

DRESS A GIRL SF BAY AREA DRESS GUIDELINES

At Dress A Girl Around the World, we are making “God’s best dress,” and we carefully screen every dress before it is sent. Please carefully read and follow the instructions below for your dress to be included. Thank you very much for following these guidelines!

FABRIC:

- ONLY 100% cotton or a cotton/poly blend (with mostly cotton) should be used.
- The dresses will be washed in rivers, creeks, watering holes and maybe scrubbed with rocks. Only cotton will stand up to this treatment.
- When choosing fabric, consider the size it will be. Use baby/nursery patterns for smaller sizes.
- ALL dresses should be **44” wide** (the full width of standard fabric), with the **finished length** between 22” and 36”. (This matches typical girl’s sizes here in the states—2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.)
- Most girls in these countries are malnourished so their bodies are smaller, so the 44" wide fabric is fine. If making a size 12 or 14, please put a small 3-4" 'kick-pleat' in the side or back seam.
- ***PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE NO LONGER USING PILLOWCASES.***

TIES:

- Please use “double-wide, double fold bias tape” for the dress ties. DO NOT use thinner bias OR any kind of or ribbon for the ties.
- Ties should be 42-44” each. This is enough length to be tied into a bow; otherwise, it’s only enough to tie in a knot, which the girls then might not be able to untie.
- Ties should also be in one length (not pieced together) with the ends either turned under or zig-zagged across.

POCKETS:

- Place pockets slightly below the mid-point of the dress (slightly below the waist...think about putting your hands in your pockets and where you’d like them to be.) An easy way to figure out the middle is to fold the dress in half with the top casing touching the hem.
- Measure approximately 6” wide x 4” high--any smaller won’t give much room, AND hands might not fit, any larger and the dress looks out of proportion.
- Pocket fabric should coordinate both in color and pattern, i.e., please don’t use a wild geometric pocket on fabric with a small, feminine floral print.
- We prefer 2 pockets (this might be the only place a girl has to herself for her ‘treasures.’ as many times several family members live in a very tiny house).
- Pockets maybe turned out or pinked with a straight or zig-zag stitch. Double thickness makes a better pocket.

ARMHOLE CUTOUT:

- If using our kits, you will find the cut-out from the armhole included. This is NOT the pocket, but can be used to decorate the pocket. There are many creative examples using this piece on our website (DressAGirlSFBayArea.com) under ‘Pockets’. You do not have to use the piece, and please do not use this piece solely as the pocket.

SEAMS:

- Inside seams should be serged or zig-zagged in the seam allowance. This ensures that the seams will not break through. Think of little girls playing and running. If the seam opens, she has no way to repair it.

HEMS:

- Hems should be very shallow and either serged on the raw edge or turned under.
- The girls have no way of letting down the hem in case of growth, so a shallow hem (1/2-3/4") is plenty.

ELASTIC:

- 7" elastic for ALL sizes, both front and back.
- Elastic stretches and most of the girls are small across their chest area, so larger elastic isn't needed.

AVOID:

- Avoid white fabric or thin fabric (gingham, for example, tends to be very thin). We are trying to give the girls dignity and their dark skin would show through. Hold fabric up to a light source. Is it see-through?
- DO NOT use fabric that has: Americana/patriotic; Halloween (skulls, pumpkins, ghosts); obvious Christmas (Santa, snowmen; though red/green holly or pine/berry patterns ok); Disney or any character fabric (Cinderella, SpongeBob, Star Wars etc); or any printed English words.
- None of these things would be appropriate in a foreign country. Think about a little girl wearing a dress made out of the fabric chosen...is it appropriate?

EDGES:

- All edges should be either pinked or turned under, no raw edges exposed. (Pinked pockets are fine to be straight or zig-zagged stitch onto the dress, or they may be sewn all around and turned provided the finished size is still in the 4"x6" range.)
- Ensure that all the raw armhole edges are enclosed in the bias tape ties and that the bias is securely fastened where it intersects with the elastic.

EMBELLISHMENTS:

- Should all be securely SEWN on,
- Could include appliques, yo-yo's, buttons, braided or woven trims, ric rack, lace, or eyelet, but please only choose one or two things, ie, don't over-decorate. Don't use jewels, iron-on patches, etc.
- DO NOT use hot glue (or any other kind of glue) to attach decorations or embellishments.
- If using ribbon as decoration please ensure to use a ribbon that is sold FOR FABRIC ribbon (grosgrain but not satin); and not CRAFT ribbon (craft ribbon will eventually disintegrate in water, which would be problematic with washing!) Typically craft ribbon is sold on spools and is much cheaper.

PLEASE CONSIDER:

- The dress each girl receives maybe the ONLY dress they EVER have. We want it to be a high-quality product in which they feel dignified and beautiful.
- These girls live in areas where they are easy targets for trafficking. Does the dress you are making add to their dignity?
- Girls in some of these countries are considered 'less than human' just by virtue of their sex, and they have no standing in their societies. We want them to know that they are loved by God and that they are indeed precious, with high standing in the eyes of God. We show them that by taking care to make the best dress possible.
- Some of these dresses will go to some of the poorest-of-the-poor, and the poor deserve nice things with good workmanship, not just leftovers or hand-me-downs. "The Lord hears the cry of the poor," we want to honor Him by honoring them.
- Is the dress that you are making a dress that you would be proud having your daughter or granddaughter wear? Is it "God's best dress"?

Thank you!