

The Two Summer Sundress



I have wanted to knit my daughter a dress for a while, and based this dress off a commercially made item that is now in its second year of use due to the clever straps - crisscrossed the first year with a longer skirt and now straight in the second year with a shorter skirt. I wanted to design something that was lightweight, airy, cute, but completely wearable.

The best part? Start to finish, it only took me about three hours. I am not a big-time sewing gal either. I honestly think that this could be done without a machine (although the machine would make it easier).

Size:

Using the chart (based off of <http://www.yarnstandards.com/childsize.html>), select **one size larger** than the current age/size of the little girl you are knitting for. Sizes are approximate and you should choose the size that will best fit the little princess in your life!

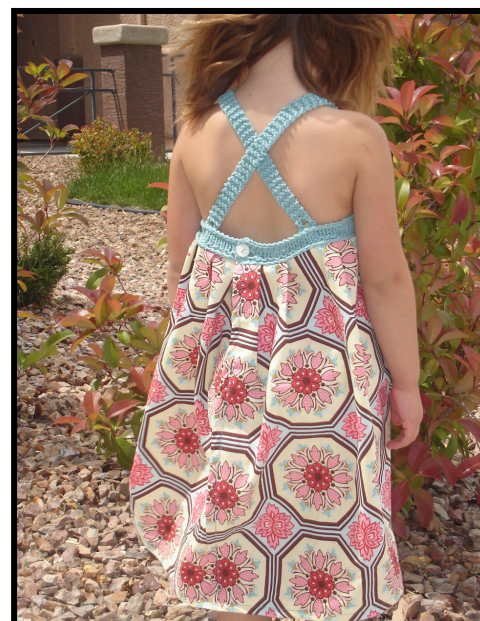
Child's Size	3-6 Months	6-9 Months	12 Months	18 Months	Size 2	Size 3	Size 4	Size 6	Size 8
Chest	16"	17"	18"	19"	21"	22"	23"	25"	26.5"
Skirt Length	13.25"	15"	16.75"	19"	20"	21"	22"	24"	26"
Cast On	64	68	72	76	84	88	92	100	106
Strap Length	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8.5	9.5	11.5	13.5

Gauge:

16 stitches = 4 inches in Stockinette Stitch

Materials:

- Lily Sugar 'n Cream Solid, 1 ball (not all is used – a good substitute would be cotton ease)
- 1 yard of fabric (machine washable cotton is highly recommended)
- US Size 7 Needle (I prefer circular, but straights would work as the bodice is knit flat)
- Tapestry Needle
- 3 Buttons (I used a 1/2" button, but directions can accommodate up to 1" button if desired)
- A roll of 1 inch ribbon - preferably some that does not fray easily
- Coordinating thread, along with a sewing machine, Stitch Witch, or a needle!



Difficulty:

This pattern is recommended for all knitters and little sewing knowledge is required.

Abbreviations:

K – Knit

P - Purl

K2tog – Knit two together

SSK – Slip, Slip, Knit

YO – yarn over

Directions:**Bodice**

Cast on the correct number of stitches based on the size chart using the long tail method.

Rows 1-3 – Knit both Sides

Row 4 - Purl

Row 5 – Knit to last 4 stitches, k2tog, yo, k2 [Make sure your button will fit – I used a ½ inch button. If the hole is too small, you can work the last five stitches k2tog, yo2, ssk, k1. If you choose this option, purl through the back of your second yo in row 6]

Row 6 – Purl

Row 7 – Knit

Row 8 – Purl

Row 9 – Bind off 25% of your total stitches (divide your cast-on number by 4), knit across middle (50% of stitches, this time divide your cast-on number by 2) and then bind off the remaining 25%. Break yarn, and reattach at the left side of your work (so you can begin with a purl row)

Row 10 – K2, Purl to last two stitches K2

Row 11 – SSK, knit to the last two stitches, K2tog

Next Rows – Repeat rows 10 and 11 until you have decreased your remaining stitches by 50%

Next 3 Rows – Garter Stitch (knitting both sides – you should have two ridges on your front side)

Next Row – K4, bind off to last 4 stitches, knit 4

You are now ready to work your straps!

Straps

We are going to work the straps simultaneously in garter stitch. Pull out a good amount of yarn (I messed this part up the first time I did it). You'll need at least five yards (air on the side of excess). Reattach the ball to the second strap.

Work across both straps in garter stitch until you are two inches before your desired length.

Work a buttonhole row (K1, K2tog, yo K1).

Knit four more rows

Work a buttonhole row (K1, K2tog, yo K1).

Knit two more rows

Bind off.

Yeah! The knitting is finished. Now you are ready to begin the sewing the skirt.

Prepare Your Fabric

At this point, you should wash and dry your fabric (I washed the total yard that I purchased and cut the needed amount from that after laundering), your ribbons and the knitted bodice as you will normally launder them to avoid funky shrinkage. I washed mine on cold, and tumble dried on low.

Cut Your Fabric

Time for more math! First, using your chest width as a guide, decide on whether you want a less gathered skirt, full skirt or really full skirt and multiply your chest size _____ x (1.5, 2, & 2.5 accordingly)=_____ + 2 inches for a seam allowance.

Next, using the length portion of the table, subtract the height of your completed and laundered bodice from the total length listed for your largest size and add two inches for the seam. So bodice _____ - total length _____ = _____ + 2 inches.

Once you have your length and height, cut your fabric accordingly.

Prepping Your Seams

Iron your seams as you will sew them. At this point, I employed the wonderful Stitch Witchery (a no sew seam binder that can be found at most craft stores) for the first 1/2 seam on all sides except for my top edge, then I ironed the second 1/2 inch seam over on all sides (you could stitch witch again, but only if you are desperate for a no-sew option)

At this point, I got out my sewing machine (or hand stitch), and with coordinating thread, I sewed up the remaining seams, leaving myself with a big, flat rectangle. You are almost there!!!

Attaching the Skirt & Bodice

- Pin the skirt to the center of the bodice first. I took care to watch my fabric's pattern, matching the center of the pattern to the center of my bodice, even if it meant there was a little excess fabric on one side.
- Pin the ends of the skirt, to the ends of the bodice, leaving 1/4 inch, to 1/2 inch overlap on each side.
- Pin down the gathers evenly through each side section, again, paying attention to the pattern of the fabric.
- Sew down the gathers
Don't sew the back seam yet, save that for last so that everything else can be done with a flat garment.



Finishing Details

- Cut a length of ribbon to be sewn to the backside of each strap, and for the width of the chest leaving and overage of a half inch sew that you fold it over to create a clean seam when you sew it into place.
- Sew down ribbon (this is done on the straps to prevent stretching and on the chest to create a firm location for your buttons)
- Sew on exterior button (remember to sew for the smallest size needed first, then next year you can move them after she grows).
- Sew on strap buttons. I sewed mine each 1.5 inches away from the front panel on the inside of the dress.
- Sew up back seam, leaving about three inches with no seam (so she can dress herself, right?).

Weave in ends, trim up threads, wear and enjoy – for at least two years!

Natalie is the mother of two small children ages 2 and 4 and is very proud of her recent transition into exclusive motherhood. She and her family just moved from the dry desert of Arizona, to the even drier desert of Nevada. She has been knitting for just over one year.

