

# The Best Sun-Protective Clothing for Kids and Babies, According to Dermatologists

| By Lori Keong and Dominique Pariso

Youngsters have thinner, more sensitive skin, making it essential for parents — and their little ones — to develop good sun-protection habits from the get-go. “Getting kids used to sun protection early is key,” says Dr. Heidi A. Waldorf, associate clinical professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Finding the right sunscreen to slather on is of course important, but the dermatologists we spoke with say finding quality sun-protective clothing is just as crucial — especially for new parents, because babies under six months cannot wear any sunscreen. And even when your child is old enough for sunscreen, experts still recommend using sun-protective clothing because it can reduce the need to reapply and because some kids just don’t like the feel of a pasty white film on their skin. “When sunscreen gets too cumbersome to apply and reapply, a good alternative is sun-protective clothing,” explains Dr. Ainah Tan.

Generally, clothes with “dark colors and a tight-weave fabric will protect the skin,” according to Dr. Jody Levine. But finding garments with a high ultraviolet-



protection factor — or UPF rating — is key to getting the best coverage, according to Dr. Marnie Nussbaum. “The average white cotton T-shirt provides a 5 UPF rating, (meaning one-fifth of the sun’s rays will pass through that garment), while some sun-protective garments have a UPF rating of 50, which means one-50th of the UV radiation can penetrate the fabric,” she explains. Below, Nussbaum and nine other experts recommend their favorite sun-blocking shirts, onesies, and swimsuits (all of which have a UPF rating of 50) for kids and babies.

## Best overall sun-protective clothing for kids



\$35 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Boy's Logo Surf Rash Guard

Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi, who says she “only applies sunscreen to my kids in areas that are not covered by sun-protective clothing,” cites Coolibar as her favorite brand. She is in good company: Seven of the nine other dermatologists we talked to also recommended it. “I love Coolibar. It is one of the original brands for sun-protective clothing and their innovative fabric blocks 98 percent of the sun’s ultraviolet light,” says Dr. Carlos A. Charles, founder of NYC-based Derma di Colore.



\$26 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Kids' Surf Shirt

Dr. Samer Jaber of New York City–based Washington Square Dermatology also recommends Coolibar and, as a rule, suggests looking for sun-protective clothing that is both “comfortable and stylish.” This surf shirt comes in 21 different colors and patterns, so there is surely an option that’ll please even the most persnickety of kids.



\$35 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Baby Boys' Island Swim Trunks

These moisture-wicking swim trunks come in a variety of fun patterns and in sizes that will fit babies from 6 months old to age 2.



\$40 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Boy's Superbank Board Shorts

And for older boys, ages 4 to 16, here’s a smart-looking pair of striped board shorts



\$40 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Kids' Neck-to-Knee Surf Suit

This neck-to-knee surf suit would be great for active girls ages 4 to 16 who spend a lot of time in the water.



\$42 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Baby Hooded One Piece Swimsuit

Coolibar's onesie for babies between 6 months and 2 years old offers full body protection — including for little scalps, thanks to its handy hood.



\$22 at Amazon

### Coolibar UPF 50+ Baby Splashy Bucket Hat

Older kids should be wearing something in addition to sunscreen to protect their heads and faces. “Hats are huge because they offer a wide brim that’s protecting the back of your neck and your face,” says Vikash Oza, director of pediatric dermatology at NYU Langone Health. This cute bucket hat will fit on little noggins of kids between 1 and 3 years old.

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## Most stylish sun-protective clothing for kids



\$56 at Maisonette

### Mott50 x Maisonette Mini Kelly, Ice Cream Dream

Both Nussbaum and Dr. Keira Barr recommend Mott50 for stylish kids. “They have lightweight, fashionable options for kids that provide a UPF 50 rating, so you’re not choosing between sun safety and style,” Nussbaum explains. This suit, designed in collaboration with Maisonette and NYC-based illustrator Jordan Sondler, even has thumb holes, so its sleeves can cover and protect your child’s hands. It’s sized to fit kids from 2 to 10 years old.



\$40 at [Maisonette](#)

### Mott50 Mini Max, Blue Sharks

And for the boys (ages 2 to 10 years old), Mott50 makes this just-as-snazzy sun-protective shirt in graphic shark print.



\$35 at [Amazon](#)

### SwimZip Little Girl Mint Chip Rash Guard Swimsuit Set

Charles and Barr suggest Swimzip’s garments to protect burgeoning fashionistas at the beach. “Swimzip makes some very stylish and playful suits for your baby that are easy to put on and take off — a huge help for kids that can be difficult to wrangle,” Charles says. We particularly love the sweet bow detail on this mint-colored long-sleeved swimsuit, which is sized for 1- to 3-year-olds.



\$30 at [Amazon](#)

### SwimZip Boys UPF 50+ Short Sleeve Rash Guard Swim Trunk Set

This rash-guard-and-swim-trunk set for boys features a coordinating color palette that feels very beachy (especially owing to the shorts’ fun jellyfish print). This set also has the most variety of sizes of anything on this list (it ranges from newborn to 10 years old), although a handful of sizes are currently sold out.

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## Best sun-protective swim sets



\$30 at [Amazon](#)

### UV SKINZ UPF 50+ Girls 3-Piece Swim Set

Three of our experts — Tan, Charles, and Waldorf — recommend the sun-protective clothing from UV Skinz. This three-piece set for girls, which includes a pair of swim trunks, a swim shirt, and a matching hat, offers the most bang for your buck (and looks adorable to boot). The set comes in a variety of sizes, from age 1 all the way up to 7 years old. It also comes in 14 different patterns — we’re partial to this happy sunburst style, but you really can’t go wrong with any of the whimsical prints.



## UV SKINZ UPF 50+ Boys' 3-Piece Swim Set

Like the UV SKINz set for girls, the set for boys comes in 14 different patterns, including this tropical-palm-tree version we really dig.

\$30 at Amazon

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## Best sun-protective clothing for infants



## Nozone Fiji Protective Baby Swimsuit UPF 50+ (0-36 Months)

Full-coverage clothing is a must for babies under 6 months since they can't wear a drop of sunscreen. This swimsuit from Nozone — which came recommended by Waldorf — covers your baby's arms and legs entirely, and if your child likes it, you can get it in sizes that will fit kids as old as 3. Dr. Morgan Rabach explains why the appeal of sun-protective onesies extends beyond a child's infancy: "I find it easier to put very little kids in a onesie than try to get them all greased up."

\$40 at Amazon

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## Best treatment to make clothing sun-protective



## Nakoma Products SunGuard Sun Protection Clothing Wash, Pack of 3

An inexpensive way to add UPF protection to clothing is with SunGuard, which you can add a load of laundry to wash UPF-30 sun protection into each article of clothing (the product promises its UPF protection will last for up to 20 washings). "It's an inexpensive way to impart sun protection into your child's wardrobe," says Barr.

\$22 at Amazon

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## Best sunglasses



\$23 at Amazon

### Roshambo Baby Shades

“Sunglasses are important for protecting the eyelids, which have very thin skin,” Oza says. These shades, recommended by Barr, are made from a flexible, rubberized plastic to withstand being tossed around by a small child. Most important, they block 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation. “They are also BPA-free, so if your little one happens to mistake the glasses for a chew toy, you don’t have to worry as much,” says Barr.



\$20 at Amazon

\$20 at Saks Fifth Avenue

### Babiators Baby Original Navigator Sunglasses

Barr also likes Babiators, which will fit newborns and kids up to 5 years old.



\$45 at Maisonette

### Winkniks Jaden, Red

According to Barr, Winkniks are the “best in fashion and function.” These stylish Wayfarers types also have scratch- and impact-resistant lenses and feature spring-hinged temples that flex to fit a child’s head comfortably.

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