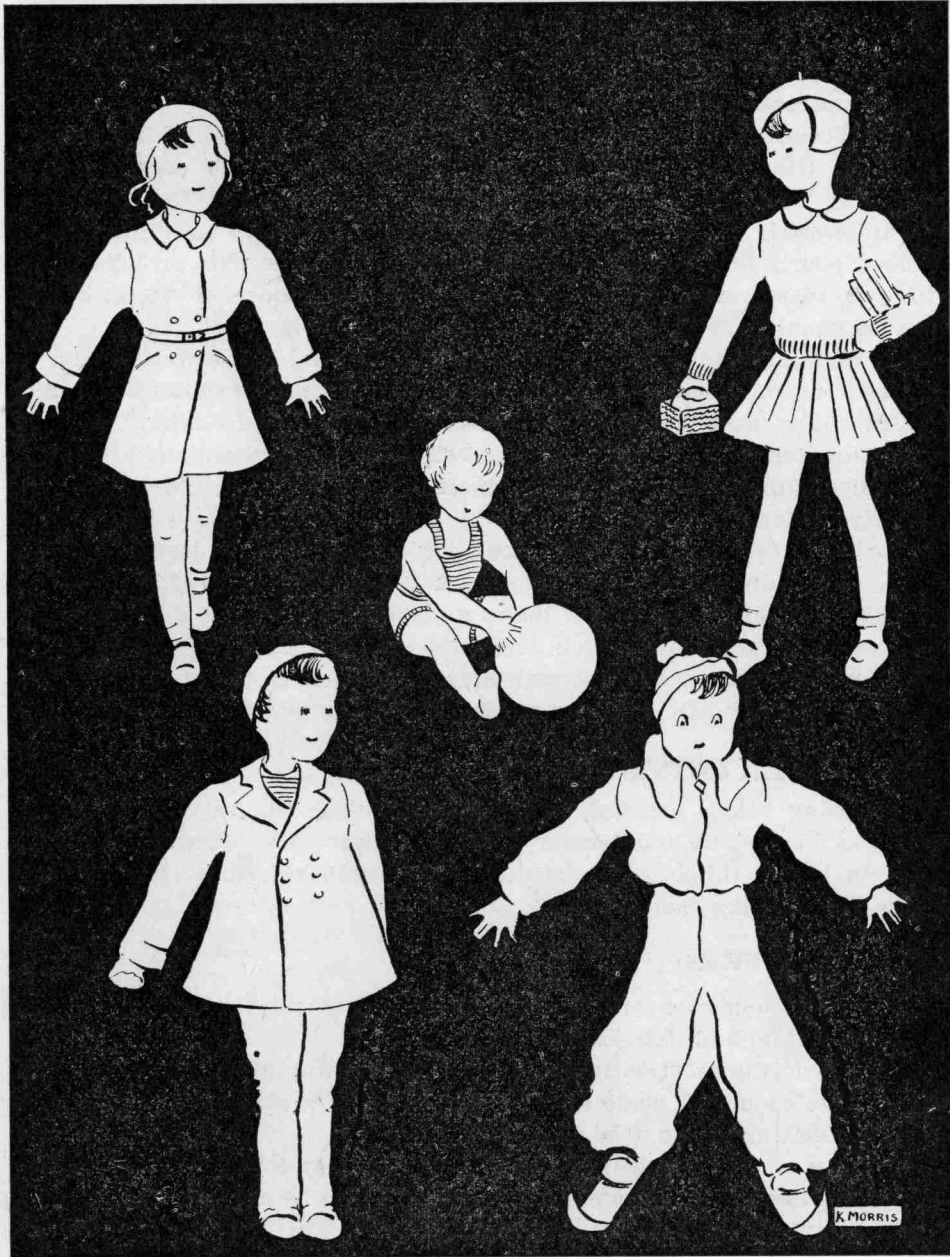


# Children's Clothing



# CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

By WILLIE N. HUNTER,  
*Extension Specialist in Clothing.*

Children's clothes have a very decided effect upon their health and, consequently, upon their happiness. Very careful selection and planning is therefore necessary.

It is especially important that clothes should fit without binding, pulling or chafing. Otherwise, the child's breathing, circulation, or digestion may be seriously impaired or his soft bones deformed while in the "molding" stage. Improperly placed shoulder straps or hose supporters may cause round shoulders, poorly fitting shoes cause lame feet, and inadequate or superfluous clothing increases susceptibility to colds. Play helps develop strong bodies, so clothes should not hamper the child while he is playing.

Since clothing also effects character, a child should be so dressed that he is entirely unconscious of his clothes. Overdressing encourages extravagance, fussiness, snobbishness. Odd, dirty, ugly or ragged clothing develops slovenliness and diminishes self-respect. Clothes that are simple, attractive, clean and comfortable prevent self-consciousness, improve the disposition, and cultivate genuineness.

Self-confidence and self-dependence may be encouraged if the child is taught early to dress himself. If clothes have few and simple fastenings, so placed that the child can reach them, a three or four year old child may learn to do his own dressing. If the child is given a special place to keep his clothes (a corner of a closet with a rod and hangers low enough for him to reach it) he may also be early taught to care for his clothes.

## I. BABY'S LAYETTE:

In choosing baby's clothing, one should consider chiefly the question of comfort, as his health and temper are to a large extent dependent on this point. As baby's things must be constantly laundered, ease in laundering must be a secondary consideration.

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. Material should be soft, launder easily, of texture that does not irritate tender skin, and light in weight.
2. Cotton is the most satisfactory material for infants' garments.
3. Clothes should be made extra large with plenty of room through chest, so breathing will not be restricted.
4. Raglan or kimona sleeves are comfortable, easy to make and launder.
5. Seams should be flat and of smooth finish, to avoid irritation.
6. Garments opened all the way down front makes for ease and speed in dressing child. Wide front laps spread easily to give plenty of room for kicking, yet keep the baby covered. (Figures 1 and 2.)
7. Little or no trimming should be used. Dainty narrow bias bindings in pastel colors may be used to bind edges. (Figures 1 and 2.)
8. The rectangular fold is the acceptable one for diapers today. The old triangular fold was clumsy and often caused bowed legs.

9. Tape fastenings of twistless tape are preferable to pins or buttons as they remove danger of scratches or possible swallowing. (Figures 1 and 2.)
10. Lace on neck and wrist bands is unnecessary and only makes laundering more difficult.

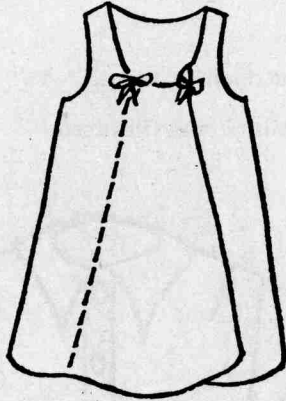
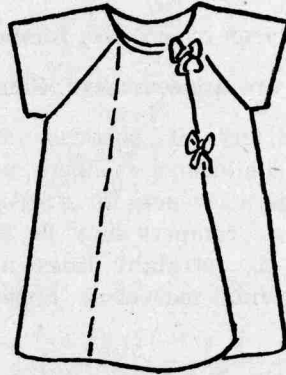


Figure 1



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#### HOW TO DRESS THE BABY

Before beginning bath lay out clothing on dressing table (or bed). Place shirt inside gown with sleeves of shirt inside sleeves of gown. This can be easily arranged if gown opens all the way down front. Place diaper in position on gown. Baby can then be laid upon his clothing and the dressing process completed in a short time with very little handling and without enraging the child.

#### WHEN BABY BEGINS TO CRAWL

A. Rompers should replace gowns when baby is not lying down. This gives more freedom of movement, avoids tangling up of feet in skirts, and protects underclothes from dirt.

For a very small child the most suitable romper is the new type envelope romper with triangular extension of back which laps over the front. Three to five buttons are enough for this type, and the strain is so slight that buttons do not pop off. It is roomy enough to be used with a diaper and to cover this completely and comfortably. With a romper of this design a child can be laid down on the opened garment and literally buttoned up in it. A good quality of broadcloth or checked gingham is the best material for this romper. (Fig. 3.)

Rompers should be simple and with little or no trimming. Varied or contrasting colors may, however, be used to make garments more attractive.



3

Beware of elastic bands or tight fitting cloth bands, as these interfere with surface circulation. If bands are used take measurement for length 5 inches above knee cap to prevent binding when band slips up. To prevent loose bands from falling below knees let fullness come in *width* rather than in *length* of garment.

For children over three, rompers should open in front.

Collars are unnecessary. Simulated collars may be used.

The variety of patterns and prints for children's rompers provide for attractiveness in dressing them. Boys' rompers may be distinguished by straight lines and pockets, giving masculine appearance.

**Self Help Rompers:** When a baby begins to walk the creeper romper should be replaced with a romper similar to Illustration 4. This has a long center front opening with three buttons which tiny hands can handle. The back drop has four buttons, two at each side. They are easy to reach, and the pull on the shoulder is evenly distributed.



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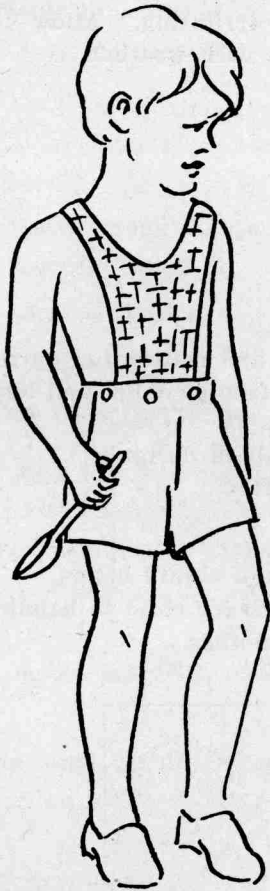
See U. S. Department of Agriculture Leaflet No. 79—Rompers.

**B. Sun Suits:** Sun suits provide for a very important health need of the child, for they allow better than any other garment for the penetration of the health-giving ultra violet rays to the skin.

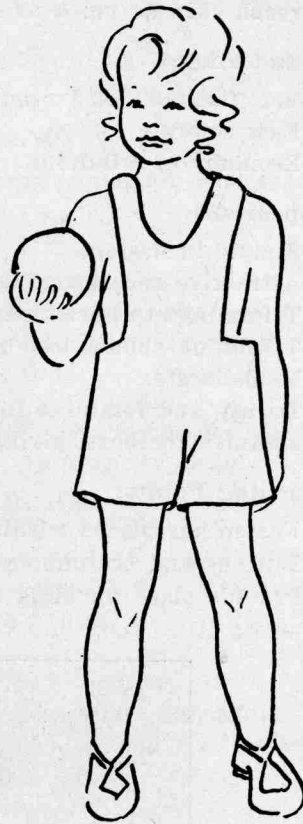
a. A very satisfactory suit for most children may consist of bloomers or pants made from any durable cotton material in a suitable design and sewed or buttoned to a sleeveless, low necked waist of material through which the rays pass easily. Marquisetts, cable net, or leno weave is suitable for waists. (Illustration 5.)

b. When the open weave top is not desired a sun suit may be made entirely of cotton print and cut with slight modifications from a well fitting romper pattern. Low neck and large arm holes, or an overall shaped top should characterize such suits, which will then allow for considerable exposure to the sun. (Illustration 6.)





5



6

Sun baths should be given to all children to keep them well and to many sick children to make them well. If a child has not been accustomed to playing in the direct sun, it is best to begin with short periods of time and expose only a small portion of the body at first. Gradually increase both the time and the amount exposed until a coat of tan has been acquired.

See U. S. D. A. Leaflet No. 24—Sun Suits for Children.

## II. SMALL CHILDREN'S CLOTHES:

- A. In addition to comfort, which is still a prime requisite, and ease in laundering, attention must now be directed to appearance, which so largely determines the child's happiness, and ease in adjustment with a view to teaching him early to dress himself. Economy is also a consideration.

### 1. Health and Comfort:

- a. Let clothes be as light in weight as possible, using materials that are light weight and reducing number of garments to **necessary minimum** (depending on season of year).
- b. Have clothes made so there is no pulling or bindings.
- c. Clothes must be large enough to allow unlimited freedom for motion.

- d. Material soft, smooth weave—non irritating. Allow for sun to reach skin as much as is consistent with weather.

**2. Laundering:**

- a. Soft fabrics which need no starch.  
b. Fast colors.  
c. Economy of trimming.

**3. Appearance:**

- a. Simple in design.  
b. Attractive and becoming in color.  
c. Trimmings to harmonize with color and material of garment.  
Trimming should lead attention to face of child, and should never be elaborate.  
d. Dainty and feminine for girls (small in design).  
e. Mannish for boys, giving tailored effect.

**4. Teaching Points:**

- a. Fastenings placed within easy reach of child's hands.  
b. Buttons and buttonholes large enough for child to handle.  
c. Provide place for child to keep his clothes.



SIMPLE OPENINGS AND CONVENIENT FASTENINGS  
ENCOURAGE SELF-HELP IN DRESSING.

## **5. Economy:**

- a. Use durable materials.
- b. In making allow for growth; wide hems in girls' dresses, long blouses for boys' suits, raglan sleeves which are not quickly outgrown. Tucks or shirring across chest.
- c. Have strong buttonholes and reinforcements where buttons are securely sewed on.
- d. Care of clothes.

## **B. KINDS OF CLOTHES:**

As soon as child can control his hands he should be trained to dress and undress himself. This is valuable training for child. Rompers and other garments must open down the front to make self-dressing possible.

1. Rompers may still be used for boys and girls until about age 6.
2. Sun suits are important in the small child's wardrobe. They are used up to about 8 or 10 years of age.

### **3. Underclothes:**

A Child's underclothing should, of course, be adequate at all times. Warmth, however does not depend upon weight. Heavy-weight, fleece-lined underwear should always be avoided for lighter, loosely-woven garments are more comfortable due to decrease in weight and are even warmer than the heavy type, due to circulation of air, absorption, and rapid evaporation. Cotton, if so woven that it remains soft after washing is more comfortable, as it does not scratch.

- a. Union suits and knitted underwaists should have roomy armholes and wide shoulder straps (at least 2"). Narrow straps tend to slip and concentrate the weight of the garment on to small part of the shoulder—induce poor posture.
- b. All underwear should fit well, have generous seat and wide crotch.
- c. Inside seams should be smooth.
- d. Underwaists should be 5" or 6" larger at waist line than child's measurement.
- e. Waists should have front closing.
- f. Have buttons taped on. One kind of button should be used for all undergarments.

- g. Adjust buttons and reinforcements at waist line to lengthen garment.
- h. If bloomers matching dress are used in place of union suit, this takes place of petticoat.
- i. Instead of elastic, use belts or bands for children's bloomers. Have belt 6" larger than child's waist measurement. Finish front of belt with contrasting material, so that child can distinguish front from back.
- j. Use 3 buttonholes in front and 2 in back of waist bands. Reinforce bands for buttonholes.
- k. Take measurement for leg bands 5" above knee cap.
- l. If bloomers are too long between waist and crotch, insert a tuck, which may be graduated, allowing more length in front and back than on sides.

#### 4. Sleeping Clothes:

In planning sleeping clothes for children bear in mind that they should be as warm as the weather demands but not heavy. Knitted sleepers, provided they are not heavy or closely knitted—are appropriate. Or they may be made of outing flannel or muslin. To allow for growth and secure freedom of movement, these garments should be several sizes too large for the child. The legs of the sleeper should be finished with feet of ample size. These may be lengthened in the toe when necessary. The entire garment may be lengthened by inserting a band in the waist.

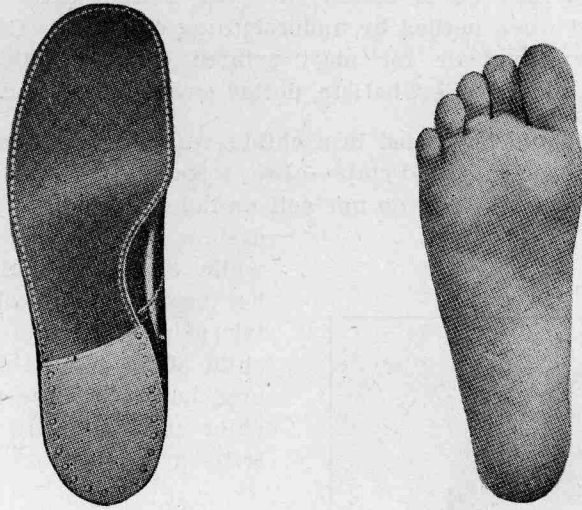
If nightgowns are preferred, make them one-piece with kimona sleeves. Materials should be muslin or outing, and gown should be several sizes too large and too long.

#### 5. Shoes:

Many feet are permanently injured due to carelessness in selection and wearing of shoes in childhood. Fallen arches, misplaced or crooked bones, weakened ankles are a few of the ill results. Children's bones are soft and unmolded. They should develop normally.

- a. Infants and small children should be allowed to walk barefooted when shoes are needed neither for warmth nor for protection.
- b. Shoes should have roomy toe and enough upper to prevent cramping toes between upper and sole. The moccasin type is good.
- c. They should be same width as foot, one inch longer than foot, and the exact shape of foot. Straight inner line. See Illustrations.





- d. Heels must fit snugly.
- e. Soft porous leather should be selected. The varnish on patent leather prevents evaporation, hence is harmful.
- f. Laced high top shoes which support the ankle are preferable for small children. Later oxfords may be substituted.
- g. The heel varies with age from a lift, through the spring heel to the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " heel with good base.
- h. If a child's foot tends to toe out, a Thomas heel should be added.

#### 6. Stockings:

- a. Unless stockings are needed for warmth, socks are advisable, because they expose parts of the child's legs to the ultra violet rays of the sun.
- b. Stockings and socks should be the shape of the child's foot and at least  $\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than foot. Else the effects are scarcely better than when stiff and ill-fitting shoes are used. In order to preserve shape of stockings wash them carefully with warm water and a neutral soap.
- c. If two pairs of stockings or socks are exactly alike, they may be remated when one wears out, and a third pair gained.
- d. Mercerized cotton socks and stockings are best for general wear and look well.
- e. Garters, when used, should be carefully measured, the size being such that no print can be seen on legs. Wide elastic is preferable to narrow.

## 7. Girls' Dresses:

- a. *Material* may be of cotton the year 'round, extra warmth being supplied when needed by underclothing or wraps. Gingham, broadcloth, and percale for play, printed lawn or challis for better dresses, sheer voiles, batiste, dotted swiss for party dresses.
- b. *Colors* should be varied in a child's wardrobe, even when one color is most becoming. Prints—always small—are preferable to plain colors, because they do not soil or fade so readily. Delicate floral designs are best for some children, while the study child appears at her best in plain colors or geometric prints. Dresses for the sturdy child should invariably have a tailored cut, while the more feminine child needs daintily made, but not frilly dresses.



- c. *Trimming:* Ruffles, lace, and ribbon are almost invariably out of place on a child's dress. They should never be used except on special occasion dresses of which no great serviceability is expected—sparingly then.

Decorative stitchery is attractive, and when done with good thread adds durability. Simple, easily made stitches such as blanket stitch, fagoting, or a short running stitch made with two or three strands of cotton floss are preferable to more elaborate ones.

- d. Sleeves, unless length is needed for warmth, are better short. If long, sleeves should allow plenty of room at elbow. When warm weather comes they may be cut off above elbow, and the dress worn while it is the right size.
- e. Dresses must be of ample cut—especially across chest. Fullness may be gained here by gathers or one or two easily ironed inverted pleats.

f. Straight from the shoulder dresses, with no belt are always appropriate and attractive for small children.

g. Low necks are important for comfort, as they are cool in warm weather and do not at any time irritate the throat. Simulated collars add attractiveness to neck, are not uncomfortable as high or rolled collars may be, and are as easy to iron as the dress itself.

h. Matching bloomers or rompers worn under dress, can when desirable take the place of petticoat. If pockets are desired, it is well to place them low down on these undergarments. There, they hold handkerchief, are easy to reach, and are less likely to be ripped off and cause tears in garment.

i. During period of rapid growth a child should not have too many dresses. Several dresses—enough to provide for all occasions and a few emergencies—made in becoming styles and sizes which do not have to be grown into enable her to wear her dresses while they fit and discard them when a few simple alterations are no longer sufficient.

U. S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 80, "Dresses for Little Girls," has some excellent models. The illustrations used here are from this bulletin and are used by permission of the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics.

*Little Girls Not Tall for Their  
Ages May Wear Unbelted  
Dresses for School.*



## 8. Boys' Suits:

Boys clothes should be mannish and tailored, though not patterned after their elders.

- a. Comfort is the prime requisite, for a boy is naturally active and needs the utmost freedom in his clothes. If too small they are physically harmful, if too large, they affect posture and nerves. Long shoulders, generous armholes, and short sleeve caps give arms freedom of movement. In hot weather sleeveless blouses are good. Elbow sleeves are good, unless long sleeves are needed for warmth, in which case they should be wide enough to give room for elbow movement. When sleeves are long, let blouse have extra width through chest and across shoulders.

Let neck lines be low, slightly rounded, and collarless. Necklines or collars are uncomfortable, cause head to thrust forward with the result of bad posture. Simulated collars look just as well and have not the objectionable features that real collars have.

Trousers should be knee length or shorter. Long trousers restrict movement of legs and do not allow sunlight to reach skin; also hard to launder. Plenty of room must be allowed in seat, so that child may sit or bend in comfort.



- b. Boys' clothes can be made to encourage self-help in dressing and undressing. With this in view the waist should open down front and should have as few buttons as possible. Buttons and buttonholes should be large. Trousers should have buttons so placed (in front and at sides) that child can reach them. A drop front fas-



tened to waist band by two buttons takes the place of the unsightly fly and helps prevent slovenly toilet habits. See Illustration.

- c. Simplicity is even more important in boys' than in girls' clothing. Have a boy's clothes smart, of tailored appearance, always masculine. A boy looks ridiculous with ruffles on his collars and sleeves. Colors should be masculine—blue, brown, tan, etc. Careful workmanship is nowhere more important than in boys' clothes. Accurate cutting and fine stitching are necessities.

If a boy is too tall and slender, consider style features which reduce height: Wide trouser legs, pockets on both sides of blouse, wide, rounding collar lines, suits with contrasting trousers and blouse.

If a boy is short and chunky, the opposite principle applies. Make suits of plain colors with contrasting trim which calls attention to center front. Narrow—but not tight—trouser legs, sleeveless blouses and narrow, printed simulated collars give slenderizing effect.

- d. Material: Heavy cotton fabrics, such as jean, madras, and pique are good for boys' winter wear. Lighter cottons for summer. Firm, evenly woven, durable, and non-shrinkable material is always best. For blouses, printed or plain gingham, percale, cotton pongee, and broadcloth are good. For interesting designs for the small boy see U. S. Department of Agriculture Leaflet No. 52—Suits for the Small Boy. See illustration.

## 9. Wraps:

Wraps do not need to be heavy in order to be warm. Light weight rather loosely woven material, which is warm and looks heavy, is best for coats. Heavy coats weight the child down and cause bad posture.

A coat should not be cut very high in back of neck, for a high, stiff collar pushes child's head forward.

Coats should set well at neck and shoulders.

A coat should fit loosely and have either raglan sleeves or set-in sleeves with large armholes.

A coat should have adequate pockets.

Sweaters are especially desirable for school and play. They are warm and light weight, giving more freedom for play than do coats. They may be supplemented when needed by long leggings.

### III. ADOLESCENT BOY AND GIRL:

As boys and girls grow older they tend to become more clothes conscious. It is needful that their clothes be neat, attractive, and in accordance with styles in order to keep them from feeling poorly dressed and ill at ease. On the contrary, they must not be over-dressed, both because simple clothes are most appropriate for the growing boy or girl and because they must not be allowed to become snobbish.

A girl's school wardrobe should feature simple prints, attractive and durable skirts, and blouses, oxfords and socks or durable stockings for girls. When weather and current styles permit, mercerized cotton socks are generally best, as they are more attractive. The growing girl needs a brassiere, but tight ones are to be avoided since they are injurious to the health. Bloomer elastic, if used, should be broad and not tight. Bands are better.

Attractive designs for school dresses may be found in most of the current fashion magazines. Select pattern which is easy to follow in construction—note design on back of envelope. Children's patterns are bought by age rather than measurements. Sometimes a 10-year-old is under size or over size. The child's measurements should be checked with those of pattern.

Well-made pants and blouses or shirts with soft collars should feature a boy's wardrobe. The more mannish and tailored the boy's clothing is the better he likes it. Pants should be of durable but not heavy material. If suspenders are used, they should have wide shoulder straps and be carefully adjusted to prevent pulling. Belts may also be used, but should be broad so that they will hold up pants without being drawn tight. Boys like plenty of pockets. Short pants or knickers are better than long pants until the boy has outgrown the very active age. The long pants often seen on small boys tend to retard freedom of movement, also cut off the sun's rays from child's legs. The small boy's pants may often be made from a man's suit. Sweaters or lumber jackets are good for wraps. Use tailored seams in making boys' clothing. Current fashion magazines show some good designs for the school girl and boy.

*Color:* Small children do not have much color problem—their skin is clear and complexion good. As a rule blonds wear cool colors best and brunetts warm colors. However, this is not a hard and fast rule.

It is well to remember that bright colors are a protection to a child when on the street. Bright colors are seen by motorists much more quickly than dull colors.

### IV. ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSIST CHILD IN CARING FOR HIS OWN CLOTHING:

Boys and girls should start early to assume care of their own clothing; it helps them train in habits of orderliness and personal neatness. However, it is necessary that places be provided where they can keep their clothing.

1. A two year old child may be taught to hang up his night clothes in the morning and his day clothes at night when he undresses, if hooks are within his reach. Provide regular hook for night gown, low enough for him to hang his clothes on.

2. For older children arrange to have a rod in the closet adjusted in height with clothes' hangers for dresses and suits.
3. If there is no closet space available, a nice clothes cabinet for child may be made from a goods box.
4. Provide each child with a drawer or box for his clean clothes.
5. Each child needs a laundry bag for his own soiled clothes, hanging within easy reach.
6. Provide a regular place with hooks of right height in a convenient place for child's coat, sweater, hat, cap, also place for overshoes.

*REFERENCES:*

U. S. Department of Agriculture:

Leaflet No. 80, "Dresses for the Little Girl."

Leaflet No. 52, "Suits for the Small Boy."

Leaflet No. 11, "Rompers."

California College of Agriculture:

"Clothing for Infants."

"Children's Clothing."