



CHILDREN'S CLOTHING - FABRICS AND FINISHES

Children love bright colors. In fact, children choose their clothes more by color than anything else. They also love "picture clothes"—fabrics printed with animals, toys, or story characters, or garments with a picture on the front.

Children's preferences for textures vary considerably. Some like smooth surfaces only, some want fuzzy surfaces, and some like slick surfaces. By providing children with a variety of surfaces, they learn what they feel most comfortable with, and thereby, learn something about themselves. Soft surfaces work best with children and are most comfortable. Avoid hard, crisp surfaces.

Finishes

Some finishes are easy to see and feel while others are not. The consumer must depend on labels to tell what the finish will do and how to care for it. Some examples of finishes commonly used on children's clothing and what they do are:

- Wash and wear Needs little or no ironing.
- Sanforized Fabric will not shrink more than 1 percent.
- Stain and spot resistant Fabric gives up water and oily stains easily.
- Water repellent Fabric sheds water but allows air to go through; used on outdoor wear.
- Flame retardant Makes fabric resistant to fire; used on sleepwear; washes out.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING: CLOTHES THAT GROW

Buy or make clothing with some "room to grow." However, buying too large is not a good idea because clothing that is way too big looks strange, limits the child's actions, and endangers their safety. The clothing may end up fading or wearing out before the child actually grows into them.

Look for garments with expandable or stretch features—clothes that can fit the child now and later, too. Examples of expandable or stretch features are:

- Elastic waistbands
- Raglan or kimono sleeves (or no sleeves at all)
- Wide underarm or leg seams that will stand strain and can be let out as the child grows
- Pants with cuffs that can be let down later
- Wide hems or tucks in dresses that can be let down later
- No definite waistline; things that are straight or loose hanging
- Adjustable straps for lengthening