

1961

EC61-426 Making a Child's Coat

Gerda Petersen

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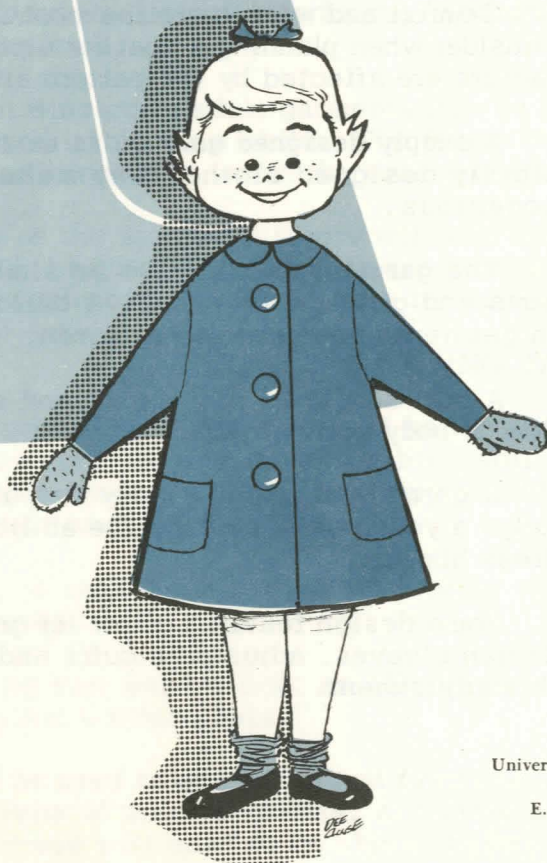
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making a CHILD'S COAT



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Making A Child's Coat Gerda Petersen



Children's ready-to-wear coats of good quality are often expensive and are soon outgrown.

The skillful homemaker who can make her child's wraps can save a nice sum of money. An even greater saving may be realized if the discarded garment of an adult can be made over for a child. If style features that allow for the growth of the child are included, the coat can be made wearable for a longer period of time.

This circular is planned to help the homemaker create an inexpensive professional looking garment for a child.

Comfort and warmth are the most important factors to consider when planning a coat for a child. Both of these factors are affected by the pattern and fabric selected.

A simply designed garment is most desirable. Elaborately designed clothes may make a child too self-conscious.

The garment should also be similar to those other boys and girls are wearing. A child is uncomfortable in garments that are too different in style or fabric.

A coat should be easy in cut and should permit freedom of body activity during play.

A garment that can easily be put on and taken off helps a young child develop the ability to dress and undress himself.

Some design features allow for growth of the child. Raglan sleeves, adjustable cuffs and deep hems permit this adjustment.

PATTERN SELECTION

The pattern design should be suited to the wearer and to the fabric. If the coat is to be remade from an adult's garment, more thought will need to be given to the selection of the pattern. The pattern pieces will need to fit the pieces of the old garment.

Buy the pattern size that most nearly corresponds to the measurements of the child's chest, waist and hips. It is unwise to buy a size 6 pattern for a child whose measurements are size 4. The coat should fit the child when it is new. Although he will eventually grow into it, a child will dislike and feel uncomfortable in a garment that is too large.

FABRIC SELECTION

Choosing the best quality in fabric is not always essential since children out-grow coats quickly. Sometimes an inexpensive remnant can be made into an attractive coat.

Choose a lightweight fabric, yet one that will keep the child warm. Three layers of lightweight fabric will be warmer than one layer of heavy fabric because the air space between the layers assists in retaining body heat and keeping out the cold air.

A firmly woven fabric will be more durable and will also offer better protection from the wind than one that is loosely woven.

A fabric that doesn't show soil readily requires less frequent dry cleaning. If a garment is to be laundered the lining, interfacing, and shoulder pads should also be of the type that can be laundered.

Many good, yet discarded adult garments can be remade for children. Be sure the fabric is one that is suitable for a child. The fabric should also be carefully inspected to determine whether or not it is worth the time and effort.

Wool and some of the synthetic fibers will add warmth for winter wear. Flannels, tweeds, gabardines, and novelty coatings are possible suggestions. Cotton fabrics, such as cords and corduroys, might be nice for summer or early fall wear.

LINING & INTERFACING FABRICS

Lining fabrics should be lightweight and harmonize in color with the coat. Fabrics with smooth surfaces are usually more durable, soil less readily, and slip off and on easily. Wearability is important since the lining should last as long as the coat. Rayon twill and cotton sateen are possible linings.

If an interlining is needed, a lightweight loosely woven wool might be used. Outing flannel may also be used.

A "zip-in" lining can make a coat an all season wrap and reduce the necessity of having both spring and winter coats.

Interfacing may be used to add shape and firmness to a garment. Wigan, unbleached muslin, the softer type of tailor's canvas, and other similar fabrics that mold well may be used. Some of these will need to be shrunk before using.

CONSTRUCTION HINTS

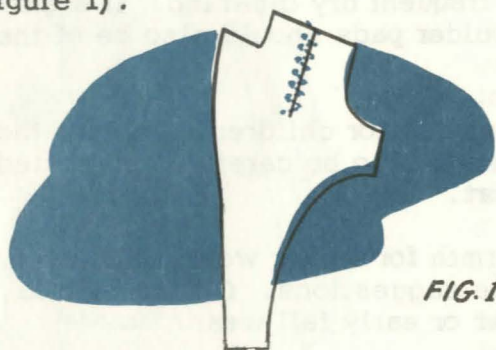
1. Observe grain (crosswise and lengthwise threads) of fabric carefully when laying the pattern, cutting, and stitching.

2. Tailor's tacks made with contrasting thread or tailor's chalk may be used for marking pattern notches and perforations.

3. Stay stitch with the fabric grain on curved or bias edges such as shoulder line, armhole, and neckline to prevent fabric from stretching. This line of stitching is placed just inside the seam line.

4. Stitch darts from the wide end to point. Fasten threads securely at the point. Cut large darts down the center to about 1/4 inch from stitching point. Open seam lightly with the tip of the iron. Press smoothly over a tailor's ham or pressing mitt.

To make the shoulder darts in the interfacing, cut down the center of the dart between stitching lines to the point. Lap one edge over the other, matching the stitching lines. Pin and sew by hand or by machine (Figure 1).



Large darts from the shoulder seam in both front and back can be made smaller, as the child grows, to enlarge the garment in width if desired.

5. Seam allowances on children's patterns are sometimes less than on adult's patterns. Check carefully before beginning to stitch. If underarm seams are made wider, the garment may be enlarged in width as the child grows. Seam edges on unlined coats may be finished by binding.

Press every seam carefully before it is crossed with another seam.

Grade or stagger all enclosed seams such as collar edges and front closings. Clip or notch curved edges where necessary.

Press an enclosed seam open and then closed. Be sure the under side or facing does not show.

6. To determine the best location for the pockets, pin coat front and back together at the shoulder and underarm seams and try the coat on the child. Consider proportion and location for the convenience of the child.

Pockets should be large enough for the hand of the child. These pockets will bear rough usage so need to be reinforced on the wrong side of the coat. Reinforcement is needed at the slit for set-in pockets and at the upper edge for patch pockets. Both welt and patch should be stitched to coat fabric at the corners with two rows of machine stitching to withstand strain.

7. A 3 to 4 inch hem may be used in a coat to allow for growth. The hem should not be so deep that it looks bulky and unattractive. Hems on sleeves may also be made deeper to allow for growth.

8. Interfacing & Taping - For summer wraps, interfacing might be used only under front facing and between collar pieces to give body yet prevent a wadded-up appearance.

For winter coats, the whole chest area and upper back may be reinforced for added warmth.

The coat back may be interfaced with wigan or muslin (that has been shrunk). To attach interfacing to the back, baste along center back line so that lengthwise grainline of interfacing is directly on top of the lengthwise grainline of coat. See that the edge of the coat and interfacing exactly coincide. Ease the interfacing toward the center so that it is slightly looser than the fabric. Baste at the neck, shoulder, and underarm seams (Figure 2). Stitch into the regular seam.



The coat front may be interfaced with either wigan, muslin, or a lightweight tailor's canvas (hair canvas).

Taping front edges and breakline (crease line) prevents the garment from getting out of shape (Figure 3). If wigan or muslin is used for interfacing on the front, it may be stitched into the seam instead of using tape.

If a tailor's canvas is used, the seam allowance may be trimmed away and the twill tape (should be shrunk) stitched to the canvas. Then the tape, and not the interfacing is stitched into the seam. This eliminates the hair canvas from the seam line, holds the interfacing securely, and makes possible sharp, thin, front edges.

This same effect may be obtained by cutting a strip of muslin on the identical grain to fit the front edge of the interfacing where the facing will be attached (Figure 4).

Match outer edge of the muslin strip with the outer edge of the hair canvas. Place muslin strip on opposite side of hair canvas from center front and buttonhole markings. With interfacing side up, stitch muslin to hair canvas $7/8$ inch from the edge; stitch again toward inside edge of muslin strip for reinforcement. Press if necessary. Trim away hair canvas to first row of stitching $7/8$ inch from edge (Figure 5).

Place interfacing to underside of coat front, muslin strip facing the coat. Stay stitch interfacing to the coat just inside the seam line at shoulder and armhole. On front edges, stay stitch on seamline. Muslin will then be stitched into the seam, but hair canvas will not.

Collars and cuffs will also need interfacing. If there are no cuffs, stay the lower edge of the sleeve to give more body at the wrist. To do this, cut a bias strip of canvas or muslin $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches wide. Pin or baste the lower edge against the hemline of the sleeve. Cross-stitch both edges lightly to the sleeve (Figure 6). Turn the sleeve hem up over the bias piece, baste, and cross-stitch (Figure 7).

This same type of stay may also be used in the hem of a coat.

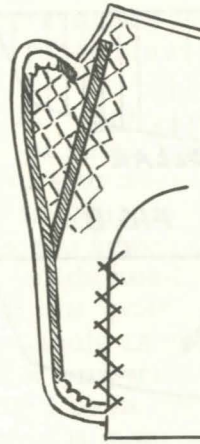


FIG. 3



FIG. 4

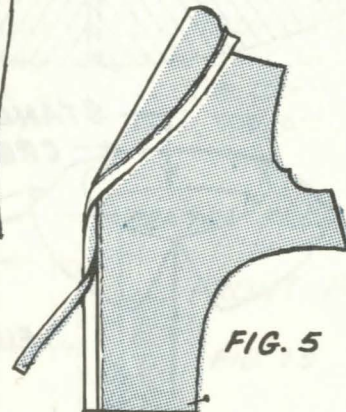


FIG. 5



FIG. 6

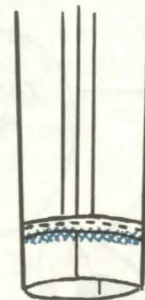


FIG. 7

9. Collars - Follow the instructions given in the pattern. The following suggestions may help you have a sharper smoother collar.

The upper collar is usually cut with center back on lengthwise grain of fabric. The collar should be cut with the fabric folded so that the grain on the two sides is the same.

The under collar is usually cut on the bias with a seam at center back (Figure 8).

If the pattern for the under collar is not smaller than the upper collar, trim $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch off of the outer edge. This will make the upper collar roll under and the under collar will not show when it is finished.

The interfacing is cut like the under collar. Lap one edge of the seam over the other, matching stitching lines. Stitch (Figure 9).

Baste interfacing loosely to under collar.

If the collar pattern doesn't contain markings for a crease line, it will be necessary to define one. To do this, pin and baste the under collar to the neckline of the coat. Put the coat on the child and shape the collar on the neck as it will be worn. Pin a crease line between the stand and fall areas (Figure 10).

Remove the collar from the coat. Baste and then stitch the crease line.

The depth of the fall is greater than the depth of the stand at center back to prevent the seamline at the neck from showing underneath the collar.

Rows of machine stitches about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart may be used to fill in the stand. A more perfect collar can be made if pad stitches (made by hand) are used. Curve the collar inward on the canvas side (Figure 11).

When pad stitching, the collar is held with the outer edge in the hand so the canvas can be eased onto the collar with the thumb. Continue pad-stitching the entire collar, shaping by hand as you work.

Steam the under collar, shaping it on a tailor's pad or rolled up turkish towel, so it will fit the neck when finished. Allow to dry thoroughly.

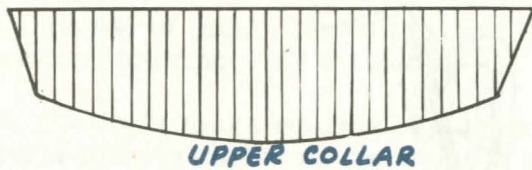


FIG. 8

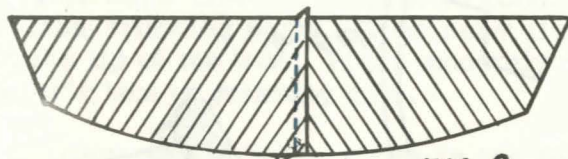
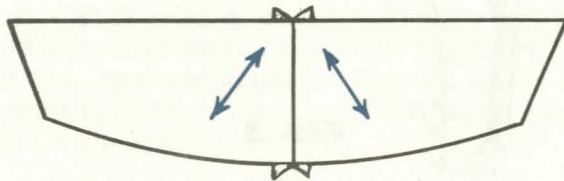


FIG. 9

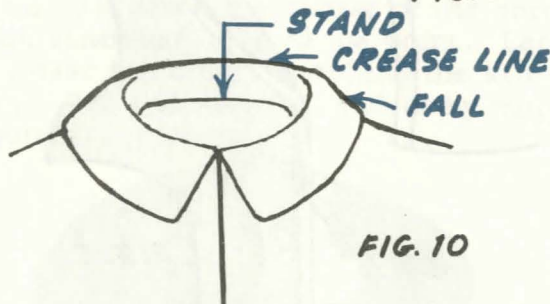
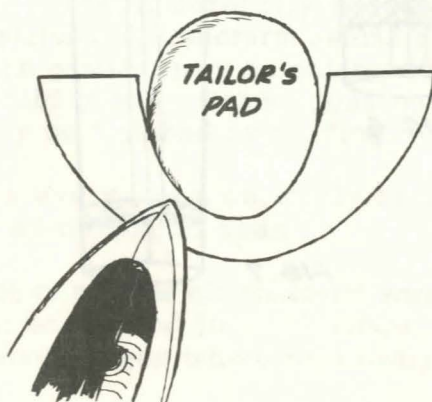
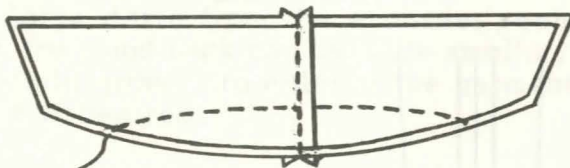


FIG. 10

FIG. 11



To eliminate seam thickness at outside collar edge, trim interfacing back to the stitching line and snip off about 1/4 inch at collar points. Ease the upper collar onto the under collar along outer edge and ends, being sure to match center backs. Pin and baste. Stitch two collar thicknesses together just at the edge of the interfacing. If the collar has a point, take one stitch diagonally across it for a neater point when the collar is turned. Grade the seams and trim off surplus fabric at the corners.

Turn collar and baste along the stitching edge, rolling under the seam edge slightly to prevent stitching edge from showing. Press, then sharp edge stitch (under stitch) from the inside of the collar through the seam and under collar.

Shape the collar by hand by making several rows of diagonal basting parallel to the collar length to hold collar to correct shape. Steam collar to correct shape. Remove bastings and re-steam to prevent basting imprints. When collar is dry, rebaste to hold shape before attaching to neck edge. Follow pattern instructions for attaching collar.

10. Sleeves - "Set-in" sleeves need skillful pressing to give a smooth effect. Make two rows of machine stitching (6 to 8 stitches per inch) over the sleeve cap from notch to notch. The first row should be just inside the seam line and the other 1/16 to 1/8 inch from this line. Pin sleeve into armseye at seams and at notches, and adjust gathers by pulling under thread from both rows of stitching until sleeve fits the armseye. Remove sleeve and shrink out the fullness in the sleeve cap by placing it over a pressing mitt or a tailor's ham. Press out the fullness with the tip of the steam iron (Figure 12).

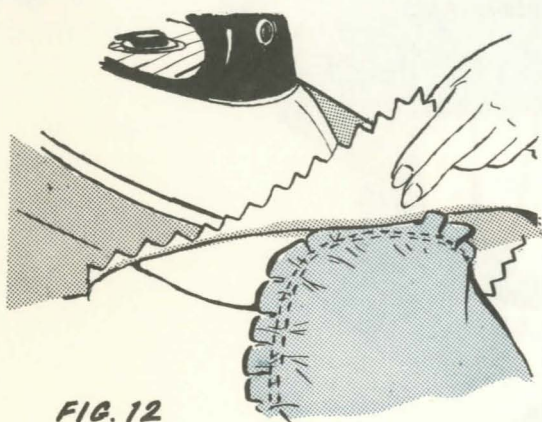


FIG. 12

Keep pressing and shrinking the fullness until sleeve cap is shaped and smooth. Gathering stitches should not be visible on right side after sleeve is stitched into armseye.

11. Buttons & Buttonholes - Correct location of buttons and buttonholes is important. Be sure to mark center front and buttonholes on the fabric as shown on the pattern. Buttons are sewed on center front line. Buttons will slide nearly to the end of the buttonhole when the coat is buttoned. Therefore, the buttonhole is not centered on the center front of the garment. The outer ends of buttonholes should be far enough away from the front edge of the garment so the buttons will not extend over the edge of the garment (Figure 13).

Buttons should be sewn on with a shank. This shank length depends on the thickness of material surrounding the button. In a heavy coat where strain on the material is great, a small backing button is used on the facing side of the garment. The thread is sewn through the eyes of both top and backing button (Figure 14).

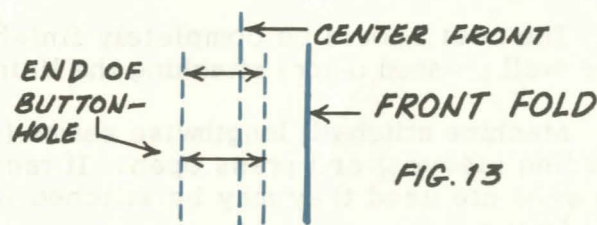


FIG. 13

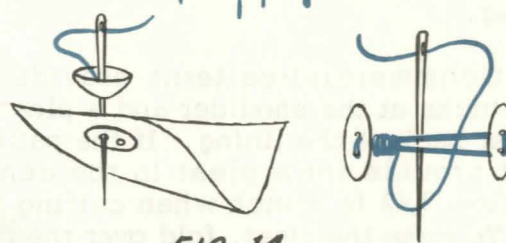


FIG. 14

Buttonholes, unless carefully made, can spoil the appearance of the coat. The length of the buttonhole is determined by the diameter of the button plus the thickness of the button. Make a sample buttonhole on a scrap of fabric to check on size and method of construction that will be best. In many cases machine made buttonholes will be satisfactory for a child's coat.

If making worked buttonholes, the following suggestions may be helpful. Machine stitch close to each side of the line where the buttonhole will be cut. This will serve as a guide in cutting the buttonhole straight

and will help to keep the ends of the yarn from fraying through the buttonhole stitches. As a guide in making buttonhole stitches, stitch again about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch from each side of the cutting line (Figure 15).

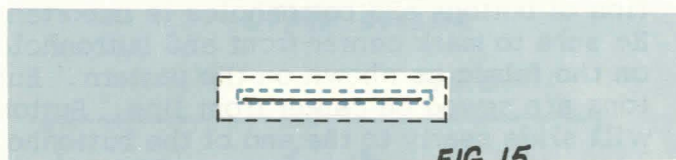


FIG. 15

After buttonhole is cut, overcast edges with mercerized cotton or silk thread. Work it with buttonhole twist.

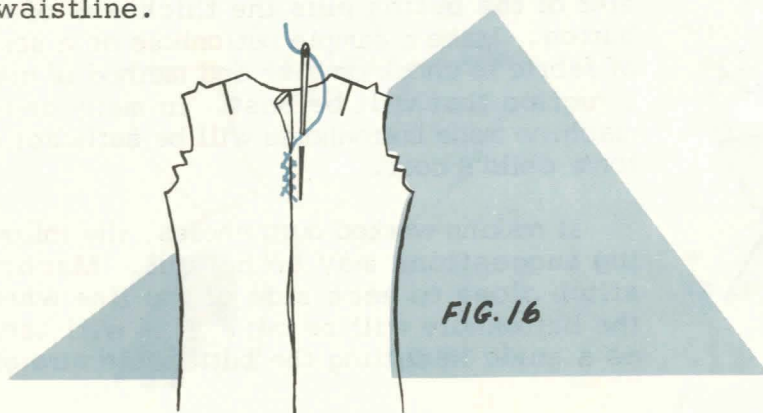
On some fabrics bound, piped or corded buttonholes may give a neat tailord effect.

LINING THE COAT

The coat should be completely finished and well pressed before attaching the lining.

Machine stitch all lengthwise seams (including sleeves) and press open. If raglan sleeves are used they may be stitched into the lining.

Most commercial patterns provide for darts or tucks at the shoulder and a pleat in the center back of the lining. If the pattern does not provide for a pleat in the center back, allow $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch when cutting the lining. To make the pleat, fold over the material right side up on the center back line, baste along the fold and press. Cross-stitch or catch-stitch for about 2 inches downward from the neck (Figure 16). It may also be necessary to cross-stitch this pleat near the waistline.



Place the coat right side down on the table. Place lining on garment with wrong sides together and the underarm seams matching those of the coat. Pin lining in place along center back, across back, chest, and on side seams. Tack lining to coat at side seams to within 3 to 4 inches of hem edge.

Turn under and baste the seam allowance down the front, and pin and baste along the inside seam line of the front facing. Slip-stitch. Smooth the front shoulder up over the coat, pin and baste over the shoulder seam line. Then turn under the neck and shoulder seam allowance of the back and slip-stitch in place over the front lining. Baste around the armholes.

Gather the top of the sleeve lining by machine and steam press to shape the sleeve cap. Turn under sleeve seam allowance and pin over the armhole seam line of the coat and slip-stitch or blind-stitch in place.

Turn the lining at sleeve bottom under so that it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch above the hem edge of coat sleeve and pin and baste it in place. Try on the coat, bending the arm to see whether the lining of the sleeves seems comfortable. Adjust lining if necessary. Press crease in lower edge of lining. Slip-stitch lining to coat sleeve $\frac{1}{4}$ inch underneath the crease at lower edge.

Baste the lining to the coat 2 or 3 inches above cut edge of coat hem line. Place coat on a table with lining side toward you and turn raw edges of lining under so that folded edge lies at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch above creased edge of coat hem. Pin, baste, and press a crease in the lower edge of lining. Slip-stitch the lining to the coat hem in the same manner as it was slip-stitched to the coat sleeves.