

Salus PFD Fits Infants Less Than 20 Pounds

In October 2006, *Practical Sailor* tested infant's life jackets and our top pick was MTI Adventurewear's Bay Bee 201-I, one of the few jackets we looked at that met our chief criteria for an infant life vest: flotation that turned the infant face up and kept his head well above water, comfortable snug fit, easy donning, and a wide grab strap near the top that allowed someone to easily lift the child from the water or dinghy.

None of the jackets that we tested was suitable for very small infants weighing less than about 20 pounds. One reason for this is that the U.S. Coast Guard's minimum buoyancy standards apply to children up to 30 pounds, resulting in a vest that is extremely bulky for infants less than 6 months old.

Despite the lack of any certifying



The Salus Bijoux has two adjustment points at the back (left) and two on the front.

standards, the Canadian company Salus Marine has been selling a vest for infants between 9 and 25 pounds since 2006. It still has no official certification in the U.S. or Canada, but several *PS* readers have praised the PFD, saying it's the only one their baby will wear.

With well-distributed flotation, four adjustment buckles, a broad tri-segment head support, lifting strap, and a mesh back, it meets our criteria for a well-designed infant jacket. In field tests, it turned the infant face up, but one *PS* reader reported that the shoulder straps were too far apart for his small child.

It costs \$70, twice that of the MTI Bay Bee (www.mtiadventurewear.com), but it is hard to put a price on items such as this.

This product should be regarded as an extra layer of protection, not a license to leave a child unmonitored near the water. Since every child floats differently, it should be tested in a pool or calm water for proper fit and flotation. ▲

CONTACT

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The RKS Extreme Sport glasses come in two sizes: ages 7 to 12 (above left) and ages 3 to 7 (above right).

Real Kids' Sunglasses

Only a few sunglasses manufacturers featured in last summer's test (July 2009) offer children's sunglasses, and those shades are usually just scaled down versions of the adult kind.

After experimenting with several different styles for kids ages 3-13, we found that the younger children, ages 7 and under, were a tough bunch to fit. Harder still were kids ages 3 and under. Uncomfortable ear pieces were a common complaint.

Enter the wrap-around goggle-style glasses from Real Kids Shades. The lenses meet our criteria for glare and UV protection (100 percent UV 400), and they fit. The tiny Extreme Element are sized for children 3 years or younger, while the Extreme Sport come in two sizes, ages 3-7, ages 7-12. The larger size is also avail-

able with polarized lenses.

The sunglasses have no ear pieces, only a neoprene and webbing band that easily adjusts for fit. (The Element band is just neoprene.) They have a closed-cell foam cushion surrounding the inside of the frame, blocking any light from entering at the sides; vents prevent fogging.

While we suspected the foam is vulnerable to wear and tear, after three months of use, the glasses have held up well. We have seen no foam deterioration from exposure to sunscreen or water.

For \$20, you get the sunglasses and a microfiber cleaning bag. Money well spent, in our book. ▲

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