

Studio
by **WHITE**

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

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KID WAVES

by Dawn Oertel and Mary Elliott

Designing knitwear for kids is really a labor of love, isn't it? You need to consider so many things - the child's personality, body development, comfort, safety and care - in addition to all of the color and design issues we usually focus on! Children's clothing is divided into three distinct groups: infant, toddler and children. Mercifully, sizing between boys and girls during these stages is the same!

How can you build safety into the garments you knit? Remove all external draw cords from outerwear, electing to use alternative closures such as secure buttons, snaps, elastic or hook/loop tape to avoid accidents. Also, never use the child's name in a sweater design; strangers can use the name to quickly establish familiarity and trust. Try using initials (JLOJLOJLOJLO), fashion words (SMILE, LOVE, etc..), numbers or logos to create a custom look. Make sure the sweater fits. Although current fashions favor an oversized silhouette, remember that there is a difference between an oversized style and one that is simply too big!

Involve children in the design process, so that they can share the pride of "their" sweater as it is knitted and finished. And, when a child outgrows his sweater, don't give it away. Perhaps it can be loaned to a favorite stuffed animal, displayed in a shadow box, or tucked away in a hope chest. But, most of all, enjoy the process and the special time

spent creating a one-of-a-kind masterpiece with your child.

Fit is the most important feature of a sweater. A garment which is too big, too small or poorly proportioned is one that ends up in the drawer rather than on the child. Measuring a favorite sweatshirt can be a helpful guide in determining size. The following sizes and size related information are based upon U.S. Department of Commerce Standards and should help you design garments that fit.



From: *Studio Design Magazine* fall/winter 1995

Designing for Infants

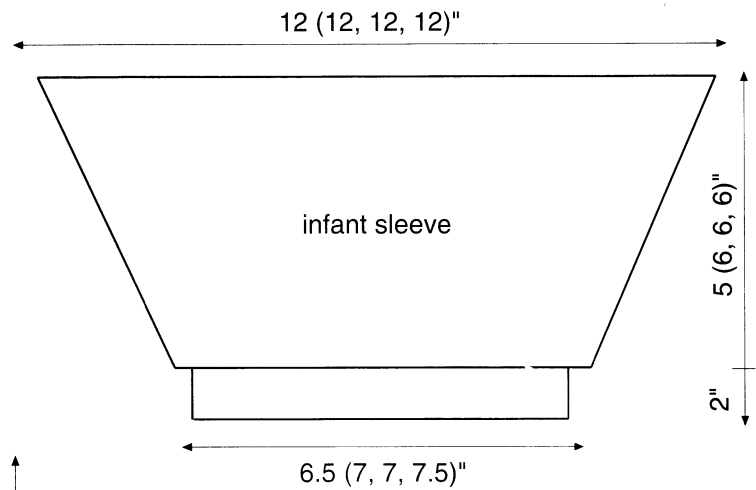
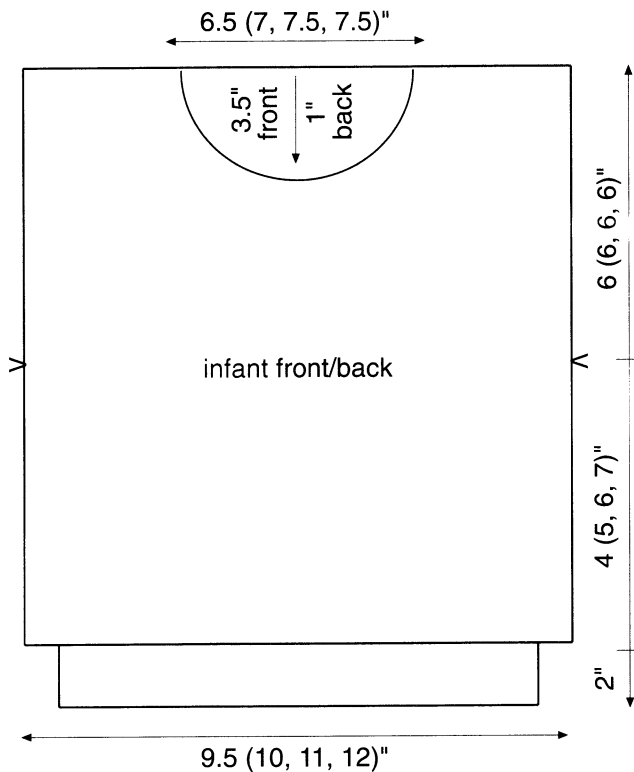
Age Range: To be worn from birth to approximately one year of age (walking).

Sizes Labeled: 0/3, 3/6, 9/12, 12/18 month

Average chest measurement: 16.5", 17.5", 18.5", 19.5".

Average body length to waist: 6", 6.5", 7", 7.5".

Note: This size range is sometimes described in terms of weight and height, rather than age.



Securely attach or just eliminate any small buttons or trim as an infant's natural tendency is to put things into her mouth. This is a major safety issue that should never be sacrificed to what looks cute or trendy!



Ease: For all infant sizes you need to add approximately 3.5" of ease to the body measurements to arrive at the actual garment sizing.

Design Considerations: In this stage of development most of the growth is in the length of the trunk.

Infant's heads are quite large in proportion to the rest of their bodies. Remember this when designing head openings.

Raglans and drop shoulders are easier to put on and less restrictive than set in sleeves.

Back interest is very important as we usually see more of infants' backs than fronts!

Washability is a major consideration when choosing yarns. Try to use cotton, acrylic or the specially treated baby wools and blends that are easy to care for and will not irritate a baby's tender skin. Think of both the baby's and the mother's needs!

1997 Children's Fashion Trends

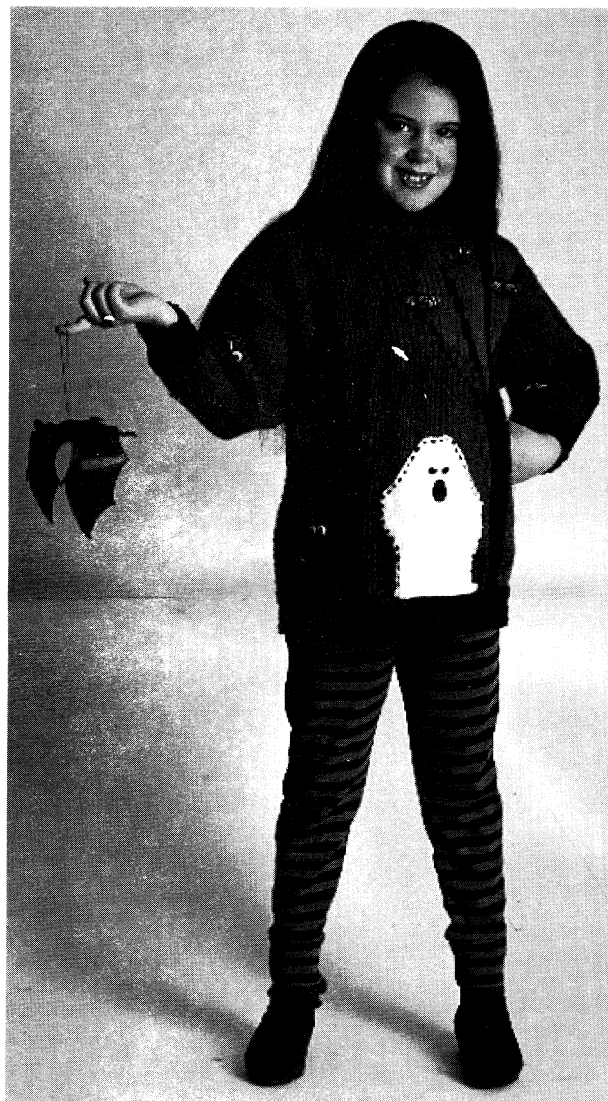
Colors/Textures: Heather yarns; especially blue, beige or gray colors. Stripes using thick and thin yarn combos, multicolored, wavy or vertical designs.

Themes: Sports themes like cars and bicycle racing, roller blading and surfing. Childhood pets like dogs, cats, lizards, birds, etc... Creepy crawlers, bugs and butterflies. Early 1970s, "flower power" look for girls.

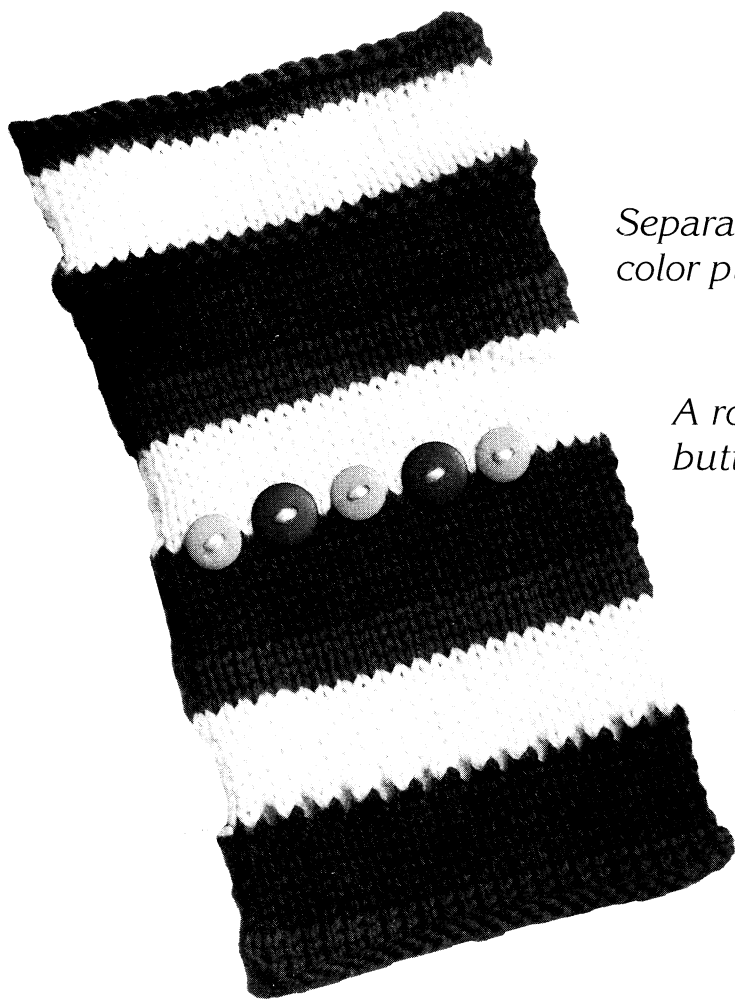
New Sweater Shapes: Look for jumper dresses, A-Line tennis dresses and pinafores for little girls and roomy shapes fashioned like hockey or rugby shirts for the boys.

New Sweater Details: Pockets of all sizes and shapes, such as cargo and kangaroo pockets. Airy stitches, such as a drop stitch patterns for girls and mesh patterns for boys. Necklines in contrasting colors.

Try using some of these great ideas in the basic sweater patterns for infants, toddlers and children!



From: *Studio Design Magazine* fall/winter 1994



Separate stripes with contrast color purl row

A row of accent buttons.

A row of eyelet holes.

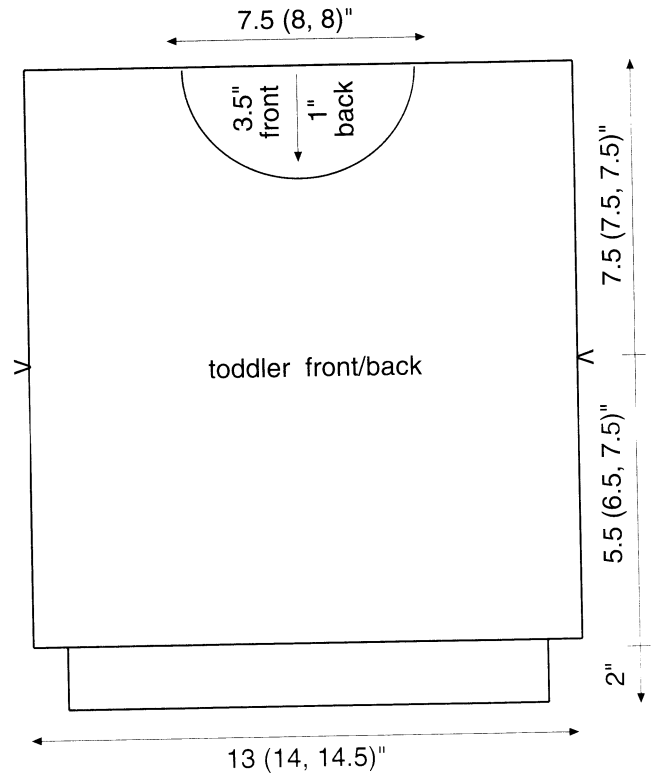
Stripes

To

Try



From: *Studio Design Magazine* spring/summer 1995



Designing for Toddlers

Sweater Age Range: To be worn during the “new walker” stage to approximately 3 years old.

Sizes Labeled: 2T, 3T, 4T; the “T” represents toddler, rather than children’s sizing.

Average chest measurement: 20", 21", 22".

Average body length to waist: 8", 8.75", 9.5".

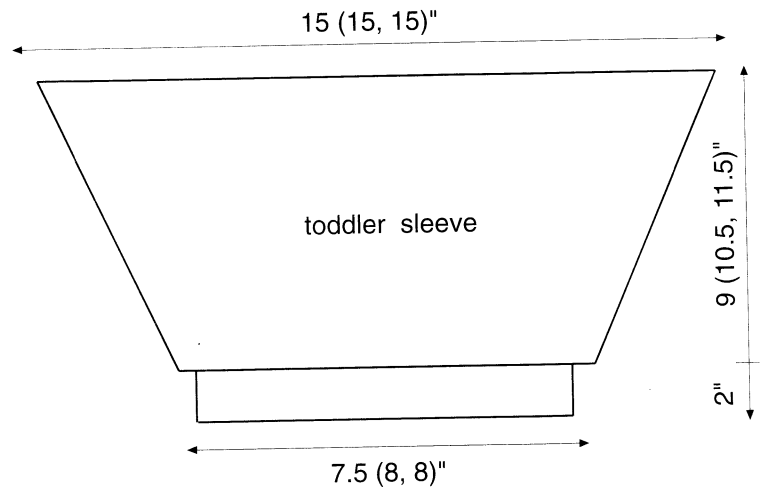
Ease: For all toddler sizes you need to add approximately 7" of ease to the body measurements to arrive at the actual garment sizing.

Design Considerations: Most toddler growth is in the length of the arms.

A toddler’s tummy almost always protrudes. Remember this when determining sweater length. Try tunic lengths, which accommodate both tummy and movement.

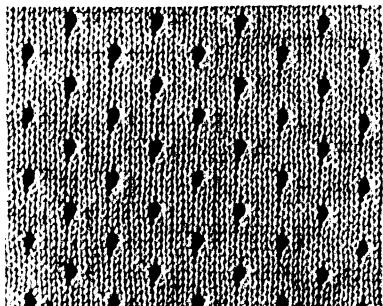
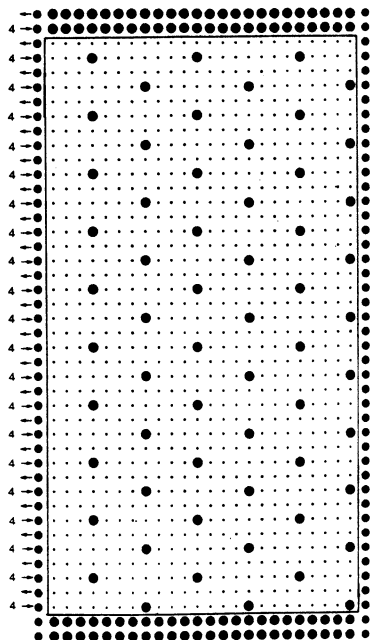
Freedom of movement is extremely important, as toddlers either walk or run most of the time.

Toddler’s are learning to dress themselves, so encourage their independence by designing a specific front and back on the sweater.



Example of eyelet hole layout

X.8



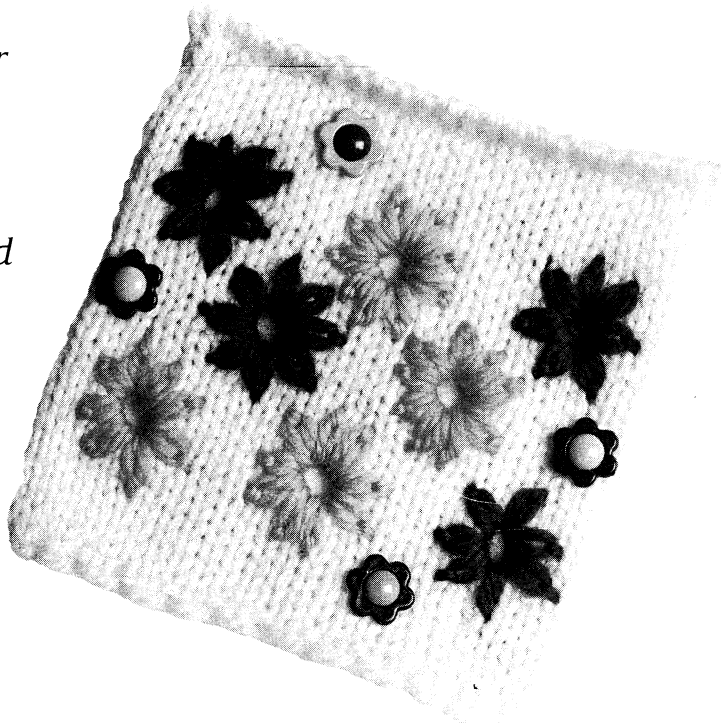
From: Studio Design Magazine fall/winter 1995

Flower Power

Try this swatch with either a black or white ground

Accent eyelet holes in daisy stitch and bright colors

Add accent novelty flower buttons



Designing for Children

Sweater Age Range: To be worn from pre-school through the first years of elementary school.

Sizes Labeled: 4, 5, 6, 6x, and 7 for boys.

Average chest measurements: 22", 23", 24", 25".

Average body length to waist: 9.5", 10.25", 11", 11.75".

Ease: For all children's sizes you need to add approximately 7" of ease to the body measurements to arrive at the actual garment sizing.

Design Considerations: Remember the following important design considerations:

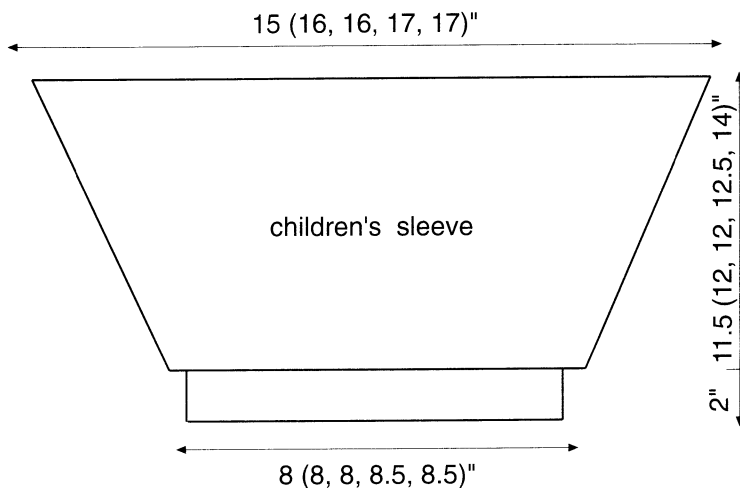
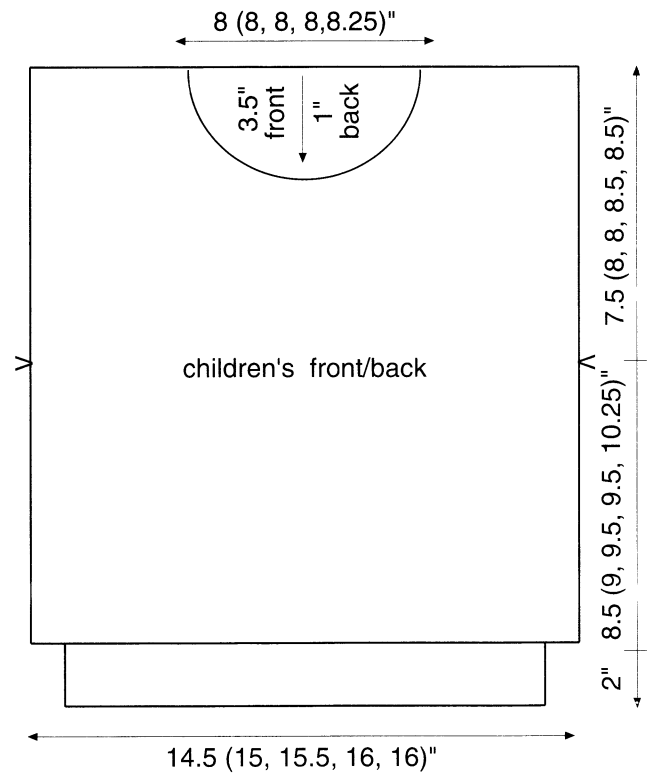
Children still have no distinguishable waistline.

Adult proportions are assumed through steady growth.

Favorite colors, especially bright primary colors, signal a child's awareness of clothing. Texture and surface details are also important.

Children love the attention adults give them while admiring new clothes.

Knit sweaters which allow the child to role play as a teacher, firefighter, doctor or admired superhero.



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