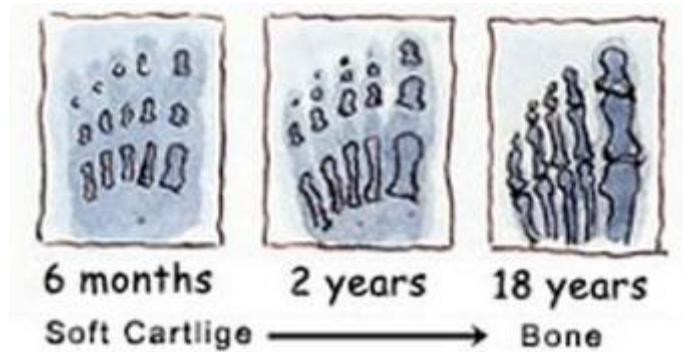


## Shoe Recommendations for Children

Once your baby starts cruising along furniture to taking their first few steps, it is important to think about what shoes to buy.



In young children the arch will usually not be visible or developed for the first 2 years, and even then it is not fully developed. In the early years of childhood, there is a “fat” pad in the arch area of the foot, which gives the appearance of a flat foot, but this is not the case as it offers a natural arch support.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has developed shoe recommendations for children to help you find shoes that are helpful and not harmful as your little one continues learning to walk. Flexible, non-skid or skid-resistant soles are one of the most important features to look for in a baby shoe. Children should be wearing shoes that are flexible and allow the foot to bend and move as though the child is barefoot. You also want to make sure your baby’s shoes fit correctly and are not too small.

Children learn to walk by gripping their toes on the ground, as they build intrinsic strength of their foot and arch. So at home, it is advised to leave your child barefoot to promote natural foot development. However, when surfaces are uneven, shoes should be worn to protect their feet.

*The AAP recommends the following when considering shoe recommendations for children:*

1. Shoes should be lightweight and flexible to support natural foot movement with a stable base of support.
2. Shoes should be made of leather or mesh to allow your baby’s feet to breathe comfortably.
3. Shoes should have rubber soles for traction to prevent slipping or sliding.
4. Stiff and compressive footwear may cause deformity, weakness, and loss of mobility.
5. Base your shoe selection for children on the barefoot model.

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6. Shoes should have good shock absorption with durable soles as children participate in more high impact activities.

### ***Shoe Recommendations for Children***

- **Pre-Walking Shoe:** Certain types of shoes are appropriate for your child's age. Babies and crawlers do not need shoes. They need booties or pre-walking shoes that do not bind their feet. The shoe should be flexible rather than providing a rigid support, and it's very important that the shoe be shaped like the child's foot. The function of a shoe at this age is warmth and protection.
- **Toddler Shoes:** Choose a lightweight shoe as children at this age, tend to use a lot of energy walking. A leather or canvas tie shoe is more secure, will stay on the foot, and will fit little feet better. Toddlers can go barefoot in a protected environment such as indoors.
- **School-Age Children's Shoes:** Style and shoe fit is important for school-age children. Their main function is shock absorption and protection. At this age, they can choose from a variety of options including athletic shoes, sandals, hiking shoes, etc. It is very important to wear the right shoes for the right activity to prevent injury. Look for reasonably priced, flexible, well-ventilated shoes that allow plenty of room for growth