Solving Family Clothing Problems

South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension

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Recommended Citation
https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/962

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"Individuality in dressing doesn’t just happen; it is the result of knowing oneself, planning, and constantly developing good taste through being aware of everything about oneself."
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Foreword

This publication has been developed to help families achieve satisfaction from their clothing. Its aim is to set forth principles of wardrobe planning that will apply in a variety of family situations. Steps for solving clothing problems are outlined and teaching techniques are suggested for those who wish to use the publication for instruction.
STEPS IN SOLVING CLOTHING PROBLEMS:

What Are My Family's Clothing Problems?

What place do clothes occupy in our family life?

How do we spend our time?

For what occasions do we need clothes?

These questions will help you understand your family's philosophy toward clothing which greatly influences the way your clothing money is spent. "To some families, the chief purpose of clothing is to protect the body and meet the minimum requirements of the culture. To others, clothing is an art and an expression of personality, requiring as much study for successful performance as any factor associated with the life of the family." 3/

In this step, families attempt to pin-point their clothing problems by identifying their attitudes toward clothing and the needs clothing must fulfill to achieve family satisfaction.
TEACHING TECHNIQUES:

Compare Clothing Philosophies with Thought Questions Such as:

Is being properly dressed important to your family?

Would you purchase new clothing for a family member for a new job? For a special social event?

Would you or members of your family stay away from a social event if you felt your clothes were inappropriate?

How would you expect these persons to dress at church, on the job, in the supermarket, or in their home?

- teenage girl
- college boy
- mother with pre-school children
- young married man
- young grandmother
- middle-aged man
- older lady
- older gentleman

What costume does your husband like for you to wear? Your children?
What Clothing Do We Have?

What service may we expect from these garments?

When will they need to be replaced?

Are alterations or repairs needed?

What routine care is required for these garments?

How much storage space do they require?

What clothing do we like? What clothing do we dislike? Why?

How often do we wear each piece of clothing?

Are your tastes reflected in the clothes you wear?

What are the colors, textures, and styles in the clothes we have?
Taking a Clothing Inventory

The next step in solving clothing problems is to take an inventory of your family's clothing. This listing will give you a clearer picture of your clothing resources and needs. Your list should help you answer the questions on the left.

The inventory may take any form, i.e., notebook, card file, or list. It should include outer garments, undergarments, and accessories. It should provide a notation to indicate those garments which are wearable, those which need alterations or repairs, and those which should be discarded.

You will undoubtedly find garments that are wearable but not worn. There is probably a good reason for this, and it should provide you with clues in future planning. The inventory will also point out your color, texture, and style preferences.

Finally, list on your inventory the items you think the family should purchase to meet clothing needs.
What Factors Affect Our Clothing Decisions?

Income - what proportion can be spent for clothes?

Time - how much time can be used in shopping and care?

Place of residence and its climatic conditions.

Nature of your work and play.

Accepted mode of dress in your community.

Skills of family members that may be used in solving clothing problems.
Clarify the Family's Clothing Situation with Thought Items Like These:

Three determinations must be made when allocating a portion of the family income for clothing: What percent will be spent for clothing? What part of the clothing dollar will each family member receive? How will the individual divide the allowance among the various clothing items?

What effect might this have on the family's clothing situation? Nine out of every 10 women work outside the home at some time during their life for a longer period than formerly. The school girl today will spend 25 or more years in work outside the home. Women are responsible for most of the family's spending!

What special clothing problems may be encountered by a family moving to a new location? How might clothing decisions of a family in Florida differ from those of an Indian family?

What special clothing problems may be encountered by a family when the breadwinner is promoted to a new job? How might the clothing decisions of a family that attends basketball and football games differ from those of a family that owns a motorboat for recreation?

Is it true that "Whether you are really well dressed depends in large measure on the people you are with; you are only as well dressed as they think you are"?

Knowledge of buying and ability to sew are the two skills most often considered in solving problems. What other skills of the family members might be used to solve these problems?
How Might You Fulfill Your Clothing Needs?

Putting your clothes into better use.

Observation -- ask yourself

Are the clothes in my family's closets ready to wear?

Might boredom with particular clothes be relieved by putting them away for a while?

Have I considered all articles of clothing in my plans for wardrobe coordination, i.e., hosiery, belts, etc.?

Experimentation

Try different combinations of the clothes you already have.

Interchange accessories with different costumes.

Note lines and textures. Would small changes revive garments, i.e., new buttons, collar, or hem length?

Acquiring Knowledge

Care information is a must to gain maximum use. You'll need to know specific care for the fabrics—pressing, laundry, dry cleaning, spot and stain removal procedures. Don't forget storage!

Fashion may be used to add variety to present clothing, i.e., a different way of wearing accessories.

It is necessary to understand men's and children's clothing as well as women's to solve family clothing problems.
Planning for the future.

Determine the clothing items to be purchased.

Consider the clothing needs you found in the Inventory (Pages 6 & 7) in terms of the factors affecting your decisions (Pages 8 & 9). You might rank the items as follows:

- Items purchased regularly.
- Items purchased occasionally.
- Items requiring long-range planning.

Determine the colors, lines and textures to be purchased. This is an opportunity to express individuality. It is also important to consider the ways in which the items can be interchanged to give variety and to suit different occasions.

Consider where, when and how you will purchase these items.

What are the kinds of stores in which these items can be purchased?

When is a bargain a bargain?

Should the items be purchased on credit? What kinds of credit are available and how much will each cost?

Remember that well planned shopping provides for flexibility.
Making Clothing Decisions

If you buy, how may you obtain quality?

Decide what your expectations for the garment are in relation to the price you can pay.

Remember that high fashion is a good buy only when the garment fits your needs, is attractive on you, and promises to stay in fashion for the life of the garment.

Select colors, textures and lines that are consistent with your wardrobe needs and are becoming to you. Pay particular attention to fit and amount of ease in the garment.

Evaluate the fabric quality in terms of fiber content, yarn construction, closeness of the weave and the finishes. Study the labels!

Look for marks of quality in workmanship:

Wide, firm seams
General neatness inside and out
Full cut
Reinforcement around construction details and securely attached
If you _sew_, how may you obtain quality?

Decide what your expectations for the garment are in relation to the total cost of the materials and the value of your time.

If time is limited, you will need to decide which garments you should make—the better and more expensive items, i.e., mother's good dress, or the everyday, rapid turnover items, i.e., children's pajamas.

Select a pattern and a fabric consistent with your construction skills.

Meet the quality factors of ready-made garments when you _sew_:

- Styles which last the life of the garment
- Becoming colors, textures, lines that are consistent with wardrobe needs
- Good fit and ease for comfort
- Fabric quality to suit needs

Develop good construction practices which will add to both beauty and durability of the garment. These are listed at the bottom of page 12.

Consider the enjoyment you receive from sewing and the satisfaction gained from wearing the garments you have made.
Evaluating Your Progress

What do the records show?

How much was spent for clothing?

What items were purchased?

Did each family member have his or her clothing needs met?

Did the family members find satisfaction in the clothes they wore? Why?

How may the plan be strengthened?

References:

3. Tate, M.T. and Glisson, O. Family Clothing, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1961
Methods for Evaluating

Keeping records as a means of evaluating:

These records will refresh your memory of the clothing decisions you have made over a period of time. They should tell you the clothing items purchased and the price paid. Your method of record keeping may range from a receipt box to an itemized listing in a notebook. You should evaluate your decisions in terms of the family's needs and their satisfaction in the clothing.

Evaluating of clothing problems and decisions is a constant process:

The family's clothing problems aren't solved in one shopping trip nor in one year. Instead, wardrobes are built over a number of years.

As you evaluate your clothing problems and decisions, you will find that a pattern or method has evolved. This method will help you recognize the problems, consider your resources and alternatives and finally reach decisions that will give your family the greatest enjoyment from their clothing.


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