

## Your Child's Foot Care: Every Step Counts: Part I

Parents anxiously await their child's first steps. All eyes and video recorders are positioned to catch this momentous occasion, but all the steps a child takes after that are equally important.

Unless there is an obvious major foot health problem, parents tend to ignore their children's foot care. There seem to be so many other concerns – general health issues, proper development and just daily care – that parents overlook their children's feet, just as they do their own.

I recommend that parents observe their child's walking and shoe wear patterns. Things to watch out for include:

- Walking with the toes pointed inward or outward is a common cause for parental concern. In some cases, these types of walking are normal. Excessive out-toeing or in-toeing needs to be evaluated.
- Excessively flat feet. This is a common finding when infants first begin to walk. As they become older, this becomes less of an issue. Excessively flat feet may become painful with time, and may need to be treated for this reason.
- High arches. This is not a part of normal development, and it needs to be investigated to be sure that it is not a sign of a bigger problem.

Next week we'll look at a few other things to watch in your child's walking. The important thing to remember is that it never hurts to have your child evaluated if there are any concerns with your child's walking. Pain is never normal! Most young children won't tell you they hurt. So be vigilant and watch for subtle limping or discomfort.