

Nether Hall School Vision & Values

Be
Brave

Be
Honest

Be
Kind

Be
Safe

Grow
Together

NH

A place to shine

NH

Guide to Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO/ Splints)



What is it?

AFOs or 'Ankle Foot Orthoses' are plastic splints which are useful for treating many conditions related to the foot and ankle. They allow children to find stability in walking and freedom of movement appropriate for their age, considering their development and growth. Some children have to keep feet and ankles in a good position for standing or walking.

Children may wear them on one foot or both feet. They may have a joint or hinge at the ankle or they may be fixed in one position. They come in lots of different colours and patterns.

Paediatric AFOs are used to treat conditions such as:

- Pronation or supination of the foot
- Poor alignment of the foot or ankle
- Metatarsus adductus
- Plasticity of the legs
- Hip dysplasia
- Tibial torsion
- Clubfoot

Putting on your child's AFO:

1. Sit your child in front of you with their hip and knee bent. Pull up their socks and make sure there are no wrinkles in them.
2. Turn the foot towards the middle before bringing the foot up towards the knee.
3. Place your child's heel at the back of the AFO, then fasten the heel retaining strap snugly. Check that the heel is in place by lifting the toes up to see.

Finally fasten the top strap and put on the shoe.

What do I need to do?

If you feel your child would benefit from this type of splint then please talk to your child's physiotherapist.

If your child has AFO splints already you should be following the plan given to you by your child's physiotherapist regarding:

- When your child should wear them
- How long they should wear them for
- Using them in certain positions or postures

All this information should be found on their postural management programme.

Also remember:

- Your child should wear long cotton socks or tights under the AFO which are well fitting, long enough to cover all the areas of the skin, which come into contact with the splint and are pulled up firmly to eliminate creases
- Check after use for any red marks and how long they take to disappear
- Check for wear and tear of the plastic and straps and report any issues

Children's Physiotherapy Service

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