

# Children's feet Children's shoes Children's socks

[kidsfeet.info](https://kidsfeet.info)

[plus12socks.com](https://plus12socks.com)

An initiative of the Austrian research team  
Children's Feet Children's Shoes <sup>1</sup>

## Then (and now) ...

Recent studies show that over half of children wear shoes that are too short in length <sup>1</sup>, which damages their feet.

Deceptive sizing in kids' shoes: Children's shoes are almost always shorter than the shoe size indicates. Often, a shoe labeled size 30 is only as long as a size 28 on the inside - or even a size 27 or 26.



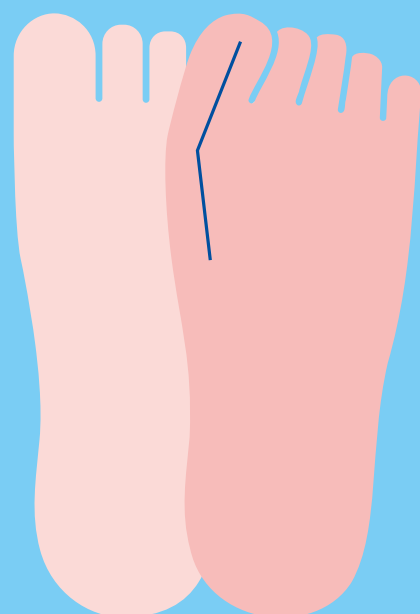
X-ray of an infant's feet:  
The dark areas are cartilage that is still ossifying.

## Children's feet are special:

- └ They are much softer and more flexible than adult feet. That's why they can be deformed more easily by shoes or socks that are too short.
- └ In the course of our research, we have repeatedly encountered children wearing shoes as much as five sizes too small. But can't they tell? We investigated this with a specially developed test track and discovered that children wearing too-small shoes usually claim they fit well.
- └ They grow fast: At the age of 3-6 years, kids' feet grow an average of 1mm per month.

## Why a good fit is so important:

- └ Too-short shoes can cause permanent damage to kids' feet (hallux valgus). Socks that are too short can also affect the correct positioning of the toes.
- └ Healthy feet are an important prerequisite for children's overall development - and help make sure kids enjoy healthy exercise.
- └ Hallux valgus (right): The big toe is displaced towards the middle of the foot.

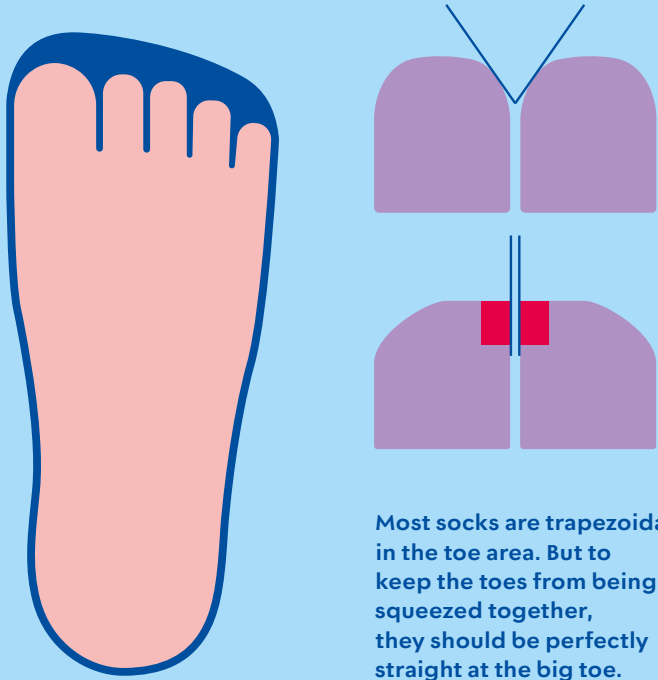


<sup>1</sup> Kinz, W., Groll-Knapp, E., Kundi, M. (2021): Hallux valgus in pre-school-aged children: the effects of too-short shoes on the hallux angle and the effects of going bare-foot on podiatric health. Footwear Science, 13:1, 29-42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19424280.2020.1853826>

# The proper fit for children's shoes and socks:

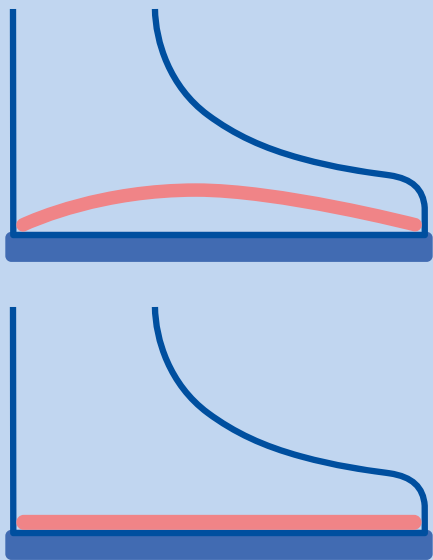
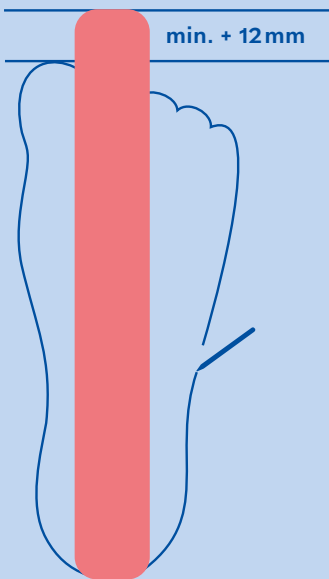
Children's feet need at least 12mm (1/2 inch) extra length in shoes.  
New shoes can even have up to 17mm (3/4 inch) extra space.

Children's shoes should be soft and flexible and as straight as possible in the big toe area.



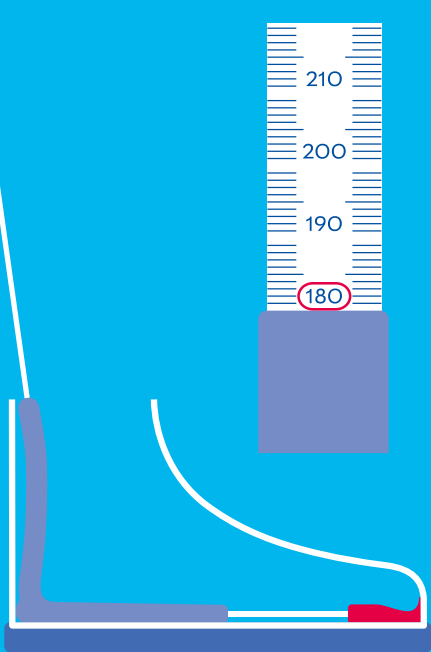
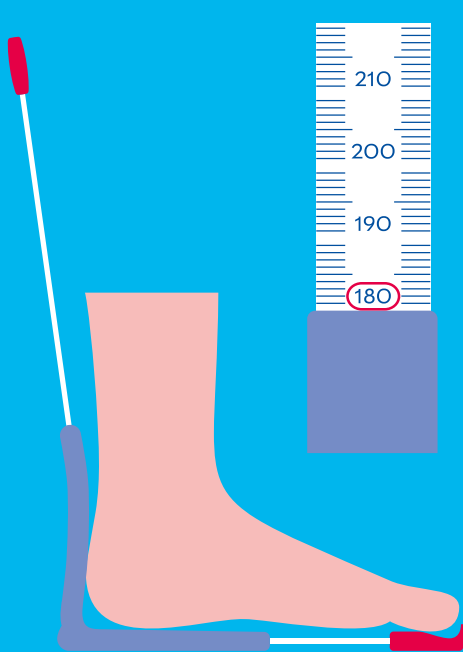
Most socks are trapezoidal in the toe area. But to keep the toes from being squeezed together, they should be perfectly straight at the big toe.

## Two ways to make sure kids' shoes fit:



### 1 Cardboard template

- L Have your child stand on a piece of stiff cardboard and trace the contour of both feet.
- L Add 12mm (1/2 inch) to the longest toe - 17mm (3/4 inch) for new shoes.
- L Cut a strip about 2 fingers wide from the center of the template.
- L If it can't fit in the shoe without bending, the shoe is too short. If the strip lies flat in the shoe, the shoe fits.



### 2 plus12

- L The plus12 can be used to measure both feet and the inside length of shoes.
- L The best part: 12 mm of extra space are automatically added to the measurement, providing you with the required inside length for well-fitting shoes in no time at all.

## Questions, questions, questions...

### Online or in store?

It doesn't matter. The main thing is to measure the length of your child's foot (mm) and ask the online retailer to provide the inside length of the shoes you'd like to buy (mm).

### Hand-me-downs?

No problem. Do make sure, however, that used shoes are not

worn down unevenly, and of course, that they are long enough.

### Slippers or anti-skid socks?

We have a better idea: barefoot. And if kids need to wear something, then regular slippery socks. Yes, you read that right: slippery socks. Breathable and without a coating on the sole, which is often also ecologically questionable.

### But how wide should shoes be?

Believe it or not, science hasn't answered this question yet. Sounds crazy, but it's true.

### Cheap or expensive?

A high price doesn't guarantee quality. The latest consumer reports can be a helpful resource.

### Firm and supportive?

Not at all. The softer and more flexible shoes are, the better they are for kids' feet - especially for children just learning to walk.

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