

## Holiday looks

# Kids' fashions are growing up fast

Manufacturers of children's wear are adapting new adult fashions into their lines more and more quickly these days. That means youngsters don't have to wait to dress like mom and dad.

In fact, the traditional one-year gap between the debut of adult fashions and their impact on children's garments is virtually non-existent today. Only the age of the child determines the color, fabric, pattern and cut of a garment.

Most children's fashions are manufactured in machine-washable, stay-fresh, no-iron fabrics. One of the most popular is fleece. Favored among adults for after-hours and even of-fleecewear, fleece is ideal for play, school and semi-dress-up for children.

Designers choose fleeces for its suitability to virtually any silhouette and ability to take most colors and prints. Today, fleece is recognized as the foremost lifestyle fabric of the '80s.

Knit accessories are perfect Christmas gifts for infants and toddlers. Shop for a classic look. Updated versions are knitted animal, snowflake and geometric patterns with little whimsical touches. These basics are joined by more creative graphic inspirations in the larger sizes that more closely resemble adult accessories.

Color is a key to toddler fashion this holiday season. The choices run the gamut from brights and jewel tones to pastels and the new Australian and African browns.

Look for infant and toddler apparel for little girls in soft pastels. Little boys' items run in bright, primary colors. As a child grows toward the teen years, the color selection becomes wider and more closely parallels adult preferences.

Popular screen and puff prints are also available in all age categories. The difference is in the choice of subject and the scale of the imprint. Adults favor animal prints, like dynamic tigers, and bold graphics, including slogans and sports symbols. Toddler and infant prints run to pandas, teddy bears, kittens and other symbols that kids can easily understand.

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## Home furnishings

# Decorating can last all year long

Spruce up for the holidays and create a beautiful Christmas setting for family and friends with some gifts for the home.

Each part of the country offers wonderful furnishing ideas. New England, for instance, is greatly influenced by English furniture, such as the Queen Anne wing chair with gracefully carved cabriole legs. Hundreds of years later, the Sherwood, an ultra-comfortable recliner by Barcalounger, offers the same styling.

For urbanites along the Eastern corridor, there's a wealth of contemporary gift ideas. Stratford's new clean-lined sectional sofa offers comfort seating and sleeping for holiday guests. Chromcraft's innovative chrome or brass dining designs also add their own sparkle.

Wicker is synonymous with Southern living, and is now enjoying renewed popularity. One gift suggestion for year-long pleasure is Barcalounger's new Hot Lines collection of modular, sleep sofas and recliners, featuring handsome wicker in white-washed and appealing honey finishes. Middle America has its roots deep in Victoriana. There's a decided renaissance of this design statement in Stratolounger's new Victorian recliner. Midwestern sports fans can catch their favorite game in the comfort of a Liberty recliner.

The flavor of the desert creates a clean, uncluttered style statement all its own. Soft muted tones, leather looks and natural stone accessories are the message from the Southwest. A perfect Southwestern-style gift is Barcalounger's modular leather seating, complete with crisp saddle stitching that withstands daily wear and tear. An added bit of sunshine on



VICTORIANA is recaptured in a special home holiday gift from Stratolounger that blends old and new. Chairs have high cabriole front legs, curved sculptured arms over matching cane sides and deep button tufting on back cushions. In velvet or jacquard for about \$500.

Christmas morning for young couples is Chromcraft's pristine pure-white dining group with an extra leaf for buffets.

The West Coast reflects a Far Eastern influence. A major home gift here can be a Stratford sofa, love seat and chair collection with softly rounded arms and pagoda base. Another Oriental interpretation is Chromcraft's casual antique white-washed rattan dining group with casted chairs, which provide extra seating both indoors and out.

What can be more appropriate for the Northwest than log-home living? A perfect Christmas gift suggestion here is a pair of rustic rattan re-

cliners from Barcalounger that guarantees no family feuding for the most comfortable seat in the house.

There's always a wonderful gift idea waiting for every room. Plush plaids typify the best of country in the living room. If you plan to redecorate for the holidays, Stratford cleverly coordinates plaid with denim for real down-home country. Update the guest room with a comfy country-styled recliner.

But the best indulgence of all is to gift yourself with a new lounge for the master bedroom -- and relax with an extra cup of coffee and the morning paper.

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## What's the latest in fun and games?

If you're thinking about buying a game or toy for a child or adult, Jeff Conrad can tell you what's in and what's out. He's the game designer for International Games, Inc., manufacturer of the best-selling card game UNO and other family and children's games and toys.

"The toy industry works like a pendulum. It's cyclical," Conrad comments. "I compare it to the fashion industry. The length of a woman's skirt and the width of a man's tie change every year, but they always end up repeating themselves."

Conrad, a game designer for 17 years, says that a 1970s trend is back, with a little twist: Crafts are popular again. Today's crafts, however, are activity products that offer instant gratification, rather than projects that require numerous steps and lots of time.

For example, Stamos Activity Sets, by International Games, let children create scenes and pictures using self-linking rubber stampers. Conrad says that parents and children want to create something and see the result -- now!

"The older crafts, such as threading a needle through a cardboard picture of an animal, took time. Today's activity sets give children immediate results," Conrad explains.

Several activity toys have become popular with children. With Magna Doodle, by the Ideal Co., children use a special tool to draw pictures on a screen filled with a metallic substance. This material is attracted to the tool and brought to the surface of the screen. The result is a picture that can be erased immediately. The Etch-a-Sketch Animator, by Ohio Art, uses a screen on which a child draws a dozen pictures. When the screens are "animated" in sequence, they create a moving picture.



GREAT GIFTS can be games to learn by. Feeling Fit and Shopping are two new preschool entries in the Games for Growing collection from International Games. In Feeling Fit, children learn about good eating habits and exercise. Shopping gives educational information about earning, saving and spending money. Games retail for \$11.

Another buzz word this year is education, says Conrad. Parents are very interested in offering infants and preschoolers "productive stimulation, not just pacifying play."

Video Technology manufactures electronic teaching devices for the preschoolers, including the talking Whiz Kid. This learning computer operates with 50 software study cards and is designed to teach children numbers and the alphabet.

Panosch Place's soft toy products for toddlers also have an educational purpose. Its First Curves toy uses colored panels of fabric and interesting graphics to help develop a child's visual perception.

International Games has added two unique floor games to its Games for Growing collection, educational preschool games designed to grow with a child's changing skill levels. In "Feeling Fit" and "Shopping," preschoolers have fun learning about good eating habits, exercise and the values associated with earning, saving and spending money.

Conrad also sees a strong trend in three-dimensional mechanical-action games such as Milton Bradley's Hungry Hippos and Pig Pong, in which children manipulate levers or squeeze game pieces to win the game. Sophisticated electronic games, such as the Cookie Monster Cookie Counter

## Give executives something useful

Somewhere between a yellow paley tie and a partridge in a pear tree is a variety of thoughtful gifts that will delight the executive who has everything.

The large assortment of gifts to choose from, available in an equally wide price range, should please gift givers as well.

The executive with a penchant for bringing work home from the office will appreciate gifts that make the easy transition from desk to den. A portable computer can be used at home or during a commute. Some models weigh less than 12 pounds, are battery operated and are small enough to fit into a briefcase.

A multi-feature telephone will let an executive conduct business from home. Previously available only on commercial equipment, features like electronic hold, two-line capability and conferencing are now increasing-

ly available on home telephone products.

The fitness-conscious executive will enjoy an exercise bicycle that electronically displays time, speed, distance and pulse. For the exec who is already pedaling indoors, videocassettes are available that simulate cycling through steaming geyser basins, along Lake Yellowstone or through the Grand Tetons.

To help the traveler stay in shape, a portable "gym in a bag" includes rubberized exercise bands, which combine the principles of a pulley system and free weights for a complete workout. A jump rope is also a handy way to work out on the road.

If your big wheel is more into spectator sports, he or she would probably appreciate a good pair of binoculars.

For the executive who wants to cut the time it takes to transcribe notes

from business meetings, the GE Fast-trac tape recorder plays back recorded material at up to twice the normal speed. The voices aren't "chipmunky," either; they're fast-paced, but sound normal. Through advanced micro-circuitry, the user controls the speed and pitch of the tape to maintain intelligible sound.

Wine connoisseurs tired of twisting and tugging a manual corkscrew may welcome a powerful electric model. They are available in a variety of price ranges, and some models include wine thermometers with proper temperatures inscribed on the tip.

When shopping for the jaded businessman or woman, remember that a really good gift is something useful. And that's something that will earn you a broad smile at unwrapping time.

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