

SHOPPING HINTS for

BUYING CLOTHES for TOTS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DRY GOODS



BY BERNETTA KAHABKA
Extension Clothing Specialist

IN BUYING CHILDREN'S CLOTHING, care required, durability, and cost are important considerations, *but* don't forget how a child feels about his clothes.

Children grow fast. As they move from one stage to the next, their clothes must allow for this growth too.

Select clothes that are designed for comfort, activity, growth, and personal development.

SUITABILITY

Children's clothes should be simple in design, comfortable, and roomy enough for squatting, reaching, running, and climbing.

Some qualities of children's clothing—simple, comfortable, roomy enough for squatting, reaching, running, climbing

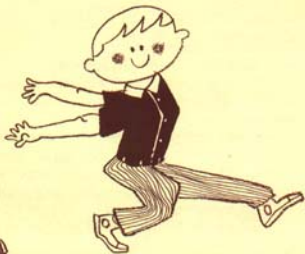
Clothes can help to give children a sense of security—helping them to feel at ease and comfortable rather than awkward and different from others.

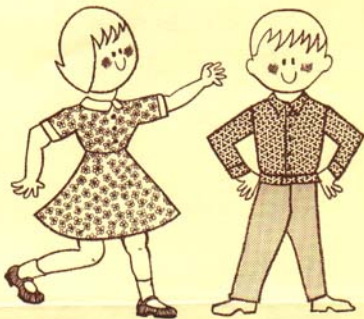
The color, design, and cut of children's clothes can help them to feel self-assured or may cause self-consciousness and timidity. Clothing which is too large may make a child self-conscious.

APPEARANCE

Bright colors for children's outerwear clothes make it easier to spot the child on the playground, yard, or street.

Let your child help to choose the colors he or she will wear.





Fabric prints and designs that are in scale with children's sizes add to the appropriateness of the article of clothing

Children often enjoy expressing their own preferences for color which might be considered in final decisions on selection. Children vary at different age levels and as individuals in their ability to make judgments in selecting appropriate clothing.

Fabric designs should be in scale with smaller figures. Usually dainty floral or animal prints and small scale checks, stripes, and plaids look best.

Keep the trimming on children's clothes to a minimum and also in scale with their size. Trimming should be attached in a secure, flat way so it will not catch on furniture, toys, or equipment as the child plays.

ECONOMY

The size and content of a child's wardrobe will vary with each family and with each child.

Buy fewer clothes that will serve many purposes and that can be kept in continuous use. Buy clothes suitable for year round wear. For the rapidly growing toddler and pre-schooler, plan on fewer clothes which can be worn often and easily laundered. Buy clothes with adjustable features for longer wear. Put the most money into clothes that are worn the most. Take advantage of after season sales to have clothes on hand for the following year *but buy only what is really needed.*

"Hand-me-downs" are one method of stretching clothing dollars. Children differ in their feelings about wearing other children's clothing. A great deal depends on the adult attitude towards the use of such clothing. Adjust "hand-me-downs" to fit the child and to make them really his (give a personal touch to the new owner).

Shoes are one item of clothing which should not be passed from one child to another because foot shapes may be very different. Children's foot bones are still in a soft, formative stage and can be misshaped.

HEALTH AND COMFORT FEATURES

In buying children's clothes always remember to shop for health and comfort features along with considerations of looks and price. Following are some of the things to look for. Take your time in selection. An uncomfortable garment may later be discarded.

Light-weight clothes. Heavy, bulky clothes are awkward to handle — excess weight also tires a child at play.

Comfortable fullness across the shoulders and chest. Necklines low enough so that they do not strain against the throat or pull down on the back of the neck.

Armhole, sleeves, and legs roomy enough to prevent binding.

Ample ease in the crotch and hip areas to allow for bending and stooping.

Ease through waistline.

Avoid tight clothes which restrict activity and may even interfere with natural circulation. Only part of the distance around the arm, waistline, or leg should have elastic, or any elastic fitting should not be tight.

Soft, absorbent fabrics to prevent skin irritation.

Soft, flat seams. Avoid heavy or stiff collars, cuffs, pockets, pocket flaps.

SELF-HELP FEATURES

The design of clothes can help a child to dress and undress himself. The type of clothes should follow one general style. Self-help features also eliminate strain on clothing when dressing and undressing.

Simple clothes — easy to handle.

Front openings or deep plackets that slip over the head easily.

Neck openings large enough for child's head to go through without strain.

As few fastenings as possible, conveniently located — within easy reach.

The back and front of the garment should be different so the child can tell which is which.

Somewhat larger buttonholes — easy to manage.

Flat, smooth, slightly grooved buttons, medium in size — easy to grasp.

Slide fasteners with special pulls that can be easily opened and closed. Be sure that there is no danger of injuring a child's skin or catching under-clothing.

ALLOW ROOM TO GROW

Make allowances for growth, especially in the length of children's clothing. Buying a larger size is not always an economy. Clothes that are much too large will be strange appearing and even hamper a child's movements. They may also become faded and worn looking by the time the child grows into them.

Look for features which adjust themselves to a growing child:

Deep hems or tucks in hems.

Adjustable straps.

Deep cuffs

Raglan sleeves.

Extra blouse length.

Tucks and pleats at the shoulder line.

Large underarm or leg seams.

Knit garments.

FOCUS ON FABRIC

Soft, firmly woven or knitted fabrics which are easy to care for, comfortable to the skin, do not wrinkle easily, and do not show soil readily are preferred for children's clothing. Avoid delicate fabrics and trims which will not withstand wear and require special care or cleaning.

Firmly woven or knitted fabrics are stronger.

Printed fabrics show wrinkles and soil less.

Cotton, linen, and wool are the most absorbent fibers.

Man-made fibers such as Nylon, Dacron, Orlon, etc. may add to the easy-care features of a fabric.

Easy-care depends on garment construction as well as the fabric.

Shrink resistant.

Check labels for wear and care performance.

CONSTRUCTION

Well constructed clothing is required for the strains in wearing and laundering to which a child's clothing is subjected.



Front openings make dressing easier for tots



Raglan sleeves allow room for growth



Garments with straps should be easy to manage

Seams soft and flat to prevent skin irritation.
 Reinforcement at points of strain—elbows, knees.
 Hems deep enough (around 3 inches) to adjust for growth.
 Built up shoulder straps.

Firm, strong buttonholes.
 Buttons sewed on with a threadshank (reinforcing wraparound of thread between button and material.)
 A two piece garment can usually be worn longer than a one piece garment.

HOW TO DETERMINE SIZE

Height and weight measurements may be used in determining a child's size. However, the same size may vary somewhat according to brand; a child's body proportions may not be standard; many children may wear one size in some styles and a different size

in other styles. Unless you are sure about sizing try on clothes for fit and comfort. The chart gives some standard measurements recommended by Commercial Standards of the U.S. Department of Commerce. These measurements are used by many garment manufacturers.

	Size	Height (inches)	Weight (pounds)		Size	Height (inches)	Weight (pounds)
INFANTS AND BABIES	3 months	24	13	GIRLS	size 7	50	60
	6 months	26½	18		size 8	52	67
	12 months	29	22		size 9	54	75
	18 months	31½	26		size 10	56	83
	23 months	34	29		size 12	58½	95
	36 months	36½	32		size 14	61	107
TODDLERS*	size 1	31	25	BOYS	size 7	48	54
	size 2	34	29		size 8	50	59
	size 3	37	34		size 9	52	65
	size 4	40	38		size 10	54	73
					size 11	56	80
CHILDREN*	size 2	34	29	size 12	58	87	
	size 3**	37	34	size 13	59½	93	
	size 4	40	38	size 14	61	100	
	size 5	43	44	size 15	62½	107	
	size 6	46	49	size 16	64	115	
	size 6x	48	54	size 17	65	121	
				size 18	66	126	
			size 19	67	132		
			size 20	68	138		

*Note that body measurements for toddlers' sizes 2, 3 and 4 are the same as those for children sizes 2, 3 and 4.
 **Sometimes these garments are marked size 3L to indicate additional length and to distinguish them from toddlers' size 3.