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CLOTHES *and Children*

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CLOTHES *and Children*



Keeping children in clothes that look well and fit well may seem like a never-ending task. Planning wardrobes for them is just as important as planning for other family members. Children's clothes are usually bought with care, durability, and cost in mind. All of these are important. The list, however, should also include the suitability of the garment to the child. Children's clothes, like those of teenagers and adults, should be appropriate, becoming, comfortable, and a pleasure to wear.

An infant or toddler is unaware of his clothes; they are a nuisance to him. By the time he is 3 or 4, he may find clothing a wonderful way of getting others to notice him. At this age he also begins to notice the clothing of others.

Adults make children conscious of clothes at an early age by commenting on their newness, color, and kind. Playmates notice each other's clothes and openly admire or tease about them. Thus a child soon learns that the clothes he wears affect others and himself.

DRESSED LIKE OTHERS

Children want the same kind of clothes that their playmates have. This sameness gives a child a feeling of belonging and self-confidence. Clothes that differ from others, whether they are better or not as good, can result in a child being excluded. By recognizing this fact and buying clothes accordingly, parents can help children make the desired social adjustments.

TRAINING

Clothes offer a means of training in muscle coordination, habit formation, and color appreciation.

Dressing and undressing develop coordination. Selecting clothes with few fasteners, large buttons, front closings, and no ties and belts helps both the child and mother.

Taking care of clothes begins at an early age with the child hanging up and putting away clothes. Add responsibilities when the child is ready. Seeing others do the same things and having the effort recognized are important helps. Low hooks, closet bars, and drawers are necessities.

Children, like adults, should be dressed in becoming colors. A young child has favorite colors with little regard to their suitability. With training, a child of 10 should have a good idea of his most becoming colors and colors that go well together. Color training begins by letting a child of 2 or 3 choose between two or three garments that meet mother's approval.

SELECTION

Cost—Each child should receive a fair share of the clothing budget. Wise purchasing is necessary at the rapid rate clothes are worn out or outgrown.



Well-fitted, durable clothes that are properly cared for solve some of the wear problems. Managing the kind and number of garments combats the outgrown problem.

Knowing periods of slow or rapid growth can help in planning. It is more economical for rapidly growing children to have fewer clothes and wear them often. Selecting clothes in the low to medium price range also helps because they will be worn out before they're outgrown.

Growth Chart

Birth to 18 months	very rapid
3 to 6 years	rapid and uneven
6 to 9 years	relatively slow
Girls 9-10, boys 10-11	least growth in height
Girls 12 years, boys 14 years	most intensive growth
Girls 16 years, boys 18 years	growth usually stops

Let-out features such as wide hems and tucks, no waistline, and raglan sleeves or shoulder fullness add to the garment's life.

Care—Ease of washing and ironing depends on fabric, style, and trim detail. Soil- and wrinkle-resistant fabrics are wise choices. Garments also should be colorfast to washing and sunlight, and fully preshrunk. Selecting garments that can be washed and dried by machine also saves time. Choose fabrics requiring little or no ironing and those with simple, flat trim whenever possible.

Mend clothes immediately.

Comfort—For physical comfort, select well fitting clothes designed for action. Consider these structural features for physical comfort:

- Curved yokes, raglan sleeves, and waist fullness in blouses and dresses permit freedom of movement.
- Necklines cut low enough in front so they will not bind and curved at the back encourage good posture.
- Suspender garments with a chest bar or bib and a crisscross in the back stay in place while a child twists and bends.
- Bands and elastic on undergarments should not leave marks on the flesh.
- The back seam line of pants, jeans, and panties should be appreciably longer than the front.

For a check on comfort and fit of garments, observe the child as he plays actively. Clothing that is too small cramps a child's activity and makes him irritable. Clothes that are too large can be just as restrictive and harmful.

Another cause of physical discomfort is the actual weight of clothing worn for rainy or cold weather. Provide adequate warmth without much weight by selecting nonbulky styles and lightweight, closely woven fabrics.

Children also find the harshness and nonabsorbency of some of the newer fabrics to be uncomfortable.

For safety, look for colors that show up against the background of the play area and for securely

sewn buttons. Broken buttons may bruise; safety pins are dangerous in falls. Avoid drawstring necklines.

Keeping fasteners firmly fastened and avoiding big ruffles, bows, and cuffs helps prevent catching garments on projections.

Size—Children's clothes come in five size classifications: infants and babies, toddlers, children, boys, girls. Age ranges in the first three overlap. In selecting sizes use measurements, not age, for proper fit.

CHART OF SIZES

Size	Height	Weight
	INFANTS AND BABIES	
3 months	24	13
6 months	26½	18
12 months	29	22
18 months	31½	26
24 months	34	29
	TODDLERS	
Size 1	31	25
Size 2	34	29
Size 3	37	34
Size 4	40	38
	CHILDREN	
Size 2	34	29
Size 3	37	34
Size 4	40	38
Size 5	43	44
Size 6	46	49
Size 6X	48	54

Construction—The continued strains to which children's garments are subjected in playtime activities and the repeated washings they undergo throughout a season demand that clothing be well constructed. Learning to judge the quality of construction relieves the strain on the clothing budget without sacrificing acceptable standards of appearance. Look for these indications of quality construction:

Fabrics cut on the grainline.

Seams flat and soft to prevent skin irritation: Flat felled seams for pants and sturdy fabrics; French seams for sheer fabrics; plain seams with edge finish for mediumweight fabrics; reinforced stitching in areas getting strain and hard wear such as pocket corners, straps, knees, and armholes.

Hems machine stitched for pants, play clothes, and garments that will get hard wear; hand sewn for dresses, skirts, and jumpers that will be lengthened.

Buttonholes firm and strong; an interfacing reinforcement adds durability to buttonholes and prevents tearing the fabric when buttons are pulled off.

Buttons sewn on with a thread shank.

SELF-HELP FEATURES

Self-help features should include front openings, big buttons and buttonholes, zippers with large tabs, necklines and plackets large enough to slip easily over the head, and knit and stretch fabrics.

GROW FEATURES

Grow features should include deep hems and cuffs, adjustable straps, no waistline seam, tucks and gathers at shoulders, raglan sleeves, extra length on skirts and blouses, stretch garments, two-piece outfits, and hidden let-out tucks on sleeves and hemline.

HAND-ME-DOWNS

Every child needs some clothes selected for him alone; there is no one answer to hand-me-downs or make-overs. It is a good idea to give a hand-me-down a special touch or make it over so a child really feels the garment looks attractive and is meant for him. The clothes, whatever kind, should fit.

Shoes are one item of clothing not to be handed down. Your child's feet must be properly fitted with shoes intended for him alone.

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