

# Children's Clothing

Cir. 390



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# CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

by

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Clothing made on simple, comfortable lines, and of a suitable material best express "well dressed childhood". Children's clothing should be designed to meet the needs of the child. Provisions for comfort, freedom of movement, growth and self reliance are essentials. In addition materials and styles should be attractive and easy to care for.

A number of garments of a simple, well chosen, attractive design will encourage a child to dress himself. Marking the front of the garment in some way to distinguish it from the back is another way of helping a child gain confidence.

Health and clothes are closely associated. All garments should be of the correct size. When making or buying, get all articles of clothing large enough for immediate growth. Garments that are outgrown no matter how good their condition are poor economy. The money is saved at the expense of the child's nerves, disposition and possibly his health.

## DRESSES

A garment in which ample fullness is part of the style, fits the growing child comfortably and does not hinder reaching, climbing, running, jumping and squatting. Garments that are too large are as restricting as those that are too small. Small tucks, gathers, shirring, flares or pleats should furnish sufficient shoulder fullness for reaching without straining the garment. Well fitted necklines should be large enough for comfort but not so large that they will sag. Raglan sleeves permit long high reaches and are easier to iron and to make than a puffed sleeve.

Cap sleeves are very comfortable and are easily ironed and are just as fashionable for daughter as for mother. A set in sleeve to be comfortable needs a large enough armseye to omit binding. A garment should fit at all times. Often a garment is made several sizes too large for the child and by the time it fits the garment is practically worn out. Deep hems from four to six inches give the garment lengthening possibilities.

A full length center front opening in dresses and blouses is of great assistance to the child who is learning the task of dressing and undressing. If the opening is not full length the placket should be long enough to provide ample room for the head. A few exposed, easily managed fastenings that a child can reach encourage self-help.

Round, flat, slightly grooved buttons  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter are easy for a child to grasp. Buttons that are too large or too small are as difficult as snaps, hooks and eyes, ties and lacings and should be avoided. The flat button requires a firmly worked button hole which is larger than the button. A ball button or tassel fastened to the slide is easy for small fingers to grasp. Comfort and attractiveness are of major importance in the selection of children's clothing.

Zippers add to the cost of the garment, but are satisfactory from the self-help standpoint if they are placed in front and the child has been taught how to use them. They should, however, correspond to the weight of the fabric and fit into the design of the garment.

Pockets for the handkerchief and the child's "valuables" encourage neatness and contribute to a sense of self-importance. Patch pockets are easy to iron and less likely to tear if placed at a slant.

Of course the "Sunday" may be made with other types of fasteners and of a dressier design than the self-help garment for general wear that has been described. Buttons down the back and tie backs are acceptable for dress of this type.

Durable workmanship is necessary if the child's garment is to withstand hard wear and many washings. Finishes should be suitable to the material. Refer to "Appropriate Finishes", Circular No. 269.

Fabrics need to be firmly woven to withstand wear and laundering but should be soft and smooth texture. Harsh stiff fabrics irritate the child's sensitive skin. Cotton, because of the wide variety, cheapness, firmness and fastness of color, is the most desirable fabric for children's clothes. Durable, lightweight wool which withstands cleaning or laundering is suitable for wraps. The spun rayon fabrics that are washable make satisfactory garments for children.



Silk is not recommended for children's clothing because it is too sophisticated, expensive and does not lend itself to washing as well as the other fabrics.

The design of the material should be suited to the child. Prints should be small in design and color fast to sun and launderings. Ginghams, chambrays, poplin, cotton broadcloth, percale, batiste, lawn and dotted swiss give unlimited possibilities for little girls' dresses. Many prints are too bold in design or color to be becoming to a child. Prints with geometric designs, small figures with which the child is familiar or all over patterns are appropriate.

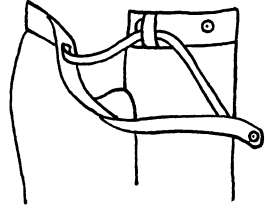
The colors that are most becoming to a child are those that suit his individual type. Generally intense colors are too harsh for the child's delicate coloring and fine textured skin while weak and neutral colors are not becoming to the normal healthy child. Color should serve as a background for the child's personal coloring and should not overshadow the child's personality. Clear bright colors that are not intense are pleasing to a child and furnish protection against traffic accidents.

## **BOYS' SUITS**

Boys as well as girls need ample fullness in their garments. Suits must be large enough but not so large that they sag and are bulky. Tight uncomfortable clothes are physically harmful. Waists on which trousers button need ample length below the button line to keep the waist inside the trousers and to allow for growth. There should be four buttons across the back including the ones in the side fastenings. This eliminates the center button which is hard to manipulate. A drop seat placket with a sliding belt as illustrated needing only one or two buttons helps a great deal when training a child. The raglan sleeve shirt will allow growth and can be worn for a much longer period of time. Also loose necklines add much to the comfort of the child. A boy as well as a girl can wear cotton



fabrics the year round provided the underwear and outer garments are adjusted to the season and the heating conditions of the home. For trousers, the most common and practical materials are poplin, broadcloth, cotton shantung, pique, cotton twill, seersucker, chambray and cotton suiting. Such fabrics as gingham, percale, peter pan and broadcloth are suitable for blouses. Usually plain or striped materials are more boyish than prints. Cotton corduroy is washable and very durable for boys' garments.



### **PLAY SUITS**

Play suits are recommended to protect the child from snow or extreme cold when outside. A combination one piece outdoor play suit is recommended; it allows freedom of movement and meets the needs of the child for active play. Raglan sleeves allow room for a sweater to be worn underneath in extremely cold weather. Several layers of light weight clothing are warmer than heavy clothing in single thickness. A flexible material is much to be desired in this type of garment. Gay colors are a protection to children.

### **UNDERWEAR**

The activity of children makes it necessary that their undergarments be made of fabrics which are hygienic and which will stand strain and frequent laundering. Knit underwear is more suitable for children than woven. Knit underwear is elastic and fits the body without binding. Its construction makes it durable to withstand frequent launderings and does not need to be ironed.

### **NIGHT CLOTHES**

Night clothes should be loose to allow the child to turn and stretch in his sleep. Never allow a child to sleep in his underclothes. There are several points to consider in selecting undergarments. One piece garments eliminate gapping and encourage self help. They are the more practical type except for the very young child who needs to change the lower part of the garment often. Knitted cotton materials, outing flannel, muslin or plisse crepe are suitable fabrics for sleeping garments. Sleepers with "feet in" are much warmer in the winter, while the short leg sleeveless type is good for summer wear. Center front openings and few or no buttons are desirable from the self help standpoint. A belt or elastic on the drop seat is also helpful.

## SHOES AND HOSE

Fitting shoes and stockings to the small child means comfort and foot health, or trouble and distress through all his life. If the very first stocking drawn on the baby's tiny foot is too short or too small, as much harm may be done as if the shoe is too short. Stockings should be bought large enough for free toe action and should be well shaped to fit the foot after being washed; the foot of the stocking should be at least one-half to three-fourths inches longer than the child's foot (one inch longer when new to allow for shrinking). When stockings are outgrown they must be discarded at once.

Shoes should be chosen and fitted with great care, as the soft bones of a child's foot may be injured by poorly fitting and badly shaped shoes. Length, width, the height of the space for the toes and the fit of the heel are all important.

Shoes should follow the natural shape of the feet and should be one-fourth inch wider than the outline of the child's foot drawn on paper while he is standing. It is best for the child to be present when his shoes are bought so that they may fit him properly.

Soles should be firm, flat, moderately flexible, and not slippery. Heels are not advisable, but the soles should be somewhat thicker at the heel and under the arch. The heel should fit snugly, and the toe of the shoe, broad and deep enough so that the child can move his toes freely.

Only if shoes are still one-half inch longer and one-fourth inch broader than the child's foot should the soles be renewed when worn out. Care must be taken that when shoes are repaired they are not made shorter or narrower or changed in shape.

When a child outgrows a pair of shoes, he should no longer wear them.

## REMODELING CLOTHES FOR CHILDREN

Often garments are too badly worn to be used by grown ups and may be remodeled for children but keep in mind that materials selected for adults are not always suitable for children. Also the garment should be as good if not better than the original.

The very first point to be considered when making over clothing is whether it is in good condition and will be worth the time spent on it. Woolens may often be turned, giving them a much fresher look.

It is more pleasant to work with clean material so it would be well to launder or dry clean the garment before starting to rip it. If the article is to be made for a much smaller person it is best to cut apart at the seams; otherwise carefully rip with a one edged razor blade or pull the thread in the stitching.

After the material has been ripped it should be pressed. Just as much care should be used in laying a pattern on old material as new, as the grain of the material is important in fitting of all garments. There will be no selvages to guide in finding the straight of the goods so it will take great care finding the grain. Use suitable finishes for the material. Refer to "Appropriate Finishes", Circular No. 269.

If there isn't enough material in one garment, two may often be combined, or small amount of new material may be used.

Maybe suits and coats are too badly worn for dad and mother but there is a wide range of possibilities for younger members of the family as boys' suits, boys' coat, girls' coat or dress. Dad's shirts which are worn around the collar and cuffs can be used to an advantage in shirts for a small boy, slips, panties, sunsuits, overalls or pinafore for little sister.

#### Pattern layout on old garment

It is often a problem for the mother to decide how to dress a boy at that "in between" age, too young for wash suits and too old for baby dresses. The "boy dress" is more easily made and taken care of than rompers and looks quite "boyish". It may be made from dad's old shirt.

