



Tips & Instructions for Rag Dolls

Tips

The dolls are not safety-tested, so are not given to children
For photos of dolls: see our website: www.endchildpoverty.ca



1. Use **mismatched** fabric scraps, old pillow cases or sheets, etc.; that is the point; Poverty is not colour-coordinated!
2. **Head and body:** Use plain coloured fabric-light enough for the face to be seen.
3. **Do not use stretch fabric** as it pushes out of shape when stuffed. Poverty affects every race. Dolls can be white, brown or many other colours. Those made with colours such as blue, depict all races of children.
4. **Arms and legs:** use patterned or plain fabric, as **mismatched** as possible.
5. **Face: Keep the face very simple, especially the mouth. A simple "Happy Face" is best. It always looks child-like.** Do the face **before** you sew the head and body together. If the face doesn't turn out, you can flip the head and body over and make a new face on the other side. You may wish to draw the face in pencil first. Use a fine-tipped permanent or fabric marker for facial features. On some fabrics, gel pens may work best.
6. **Hair:** Use wool or strips of fabric-If using fabric, tear, rather than cut the strips for a somewhat dishevelled look. The dolls are most effective if they are not perfect. They represent children in poverty. Also make the clothing somewhat frayed. To help get that look, don't hem the clothing.
7. **Clothing:** Use fabric scraps, old wool socks or cut up sweaters, as well as creating knitted sweaters-see instructions and patterns for clothing or create your own.
8. **Every doll must have a red felt or fabric heart. Attach it to the left side of the doll's chest, where the heart would be. Hand sew it on top of the clothing.**
9. **Name your doll. Children in poverty are never to be invisible. Write the name on the doll's certificate.**
10. *In case a doll mistakenly goes to a child, do not use buttons or anything else a child could pull off. Do not use glue.
11. **Take only a 1/4 "seam,** otherwise the doll becomes too small.

Instructions for Sewing

1. Use sewing machine, if possible, so the stitching is tighter, taking only a ¼" seam. If you don't have a machine, hand-sewing is quite acceptable.
2. Sew the arms and legs, leaving tops open for stuffing.
3. Sew the body – only around the shoulders and head. We will come back to this.
4. Turn and stuff the arms and legs, but leave a ½ "or so unstuffed at the tops. You could use the top of a pencil to push the stuffing in. (Do not turn or stuff the body yet.)
5. With the body still inside out, pin the **back** side of the legs to the **back side only** of the bottom of the body.
6. Hand or machine sew them to the back of the body. Legs can be sewn in straight or on an angle, with the feet pointing outwards.
7. Next, place one arm into the open space **from inside** the body, pin (thumbs up), then sew in place, stitching right down the side seam. Repeat with the second arm.

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8. Turn the body right side out - now the arms will be on the outside.
9. Stuff the head and body and sew up the remaining opening by hand, or by machine, if possible.
10. **Next make the clothing:** use an old sock or sweater, or create a somewhat raggedy dress or pants. Use the patterns on the website. Or, you can make a very simple dress from 2 rectangular pieces of fabric sewn together on the side seams, with a basting stitch around the neckline. Simply pull both ends of the thread at the neckline, as you would a drawstring. Leave an open space on each side seam of the clothing for the arms to fit through.
11. **Make the red felt heart and attach it to the left of the doll's chest on top of the clothing.**
12. **Hair:** Once the clothing is in place, make the hair. Use fabric strips or wool. **Avoid using white or grey wool, the dolls are to represent children.**
13. Cut a ½" wide by 4" long piece of fabric, the same fabric you used for the head and body. This will be used to attach the hair to the head. See the hair tutorial on our website.
14. If using strips of fabric for the hair, rather than wool, use strips approx. 1/2" to ¾" wide and approx. 16" long. Tear the strips, rather than cut them for a more dishevelled look. One method of attaching them is to pin the strips in place on the head and hand sew each strip to the head, in a seam down the middle. **When finished, cut the strips to varying lengths.**
15. If you prefer, make the hair as a wig attached to a small cap, which you then attach at strategic spots to the head.
16. You may wish to use 2 fabric strips for bows to tie the hair into 2 side ponytails. Secure the bows in place with several stitches. Fuss and fiddle and play until you get the hair the way you want it. You might cut their bangs or add a hat or hair band, etc.

Have fun!