

The Prepared Closet

A Gentle Guide to Organizing Kids' Clothing



WELCOME

&

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Clothing clutter can sneak up on families—especially with growing kids and changing seasons. This guide is here to help you simplify your child’s wardrobe so that getting dressed (and putting laundry away!) becomes easier, faster, and less stressful.

Inside, you’ll find:

- Step-by-step instructions to declutter and reset each season
- Tips for setting up a child-friendly clothing system
- Ways to involve your child in organizing

You can complete this entire guide in a weekend—or spread it out over several short sessions. The key is progress, not perfection.

What you’ll need:

- 3 laundry baskets or bins (Keep Out, Pass On, Store)
- Labels and markers
- This guide and a bit of time

AUDIT THE WARDROBE

Before you organize, it's important to see what you're working with. Go through all of your child's clothing together, category by category. Don't forget any clothes that might be in storage.

This is a great chance to talk with your child about what they love to wear and what no longer works.

Sort items into 3 piles:

- Keep Out – It fits, is in good shape, and gets worn.
- Store – Too big/seasonal but still useful as well as any items you are keeping for younger children.
- Pass On – Too small or not loved anymore.

Categories to check:

- Shirts & tops
- Pants, leggings & shorts
- Dresses/skirts
- Pajamas
- Underwear & socks
- Jackets & outerwear
- Seasonal (swimwear, snow gear, etc.)

Then ask: Do we need all of these? Keep your favorites and let go of excess.

SET UP AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

Now that you've pared down the wardrobe, it's time to set up a system that makes it easy for your child to find, choose, and put away clothes independently. A well-organized wardrobe not only helps your child feel empowered, but it also keeps everything neat and accessible for you.

Tips for Setting Up:

- **Use Low Drawers or Bins:** Place storage in a way that allows your child to easily reach and access everything. Low drawers, baskets, or bins work great because they keep clothes within easy reach and allow children to see what's inside. This promotes independence and helps reduce frustration when they need to get dressed.
- **Label with Pictures and Words:** Labeling is key for helping your child identify where each item belongs. Use both pictures and words to create easy-to-read labels, especially if your child is an early reader. For example, pair a picture of a shirt with the word "Tops" so your child knows exactly where to find their favorite T-shirt.
- **Keep In-Season Items in the Main Area:** Limit the clothing options to what fits for the current season. This reduces decision fatigue and keeps your child's wardrobe manageable. Store off-season clothing in bins or under the bed so that they don't clutter up the main storage area.

SET UP AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

- **Group Similar Items Together:** Organize clothing by category to keep everything in its place. Group all tops together, all bottoms together, and so on. If your child has a lot of options, this can help them easily identify what they need without wasting time looking through piles of clothes.
- **Create Separate Areas for Special Items:** If your child has special occasion clothes, pajamas, or accessories, create separate bins or compartments to keep these items from being mixed with everyday clothing. This ensures that they're easy to find when needed and prevents them from getting forgotten in the shuffle of everyday wear.
- **Keep It Simple & Accessible:** Avoid overstuffing drawers. Keep the system simple by only storing what your child wears regularly. Too many choices can lead to overwhelm. Make sure there's a place for everything, so that when your child gets dressed, it's a quick and easy process.

SET UP AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

Storing Items for Later

As you organize your child's wardrobe, you'll likely have a pile of clothing that no longer fits or is out of season. It's important to store these items in a way that keeps them safe, organized, and easy to access when the time comes to rotate them back into use.

If you're saving keepsakes, be intentional. Keep only a few meaningful items and store them in a clearly designated spot.

Tips for Storing Off-Season or Clothing for Later:

- **Use Clear, Labeled Bins:** Store out-of-season or clothing that is too large in clear plastic bins so that you can easily see what's inside. Label each bin with the season and size range (e.g., "Winter - Size 6") to make it easy to grab the right clothes when needed. This will save you time when it's time to rotate clothes for the next season.
- **Avoid Overstuffing:** Remember to leave enough room to add new clothes as needed. Overstuffing can make it difficult to find specific items.
- **Store in a Dedicated Area:** If possible, designate a specific area for storing off-season items, such as under the bed, in a closet, or in the attic. Keeping them in one spot ensures that they don't get mixed up with the current wardrobe and are easy to access when the seasons change.

DO A SEASONAL DECLUTTER

Kids grow fast—and their clothing needs change with the weather. A quick wardrobe reset at the start of each season helps keep drawers manageable and mornings smooth.

When to do it:

- After a growth spurt
- When your child receives clothing from others
- After their birthday or holidays, if they receive new clothes
- Seasonally

Seasonal Reset Checklist:

- Try on all current-season clothes
- Remove anything too small, worn out, or not worn
- Store or donate off-season items
- Make a list of gaps (e.g., “needs rain boots”)

Pro tip: Set a seasonal calendar reminder to make this a habit!

BUILD A WARDROBE THAT WORKS

Forget overstuffed drawers! A well-curated wardrobe helps children get dressed easily and reduces laundry stress. Use this as a flexible guide—not every family needs the same amount.

The number of items you have will depend on how often you do laundry and your child! Come up with a number that works best for you.

Categories to Consider for a Capsule Wardrobe

- Tops
- Bottoms
- Pajamas
- Layering Pieces (sweater/hoodie)
- Jacket or seasonal outerwear
- Undergarments
- Pairs of Socks
- Dressy Outfits or Uniforms
- Seasonal Items (e.g., swimsuit, snow pants)

Tips:

- Stick to mix-and-match colors to make outfits easier
- Limit the “just in case” extras to one small bin

INVOLVE YOUR CHILD

Children are more likely to take care of their belongings when they help choose and organize them. Make clothing care a collaborative, age-appropriate process. Ways to involve your child:

- Ages 2-5: Sort socks, hand you items, help fold
- Ages 6-8: Try on clothes, help label drawers
- Ages 9-12: Lead the audit, plan shopping list, set up system

Sample Conversation Starters:

- "Do you still like wearing this?"
- "Let's make a space just for your favorite things."
- "Want to help label your drawers with stickers?"
- "Which clothes do you think are best for playtime, school, or parties?"

SIMPLIFIED DECLUTTERING CHECKLIST

Step 1: Prepare

- Decide what to do with unwanted clothes
- Choose storage spots for too-big, seasonal, or future clothes
- Make a plan for when you'll declutter (esp. with toddlers)
- Decide if your child will access clothes independently
- Do laundry
- Take a "before" photo

Step 2: Declutter

- Collect all clothes
- Sort into: Keep / Donate / Store
- Refine the "Keep" pile
- Refine the "Store" pile
- Put away stored clothes
- Set "Keep" items aside

Step 3: Set Limits

- Decide how many items you need in each category
- Choose how many items your child can access
- Create overflow/backstock storage spot
- Donate any excess
- Repeat Step 2 for new laundry as needed

SIMPLIFIED DECLUTTERING CHECKLIST

Step 4: Create Independent Setup

- Remove off-season clothes from child's reach
- Set up independent access system (baskets, shelves, drawers)
- Adjust what's available to match your style/season preferences
- Take an "after" photo

Step 5: Maintain

- Add a child-height mirror (secured)
- Add a small laundry basket
- Label bins/drawers if helpful
- Keep checking in regularly

FINAL TIPS & ENCOURAGEMENT

Organizing your child's clothing isn't just about having tidy drawers—it's about creating calm mornings, confident kids, and more time for what really matters.

A few final reminders:

- Done is better than perfect
- Keep it simple—less is more
- Involve your child in small ways
- Refresh your system each season
- Celebrate small wins!

Whether you finish this guide in a weekend or over a few weeks, you're making a meaningful difference in your family's daily life. You've got this!



THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to use this! I hope it will help you create a more organized and peaceful space with your child. I'd love to hear how it goes - feel free to share your experience and tag me on social media!

Follow me @the_prepared_environment for more tips on organizing with kids, creating a Montessori-inspired home, and making decluttering a positive experience.

TAKE CARE,
Sarah