

How to Pare Down & Organize Kids' Clothes

As a professional organizer, I developed this system for parents who struggle with too many clothes for their children. This causes all kinds of problems, stress and laundry that can be avoided! It has worked well for many of my clients. I hope it will be helpful to you too!

-Rachel Biesinger, Reclaim the Room

*You can do this with or without your child; you decide what will work best. When I work with clients, I usually at least partly involve kids who are over 12 or who have a strong opinion about what they wear.

Steps

- Collect all of your children's dirty clothes and wash them.
If this is too big a task, just start with your oldest child's laundry. (You'll be glad to cut way down on the laundry through this process!)
- Get a notepad, several white garbage bags, and a permanent marker.
- Decide which clothes your children need (keep the same number for each child), and write them in your notepad. Here is an example:
 - 8 sets of pjs
 - 8 outfits for school/ everyday
 - 4 church outfits
 - 12 pairs of underwear
 - 12 pairs of socks
 - 2-5 pairs of shoes to go with the outfits
 - 2 swimsuits & cover-ups
 - Coat, snow pants, gloves, boots, scarf
 - 2 jackets
- Start with the oldest child's clothing. Gather all their clothes from their room, the laundry room, the coat closet, storage, etc., and set them in front of you.

- Put outfits together, then set aside the best eight that fit your child. Check off each item on your list as you do this.
 - If you are missing any clothes on your checklist, start a shopping list on another page of your notepad, or on your phone, and write down exactly what is needed, including the size & color.
 - For outfits that are missing items, like a shirt without pants to match, take a picture of what you already have, so that you can refer to it when you are shopping for the new item. Don't forget to make a note on your shopping list to remind you to check your picture of the item you already have.
- Put the outfits that are too small for this child, but are still nice, into a garbage bag labeled "too small for (name of child)", in case you want to pass them down to your other children.
- Put all other excess clothes into a garbage bag, labeled "donate".
- Check the eight outfits that you picked out to make sure there are socks, shoes, things for doing hair, etc. to complete each outfit. If anything is needed, make a note of it on your shopping list. If you have more than you need, donate the extra. Shoes should go with several outfits, so you will only need 2-5 pairs. *Tip: If you only use matching white socks for all but formal outfits, the laundry is so much easier!
- Put away all the clothes and accessories you are keeping for that child (see our website for blog posts and tips on how to store them in an organized way).
- Repeat the process for the next child. As you gather their clothes, remember to look at the clothes that were too small for the older child.