

What children wear to child care?

Showing respect for children and appreciation of their individuality is important to the development of their self-esteem.

The clothes we wear and the way we dress are an important part of our everyday experience, and are a way for many people to express their culture, personality and individuality. In child care, what your child wears may also influence your child's health, safety, comfort, and wellbeing.

You show respect for your child when you allow them to make some decisions about the clothing that they wear by offering them choices from several acceptable options. Talk about tastes and preferences in clothing and fashion with your child and try to avoid giving them the message that they are being 'judged' either positively or negatively by their clothing.

The clothes children wear can affect the development of their independence and self-help skills. For example:

- trousers that fit comfortably and have an elastic waist are easier for young children to pull down and up than tighter fitting clothes, or ones with zips and studs.
- Tops with large necks, cardigans, slip-on shoes or shoes with Velcro fasteners are easier for children who are learning to or want to dress themselves.
- Bigger buttons are also easier for children to manage than small buttons or press studs.

As with all issues related to your child's experience in child care, to achieve the best outcome have open discussions with the educators in the service about your child's needs and how these can be accommodated in the child care service.

It's important for the service to know what you think and what matters to your family in relation to your child's clothing. Working together with the educators at your service will help to ensure that clothing and dressing practices support the best outcome for your child.

You may want to talk with the educators at your service if you have questions about suitable clothing for your

child. They can tell you about your responsibilities and theirs related to children's clothing, including how they manage dirty or soiled clothing.

It's usual for educators to make some requests about your child's clothing, including that you:

- label all clothing with your child's name
- provide spare clothes in case your child has an accident (especially during the time when your child is learning to use the toilet) or if there is a change in the weather
- supply one or more sun hats
- encourage your child to dress appropriately for the weather and to wear a hat at all times while playing in the sun





These are a few factors that you may wish to consider when choosing what your child wears to child care.

Temperature

It is important that children are not over or under dressed, and that clothing suits the temperature of the day. The smaller children are, the more easily they can become chilled or overheated. Natural fabrics such as cotton are generally cooler than acrylic fabrics. It is a good idea to send spare clothes for unexpected changes of weather, especially during changes of season, when the weather can be unpredictable.

Footwear

Children need to wear safe, comfortable shoes that fit well. Shoes should provide support as well as protection for your child's feet. Shoes that give little protection and support or that have raised heels or soles may cause accidents. Shoes with soles that grip make climbing and other physical activities easier and safer for children to enjoy and take part in.

Sun protection

Children need protection from the sun while playing throughout the day. T-shirts with long sleeves and long trousers offer good protection. Hats are essential and should have soft brims to allow for movement and to provide maximum protection. Your service will be able to provide you with information about their sun

protection policy and practices and the times that your child will be playing outdoors.

Clothing designs and accessories

The design and fit of their clothes and accessories may affect your child's safety during passive and active play. For example, long hems may cause tripping, and items such as necklaces, toggles on hats, drawstrings on jumpers and ribbons may become caught in equipment.

Clothing fabrics

Some children are sensitive to 'scratchy' fabrics, and some may have an allergic reaction to detergents, fabric softeners or other treatments used on clothes. All clothes that children wear should be low fire danger.

Dressing to support children's play and learning

When clothes fit properly and are not too loose or tight, children can move freely and comfortably and participate in experiences. It can be helpful to talk with your child about the clothes they feel most comfortable in for different activities, and to help them to choose clothes that will be practical.

