



St. Joseph County 4-H Youth Program



Sewing Project Skills Development Guidelines

Following are 4-H sewing skills development guidelines for St. Joseph County 4-H members. The guidelines are set up to show the progression in sewing skills education recommended for each successive year a member participates in the project.

Attention! – All Sewing Skills Development Guidelines are based on the year in project, and not the member's age. This means that all first-year members should start at the FIRST YEAR SEWING level, regardless of age, to determine minimum sewing skills development expectations. However, an older first-year member may, with leader approval, prepare a garment(s) which requires sewing skills above and beyond those listed for first-year members.

Sewing - Garments

Exhibit requirements:

1. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on exhibitor's sewing skills development.
2. Sewing is limited to personal garments only. Exhibitor may enter only one exhibit in the appropriate garment construction class.
3. Garment(s) should be clean, neatly pressed and on a hanger when presented for exhibition at the fair.
4. All exhibits must have pattern when presenting project for judging.
5. All garments must have finished seams except knits and non-raveling specialty fabrics.
6. Beginning Sewing (9-11 yrs. old)
 - a. First-Year - garment(s) made. Exhibitors may choose either: apron; skirt; shorts or slacks with elastic or drawstring or a drawstring purse.
 - b. Second-Year - garment made. Exhibitor may choose a simple jumper, pullover blouse or shirt, vest or wrap-around skirt.
 - c. Third-Year - suggested garment made, not completed in 1st or 2nd year.
7. Intermediate Sewing (12-14 yrs. old) - Garments made must have one or more of the following: patch pockets, facings, zipper, button hole(s), or waistbands.
8. Intermediate Sewing (12-14 yrs. old) – No tailored suits or coats. A non-tailored jacket or blazer is allowed.
9. Advanced Sewing (15-19 yrs. old) - Complete outfit must be sewn by member (i.e. two-piece outfit or ensemble (three or more pieces)). No purchased garments may be used as part of an outfit. Garments made must have one or more of the following: zipper, button, inset pockets, cuffs, collars, lining, and any advanced sewing techniques.

Creative Sewing

Exhibit requirements:

1. Open to exhibitors of all ages.
2. Limited to sewn articles other than garments.
3. Exhibitor may enter only one exhibit in Creative Sewing.
4. No pre-stamped pillows, pre-stamped stuffed animals or kits allowed.
5. A pattern(s) should be used where available and must accompany project at judging.
6. Exhibitors making comforters and quilts must exhibit them under the Department 60, Section M – Quilts or Section N - Comforters.
7. Projects include: Sewing for the home (i.e. place mats, dresser scarf, curtains, etc.); Tote/duffel/sport bag or purse; Stuffed animal(s) or pillow(s); Holiday items; Any other creative sewing item(s) made. (See Rules 2 and 6.)

Special Sewing Tips

- Be sure to use knit patterns when sewing on knit fabrics.
- Hems should not be more than three (3) inches wide, unless specified otherwise in pattern directions.
- Seams should be pressed as the garment is being made.
- Seam finishes should be done according to the type of fabric (i.e. edge-stitch or zig-zag stitch fabrics that ravel).
- Knit fabrics do not need extra seam finishes or hems turned twice.
- Facings in cotton fabrics need the raw edge turned under and stitched or over-locked. Tack facings only at seams.
- Set-in sleeves should be double-stitched and trimmed to give a neat appearance. Zig-zag stitch seam edges if possible.
- Collars and labels should be trimmed and neatly pressed.
- Garments should ALWAYS be clean and neatly pressed when presented for evaluation and for exhibiting at the fair.

First Year Sewing

Sewing skills and concepts to be learned by first-year members include:

1. Basic hand sewing techniques.
2. Basic sewing machine operation and safety.
3. Fabric selection to match garment purpose and function.
4. Proper fabric handling techniques.
 - a. Pre-shrinking.
 - b. Identification of grainlines.
 - c. Keeping sewing materials clean during construction process.
5. Pressing techniques.
6. Proper hemming techniques.
7. Appearance of final product.
 - a. Cleanliness.
 - b. Correctly pressed.
 - c. Loose threads removed.
 - d. Proper fit.

Suggested Garments: Apron; skirt; shorts or slacks with elastic or drawstring or a drawstring purse; simple jumper, pullover blouse or shirt, vest or wrap-around skirt.

Fabric selection recommendations: Select a fabric(s) that is tightly woven and without a nap (i.e. cotton or polyester blend). Knit fabrics may be used with leader approval.

Hems: Machine hems are acceptable on all garments where called for on the pattern guide sheet. However, if the garment is machine hemmed, the member must bring an 18" sample of hand hemming with her/him to judging.

Second Year Sewing

1. Garment(s) made should show increased sewing construction skills development over previous year's work.
2. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on member's sewing skills development.
3. Strong emphasis should continue on pattern/guide sheet reading and interpretation skills, fabric selection and handling; sewing machine operation; sewing construction skills and pressing techniques. Continue to use and build on sewing skills development outlined in first-year guidelines.
4. Garments made to be worn together (i.e. two-piece outfit or ensemble (three or more garments)) should complement each other in terms of fabric selection and styling.
5. Hems should be constructed according to the pattern guide sheet.

Recommended Sewing Construction Skills Advancement: Learn and develop one (1) or more of the following sewing construction skills that are new to you: casings; darts; facings; fasteners (i.e. hooks and eyes; snaps; Velcro; buttons/button holes; zipper); pockets; waistband.

Third Year Sewing

1. Garment(s) made should show increased sewing construction skills development over previous year's work.
2. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on member's sewing skills development.
3. Strong emphasis should continue on pattern/guide sheet reading and interpretation skills; fabric selection and handling; sewing machine operation; sewing construction skills and pressing techniques. Continue to use and build on sewing skills development outlined for first-year and second-year experience levels.
4. Garments made to be worn together (i.e. two-piece outfit, or ensemble (three or more pieces)) should complement each other in terms of fabric selection and styling.
5. Hems should be constructed according to the pattern guide sheet.

Recommended Sewing Construction Skills Advancement: Learn and develop two (2) or more of the following sewing construction skills that are new to you: casings; collars; cuffs; darts; facings; fasteners (i.e. hooks and eyes; snaps; Velcro; buttons/button holes; zippers); gathers; pockets; sleeves; trims; waistbands.

Fourth Year Sewing

1. Garment(s) made should show increased sewing construction skills development over previous year's work.
2. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on member's sewing skills development.
3. Continue to use and build on sewing skills learned in previous years.
4. Garments made to be worn together (i.e. two-piece outfit, or ensemble (three or more pieces)) should complement each other in terms of fabric selection and styling.

Recommended Sewing Construction Skills Advancement: Learn and develop at least three (3) or more of the following sewing construction skills that are new to you: casings; collars; cuffs; darts; facings; fasteners (i.e. hooks and eyes; snaps; Velcro; buttons/button holes; zippers); gathers; hemming techniques; lapels; linings; pleats; pockets; seam finishes (i.e. flat felled; French; welted; topstitched); sleeves; trims.

Fifth and Sixth Year Sewing

1. Garment(s) made should show increased sewing construction skills development over previous year's work.
2. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on member's sewing skills development.
3. Continue to use and build on sewing skills learned in previous years.
4. Garments made to be worn together (i.e. two-piece outfit, or ensemble (three or more pieces)) should complement each other in terms of fabric selection and styling.

Recommended Sewing Construction Skills Advancement: Learn and develop at least five (5) or more of the following sewing construction skills: collars; cuffs; darts; fabrics (i.e. selection of a garment(s) that requires sewing on a fabric type that is new to you, such as wool, silk, plaid, one-way directional fabric, knits, sheers, etc.); facings; fasteners (i.e. hooks and eyes; snaps; Velcro; buttons/button holes; zippers); lapels; linings; pleats; pockets (i.e. bound; set in sea; welt); sleeves; seam finishes (i.e. flat felled; French; machine stretch stitch; topstitched); waistband.

Seventh - Eleventh Year Sewing

1. Garment(s) made should show increased sewing construction skills development over previous year's work.
2. Pattern and fabric(s) to be chosen based on member's sewing skills development.
3. Continue to use and build on sewing skills learned in previous years.
4. Garments made to be worn together (i.e. two-piece outfit, or ensemble (three or more pieces)) should complement each other in terms of fabric selection and styling.

Recommended Sewing Construction Skills Advancement: Learn and develop at least six (6) or more of the sewing construction skills listed under "Fifth and Sixth Year Sewing".