

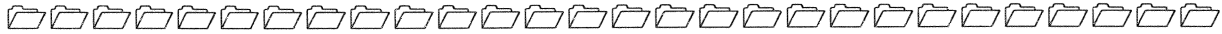
CHILDREN'S CLOTHING - WEARABILITY

Some things to look for that provide comfort are:

- Neckline: Low enough in front to be comfortable and snug enough in back to stay in place. No collar is generally better.
- Shoulders and chest: Wide enough and roomy enough across the shoulders and chest for free arm movement without pulling but not so full that the shoulder seams will not stay in place.
- Sleeves: Roomy sleeves, such as raglan or kimono type are most comfortable. Tight ones restrict movement and pull out with strain. Armholes should be about 1 inch below the armpit.
- Length: Shirts and blouses should be long enough to stay in place. Look for wide hems in skirts and pants. Clothes that are too long are uncomfortable as well as unsafe.
- Hipline: The crotch should be long enough that it doesn't bind and allows for ease of movement. The fabric around the hips should be full enough so the child can move freely.
- Girls' dresses: Full-cut dresses (no waistline) with gathers or pleats attached to a yoke are the most comfortable because they are the least binding. The dress should be short enough to keep from getting under foot when the child plays.
- Outdoor wear: Outdoor wear, such as snowsuits, coats, and jackets, should be lightweight, windproof, and water resistant. Also they need to be roomy enough to be worn over clothing comfortably and take on and off easily.

Durability is a major factor when choosing children's clothing. Children's clothes must withstand both hard wear and repeated laundering. Durability is influenced by the construction as well as the fabric. Reinforcement at the points of strain greatly increases the durability of a garment. Cotton and cotton-blend fabrics are excellent choices for children because of their durability, absorbency, and ease of care.

Reinforcing areas of clothing that are points of strain can add to the durability of the garment considerably. Taking the time to reinforce points of strain on both ready-made articles of clothing as well as homemade articles is certainly worth the little bit of time and effort required.



CHILDREN'S CLOTHING: WEARABILITY

Some types of reinforcement that increase the life of garments are:

- Patches Put extra fabric on elbows and knees. The patches can be decorative as well as functional.
- Metal rivets Place at corners of pocket.
- Bar tacks Place at the ends of buttonholes (so they don't unravel), pocket corners, and placket openings.
- Extra stitching Sew an extra row of stitching along areas of stress such as pockets, plackets, crotch seams, etc. These can also be in the form of topstitching or decorative stitches.

Safety is a major concern with children's clothing. Clothing that is too large or too long inhibits the child's physical activities and presents safety hazards. For example:

- Sleeves that are too long limit hand movement and become caught easily
- Pants that are too long cause the child to stumble and fall
- Socks that are too big cause blisters on the feet
- Shoes that are too big cause the child to stumble or change his/her walking pattern to accommodate them. This could affect long-term bone structure.
- Dresses that are too long cause the child to stumble and fall.

Clothing that is too small is uncomfortable and binding as well as difficult to get on and off. Clothing that fits and/or has a slight amount of room for growth is always the safest.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING: FABRIC CHOICES

Fabrics

Choose clothes made of smooth, firm, evenly woven or knitted fabrics. Hold the fabric up to the light and see how closely it is woven. Better fabrics are more closely woven and tend to wear longer and keep their shape better.

Fabric considerations for children's clothing include:

- Stretch (knit) fabrics give extra comfort and allow more freedom for active play.
- Soft, lightweight fabrics won't scratch the child's skin or feel heavy when wearing.
- Cotton fabrics are absorbent and washable—both important features. Examples of good wearing cotton are corduroy, medium- or light-weight denim, poplin, sailcloth, tarpoon cloth, seersucker, terrycloth.
- Cotton-blend fabrics are usually more durable than 100 percent cotton, and easier to care for.