

# The wardrobe flow

Amanda Lecaude, Organising You

WITH THE RATE THAT BABIES AND KIDS GROW AT, WARDROBE SWAP OUTS AND CHANGES ARE AN ALL TOO REGULAR OCCURRENCE. BUT WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ALL THE CLOTHES THEY NO LONGER FIT INTO? ORGANISING EXPERT, AMANDA LECAUDE, SHARES HER TIPS FOR MANAGING THE FLOW OF CLOTHES.



One of the regular things I hear from mums, or see when I work with mums, is “how should I manage all the baby and children’s clothes and items that I no longer need right now?”

Naturally there are a range of reasons why mums ask this question and could include:

- they no longer fit but I will use for the next child when I have it in the future;
- I will need them for a younger sibling soon;
- I think I will pass them on to friends or family; or
- sometimes they are just not ready to part with them and want to keep all or some of them.

All of these are valid reasons and really it is just finding the right way to manage what to do with them. Every one’s circumstance is different as are people’s homes and storage spaces. Therefore please consider the following tips that might be applicable to your situation to make it an easier and simpler process for you. Please remember any of these tips are not complete solutions and might need tweaking over time to suit your specific needs!

10 tips on how to manage the flow of clothes and other children’s items in your home.

#### Tip 1

If one of your reasons for keeping clothes and items is that you are going to pass them on to friends or family then I suggest you consider doing this sooner rather than later – why take up storage in your space when you don’t need to! When you are doing this you might like to consider donating some to charity as well. When sorting some people like to pass on those clothing items to family that are in better condition rather than give them everything.

#### Tip 2

Firstly if you are having a new baby, and if it is your first, I regularly say to new mums-to-be to consider your purchases and don’t go overboard. They grow so fast and quickly outgrow clothes so therefore don’t buy lots of small sizes – it is better to purchase a few to get you by and if you feel you need more get them later.

#### Tip 3

No matter what age your baby or child is it is important to make time to regularly go through their current stock of clothes to see what fits and what doesn’t any more. Naturally this needs to happen more often with babies and small children than it does with older children when you can be more seasonal in your approach (i.e. once or twice a year).

If you don’t do this you might find your child has actually

missed out on wearing some items and by the time you notice it will be too late. I remember this happening to me with a few items of clothing when my boys were babies and I was so disappointed at the time. Once I set up a system in place fortunately it never happened again.

#### Tip 4

Storing items will depend upon the storage space and type that you have available. As this can be different for everyone I have made a couple of different suggestions below that might work for you:

- a chest of drawer system - how this can work is that you have all the current items that your baby or child is wearing in the top drawers and all the next clothing items in the drawers below. As needed you rotate some out and others up and in.

- using tubs - Another option is to store all the other bits of clothing that don’t currently fit (they either have just worn or are about to grow into) in tubs (labelled with the size/s and what is in there). Sometimes if using large tubs you might include different sizes to fill the tub so it is important that you separate and label them where possible to make it easier for you to go through at a later stage.

- using garbage bags or space bags - you could even use garbage bags to sort clothes into however be aware that they are probably are not the best in terms of utilising space and don’t tend to stack very well. Space bags on the other hand are a good option for including quite a bit of clothing and can be better to stack. You can also include a label inside the bag so you know what has been included.

- using large ziploc bags – these can also be used to separate different bits of clothing in a way that is useful to you and the beauty about this method is you can clearly label them. These could also be used in conjunction with tubs as well.

- use suit cases / travel bags - I have known families to use many different options including these as they are being stored anyway so why not use them for multi purposes.

#### Tip 5

It is important before storing clothing to go through all the items, no matter what, to determine if they are still in good condition and that you or someone else will in fact reuse. There is no point storing items and taking up valuable space when you don’t need to.

#### Tip 6

Please make sure before you store any items away that you wash those you are going to keep rather than putting

anything away dirty. The last thing you want to do is start going through clothing at a later stage and find dirty clothing items.

#### Tip 7

It is also important to ensure you store clothing in a dry area. As you will not need to access these items regularly it is suggested that they do not take up prime and valuable space in your home and be stored either high up in wardrobes, in a spare room or even in an attic space.

You might also like to consider using moth balls or something like cedar balls to protect clothing if not in a fully sealed storage item like a tub. Even then I would probably still be inclined to include them.

#### Tip 8

As clothes can differ in sizes it is more important to keep all those worn at the same time together and note that they vary than to keep them specifically in size order. If you do this you might once again easily miss the opportunity for your child to wear something. A general rule is to break clothing down into three-month age brackets; 0-3 months; 3-6 months; 6-12 months for younger children and into larger age brackets for older children.

You can further sort into more detail than sizes if you like i.e. dresses, pants, shirts but in general it is easier to keep them all together by age brackets.

You can also sort by gender if you have different sexes before storing clothing to make it easier too.

#### Tip 9

Put reminders in your diary at key times when you think it will be time to review or go through the clothes. You don't actually have to do it on this day in the future but at least it will prompt as a reminder and then you can move it forward as many times as you need to. The main thing is you won't forget!

#### Tip 10

When you get to the next stage of clothing it is important to also have a quick look through as sometimes you find yourself going through items and wondering why you kept what you did. If that is the case some of these might be able to be donated if you are not going to pass them down or hand on to friends/family.

#### Keeping special items

Many of us cannot part with particular items from our children's younger years and there is nothing wrong with this. It really is okay to keep a few items in a memorabilia box. It only really becomes a major issue if you find you can't part with anything and want to keep it all. My advice

is to select the key items and keep these in a sealed container, like a tub, and clearly mark it as memorabilia. I know in my memorabilia box I have my boys first shoes, a bunny rug, a couple of hand made rugs given to them, a couple of soft toys, a few special outfits and a pair of Levi jeans.

#### Items other than clothing

When it comes to other items it will once again depend upon the size of the items and the storage options available to you. If they are larger items like prams, cots, change tables, or large toys then usually you will need a rather large storage space such as a garage or under stair storage. Once again before storing such items be aware as to whether or not you are likely to use them again rather than just keeping for the sake of it. If you do decide to store items once again ensure they are clean and in good condition before storing away.

#### Please remember

Any of the above can be a little time consuming but worth setting up as it can ultimately save you time and money having to shop for something when you already have it.

Whatever system you use it is important to keep it simple rather than making it too complicated. It needs to work for you not against you!

If you have other approaches that have worked for you please do get in touch and let me know as I am always keen to learn and pass on to others – Amanda@organisingyou.com.au

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**Amanda Lecaude is an organising expert who loves being able to help people – her clients – get organised. She sees the difference it makes in their everyday lives, particularly families, just to have a way to create some TIME, SPACE and BALANCE! She is also very passionate about equipping school students with organising skills for life to maximise greater results primarily in secondary school and limit the overwhelm and frustration for both them and their parents.**

**Get in touch 0409 967 166  
amanda@organisingyou.com.au**