

## BabyGym® and Calcaneovalgus Foot

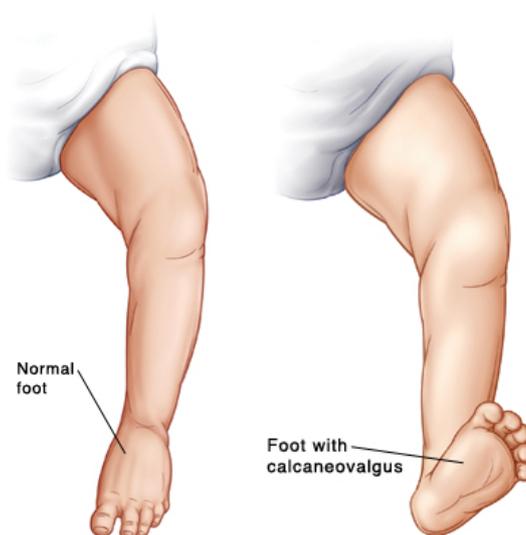
Marietjie Poggenpoel

During a pre-natal check-up with the gynaecologist, my grandson was diagnosed with the possibility of a clubfoot. It was important to determine whether it was an isolated incident or whether there was the possibility that other congenital complications could occur too. All tests were done, and professionals were consulted. The recommendation was to enjoy the pregnancy as final diagnosis and treatment would be determined after birth.

My grandson was born on the 3rd of February 2021 by natural birth. He was a perfect, healthy, newborn baby. His physical health was determined by his Apgar score and he passed with flying colours. He scored a nine within minutes and then a ten out of ten.

At birth the foot was diagnosed as Calcaneovalgus foot and not clubfoot.

*Calcaneovalgus foot is a problem with the shape, or deformity, of the foot. The foot points upward and outward. In extreme cases, the top of the foot touches the front of the lower leg. The condition is congenital and may affect one or both feet.*



According to Orthobullets, this condition is a positional issue that needs to be corrected by professionals. Calcaneovalgus foot is a common acquired condition caused by intrauterine "packaging" seen in neonates that presents as a benign soft tissue contracture deformity of the foot characterised by hind foot eversion and dorsiflexion. The diagnosis was made clinically as a calcaneovalgus foot deformity without congenital deformity or dislocation.

I contacted Dr Melodie de Jager, the Founder of BabyGym, without delay concerning his foot. As a concerned grandmother, I wanted all my questions answered. 'How is calcaneovalgus treated, and when should we start with treatment?'

According to Dr Melodie de Jager, and her book Play Learn Grow (Birth to 3), the first priority was to establish secure attachment between mom and baby and to make sure the first milestone, suckling at the breast, was in place. Once this was achieved the focus would extend to lengthening the calve muscles, positioning of the ankle, keeping the toes separate, and very importantly - developing the body map of his whole body with massage.

We started with these BabyGym exercises from day one. From my experience as Advanced Mind Moves Instructor, a sister program to BabyGym, I knew that we needed to start as soon as possible. Early intervention is the answer. As a grandmother I was emotionally involved, and therefore arranged for this little baby and his parents to make an appointment with Rika Grové, an Advanced Mind Moves Instructor as well as a BabyGym<sup>®</sup> Instructor.

Once baby was home, settled, and breastfeeding well, BabyGym classes started with Rika. Baby's caretaker also joined the BabyGym classes to understand the importance of every exercise and to continue with the exercises once mom returned to work.

We were committed and determined to do the work at home. With follow-up appointments the orthopaedic surgeon and orthotics and prosthetics specialist were amazed by the progress! Their feedback was to continue with the BabyGym exercises as it was clearly working very well.

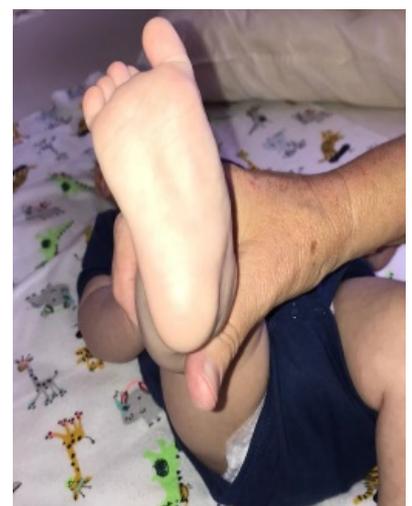
We will continue to work on the foot for many months to come to ensure all milestones are reached in sequence, especially walking.

I would like to sincerely thank Dr Melodie de Jager and Rika Grové. Thank you for your passion and advice which aided us to remain calm, knowing that with daily repetition of the massage and exercises, the hard work will pay off.

Congratulations to parents Gerrit and Judy! Thank you for your perseverance and dedication and understanding of the wonderful world of BabyGym and Mind Moves. I am a proud grandmother and Advanced Mind Moves Instructor.



Foot on 4 February 2021



Foot on 3 April 2021



BabyGym Graduation 12 May 2021, Granny Marietjie, Mommy Judy and Daddy Gerrit

References:

De Jager, M. 2018. *PLAY LEARN GROW*. Johannesburg: Mind Moves Publishing.

<https://www.orthobullets.com/pediatrics/4067/calcaeovalgus-foot>