



## 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](http://www.endchildpoverty.ca)



1. Use **mismatched** fabric scraps, old sheets, etc.; that is the point; Poverty is not colour-coordinated! **Do not use stretch fabric for the doll as it pushes out of shape when stuffed.** Old wool socks for the dolls' sweaters are also part of the point. Or cut up an old sweater.
2. Use strips of various colours of fabric or wool for the hair.
3. The doll is to look child-like, but not perfect. Make the clothing and hair somewhat disheveled or frayed. In order to get that look, don't hem the clothing.
4. **Every doll has a red felt or fabric heart. Attach it to the left side of the doll's chest, on top of the clothing.**
5. **Name your doll. Children in poverty are not just statistics.**
6. \*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.
7. Poverty affects every race. Dolls can be white, brown or many other colours. Those made with blue fabric, depict all races.
8. **Do the face before you sew on the arms and legs. If the face doesn't turn out, you can then flip the doll over and make a new face on the other side. \*It's best to keep the face very simple, especially the mouth. A simple "Happy Face" is best. A "Happy Face" smile, turned either up or down is easiest and always looks cute.** Use a **fine-tipped** permanent marker for facial features. You may wish to draw the face in pencil first. Some people prefer to embroider the face. Again, keep it simple.
9. If possible, it's best to make the arms and legs mismatched colours or prints.
10. **Take only a 1/4 "seam,** otherwise the doll becomes too small.
11. Some dolls have smiles or semi-smiles, while some have sad little faces.

### Instructions for Sewing

1. Use sewing machine, if possible, so the stitching is tighter, taking only a 1/4" 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 1/2 "or so unstuffed at the tops. You could use the top of a pencil to push the stuffing in. (Do not stuff the body yet.)
5. With the body still inside out, 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.
6. Turn the body right side out - now the arms will be on the outside.
7. Next pin the legs to the **backside only** of the bottom of the body.
8. 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.
9. Stuff the head and body and sew up the remaining opening by hand, or by machine, if possible.

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10. **Next make the clothing:** use an old sock or sweater, or create a somewhat raggedy dress or pants. 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, wool or embroidery yarn, etc. **Avoid using white or grey wool, these dolls are supposed to represent children.**
13. If using strips of fabric, cut the strips approx. 1/2 " to 3/4" wide and approx. 16 " long. Tear the strips, rather than cut them for a more dishevelled look.
14. Centre the hair on the head, one strip at a time, and pin into place using one pin on either side of the centre for each strip. Start just in front of the seam on the top of the head, then attach strips all the way down the back of the head.
15. Sew into place, by hand, down the centre of the head from the top to the bottom. **When finished, cut the strips to varying lengths.**
16. If you prefer, make the hair as a wig attached to a small cap, which you then attach at strategic spots to the head.
17. You may wish to use 2 more 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!**