

Outdoor Clothing

Buying guide



This Outdoor Clothing buying guide has been developed by Muddy Faces to help practitioners purchase effective outdoor clothing on a range of different budgets.

This guide also offers ideas on what considerations need to be made when buying outdoor clothing for children.

Settings often purchase clothing for the children to help provide and support outdoor play and forest schools. It is often the case, that settings have a limited budget to spend on clothing. We have set out below some suggestions on how to spend your budget on outdoor clothing whilst maintaining the emphasis on supporting free play outdoors.

Considerations

1. Budget

The first thing to consider is your clothing budget as this will be the significant limiting factor. In an ideal world, a full class set of top quality waterproofs would be lovely but unless you have towards £2,000 to spend then you will need to make some compromises.

2. What will you be doing outdoors?

If you need the clothing for a school trip where they will not get much wear then a budget set should be adequate. If you are going to be doing more adventurous activities, such as crawling, sliding and climbing trees, then a budget clothing range will not last and you will need to consider more robust clothing.



3. Number of sets

Do you need to buy a full class set or could you manage with a smaller number for those children who come ill prepared or have forgotten their kit.

4. Do you need to buy jackets as well as trousers?

When participating in outdoor play, children will crawl, kneel, sit, climb, slide and splash. A good quality trouser is important, therefore, to protect from the wind, mud, damp and vegetation. Waterproof trousers are often worn even if it is not raining. If a good quality trouser is worn, the waterproof jacket is less important, except of course, for when it is actually raining.

Even if it is not raining during your session, the ground is most likely to be damp. If you can afford it, we would recommend buying higher quality waterproof trousers or dungarees

and a lower quality or budget jacket. The children can use their own coats and maybe supplement these with a few shell jackets to use over the children's coats should it rain.

Budget jackets are less breathable than the more expensive ones so can become damp inside if a child sweats. These jackets are fine, providing you are not planning to wear them for long periods of time. An economy jacket can often be sufficient for most situations even robust play situations.

5. How water proof is the clothing?

For modern technical fabrics, waterproof ability is measured by its hydrostatic head. This is where the fabric is held taut under a tube/column of water 1" in diameter. The taller the column of water, the greater the pressure and therefore the more waterproof the material. For example, a fabric that is waterproof to 10,000 mm fabric means that the column of water will be at a height of 10,000 mm (32.8 feet) before water would begin to leak through the fabric. For fabric to be considered waterproof, it must resist the pressure of a column of water 2000mm tall.

6. Is the material breathable?

A measure of how breathable a fabric is, will be expressed in terms of how many grams (g) of water vapour can pass through a square metre of fabric from the inside to the outside in a 24 hour period. In the case of a 20k (20,000 g) fabric, this would be 20,000 grams. The larger the number, the more breathable the fabric.

7. Are the seams welded & taped?

Often, fabric is fully waterproof, however, where two pieces are joined together, water can leak through the seam. For clothing to be fully waterproof, the seams need to be sealed this is achieved through taping or glue/heat welding.

Seam taping covers the tiny holes, made by the needle in the sewing process, so they don't leak This is done using a heat application of thin waterproof tape.

Sometimes seams are bonded together using glue or heat, but typically they are first sewn then taped. Garments can be either "fully taped" or "critically taped" – the difference is that a fully taped garment has every seam taped, while a critically taped garment is taped only on high exposure areas like the neck, shoulders, and chest. Without adequate seam sealing you'll get wet even with the best waterproof/breathable fabric.

8. Is the material Oeko-tex certified

The OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 is an independent test and certification system for textile raw, intermediate and end products at all stages of processing.

The tests for harmful substances cover

- legally banned and controlled substances, chemicals known to be harmful to the health (but not yet legally controlled), parameters for health protection
- Taken in their entirety, the requirements go far beyond existing national legislation.

The OEKO-TEX® testing for harmful substances is always geared towards how the textile will actually be used. The more closely the product is in contact with the skin, the stricter the human ecology requirements that it must meet.

Certification - The prerequisite for textile products to be certified under the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 is that all components of an article, without exception, comply with the required criteria - so not only the outer material, but also the sewing threads, linings, prints etc and any non-textile accessories such as buttons, zips, rivets etc.

9. Finally consider if you want any additional features

9.1 Reflective strips and patches

Many children's outdoor clothing ranges have reflective strips. This is to make the wearer more visible in low light and is a good safety feature.

Many of the clothes have adjustable velcro strips and poppers allowing for room for growth.

Elasticated ankle cuffs help hold clothing in place over welly boots.

9.2 Stirrup straps

Stirrup straps help keep trousers in place over welly boots. In my experience, these straps, can wear out or worse apply pressure to the ankle seam which results in the clothing ripping around the hem or cuff.

I always remove straps and allow trousers to hang loose or put elasticated cuffs higher up wellies to allow for kneeling and a range of movement so less pressure is applied to the material.

What is the difference - High budget V Low budget clothing

Higher specification waterproof clothing is made from more robust materials that are often both breathable and waterproof. The better clothing will offer taped seams, waterproof protected zip systems and soft feel material around the collar and cuffs where material is likely to rub on children's skin.

This clothing is often designed not to rip. If it is snagged and a small tear occurs, it can be repaired with a patch or some tape.

Good quality, lower budget clothing is often waterproof but less robust and not breathable. It is more suitable for less adventurous outdoor play, where children are less likely to come in contact with abrasive surfaces and spiky plants and shrubs. Often these clothes if snagged will rip easily.

Suggestions on how to spend your budget

Budget 1 - less than £20 per child

If you are wanting a waterproof jacket and trousers for light play situations then a quality pack in the bag jacket and trouser set is perfect. We recommend the [Result pack in the bag](#). We have tried a number of budget brands but none are as robust and waterproof as this set. It is excellent value for money. This set is ideal for keeping the wet out but we do NOT recommend it for adventurous outdoor play.

If your outdoor play is going to be more adventurous then we suggest that you buy trousers and not jackets. Most children will have their own coat and so you will be able to buy some better quality, more robust trousers. Ocean trousers and dungarees and [Muddy puddles](#) trousers are all less than £20.00 each. Muddy Faces recommends Ocean trousers and dungarees for this type of outdoor play.

Budget 2 - £20 – 35 per child

As your budget increases, there are more choices in terms of clothing. At Muddy Faces we stock a range of waterproof trousers and dungarees that are robust and waterproof and ideal for adventurous play. Have a look at Muddy Puddles, Abeko, Ocean, Togz


Muddy faces recommends Togz trousers, dungarees and jackets.

Photos of MF clothing

Budgeting for children's waterproof clothing Muddy Faces products at a glance

<£15	<£20	<30	< 40	>40
Result Jacket & trouser pack in bag	Result Jacket & trouser pack in bag	Result Jacket & trouser pack in bag	Ocean dungarees or trousers + Ocean Jacket	Muddypuddles Trouser & Jacket approx £42.00
Result lightweight trousers	Result lightweight trousers or Jackets	Result lightweight trousers or Jackets	Ocean Jacket and trouser suit	Togz Jacket and trousers approx £58.00
Ocean trousers	Ocean trousers	Ocean trousers	Muddypuddles Trousers	Togz warm and dry Jacket and trousers approx £70.00
	Ocean dungarees	Ocean dungarees	Muddypuddles Jacket	
		Ocean Jacket	Togz Trousers	
		Ocean Jacket and trouser suit	Togz dungarees	
	Muddypuddles Trousers	Muddypuddles Trousers	Togz all in one suits	
		Muddypuddles Jacket	Togz warm and dry dungarees	
		Togz Trousers		
		Togz dungarees		
		Togz all in one suits		
		Togz warm and dry dungarees		

We are very happy to discuss your clothing requirements arrange for samples to be sent out (no obligation to buy) Please note: Samples need to be returned by you unused if you do not want to purchase them. Contact info@muddyfaces.co.uk to discuss your requirements.

A close-up photograph of a person's lower legs and feet. They are wearing blue, heavy-duty work trousers and dark, heavily muddy boots. The person is standing on a patch of green grass. The mud on the boots is thick and brown, splattered across the grass. A white rectangular box with a black border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing contact information.

Please feel free to drop us an email
info@muddyfaces.co.uk or phone 0114 2219617
to discuss any clothing questions you may have.

www.muddyfaces.co.uk

