

## Keep Kids Moving: Shoes for the Right Sport

Sports and other physical activities are an excellent way for children of all ages to stay active and healthy. However, selecting the proper shoe for the sport goes above and beyond just heading to the “athletics” section of the shoe store. Buying a shoe designed for the sport or activity your child will be participating in not only improves your child’s performance on the court or field, but also helps keep him/her free from serious foot and ankle injuries commonly treated by today’s podiatrist:

**Basketball**—Many kids make basketball their first organized sport of choice, so it’s important to give them a shoe that helps them perfect their basketball handling skills and prevents injury.

### **A basketball shoe should:**

- Have a thick, stiff sole that helps give support while running and landing from jumps to the basket.
- Incorporate high ankle construction that supports the ankle during quick changes in direction.
- Have the strongest support on either side of the ankle.

**Cleats**—Outdoor field sports such as baseball, softball, soccer, football and lacrosse constantly keep children’s feet moving. This type of footwear must fit adequately to prevent tripping and falling.

### **A shoe with cleats should:**

- Fit snugly but comfortably on a child’s foot—about one thumb width or less from the toe to the end of the shoe. Oversized soccer shoes can affect balance and cause blisters.
- Feature a rubber sole, to keep prevent slipping and injury, and a leather upper material.
- Cleats on the sole should be regulation length.

**Tennis**—Court shoes for tennis and racquetball may look like any other athletic sneaker, but it’s what’s on the inside that makes the difference on a child’s feet.

### **A tennis shoe should:**

- Support both sides of the foot, due to the quick lateral movements and weight shifts in court sports.
- Provide a flexible sole for fast changes of direction.

**Running**—Running shoes come in several different styles that support feet with different arch types.

### **A running shoe should:**

- Provide maximum shock absorption to help young runners avoid ailments such as shin splints and knee pain.
- Control the way a child’s heel strikes the ground, so the rest of the foot can fall correctly.
- Fit your child’s specific arch type. To determine arch type, see a podiatrist.

**Ballet**—Children have developing and growing feet, and a properly fitting ballet slipper is vital to keeping feet safe. Certain ballet positions can put excessive strain on the feet, so check with your podiatrist if your child complains of foot pain related to dancing.

### **A ballet slipper should:**

- Have a slightly snug fit to prevent balance issues. The slipper should not be too loose or overly snug.
- Have a sturdy heel area, and feature a flexible sole.

For a list of sports-related footwear with APMA’s Seal of Acceptance, visit [www.apma.org/seal](http://www.apma.org/seal).