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CLOTHES

and Teens

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CLOTHES

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Teens are special people who should and do have fashions just for them. Yet only since 1943 has clothing been designed for them. Before 1943 girls and boys from 12 to 15 had to select from clothes designed for children. When children's sizes became too small, they had to choose from garments designed for small adults. Children's styles were too childish and adult styles were too grownup; neither was proportioned for the teenage figure.

A shift in population changed all that. Today's population emphasizes youth. In 1961, 36 percent of our population was under 20. Within the next 10 years, half of our population will be under 25.

Because of this population shift, business and industry are catering to the youth market. Now the matron and businessman are complaining that clothing is not being provided for them. They feel they are now the neglected segment of the population.

Today teens are employed after school, summers, or both. In 1956 their incomes from jobs, allowances, and gifts totaled \$9 billion; in 1966 their incomes are expected to exceed \$14 billion. Thirty-five percent of their incomes come from their own earnings. Of their income, teenage girls spend 26 percent on clothes, and boys spend 9 percent.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS

During teenage years clothing and grooming are most important. They are used as tools in developing the self image, in understanding the self, and in communicating with others. By experimenting with new styles in dress and a wide variety of grooming aids, a teenager can try different roles and personalities

until he finds one he wants. While this experimentation may be awkward at times and in conflict with parents' ideas, it is a necessary part of growing up.

That teenagers, especially girls, worry about appearance is well known. They are breaking away from their family and looking instead for approval and acceptance from their own age group. The teen's desire to identify with a small group becomes more important than adult approval. Clothing plays an important role in group acceptance.

Teens dress similarly regardless of family income, occupation, or residence. The chief differences in clothes are in quality and number.

CLOTHING PRACTICES

A teenage girl's wardrobe generally consists of 75 to 100 items; boys have about 72 items. Teens usually replace most garments in their wardrobe each year. Two reasons for this rapid turnover in clothes are (1) fitting the teen's changing figure and (2) the influence of fads. Studies show that teenagers have little idea of the total size and value of their wardrobes, and parents have an even hazier idea.

According to a 1962 Gilbert Youth Research Survey, the teen boy (14 to 17) spends an average of \$163 a year on clothing; girls in the same age-range average \$214 annually. The college set spends even more. Men average \$387; women, \$399.

Teenagers are generally more concerned with fashion than with durability or quality of clothing. Although mothers accompany teen buyers on shopping trips one-third to one-half of the time, teens usually select their own garments. If mother's help is requested, it is in selecting larger items such as coats or suits.

Teen girls consider fit, color, style, and price in selecting garments. The order in which these are

considered varies with the individual. Boys, on the other hand, usually consider style first, then fit, price, color, comfort, and specific need.

Teens usually buy clothing as they need it. Little thought is given to wardrobe planning. Remodeling or reusing possibilities are seldom considered.

Teen girls assume partial responsibility for caring for their clothes. They generally hang them up, press them, and replace fasteners. They do little mending and patching. Clothes frequently laundered by teens are cotton clothing, hose, lingerie, and sweaters.

Little adjusting to improve fit or to adapt clothes to seasons is done by either the teen or another family member.

Because of the emphasis teens place on dress and their interest in clothes and appearance, this is an excellent time to learn and practice good clothing care and buying practices. The need for this training cannot be overemphasized. In a short time they will be attending college, getting jobs, or getting married and will be responsible for their own clothing. For many it will be a very short time until the responsibility of buying and caring for a family's clothes will be their own. In 1962, 37 percent of Minnesota brides were in the 15-19 age bracket.

WARDROBE PLANNING

How can parents help teens keep within their clothing budget and yet have the clothes they need for the places they go? These wardrobe planning ideas for teens may help:

- Take stock of clothes about 2 weeks before school starts and again in the spring.



