# Safety Of Children’s Clothing

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| **Section of Manual:** | [Number] [Name] |
| **Policy:** | [Number] [Name] |
| **Approved by:** | [Example: Executive Team, Name of Program] |
| **Effective:** | [Date] |
| **Revised:** | [Date; Date; Date; Date] |
| **Accreditation:** |  |

[**PLEASE NOTE:** The policy below is a **sample** that was developed from best practices and existing policies in the field to guide operations.

## Purpose:

Children are, by nature, very active. They move around quickly and are often too young to be aware of safety concerns. There are a variety of hazards that can impact children as they play. Some of these hazards can be related to children’s clothing.

## Policy

The Salvation Army [Ministry Unit] will ensure, as much as possible, that children are safe as they play. For this reason, when children are in our care, their clothing will be inspected for safety. We will take any reasonable steps to ensure that the child is safe from hazards related to clothing.

## Procedures

* Children should always be supervised as they play.
* Staff members should assess the child’s clothing for safety concerns.
* Below are some safety concerns to be aware of:
  + **Drawstrings:** Drawstrings are not generally recommended for children’s clothing as they can contribute to a child getting caught in equipment or furnishings. If a drawstring in the neck area becomes caught, it can be a strangulation hazard. If the child’s clothing has drawstrings at either the neck or waist, ensure that the drawstring is tightly tied or short enough that it won’t get caught as they play.
  + **Shoelaces:** If the child has shoes with laces, ensure that the laces are securely tied so as not to be a tripping hazard. Velcro is a safer alternative for securing shoes on toddlers.
  + **Buttons and small parts:** For infants and toddlers, small, detachable pieces on clothing items present a choking hazard. Make sure that any buttons etc. are securely attached to the child’s clothes and that it will not come loose as they play.
  + **Scarves:** Scarves can easily get caught on playground equipment and in doors. If the child is wearing a scarf for outside play, ensure that the scarf is inside the child’s coat minimizing the danger of it becoming caught as the child plays.
  + **Belts, Ties and Sashes:** These items can also become caught in play equipment and doors etc. Ensure that belts, ties, and sashes are firmly attached to clothing and are not long enough to wrap around a child’s neck.
  + **Season Appropriate Clothing:** It is important to ensure that the child’s clothes are appropriate for the season. Ensure that they are wearing winter clothing during that season so that they will not become too cold during outdoor play. During the warmer seasons, ensure that the child is wearing clothing that will prevent them from overheating while they play.
  + **Footwear:** Children should wear footwear that may be secured to their feet. Closed toe shoes with non-skid soles are recommended. During the winter months, indoor shoes are required. If children are wearing sandals in the warmer weather, they should be attached to their foot. Flip flops are not permitted. If children are going swimming, the wearing of water shoes is encouraged.
* When staff members see any of the above easily fixed concerns, they should take whatever basic steps are necessary (eg. tie shoelaces tightly) to keep the child safe.
* If there are ongoing concerns, it may be helpful to make suggestions to the child’s parents / caregivers regarding the safety of clothing.