



PARENTS

Target's new line for kids with special needs was designed by a mom who gets it

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By Meghan Holohan

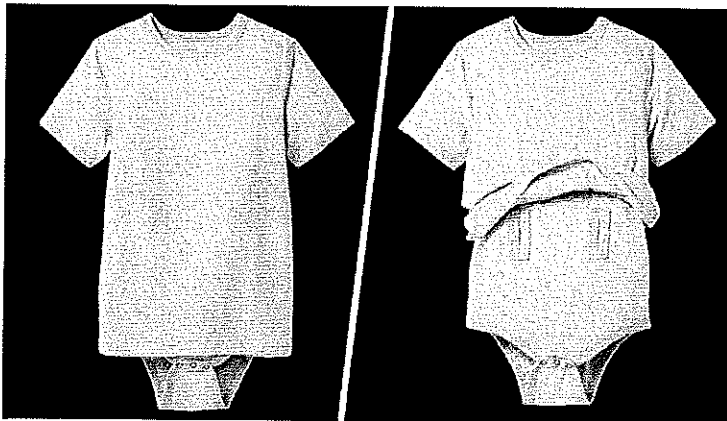
As the mother of a child with autism, Stacey Monsen struggles to find clothing that fits her daughter, Elinor, 8, has limited fine motor skills and is not potty trained, so Monsen needs clothes that cover a bulky diaper and allow easy access.

The problem is, most of the time this type of clothing is made for toddlers and babies.

"For pants or shorts, I either size way up, or buy pieces that are all function and no style which are easy for her to pull on or off," Monsen told TODAY Parents in an email. "Elinor is just one child of the many, many children who would benefit from adaptive clothing."

So Monsen, a designer on the product development and design team at Target, used her experience – along with feedback from dozens of Target shoppers and organizations that work children with special needs – to create adaptive clothing for the Cat & Jack collection. This input helped the designers "better understand how clothing can help meet the everyday needs of children living with disabilities and sensory-processing sensitivities."

Toddler Boys' Adaptive Short Sleeve Bodysuit, \$9, [Target](#)



This body suit has a hidden opening for abdominal access and no tag, which often annoys children with sensory processing sensitivities. [Target](#)

Functionality was essential – but Monsen and the team wanted the clothes to be cool, too.

"It's not just about making the routine of getting dressed easier for kids. It's also about offering clothing options that are fashionable and be able to express your child's personality and still meet their needs," she said.

Toddler Boys' Adaptive Fleece Hooded Sweatshirt, \$10, [Target](#)

This long-sleeve fleece sweatshirt does not have a tag or seams, making it more comfortable for children who struggle with unusual textures. [Target](#)

Many children with sensory-processing sensitivities and autism dislike tags, seams, or scratchy materials. So the clothes are made with extra soft cotton knits and no tags and seams. The team designed pants and bodysuits with easy access to diapers in mind, and the clothes are wheelchair-friendly so parents don't have to worry about fabric getting stuck in the wheels, for example.

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Target Adding Clothing For Adults With Special Needs

by Shaun Heasley | January 31, 2018

Target is expanding its clothing options for people with disabilities beyond children with a new collection of jeans and tops in adult sizes.

The retailer said it will roll out sensory-friendly and adaptive clothing for women as part of a new line called Universal Thread that's meant to fit individuals of all shapes and sizes.

"Universal Thread is all about making great style available to everyone, while offering unprecedented value and never compromising on quality," said Mark Tritton, Target's executive vice president and chief merchandising officer.

Sensory-friendly options within Universal Thread will be free of tags, have flat seams and feature extra-soft material. Adaptive denim in the collection will offer a high-rise back and longer inseams, wider leg openings to make dressing easier, no back pockets and faux front pockets. Items will be priced from \$5 to \$39.99.

The new products for women with disabilities come just months after Target unveiled a collection of sensory-friendly and adaptive clothing for children as part of its Cat & Jack brand. Target declined to say if they will make sensory-friendly and adaptive options available for men.

While Universal Thread will be featured in stores, Target said the sensory-friendly and adaptive items will only be available on the retailer's website when the collection goes on sale Feb. 4.

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