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Clothes for Tots

May Keithline, Extension Specialist



Fig. 1.—Simple, genuine and substantial clothing.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES should be chosen from a hygienic, economical and artistic standpoint. A mother should know how to meet the needs of her family. Clothing may preserve or destroy health. The mother should study the physical nature of the body and mind of that child.

Simple, substantial and artistic clothing develops in the child the qualities of simplicity and genuineness. A child should be unconscious of its clothing. A child overdressed thinks too much about clothes; one unattractively dressed is self-conscious; one dirty or ragged loses self respect.

Hygienic Clothing

The child's body grows and develops for twenty-five years. During this time, the clothing should be loose and comfortable so that no part of the body is restricted. Unsuitable clothing may cause various physical defects such as impaired breathing or digestion, round shoulders, weakened muscles, nervous strain, fatigue, lame feet, susceptibility to colds or displacement of certain organs.

Extension Service

**South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts
Brookings, S. D.**

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To insure perfect freedom to all parts of the body, a child should wear union garments supported from the shoulders instead of garments with tight bands at the waist; garments large enough across the chest so as not to interfere with breathing; waists and dresses with soft, loose neck bands and loose sleeves, which are well set at shoulders and of proper length; trousers and bloomers long in the crotch; seams smoothly finished.

Round elastics interfere with circulation. Hose supporters may be attached to the waist or separate, but the pull should come in the hollow of the shoulders. Round shoulders may result if the pull comes on the point of the shoulders.



Fig. 2.—Clothes for comfort and protection.

Hats and caps should be large enough to allow free circulation. The hat should be medium or small and light weight and should shade the eyes. Outer garments should not be bulky or clumsy. Wraps should be of weight, quality and texture that will permit heat regulation.



Fig. 3.—Garments supported from the shoulders.

One piece undergarments supported from the shoulders are more desirable than two separate garments. Bloomers should have comfortable bands around the waist and knees. If elastic is used at the knees, it should be as loose as possible in order to hold the bloomers up.

Sleeping garments should be loose and comfortable. For winter, they should be made with long sleeves, high neck, and feet so that the entire body is covered and the body heat uniformly maintained.

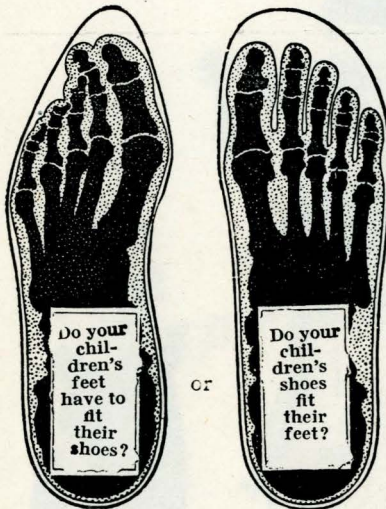


Fig. 4.—Buy protective, not corrective, shoes.

The time to think of foot hygiene and proper fitting of shoes is early childhood. Just as a good building needs a sound foundation, so does a sound body need a sound base. Since the feet are the base of the body structure, they must be healthy and free from defects. The feet are an important phase of a physical examination. Some consider defective feet as detrimental to the physical and mental growth of children as diseased tonsils or defective eyes. Remember that a child's feet are plastic and flexible and that all ailments of the feet may be traced to improper fitting during childhood. Teach your children to stand and walk properly. The feet should toe straight ahead in standing and walking. The great toe acts as a lever, and a straight lever has greater power than a bent one. The four small toes should not overlap or be crowded, but each one should rest on the floor as though clinging to it, while the great toe should be perfectly flat. Two-thirds of a child's life will be spent in his shoes. See that he has the proper fitting for life.

Stockings should fit the feet. A stocking badly shaped or one that is too short or one with a thick seam under the foot entirely destroys the beneficial effect of wearing a good shoe.

Adjust a child's clothing to the weather. Several layers of lighter weight materials are warmer than one thick heavy garment. Garments, such as sweaters worn under a coat, and leggings which may be removed when in-doors, prevent the child from becoming overheated and give the necessary protection when out of doors. To regulate the temperature of the body, children should have clothes that will maintain a body temperature of ninety-eight degrees throughout the year. Too much clothing causes perspiration which takes the strength and makes a child liable to colds; while too little clothing results in food being used to maintain the normal temperature when it should go for tissue building. Children over or under clothed have little resistance to fatigue or disease.

Clothes should possess the following qualities: first, they should absorb the body moisture; second, aid in evaporating the moisture; and third, be easily cleaned.



Fig. 5.—Simple variations of one pattern.

Undergarments not only conserve heat but aid in absorbing the perspiration and oily substances which are constantly being thrown off by the skin. The material should not only absorb these excretions but should allow the moisture to evaporate.

Economical Clothing

In considering the cost of a garment, we must also think of the life of the garment and the wearing qualities. It is poor economy to buy a

cheap piece of goods if it fades easily or is material that soon looks old. Good materials usually clean well and look well a long time.

In thinking of economy, we must consider the time required for making. It takes just as long to make a garment of inferior quality as one of better quality.

The type of the material and the simplicity of construction affects the time and effort required in laundering.

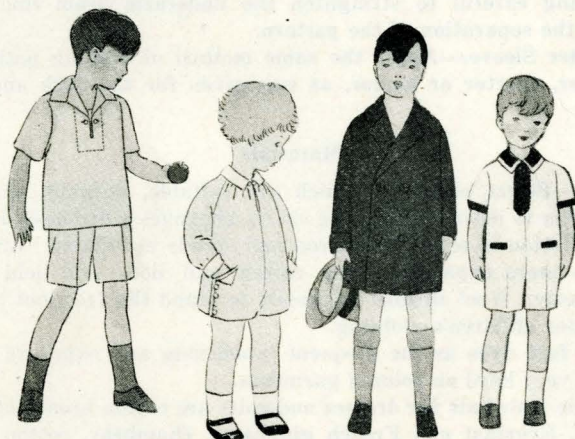


Fig. 6.—Clothes for the little man.

Patterns and Alterations

Select simple patterns and those with few seams, cut on good lines. Children's patterns are sold by year with usually two years between sizes. The year size is planned for the child of average size. As children vary so much in size, breast measurements rather than age should be the guide in selecting patterns for dresses and suits. When the breast measurement falls between two sizes, select the larger size. It is advisable to use commercial patterns because they save time and are accurate.

The same dress or suit pattern may be used for several garments. Contrasting collar and cuffs or a touch of hand work will give the necessary variety.

Before using a pattern, read the directions, study the pieces and notice the perforations. It is very important to have the pattern placed on warp thread of the material. Perforations mark the lengthwise fold of the material.

All commercial patterns should first be tested by measuring patterns and comparing with the measurements of the child. Smooth out all wrinkles in the pattern. Test measures are taken inside of the seam allowance.

To Increase Breast Measure.—Draw a line straight down from the center of the shoulder to the bottom of the garment. Cut through these

lines and separate the pieces enough to give one-quarter of the whole amount needed on both front and back.

To Decrease Breast Measure.—Lay a fold extending from the center of the shoulder straight through to the bottom of the garment, the fold to take up one-quarter of the entire amount the pattern needs to be decreased.

To Lengthen Front and Back.—Cut through the pattern about midway between the top and bottom and separate enough to give the added length, being careful to straighten the underarm seam line which is broken by the separation of the pattern.

To Alter Sleeve.—Apply the same method of making pattern wider or narrower, shorter or longer, as was given for the back and front of the dress.

Materials

Kinds.—Select materials which are suitable, durable, and easy to clean. Cotton is desirable because of its cheapness, firmness and dyeing qualities. Cotton is easily laundered and stands sterilizing. Linen wears well but is more expensive than cotton and does not hold dye and wrinkles badly. Wool shrinks too easily to stand the frequent laundering necessary for children's clothing.

Select fast dyes as the frequent laundering and exposure to strong sunlight is very hard on colored garments.

Suitable materials for dresses and suits are cotton broadcloth, Devonshire cloth, Everfast and French gingham, chambray, cotton and wool crepe, English print, voile, pongee and Jersey.

The material used for undergarments should be soft and loosely woven or knit so that there may be plenty of air space. It should be material that absorbs moisture and that is easily cleaned. Cotton is preferable in most cases. Underwear of cotton crepe is economical when laundering is a problem.

Bloomers may be made of the same material as the dress. They are worn in place of the underskirt. Sleeping garments for winter may be made of Canton flannel or flannelette. Thinner materials, such as long-cloth, muslin or cotton crepe may be used for summer nightgowns.

For winter coats, select closely woven, rough-surfaced materials. This garment should keep out the cold air and hold in the body warmth.

Color.—Select colors that bring out the best coloring in the child's hair, eyes and complexion. Color is the first thing which attracts or repels in a garment. For the child who is large for her age and has a tendency to over weight, subdued colors rather than bright colors should be selected.

If two or three colors are chosen for each child and all garments kept in these colors, the whole wardrobe will be more harmonious. The child, with the mother's guidance, may help select these colors.

It is not advisable to lay down hard and fast rules for the selection of suitable colors for different types of children. Table I suggests color selections.

If dull colors are used, they may be brightened by contrast or by brighter shade of the hue.

SUGGESTS COLOR SELECTIONS

TABLE I.—COLORS APPROPRIATE TO DIFFERENT TYPES

| COLOR | HAIR | HAIR | HAIR | HAIR | HAIR |
|--------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | Black Brown | Black Brown | Light | Light brown | Red Auburn |
| | EYES | EYES | EYES | EYES | EYES |
| | Brown | Blue Gray | Blue Gray | Brown | Blue Gray Brown |
| BLUE | When one has rosy cheeks, all blues are good. If sallow, deep blues only. | Good in nearly all shades if there is color in the face. | Very good in nearly all shades. Light blue demands color in the face. | All shades except brilliant. | Dark or gray blues only. Avoid all others. |
| GREEN | Avoid except clear tones. Blue green and hunter's green are good. | Good if only a little color in face. | Both light and dark are good. | Warm tones are good. | Dark shades are good. Avoid all light and bright greens. |
| YELLOW | Avoid if sallow; if color in face, soft yellow may be becoming. | Good only in maize. | Pale yellow is good if hair is very yellow. | If good color in face, gold and amber are especially becoming. | If fair, gold and amber are good. Avoid others. |
| BROWN | If rich color in face, warm browns are good. Use neutral or grayish brown if sallow. | Not very good. | Only very dark browns. | Good in warm tones. | Warm, dark browns are good. |
| RED | If complexion is pale, red is usually very becoming. | Cardinal and clear rose good if skin is clear. If rosy cheeks, red may reflect too much color. | If pale, dark red is good. | Good especially in yellowish hues if warm coloring in face. | Avoid all except the very dull tones. |
| PINK | Avoid pale pink. Rose or flame pink is good. | If skin is clear, pale pink may be worn. | Good if cheeks are pink. Pale and old rose good. | Rose Pink is good. | A touch of rose may be worn. |

Decorations.

Children's clothing should be simple and dainty but substantial. A touch of hand embroidery is much more effective than commercial embroideries and lace. Character is given to the simplest garment by a touch of hand embroidery.



Fig. 7.—Suitable trimmings.

Ornamental Stitches.—Simple stitches, such as smoking, feather stitch, chain stitch, and hemstitching, are attractive. Simple conventionalized designs may be used. Mercerized, boil-proof embroidery floss is the most satisfactory for this purpose.

Contrasting Colors.—Contrasting colors may be used for collar and cuffs, bloomers, bands, facings or appliqued designs.

Self Trim.—Bias of the same materials as garment may be used. Strips running in opposite directions are effective.

Bias Tape and Rick-rack.—Bias tape or rick-rack may be used as a finish for necks and sleeves, pockets or yokes of dresses, as a finish for rompers or jumper suits, or other decorative purposes.

Buttons.—Buttons are often effectively used especially in boys' suits. Boys' clothing is plainer and has less trimming than girls'.

Seams

The flat fell seam is used in boys' suits and in garments worn next to the body. The French or plain seam is used on most outer garments.

Remember the key note to children's clothing should be simplicity.

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