



The Mom Crowd.com

Orthotics for Kids

posted by McKenna on January 9th, 2008

My three year old daughter wears little orthotic braces to help give her stability and I am often asked what they are and why she has them. It must first be stated that Darah has the cutest feet in the entire world! She has little short sausage toes and these wide, fat, squishy feet that anyone would want to "This little piggy went to market" at! She also has a sweet little sandal toe gap between her first and second little sausage toes. Ok, I'll stop gushing about how stinking cute her feet are now and get back to the orthotics.

Darah's ankles pronate; meaning when she stands up, they roll inward. Here's a picture of how they roll inward while she stands. The weight is distributed in an awkward way and longterm side effects of this can be hip and back problems. Try it! Stand up and roll your ankles inward. Can you feel awkward pressure all the way up to your knees and hips?

This problem is not limited to children with Down syndrome, however a lot of children with Down syndrome have this problem because they commonly also have hypotonia and looser joints. Orthotics and shoe inserts can really help a person with ankle pronation. There are different types of orthotics. Some give more support, others give less support. My daughter has Sure Step Orthotics. These are specifically made for children who have ankle pronation or have an unbalanced or uncoordinated gait which is causing them to be delayed in their gross motor development. They are made from a very flexible plastic and are lightly cushioned. The plastic covers the bottom

of her foot (stopping right before her toes) and covers the backs and sides of her lower ankles. When she wears converse style tennis shoes, they are completely hidden. Darah walks so much better when she is wearing them. She has to wear socks under them at all times, and cannot wear them without shoes over them (because they are slippery), so the con to orthotics is the sweaty feet they produce during the summer time. She wears them whenever she leaves the house. I let her have barefoot play at home. She will not necessarily wear these for forever, however she may need some sort of shoe insert or arch support for the rest of her life due to the severity of her pronation. This equipment is covered by our insurance. They also come in very fun patterns!

Here's a good article by Pat Winders (the Physical Therapy God in the Down syndrome world) on gross motor development for children with Down syndrome.

Let me know if you have any questions about our experience with Darah's orthotics! I will be happy to share any other information I have (or can dig up) for you! Also, please share your experiences with your child's orthotics! Our readers would love to hear your stories as well!

