

### Let Children Play Role Choosing Clothes

Anyone with an elementary school child has heard the protest, "But nobody else has to wear..."

The desire to choose their own clothing is only one expression of a child's growing independence, says Pam Cutright, agricultural extension clothing specialist at A & T State University.

Through school and school activities the child develops an interest in people outside his or her immediate family.

As their circle of associations increases, it becomes important for them to be accepted by their new school friends, says Ms. Cutright.

As they seek the admiration of new friends, their parents approval becomes less important to them. It is because of their healthy developing independence that their clothing protests become more frequent.

Because clothing is something they have known since infancy, it is very personal. Children associate clothing not only with themselves but also with others. Clothing is a natural and logical medium through which they can assert themselves.

At this time in their lives, children need the self confidence that belonging to a group of friends provides. To them, part of the feeling of belonging is looking like their friends.

If their clothing is too different from that of school friends, a feeling of inferiority may develop. Concern with looking different may interfere with their participation in school and activities.

Children's growing independence is also expressed in their wanting to do things themselves.

As they reach the ages 7 to 8, they no longer want parents to select clothing for them and are much happier if they are given a choice from among a few things.

From about nine on, children are developing the ability to select things for themselves and want to be consulted before clothes are bought or made for them.

Although the way he or she looks is very important to an elementary school child, unless encouraged to do so, they will take little or no interest in caring for their clothes. They drop things where they are removed and throw clothing around.

Constant encouragement to hang clothing up and report damages will pay off when a child is about nine, says Ms. Cutright. He or she won't be perfect at that age, but will continue to improve on the habit.

Caring for clothing is one way children can learn a feeling of ownership and a sense of responsibility, she says.

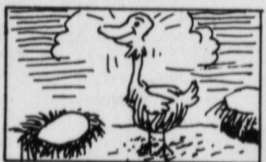
### Blooming Plant May Be Slower

When selecting your tomato plants this spring, you might be better off passing up those already blooming or bearing small fruit and choose smaller, younger plants.

Many gardeners buy blooming plants thinking they will get tomatoes quicker, but this isn't always the case, according to North Carolina State University extension horticulturists.

Developing fruit puts a nutrient drain on plants. If this is going on at the time the plant is experiencing transplant shock, slow growth can be expected.

Generally, it is better to transplant before blooms form. An alternative is to grow the plant in a large container that would allow good root development. Putting the plant into the garden row with a good root system will reduce the transplant shock.

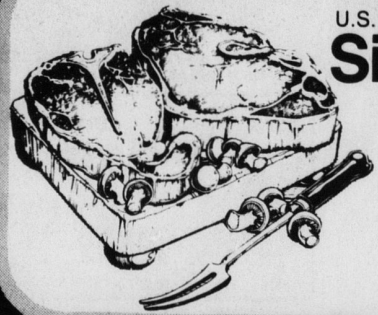


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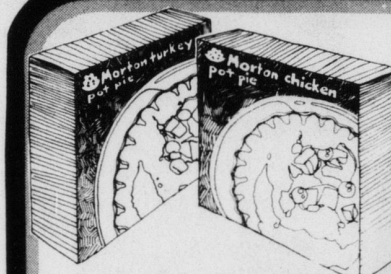
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