

Raglan sleeved toddler dress

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<http://www.burdastyle.com/projects/raglan-sleeved-toddler-dress>



My daughter is quite hard to fit, so I have been altering a small collection of 1970s patterns to fit her. I've come up with this raglan sleeve pattern from mixing an original U.S. size 2T with elements of a size 4T. I call it a dress, but it is really more of a long top to wear with pants. It's quite easy to make, taking a few hours during a nap and a bit more after she has gone to sleep for the night. I've included all of my 'wash and wear' steps which take more time in the beginning but allow the item to wash over and over and wear hard. My philosophy is why not make it last as long as possible, if I'm going to the trouble to make it at all. I've made six of this variation so far – and am still trying to improve on the pattern before I make some to send to nieces and friends. I think it is simple enough for a novice but will put 'intermediate' because of the zipper and facing. I like sewing the zipper in by hand for 1.) convenience of not messing with zipper foot and 2.) recycling zippers from her older clothing is easier that way.

Materials

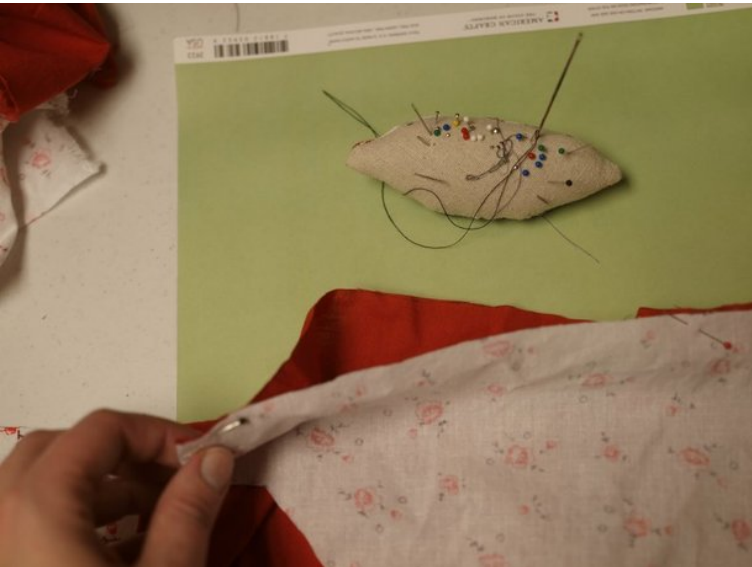
uses less than 1 yard each of two matching fabrics (orange view) or nearly one yard of a print fabric and 1/3 yard of muslin for sleeves (paisley view)

Step 1 — Cut out all pieces and locate center of bodice and front skirt.



Cut out all pieces of pattern. Locate center of bodice and front skirt by folding each in half and placing a dress pin at center of fold. Match these two pieces right sides against each other and pin together in the center.

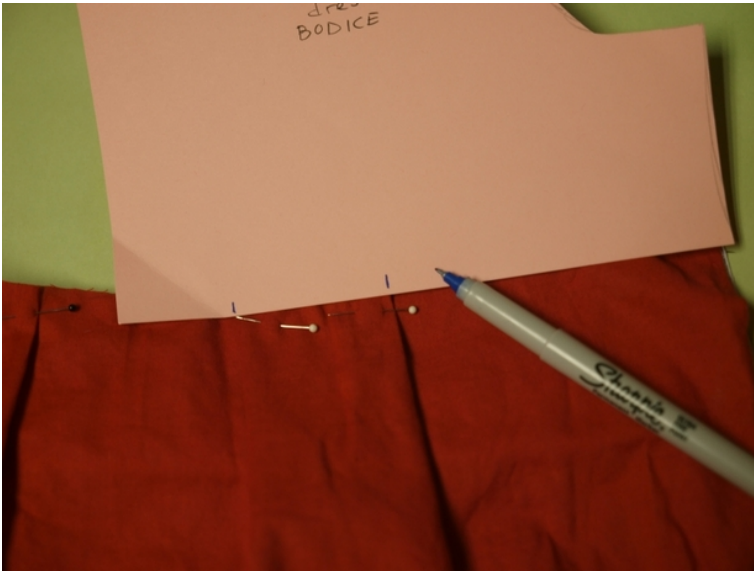
Step 2 — Pin the corners, start the pleats



Pin the outside corners of bodice and skirt together. This will leave a large excess between the center and outside corners on each side.

Step 3 — form the pleats

Step 1 — Cut out all pieces and locate center of bodice and front skirt.



Make up the excess by making identical inverted pleats on either side of the center. I do this by using a card or spool of thread to keep the pleat sizes identical – and folding in half to compare sides and make sure they are in the right place.

Step 4 — Sew skirt to bodice



Sew skirt to bodice, keeping pleats flat. Use a pinking shear to snip the edge of the seam, then zigzag stitch over entire seam.

Step 5 — Check pleats on front of bodice.



Fold bodice and skirt right side out and check that the pleats look good. This is an example of what they should look like.

Step 6 — Start to attach raglan sleeves.



Step 5 — Check pleats on front of bodice.

Sew the raglan sleeves to the bodice, one on each side. Make sure the ‘small’ side of the sleeve is pointing up towards the neck of the bodice and that the right sides are together. It is a straight seam with a little curve at the very bottom. Attach the back pieces to the other side of the sleeve piece, using the same technique and being sure that right sides are together. When you fold it out – it should look like the picture.

Step 7 — Clip the curve in sleeve seams.



Use a pinking shear to clip the curve in the sleeve seams before zigzag stitching down all seams.

Step 8 — Get ready to make the neck facing



Spread the entire neck of the dress out on a larger piece of medium-weight cheap (but not itchy) fabric. I’ve used a lightweight broadcloth that is a polycotton blend. This will be the neck facing.

Step 9 — Trace the neck onto the facing cloth



Trace the neck onto the facing cloth and also trace a little ways down the ‘back’ edges of the dress, as shown. This is how wide the facing will be.

Step 10 — An example facing



An example facing. NOTE: Before attaching this facing, test that the bodice width is correct for the child you are trying to fit. This is the best time to take up some space in the sleeves, if needed — or correct any other sizing issues. I often compare the new dress against an old one that fits her to make sure I’m “on the right track”. I also zigzag stitch along what will be the bottom edge of the facing, trying to curl under just a tiny bit of fabric as I go.

Step 11 — Sew on the facing



Sew the facing on from one side of the dress to the other. Stitch along the vertical line on the facing at the back opening of the dress. This will make a nice finished point for the zipper to attach to. Use a pinking shear to clip the curves in the neck but do NOT zigzag along the edge of the seam.

Step 12 — Turn the facing and topstitch



Turn the facing inside out. Point out the corners with a knitting needle, dull pencil or other pointed but not sharp object. Topstitch along the places shown on both sides of the dress. This will help the dress “wash and wear” much better and keep the facing from coming up and out of the neck of the dress.

Step 13 — Sew down the sleeves and sides.



This pattern is so great – because to finish the sides just sew a seam 1/4 to 3/8 inch from the wrist all the way down to the bottom of the skirt. I find it easier to pin the underarms of the sleeves together, the wrists and a few places down the side – then make one long seam. Use your pinking shear to clip the armpit area and zigzag stitch down the edge of the seam.

Step 14 — Sew hems on the sleeve wrists.



Roll under and sew a small hem on each wrist.

Step 15 — Pin in a zipper in the open back



Start at the top and work your way down pinning in a zipper. Most of the ones I use are 7 to 9 inch neck zippers (after all these are toddler dresses). When you get to the bottom of the zipper pin the back of the dress together from there down and machine sew the bottom back of the dress together. Zigzag over the seam edge. I'm old-fashioned in that after this step I finish the zipper by hand sewing. Roll under a small hem all the way around the bottom of the 'skirt' the same as was done for the wrist hems. Sew skirt hem.

Step 16 — Turn garment inside-out and clip all loose threads



Turn garment inside out, clip all loose threads and examine all seams.

Step 17 — Turn right-side out - finished!



The finished dress. About three to four hours for me, spread out over the day. I'm sure it wouldn't take that long for everyone!

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