

To decrease trips and falls...

If your child's **vision** has never formerly been tested (or not recently), consider going to the optometrist. Parents can identify that their kids can see but are they seeing clearly? A simple eye exam may explain things and rule out if vision is related to trips and falls.

Make sure your child is wearing **shoes** that are the right size. Improper fitting shoes can be a factor in decreased balance and tripping. Also consider running shoes over sandals and flip flops, which can contribute to trips and falls.



Sometimes trips and falls are related to kids not paying **attention** to their immediate surroundings and the obstacles present. Decrease clutter and tripping hazards (e.g. throw rugs, cords). Encourage them to clean up toys and slow down if they're always moving around very quickly. If parents see a potential obstacle, try to stop the child and point out the obstacle. Encourage him/her to step over or around toys.

Discourage "**w-sitting**" position as your child's main method of sitting and encourage cross-legged sitting or sitting in a chair instead. W-sitting is potentially harmful to hip, knee and foot joints. The use of "w" sitting also does not allow for the user to develop their trunk muscles, because when a child



"w" sits their muscles aren't working very hard to keep them upright, they are merely relying on their base of support versus active muscle activation. Some kids love this position when they have very active siblings as they will never fall over if bumped or pushed! Lastly this position is also linked to in-toeing (legs or feet are turned in while walking).

Encourage **gross motor challenges** in your child's day, especially activities that require standing on one leg. For example, encourage her/him to step on and off curbs instead of walking up the sloped sidewalk. Provide assistance at first if they have some

difficulty, but as she/he becomes stronger, encourage hands-free (as safety permits). Or if your child always walks up the stairs with the same foot leading, encourage leading with the opposite foot. Like above, as she/he get stronger and balance improves, try hands-free (as safety permits). Also, encourage walking and running in a variety of directions (e.g. backwards, sideways) and surfaces (e.g. up/down hills, woodchips, grass, gravel, sand).