

## SUPPORTIVE SHOES

Shoes are not needed in most cases for babies/toddlers as they develop ankle and foot strength by moving around while barefoot. Supportive shoes can provide increased stability for children when performing gross motor activities throughout the day and can help improve foot/ankle alignment.

### 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.

To allow the foot and ankle muscles to develop, provide opportunities for your child to play barefoot.

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.