emotional moment seeing your child in their first pair of proper walking shoes, but make sure the shoes you pick have both quality and fit. Just remember that baby feet don't have bones yet, just soft cartilage which can easily be pushed out of shape by badly fitting shoes. Don't buy on price or cuteness.

Even socks that are too tight can damage their feet at this delicate stage!

Another thing worth noting is that your toddler's nerve endings are not developed yet so they may not notice a painful constriction, and may not be able to complain even if they do.

Most children's shoes ought to come with a government health warning! They are like awful little bricks - too stiff, too rigid, with no flexibility at the sole and too much heel raise. This is of particular concern with toddlers learning to walk, because it causes them to bounce and tip forward.

Choose shoes designed specifically for this stage of your child's development, like Start-rite's first walking shoes, which are available in whole and half sizes and a variety of width fittings to ensure you get the best possible fit.

Ask the Experts to make sure you get the right advice for this critical milestone.

Thanks for reading.

Remember to keep Laughing and Learning

Kindest Wishes

Sue Atkins

