

Sport-Specific Footwear Gives Kids a Boost



Dr. Mary Carlson
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In this day and age, sports are more popular than ever among children of all ages. But did you know that picking the right shoe goes above and beyond just heading to the “athletics” section of the shoe store?

Buying a sport-specific shoe – a shoe designed for the exact sport 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.

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

A child’s 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. A good basketball shoe should have the strongest support on either side of the ankle.

Making a ‘Racket’ on the Court—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 your child’s feet.

A child’s court 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.

Best shoe for the job: Asics Velocity GS. This children’s court shoe provides a stable platform with long-lasting traction for eager dives toward the ball. This shoe carries APMA’s Seal of Approval.

Sprinting Toward the Finish— The running shoe is perhaps the most personal and intricate of all athletic shoes. Every runner, like every child, has different needs — and there are a multitude of choices out there.

A child’s running shoe should:

Provide **maximum shock absorption** to help runners avoid ailments such as shin splints and knee pain.

Control the way your child’s heel strikes the ground, so the rest of the foot can fall correctly.

Best shoe for the job: Asics GEL series. Several Asics GEL series shoes, including the Nimbus 9 GS, GT-2120 GS and GEL-1120 GS, all are designed for active children who run on a daily basis. All carry APMA’s Seal of Approval.

Don’t Forget the Socks!— Without the right sock, even the best athletic shoe won’t quite

cut the mustard. If your child exhibits signs of **hyperhidrosis (excess sweating)** or **bromhidrosis (foot odor)**, selection of the appropriate athletic sock may reduce incidences of these conditions.

The right athletic sock should:

Be made of a **natural/synthetic blend**, as this helps “wick” away moisture best.

Not contain any large seams that can cause blisters or irritation.

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