



Buying Shoes for Your Child:

Your child's feet only need shoes to keep protected and warm. Barefoot people in *Central Africa* or the *Solomon Islands* are less likely to have foot pain and deformity than those with a full closet of shoes! Shoes were invented about 10,000 years ago. Heels were added to shoes in the 16th century to "*stablize the mounted warrior in the stirrup*". Fashion has changed shoes since then, as has the wish to look a little taller.

There is no need for "corrective shoes" which are rigid and compressive. The notion that a healthy child's foot requires support is false. These shoes often cause foot problems as an adult. Your baby's footprint changes with age from flatfoot to arched by age 8 years. Shoes do not help the arch develop, and flatfoot does not need to be corrected unless there is foot pain.

So don't worry about buying a "proper" shoe. Comfort and proper fitting is what counts. It should have lots of room in the toes, be flexible, and be flat (unless you are *jousting*). Think of bare feet when choosing: traction similar to barefoot, lightweight, good cushioning. Don't be surprised how quickly a child's foot grows!



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