

## FLAT FEET

- Many children and adults have flat feet otherwise known as pes planus. This occurs when the foot's arch either fails to develop or collapses.
- Children can have flat feet until approximately 4-6 years of age, when they begin to develop their foot arches.
- There is usually no cause for concern if a foot arch is present when your child goes up on their tiptoes, they have no pain and there are no concerns with their gross motor development.
- Orthotics may be recommended for some children who have significant flat feet with a delay in their gross motor development and/or pain to improve alignment of their ankles and feet. Otherwise, children should be encouraged to wear supportive shoes for gross motor play activities.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR



- Firm heel: only a small amount of movement when you squeeze the back of the shoe.
- Supportive high top when possible.
- Shoe fits your child's foot well in width and length.
- Able to tie up securely (laces preferred or long Velcro straps if laces not possible).
- Firm sole: limited twist or bend when pushing up on the toe to allow a good push off.
- Running shoe bottom, not skater shoe flat bottom.
- Medial arch support if possible.
- Non-skid soles for traction to prevent slipping or sliding.
- A supportive sport sandal with heel strap can be used in the summer months; the use of flip flops should be avoided.



### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Provide opportunities for your child to play barefoot in order to strengthen their feet/ankles. Some ideas include:

- In the summer, allow your child to walk barefoot in the sand/grass.
- Place a towel under your child's foot when they are sitting down, and have them use their toes to move the towel up under their foot.
- Have your older child pick up small objects with one foot.
- Standing on one leg or kicking a ball.

If your child is having back, hip, knee, ankle or foot pain or alignment issues that are not addressed by supportive shoes, please consult with your Health Care Provider.