

Create a Child Theme for your WordPress Website: 3 Different Methods

Do you want to create a child theme for your WordPress site? If you've found a great theme that you want to use (whether you intend on modifying it or not), you should absolutely create and use a child theme.

This lets you make any customizations, and not lose them when the theme is updated. In this guide, you will learn about why using a child theme is important and how to easily create and edit one.

Why using a WordPress child theme is important

A child theme inherits all the characteristics of a parent theme, which makes it easy for you to customize any code while leaving the parent theme's functionality intact. When the parent theme gets updated, your code customizations will not be overwritten, and any changes you've made will remain. In addition, using a child theme lets you easily track any edits you've made. Since the files of a child theme are separate from those of a parent theme, you can easily see what you've adjusted and undo any unwanted changes.

You will need a basic understanding of CSS and HTML to make changes, and some [PHP knowledge](#) would also be helpful.

How do child themes work?

A WordPress child theme is stored in a directory which is separate from the parent theme. Each has its own style.css and functions.php file, and you can add other files as needed. You must have the two files above in your child theme for it to work right.

With the style.css and functions.php files, you can alter anything you need to, including:

- styling
- layout parameters
- coding
- scripts

You can adjust these items within your child theme even if they are not present in the parent theme. When someone visits your site, WordPress first loads your child theme, then retrieves any missing styles and functions using parts of your parent. This means that you get the most out of your customized child theme design without taking anything away from the parent theme's core functionality.

Creating a child theme in WordPress

There are a few ways to create a child theme, including manually using an ftp client or file manager, using a [WordPress plugin](#), or with the help of an online child theme generator.

For those of you who prefer video tutorials, here you go.

Manually via ftp or File Manager

1. In either your ftp client or File Manager within your hosting account cPanel, navigate to your themes folder under **public_html > wp-content > themes**.
2. Create a new folder within the theme directory. It is recommended that you name it the same as your parent theme, but with -child on the end (e.g. mytheme-child). Make sure you don't have any spaces in the name, but use hyphens (-) instead.

PLEASE NOTE: In this example, we're creating a style.css file based on the Twenty Twenty WordPress theme. Adjust your file as needed with the proper attributes.

3. Using a text editor, create a file called style.css, and populate it with the following code:

```
/*
Theme Name: Twenty Twenty Child
Theme URL: http://yourdomain.com
Description: Twenty Twenty Child
Theme Author: Your Name
Author URL: http://yourdomain.com
Template: twentytwenty
Version: 1.0.0
Text Domain: twentytwenty-child
*/
```

4. Adjust the fields as necessary, paying extra attention to the Template line. It lets WordPress know which parent theme your child theme is related to. Once finished changing the info, make sure to save your changes.

5. Create another file using your text editor and name it functions.php. Don't copy the code from the parent theme file because you want it to be separate and customizable. Paste the following code in your child theme's functions.php.

```
<?php  
add_action( 'wp_enqueue_scripts', 'enqueue_parent_styles' );  
function enqueue_parent_styles() {  
    wp_enqueue_style( 'parent-style',  
        get_template_directory_uri() . '/style.css' );  
}  
?>
```

6. Log in to your WordPress dashboard and go to **Appearance > Theme**. Click the **Activate** button on the child theme you just created, and preview it on the front end.

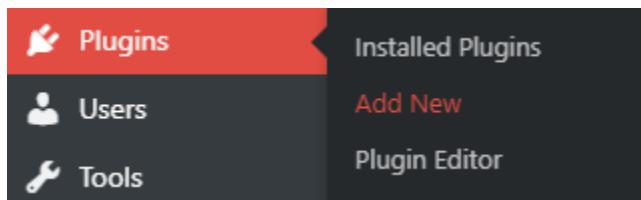
Using a child theme plugin

Instead of creating your child theme manually, you can instead use a plugin. **There are a few you can choose from, including the following:**

- Child Theme Configurator
- Child Theme Generator
- Child Theme Wizard

For the purposes of this tutorial, we will use the [Child Theme Configurator](#) plugin. Follow the steps below to create your child theme.

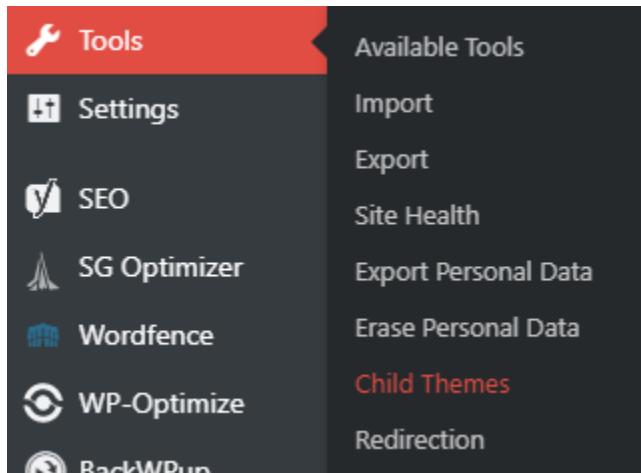
1. Log in to your WordPress dashboard and go to **Plugins > Add New**.



2. Search for Child Theme Configurator and once you find it, click **Install Now**.

A screenshot of the Child Theme Configurator plugin page on the WordPress plugin repository. The plugin logo features a stylized 'K' and 'L' with the word 'LILAEA' below it. The title 'Child Theme Configurator' is displayed, along with a 'Install Now' button. A description text explains the plugin's purpose: 'When using the Customizer is not enough - Create a child theme from your installed themes and customize styles, templates, functions and more.' Below the description, it says 'By Lilaea Media'. The plugin has a rating of 5 stars (232 reviews), over 300,000 active installations, was last updated 1 month ago, and is compatible with WordPress.

3. Activate the plugin and navigate to **Tools > Child Themes**.



4. Under select an action, choose **CREATE a new Child Theme**. Select your Parent Theme from the dropdown and click **Analyze** to check for stylesheet dependencies and other possible issues.

Parent/Child **Query/Selector** **Property/Value** **Web Fonts & CSS** **Baseline Styles** **Child Styles** **Files** **Upgrade**

1 Select an action:

CREATE a new Child Theme
Install a new customizable child theme using an installed Parent Theme.

CONFIGURE an existing Child Theme
Set up a previously installed child theme for use with the current Parent Theme.

DUPLICATE an existing Child Theme
Make a complete copy of an existing Child Theme in a new folder. Note: step 8, below) is disabled with this action.

RESET an existing Child Theme (this will destroy any work done)
Revert the Child theme stylesheet and functions files to the state they were in when you first created them under the Files tab.

2 Select a Parent Theme:
[Click here to save a backup of the selected theme.](#)

Genesis ▼ Analyze

3 Analyze Parent Theme
Click "Analyze" to determine stylesheet dependencies and other potential issues.

✓ This theme appears OK to use as a Child theme.

✓ This theme does not require the parent theme's `style.css` file for its appearance.

The Configurator selected "Do not add any parent stylesheet handling" for the "Parent stylesheet handling" option (see step 6)

Click to show/hide raw analysis data. Please include contents below with any support requests.

5. Select a name for your child theme directory (this is not the name of your Child Theme, which you can customize later).

4

Name the new theme directory:

genesis-child

6. Pick where you want to save new styles. Generally, you'll want to select Primary Stylesheet (style.css). This will save new custom styles directly in the Child Theme's primary stylesheet, and will replace existing values.

5

Select where to save new styles:

Primary Stylesheet (style.css)

Save new custom styles directly to

Separate Stylesheet

Save new custom styles to a separate file instead of replacing existing child theme styles instead

7. Specify how the Parent Theme stylesheet is handled. Typically, you'll want to select Use the WordPress style queue and let the plugin determine the proper actions and dependencies. This will update the Child Theme functions.php file automatically.

6

Select Parent Theme stylesheet handling:

Use the WordPress style queue.

Let the Configurator determine the appropriate actions and dependencies.

Use `@import` in the child theme stylesheet.

Only use this option if the parent stylesheet cannot be modified.

Do not add any parent stylesheet handling.

Select this option if this theme already handles its own styles.

Advanced handling options:

Ignore parent theme stylesheets.

Do not load or parse the parent theme styles. Only use this option if the parent theme does not have any styles that conflict with the child theme.

8. Optionally, you can enter Child Theme Name, Description, Author, Version, etc.

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Customize the Child Theme Name, Description, Author, Version, etc.:

Click to Edit Child Theme Attributes ▾

Child Theme Name	Genesis Child
Theme Website	https://my.studiopress.com/themes/genesis/
Author	StudioPress
Author Website	https://www.studiopress.com/
Theme Description	The industry standard for Premium WordPress Themes.
Theme Tags	one-column,two-columns,three-columns,left-sidebar,right-sidebar,accessibility-ready
Version	3.3.1

9. Then, you choose whether you want to copy the Parent Theme menus, widgets and other customizer settings to your Child Theme (**CAREFUL:** this will overwrite any Child Theme options you've already set).

8

Copy Menus, Widgets and other Customizer Settings from the Parent Theme to the Child Theme:

This option replaces the Child Theme's existing Menus, first time you configure a Child Theme.

IMPORTANT: Some "premium" themes use this theme from a website such as "ThemeForest".

10. Click the button to run the Configurator.

9

Click to run the Configurator:

Create New Child Theme

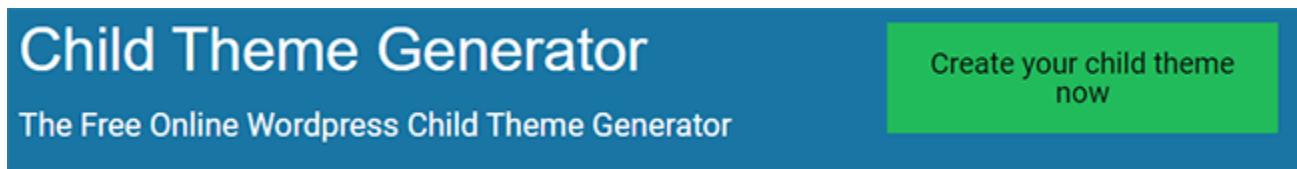
IMPORTANT: Before you activate your child theme, check it with Live Preview.

Once you've previewed your child theme and ensured that it's all right, you can go ahead and activate it.

Using an online child theme generator

In addition to the methods mentioned above, you can use a free online child theme generator. It's easy and only takes a couple minutes.

1. First, head over to <https://childtheme-generator.com/>.



2. Click the button that says **Create your child theme now**.

A screenshot of the Child Theme Generator form. It has two main sections: "Parent theme" and "Child Theme".

- Parent theme:**
 - Name of your Parent (Original) Theme: Astra
 - The slug of your Parent Theme: astra
- Congratulations!**

We were able to automatically load the theme details!
- Child Theme:**
 - Name of your Child Theme: Astra Child
 - The slug of your Child Theme: This will be the name of your theme folder
astra-child
 - Author email address:
We do not save or sell your email address
me@myemail.com
 - Author name: Me

At the bottom of the form is a blue button labeled "Create your child theme now".

3. On the next screen, fill out all details and click the **Create your child theme now** button at the bottom of the form.

Your child theme has been created!

Congratulations!

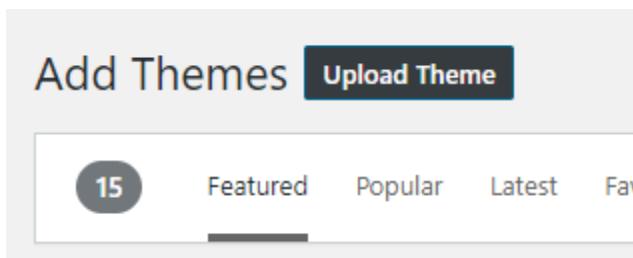
Your child theme has been created. Click the button below to download the ZIP file.

Installation

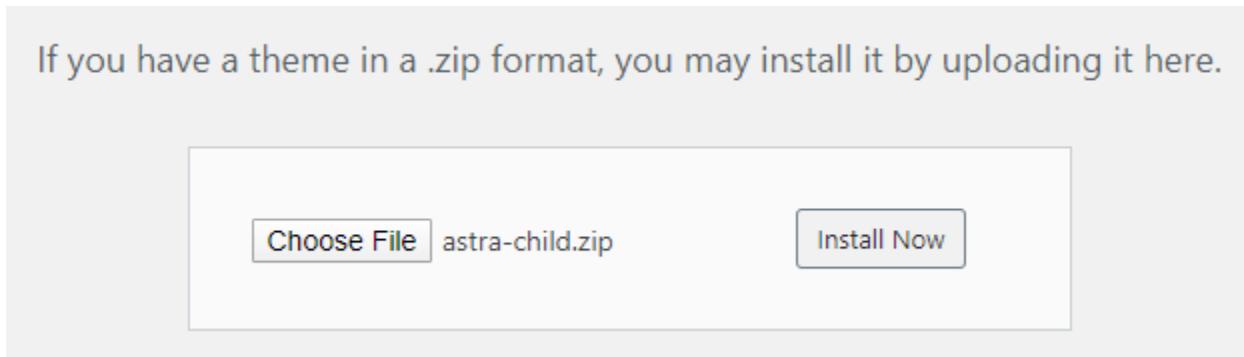
Simply unzip the file and upload the now existing folder child theme folder to your wordpress installation. The path should look like: `/wp-content/themes/your-child-theme/`.

[Download your child theme now](#)

4. On the next page, click the **Download your child theme now** button.



5. Now, log in to your WordPress dashboard and go to **Appearance > Themes**. Then, click the **Add New** button near the top. On the next screen, click the **Upload Theme** button.



6. Then, click the **Choose File** button, locate your downloaded child theme and click the **Install Now** button. Once it uploads the file, click the **Activate** link on the next page.