

A cartoon illustration of a girl with a red cap and braids, upside down, with a banner above her head. The banner contains the text "Feet Are Not for Kicking". The girl has a large, round face, a wide smile, and is wearing a blue dress with white ruffles. Her hands are visible on either side of her head, holding the banner. The background is a solid yellow color.

Feet Are Not for Kicking

free spirit  
PUBLISHING®

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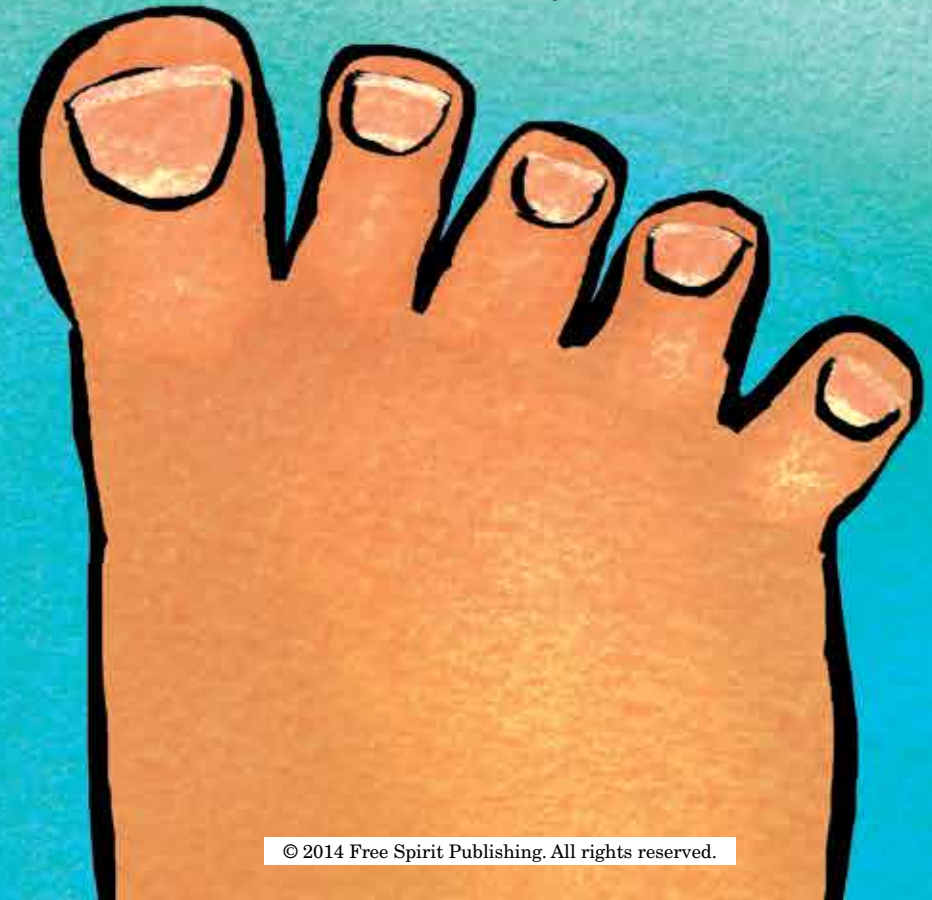
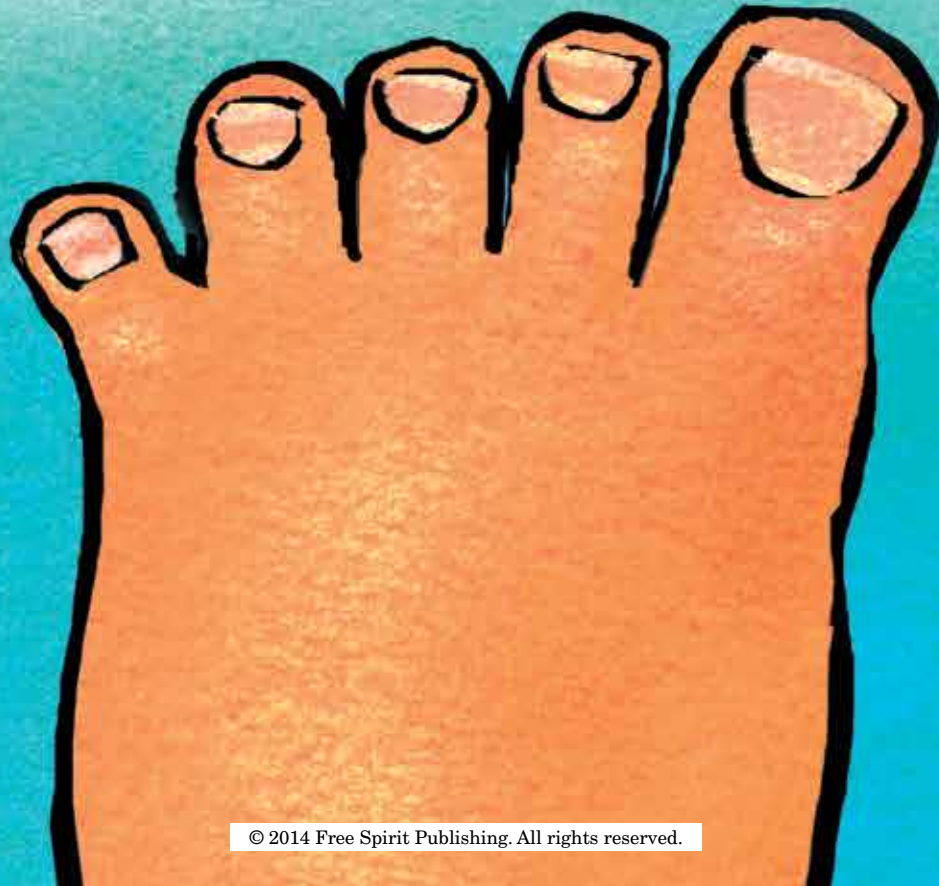
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Look at those feet!  
Aren't they sweet?

Ten little toes, all in a row.

Let's count 1-2-3...





What are feet for?

Walking



Standing



# A Message for Parents and Caregivers

Toddlers are bundles of energy, and they love to run, jump, tumble, and explore all the wonderful things that their legs and feet help them do. But these little explorers are often unpredictable: one moment they're smiling and the next they're throwing a tantrum—complete with screaming, crying, and kicking. (If you've ever been kicked by a tantrum-throwing toddler, you know how much it can hurt!)

When children this age are angry or frustrated, they tend to lash out with their voices, hands, and feet. These explosive moments are normal, but when they happen, someone might get hurt. Toddlers need help understanding that hurting others isn't okay. We can teach them that feet are not for kicking people—because kicking hurts. And we can reinforce this message by emphasizing all the positive things our feet let us do.



## Tips to help toddlers be sweet with their feet

- Watch for signs that a child may be frustrated, cranky, angry, tired, or distressed—times when kicking is more likely to occur. Step in before kicking begins.
- Stay calm when tantrums happen. If a child is kicking and flailing, move him or her to a safe place so no one gets hurt. Holding a thrashing toddler may or may not help—it depends on the child. Do your best to speak softly and express empathy until the tantrum subsides.
- If a child kicks someone, you can use the phrase “Feet are not for kicking people.” Say it gently and kindly, without yelling or scolding. You might add: “Ouch! Kicking hurts.”
- Help energetic little ones stay active throughout the day, so they're less likely to use their feet to hurt someone else. Give them plenty of opportunities to run, jump, climb, dance, pedal a tricycle—and, of course, kick a ball!