

Pointers For Parents

Start Back-To-School Shopping Off On The Right Foot

(NAPSA)—As parents and children begin their annual routine of back-to-school shopping, one item is a must-purchase for every list—shoes that fit properly.

That's the advice from podiatrists who say that many adult foot ailments have their origins in childhood and are present at birth.

“Neglecting foot health invites a host of problems and can leave children eligible to injury,” said Dr. Ronald Jensen, president of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA). “It is highly important that parents purchase children’s footwear that offers the proper support and fit necessary to keep a child’s feet safe both at school and at home.”

The APMA offers these tips to help assure parents that a shoe fits properly:

- Be aware that shoe and sock sizes may change every few months as a child grows.

- Always measure a child’s feet before buying shoes and watch for signs of aggravation.

- Never hand down footwear. Not only might the shoes be the wrong size, but sharing shoes can also spread fungi like athlete’s foot and nail fungus.

- Examine a shoe’s heels. Children often wear through a shoe’s heel faster than outgrowing the shoe itself. Uneven heel wear may indicate a foot problem that should be checked by a podiatrist.

- Take your child shoe shopping to help ensure a proper fit and to promote healthy foot habits down the road.



Children’s shoes should be supportive in the heel area and flexible where the toes bend naturally.

- Always buy for the larger foot. Feet are seldom the same size.

- Shoes should be comfortable immediately and not need a “break-in period.”

You might also try this quick 1-2-3 test to be sure your child’s shoes are in shipshape:

One

Look for a stiff heel. Press on both sides of the shoe’s heel. It shouldn’t collapse.

Two

Check toe flexibility. The shoe should bend with your child’s toes. It shouldn’t be too stiff or bend too much in the toe box area.

Three

Try twisting the shoe. It should never twist in the middle.

For more information and tips, visit www.apma.org.