

Fashion Outlook

FASHION



Mary
Martin
Niepold

"Dressing is an ideal opportunity for a parent to give a child a sense of self-esteem and an opportunity to make intelligent choices."

So suggests Dr. Lee Salk, a noted child psychologist.

Child's play?

Teaching kids to dress themselves

Generally, young children like to make their own decisions. Studies reveal that 3- and 4-year-olds already have definite opinions, especially about the way they look and feel.

With more and more children in nursery schools and day-care centers, peer pressure about dressing starts earlier. Parents may find themselves in "stand-off" situations where their ideas on clothing choices for their child conflict with the child's own

notions.

Levi Strauss & Co. recently conducted a nationwide survey of 800 mothers of preschool children to determine children's dressing habits. Half of the mothers worked, half didn't.

Surprisingly, the Little Levi's Parents Poll revealed that fewer children of working mothers (32 percent) than children of non-working mothers (40 percent) dress themselves.

One would think that children of working mothers would exhibit more independence. Not so, replies Dr. Salk.

"Dressing is one of the signs of a child becoming more independent. It takes time to help a child develop the skills for extricating himself or herself from their dependency," he notes.

"Non-working mothers clearly have less pressures in the morning and have the time to do this. Independence doesn't emerge from being left alone when you're in need of a caring, responsive adult to help you learn a skill. It unfolds, but needs to be nurtured."

The importance of taking the extra time to help children dress themselves was supported by the survey findings: Seventy percent of non-employed mothers encouraged their children to dress themselves, even if it takes more time. Only 57 percent of working mothers offered the same encouragement.

Stand-off situations with clothing choices require some extra time and effort on the parents' part. The survey confirmed that working mothers are more likely to insist on their own clothing selection (30 percent) than their non-working counterparts (22

percent).

A not-so-surprising conclusion of the survey showed that little girls become interested in clothes and learning to dress themselves earlier than little boys. Twenty-six percent of girls' mothers reported their daughters' interest in clothing between the ages of 1 and 1½ years, compared to 18 percent of boys' mothers.

Feminist protests to the contrary, Dr. Salk says, "there are biological differences between boys and girls that are undeniable."

"Girls spend more time grooming than boys do — I've seen this over many, many years," Salk explains. "Little boys are more interested in manipulating large objects and engaging in more aggressive play. The females tend to be more nurturing in their activities and concerned with their images."

• Give the child choices. Suggest several sweaters; let the child choose one, even if it's inappropriate. "Children need to feel that they have options and that their wishes are respected," Salk reminds.

• Don't scream. "The major job of a parent is to maintain self-control. Parenting is not an easy job, but it's great fun when you can see the world through the eyes of a child and respect his or her individuality and dignity."



WHAT SIGN of independence makes mothers of preschoolers most proud? A child's ability to get dressed, according to the Little Levi's Parents Poll. Four times as many mothers considered dressing to be a more important sign of self-reliance than other categories, like "personal grooming" or "helping around the house."

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Photo Tips
by Peter Moss

A Halton Hills camera club is now a reality! On Monday night the inaugural meeting of the 'Halton Hills Camera Club' was held at the Cultural Centre on Church Street. In attendance were some twenty enthusiastic amateur photographers, many of whom have waited several long years for just such a club.

At the founding meeting, a board of directors was formed, a fee schedule adopted along with a formal club name and meeting nights were set - twice a month on the second and fourth Mondays. Meeting location will be set next week and a formal announcement will be made. We are anticipating available room space at Knox Presbyterian Church (Main and Church Streets) at 7:30 p.m.

Wasting no time the club plans immediate programs for beginners in photography, slide presentations and a club competition. At the first regular meeting on Monday Nov. 23 there will be a slide show entitled "City Light" by Mr. Richard Armstrong. This presentation has some spectacular images well worth seeing.

If you have aspirations to be a photographer or you desire only the knowledge by which you can learn to take better pictures please plan to attend, as the club and its charter members will be most happy to welcome you. Membership is not restricted to residents of just Halton Hills and there are associate memberships available for those members that are not available to attend all meetings and functions.

If you would like more information prior to the November 23 meeting please feel free to contact me at 877-9976 or Mrs. Patricia Stanley (the club secretary) at 877-7796 for more specific and detailed information.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!
Until next week.

Peter G Moss Photography
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