

What is “Gender Specific” Clothing?

The dramatic play items of the environment rating scales place importance on helping children develop positive gender role identification. So you may want to consider what types of clothing are considered gender specific. Because children are developing gender role identity during the Preschool years, they require concrete examples of dress-up that are associated with men and women. Work uniforms like chef shirts, firefighter and police uniforms, scrubs, etc are wonderful additions to the dramatic play area but they are not gender specific because both men and women function in these roles. The goal is to encourage non-stereotyping in children as well as provide them with gender specific examples.

Ask yourself, “What can I provide to the children that will allow them to act out a role that is identified only with one sex, such as being “Mommy” or “Daddy. Some examples are as followed:

Female Dress-Up

Male Dress-Up

Ladies’ flats and pumps	Boys’ or men’s dress shoes/boots
Purses	Boys’ or men’s dress shirts and pants
Flowery hats	Top hat, derby, etc
Dresses and skirts	Suspenders, bow ties and ties*
Lacey blouses**	Older boy’s dress shirts, suit jackets, sports jackets**
Bathing suits	Swim trunks
Girl’s night gowns and robes	Boy’s pajamas and robes
Brownie and girl scout uniforms	Cub and boy scout uniforms

*Clip ties are best but if you cannot find clip ties, try adding Velcro to a regular tie so it doesn’t turn into a choking hazard.

**Men shirts button left to right, while women shirts button right to left.

It is also suggested that programs have additional items in storage which can be added to the dramatic play area when the accessible items are being laundered and/or to generate new interests and dramatic play possibilities.