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## EC58-416 Clothes for the Pre-School Child

Gerda Petersen

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E.C. 58-416

# Clothes for the pre-school child

BY GERDA PETERSEN, Extension Clothing Specialist

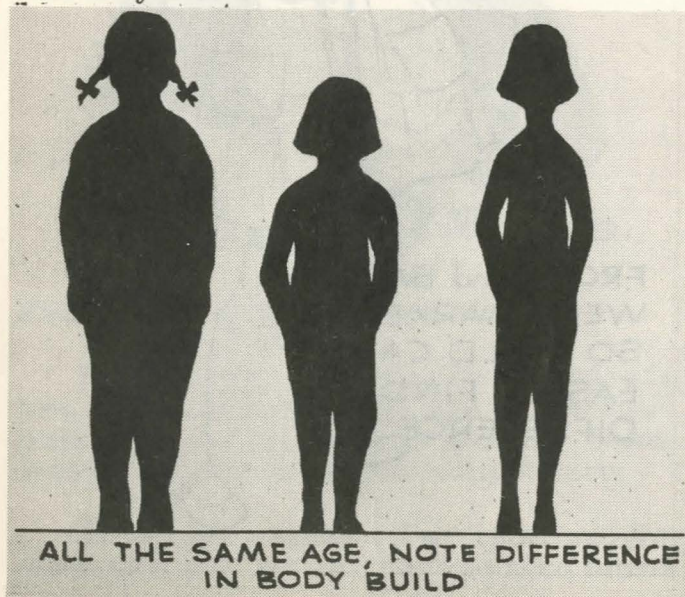
The preschool child is full of activity. He is growing rapidly. He wants to help himself. He discovers that his clothes attract attention to himself.

Clothes for the preschool child should meet his requirements for free movement, growth, self-reliance and habit formation. When selecting clothes for this child the following factors need to be considered.

1. What size will fit best?
2. Is the design or style suitable?
3. Is the fabric and color suitable?
4. Does the garment give pleasure to the child?
5. Is the garment well-constructed?

## Sizing of Children's Clothes

Children's garments have size numbers that are similar to age numbers. This makes the selection of the proper size difficult because two children may be the same age and yet be quite different in size and body build.



Height, weight and waist measure would be a more realistic basis for sizing a garment.

The following table, set up by the U. S. Bureau of Standards gives suggested commercial standards based on body measurements:

Size	Height	Weight	Waist
2	34	29	20 1/2
3	37	34	21
4	40	38	21 1/2
5	43	44	22
6	46	49	22 1/2
6X	48	54	23

Since manufacturers are not required to follow these standards, some do not do so. Therefore, two garments, having the same size number but made by different companies may not fit the same child.

Mail order houses usually carry a height, weight and waist measure table to help their customers. There are also some garments in retail stores that carry labels that give this same information.

Sales people suggest helpful measurements to have when buying a garment for a child are: Waist or girth and length from nape of neck to waist line.

## Designs in Children's Clothes

Health and comfort are major considerations when selecting designs or styles for children's clothes. No part of a garment should restrict his activity, constrict the body, or stop natural circulation. The following features will allow for freedom of action:

1. Garments that hang from the shoulders instead of being fitted at the waist.



2. Shoulder lines that allow movement but stay in place.

3. Roomy armholes or raglan or kimono style sleeves.

4. Enough room through hips and crotch to permit bending, squatting, sitting and reaching.

5. Elastic used only part way around at waist-line or in sleeve or leg bands.

6. Neckline, low in front so it doesn't rub or choke and back closely fit but doesn't ride up.

7. Trousers and sleeves, neither too long nor too tight.

8. Pockets, big ones.

As a child grows older he wants to help himself. Clothes that are easily taken off and put on and easily managed at the toilet give him a chance to help himself. This helps him to build self-confidence and independence and develop muscle coordination.

The following suggestions might be considered when selecting self-help clothes:

1. Several garments that are similar in style.

2. Boxer-style pants.

3. Garments with front and back well marked so child can easily find the difference.

4. Large openings or plackets in the front of the garment.

5. Medium sized smooth round buttons, gripper fasteners, or buckles without tongues.

6. Drop seats with elastic bands.

Good designs in children's clothing are planned for the growth of the child. Buying clothes that can be enlarged with minor adjustments is a wise economy. Some growth features to look for are:

1. Pants or skirts that button on a waist. The waist or blouse might be 2" to 3" longer than needed at the time.



**DROP SEATS  
WITH ELASTIC  
BANDS**



**FRONT and BACK  
WELL MARKED  
SO CHILD CAN  
EASILY FIND  
DIFFERENCE**



2. Full back and deep sleeves on coats. Raglan sleeves are a good growth feature.

3. Adjustable overall or jumper straps.

4. Wide hems that can be let down.

5. Horizontal tuck at the waistline.

6. Styles with indefinite waistline.

7. Pleats that allow width across the back or tucks at the shoulder line.

8. Large underlap on side closings on overalls.

9. Side seams that could be let out.



GARMENT  
with ADJUSTABLE STRAPS

#### Fabrics and Colors for a Child

Fabrics that are comfortable and that are suited to his activities, age and personality should be selected for a child. Some features that make fabrics suitable are:

1. Light weight. Two light weight garments will be warmer and also more

comfortable than one heavy garment. Close weaves make good windbreakers for outer garments.

2. Soft and smooth. Stiff harsh fabrics may irritate the skin.

3. Easily laundered and require little or no ironing. Check labels for information on care.

4. Color fast.

5. Preshrunk.

6. Soil resistant. Fabrics with all-over printed patterns, stripes, or plaids show soil and wrinkle less than dark solid colors or white backgrounds with widely spaced designs.

7. Crease resistant.

8. Prints and plaids in scale with the size of the child.

9. Simple durable trim.

10. Water-repellent fabrics for snow-suits.

A child can help choose colors for his clothes. He soon develops preferences and likes clothes that he thinks are pretty. He needs guidance in selecting colors that are suitable for his age, size and personality.

A child's skin is soft and smooth. The colors he wears should be soft and delicate too. As a youngster reaches five or six years, brighter colors are popular.

Color can be a safety feature. Attention attracting colors, such as bright yellow and red, for outer garments, make it easier for a motorist to see a child in the street.

#### Garment Construction

The hard usage an active child gives his clothes makes a well constructed garment essential. Construction features to look for:

1. Reinforcement at points of strain such as: knees, elbows, placket ends, underarm seams, pocket corners and buttons.



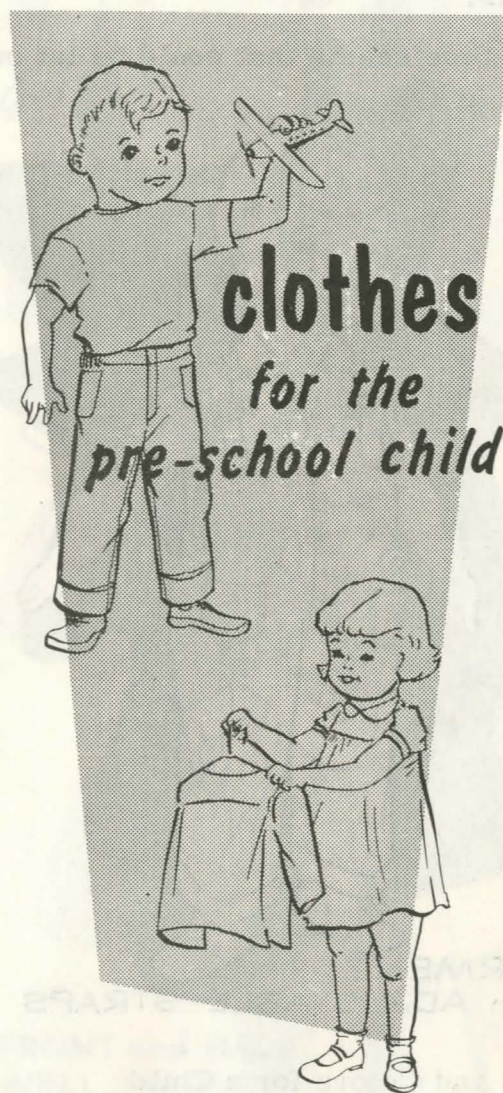
2. Short, even machine stitches.
3. Seams that are durable yet soft and flat to prevent irritation.
4. Firm, strong buttonholes.
5. Ribbed knit cuffs on snowsuits and winter sleepers allow stretch yet keep the cold out.

#### Selection of Shoes and Socks

Careful consideration should be given to the selection of shoes. The soft bones of a child's foot may be injured by poorly fitted and badly shaped shoes. A well fitted shoe should:

1. Follow the natural shape of the foot.
2. Be  $1/4''$  wider and  $1/2''$  to  $3/4''$  longer than the foot.
3. Have soles that are firm, flat and moderately flexible.
4. Have a toe cap that is firm and high enough for the thickness of the toes.
5. Have the ball of the foot at the wide part of the shoe.

Socks should also be selected with care. The foot of the sock after washing should be  $1/2''$  to  $3/4''$  longer than the child's foot ( $1''$  longer when new to allow for shrinkage).



*Layout and Illustrations*

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