



If the shoe fits!  
By Jacqueline Hill

There are various styles of shoes needed for the many different styles of dance. Tap shoes, jazz shoes and ballet shoes being the most typically bought for the young dancer. With the speed of growth little ones have, parents tend to purchase shoes that the dancer can “grow into” rather than shoes that fit properly.

I explain daily to parents what the correct fit is...encouraging them to understand the importance of the fit for even the youngest dancer. Most parents are concerned with how fast young children’s feet grow and are worried about the cost of replacing shoes. It is essential however to put your dancer into a shoe that fits regardless of the age of the dancer.

Think of it this way; most athletes would not buy a pair of shoes a full size too big. Most parents would not put their football player in a pair of cleats with any extra room. The fit should be comfortable but definitely snug. Dance shoes are the same. The obvious dangers in having a shoe that is too big are the same for dancers as for athletes. Possible rolled ankles, twisted knees, and inability to perform correctly. Not so obvious problems include incorrect placement of the foot (which directly affects the leg and back muscles), not being able to execute tap steps to create the necessary sounds because of the shoe slipping off, inability to balance because of the excess shoe. These are just a few problems.

Even the youngest dancer needs the best tools for the job. As a dancer grows and progresses they will become quite particular about the fit of their shoe. Moving up to Pointe shoes is another extremely important fitting subject (see my archived article from The Magazine of Santa Clarita at [www.elitedancestudios.net](http://www.elitedancestudios.net)).

I encourage parents to think of purchasing dance shoes as an investment in their child’s dance life as well as health. It is important to understand that the shoe can cause problems. At ELITE we have a shoe exchange policy that helps out with the cost of replacing shoes. Dancers can bring in their shoes and if there is a pair that fits they simply swap! If the shoe fits, buy it...if it’s too big skip it. Make sure you find someone who can help you fit your shoes the right way!