

## The Question of Shoes

Shoes can be a huge issue for many children when they're first learning as toddlers about this new expectation, but for a child with sensory processing difficulties, PDA and/or is autistic, it can continue beyond toddler years and become a real battle. Here's a list I've put together with the help of some amazing parents and caregivers for ideas that might help your child.



1. Leaving them alongside the child, without pressuring.
2. Offering a choice of shoes. For example, red ones or blue ones.
3. Offering choices (rather than demands). For example, asking if they want to put them on before or after they brush their teeth.
4. Using slip-ons, wellies, or flip-flops (particularly for sensory issues).
5. Asking do they want the shoe on their left foot or right foot.
6. Distract with a conversation about their favourite superhero, cartoon character etc and lightly/discretely tap each foot to signal you're putting the shoe on.
7. Make sure they choose their own when buying new shoes.
8. Don't put shoes on before leaving - take them in the car or carry them with you.
9. Making a game of it. For example, pretend you don't know where to put the shoes – on their heads, hands, ears etc.
10. Have a shoe race.

As a side note, something I always recommend to parents is never insist on children putting their own shoes on before school (and don't hold-off helping them get dressed either). Going to school is stressful enough for many kids without the added issue of shoes. Don't worry, it won't mean they lose the ability to put them on after PE at school (I know a lot of teachers think it hampers independence, but there's no evidence to support this and if it really caused problems we'd have loads of 35 year old bankers that still need their Mum's help to dress in the mornings!)