

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPERLY FITTING SHOES
Or: "Bigger Is Not Always Better"

Balancing ... Walking ... Running ... Playing ... Learning ...
All things that require us to be on our feet; moving, stopping, and starting.

For so many of our children, and especially for those who have any sort of balance or motor awkwardness, shoes are an often overlooked but extremely important concern.

We all know about shoes that are too small. The redness and blisters, or the toe peeking out of the little hole! But did you know that shoes that are too BIG can be just as harmful as ones that are too small? Here are some reasons why:

When shoes are too large the various parts of the shoe don't line up with the parts of the feet that they are intended to serve. The result ... friction, blisters, and a lack of support.

When shoes are too large and feet "flop around" inside them walking is harder, balancing is harder, and playing is harder. You can't "feel the ground" the way you are supposed to, and that also affects your posture and your muscle tone.

When shoes are too big the parts that are designed for stress and weight-bearing aren't able to do their jobs; either for your feet OR for the shoes themselves ... which causes them to wear out faster. (THAT IS WHY BUYING BIGGER SHOES AND THINKING THAT "JOHNNY" WILL GROW INTO THEM DOESN'T WORK. THEY WEAR OUT FASTER THAN SHOES THAT FIT PROPERLY AND YOU END UP REPLACING THEM SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.)

In a properly fitting shoe there is about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of space between the LONGEST toe (not always the "big toe." Sometimes the second toe is longer) and the end of the shoe. The shoe's arch and the long arch of the foot should line up, and so should the ankle for maximum support.

A properly fitting shoe should be wide enough across for all the toes to lay side by side comfortably but not so wide that you could fit in an extra toe (or an extra finger, which you could use to judge the shoe's fit).

So remember ... a properly fitting pair of shoes is important; and by the way ...
A brand new pair might make a great gift!