

## Barefoot walks

**Make a barefoot walk for your children in the garden for sensory development.**

Barefoot walks need to be carefully planned and risk assessed to ensure there are no dangerous or sharp objects present.

Great places to try first could include:

- Soft natural grass
- Bark
- Soft pebbles
- Artificial grass
- Brick/concrete
- Tree stumps.



Barefoot walks encourage children to:

- Feel where they are walking and develops muscles in their feet
- Differentiate between surfaces
- Adapt their walking styles which helps their balance and coordination.

The base of our foot has lots of nerves that connect to the brain and walking barefoot activates these nerves in a way that walking with shoes on doesn't.

Research has shown that toddlers learning to walk have fewer accidents or trips when walking barefoot as the ground gives them more feedback and they can feel the terrain much better.

This means they can keep their heads up more and look where they are going, rather than looking at their feet and the ground because they cannot feel it.

Providing different surfaces for the children to walk barefoot on will enhance their sensory and physical development and is an essential part of their learning and development.