

Why barefoot play is important for your child

Barefoot play means allowing your child to move, play, and explore **without shoes or socks** when it is safe to do so. This simple practice supports healthy foot development and overall movement skills.



How barefoot play supports development

1. Builds strong feet

Children's feet contain many small muscles that need movement to grow strong. Walking and playing barefoot helps:

- Strengthen foot and ankle muscles
- Support healthy arches
- Improve balance and coordination

2. Improves balance and body awareness

Barefoot play increases sensory feedback from the ground, helping children:

- Understand where their body is in space
- Adjust their movements more easily
- Feel more confident with walking, running, and jumping

3. Supports sensory development

Different textures (grass, sand, carpet, foam mats) give important sensory input. This helps with:

- Sensory processing
- Motor planning
- Regulation and attention



4. Encourages natural movement patterns

Without stiff soles or tight shoes, children can:

- Use their toes to grip and push
- Move more naturally
- Develop efficient walking and running patterns

When is barefoot play best?

Barefoot play is ideal:

- Indoors at home
- On safe outdoor surfaces (grass, sand, rubber playgrounds)
- During tummy time, crawling, cruising, and early walking



What about shoes?

Shoes are important for protection outdoors, but when needed:

- Choose **flexible, lightweight shoes**
- Look for a **wide toe box** so toes can spread
- Avoid stiff soles and hard arch supports for young children