

# 1860's Dress for a Little Girl

Designer: Jamie Quick



During the 1860s, one of the commonly featured fashion plate styles for young girls, involved a white body and a pinafore gown with a low squared or rounded neckline.

The white body was either pleated or gathered. Necklines ranged from open boat shapes to a snugger round neckline. Sleeves were long and gathered into a cuff. This style was wonderful for warmer weather, as it is airy, and kept the sun off little arms! It could also be utilized in the winter with a small jacket over top.



The dresses of this style could have tiny straps at the shoulder or short sleeves, but were always open to show the pretty white body underneath.

My goal was to create a simple gathered body with a square neckline dress. My daughter has a fair complexion, and white sleeves seemed practical for summer wear.



The following pattern was made for an almost four-year-old daughter. While only one size is available in the printable pdf, I do include notes to adjust sizing, which is simpler than you may think! If you have experienced making mock-ups and minor changes, you can absolutely adjust this pattern for a little girl that needs a slightly different fit.

## Materials

- 2 Yards of Silk Taffeta or Light Suiting Weight Wool
- Accent Silk Taffeta, or perhaps Velvet trim
- Hook and Eye Tape
- Self fabric buttons

## Start Sewing

**Step 1 (Pattern and Fitting):** Print pattern to scale. Measure child and make necessary modifications. Mock up recommended. My dress was around 23 inches at the waist.

Sizing Notes:

- This pattern is for a 23 inch waist.
- Add width – If you want the dress 2 inches wider, for example. Move the fold line on the bodice front and back pieces over 1/2 inch to cut the pieces larger respectively.
- Reduce width – Take the desired measurement, say you want the dress 2 inches narrower. Move the fold line on the bodice inward 1/2 inch. Move the back pieces inward 1/2 inch.
- Small Armscye – Cut around it to enlarge.
- Too long – Cut pattern shorter
- Too short – Add to the length of the bodice by drawing the bottom portion longer. You can also add to the appearance of a longer waistline, by making the skirt waistband show.. vs. hiding it under the bodice.

**Step 2 (Cutting Bodice):** Cut bodice front and backs from fashion fabric. If lining, cut two fronts and four backs. If you choose not to line the bodice, cut a facing for the neckline and armscye.

**Step 3 (Facing or Lining):** Place bodice panels, front and backs, right-sides together with lining or facings. Secure with 1/4 inch seam allowance along the neckline and armscye leaving the shoulder, side seams, and bottom open for turning. Clip, turn, and press. Top stitch neckline and armscye 1/8 inch from finished edge.

**Step 4 (Bodice Assembly):** Sew side seams and shoulder seams with 1/2 inch seam allowance.

**Step 5 (Closure Placket):** Fold over back as needed, sew into place. One side should overlap by about 3/4 of an inch for hook and eye tape or buttonholes.

**Step 6 (Cutting Skirt):** Cut 2 (30-36 inch) wide skirt panels x desired length plus 4 inches for finishing. Make sure the finished circumference will fit over the hoop skirt nicely. Eve has a 50 inch hoop so I made her skirt circumference 65 inches.



**Step 7 (Skirt Seams and Placket):** Fold one panel in half and cut a 3 1/2 – 4 1/2 inch slit from the top of the fold downward. Finish placket with a tiny rolled hem secured with hand whip stitching or machine top-stitching. Secure base of the cut edge with machine back-stitching or a hand sewn bar tack. Sew side seams with 1/2 inch seam allowance.

**Step 8 (Skirt Hem):** Press bottom edge under 1/2 inch and then press under three inches to form a wide rolled hem. Secure with machine top-stitching or hand whip stitch in place.

**Step 9 (Waist Treatment):** Chose a waist treatment: gathered, directional pleating, or box pleating. The one I made features directional pleating.

Pin treated skirt and bodice right sides together and secure with a 1/2 inch seam allowance. Turn inside out, press downward. Turn right side out and top-stitch 1/8 inch below the seam to keep everything crisp and secure.

**Step 12:** Install hook and eye closure and trim as desired.

I used self fabric buttons as a decorative detail down the center back. Self fabric buttons are easy to make! You just need a button, a small circle of fabric, and a needle and thread!



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A

Square Neckline Body  
3-4 T

Cut 1 on fold

CUT ON FOLD

↓ attach bottom ↓

Bottom to Front

- Add to length or cut shorter if needed.  
Keep in mind seam allowance.
- Move center fold if you need to resize.

1 inch





A

The diagram shows a rectangular piece of fabric with a hand-drawn pattern. A vertical line on the left side is divided into two sections. The upper section contains a curve that starts at the top-left corner, goes up and to the right, then down and to the right, ending at the bottom-left corner. The lower section contains a curve that starts at the bottom-left corner, goes up and to the right, then down and to the right, ending at the bottom-right corner. A horizontal line at the top connects the two vertical lines. A small letter 'A' is written in the upper right corner of the rectangle.

Back of Square Body

Cut 2

- cut one side longer so you can overlap for buttons or hook & eye

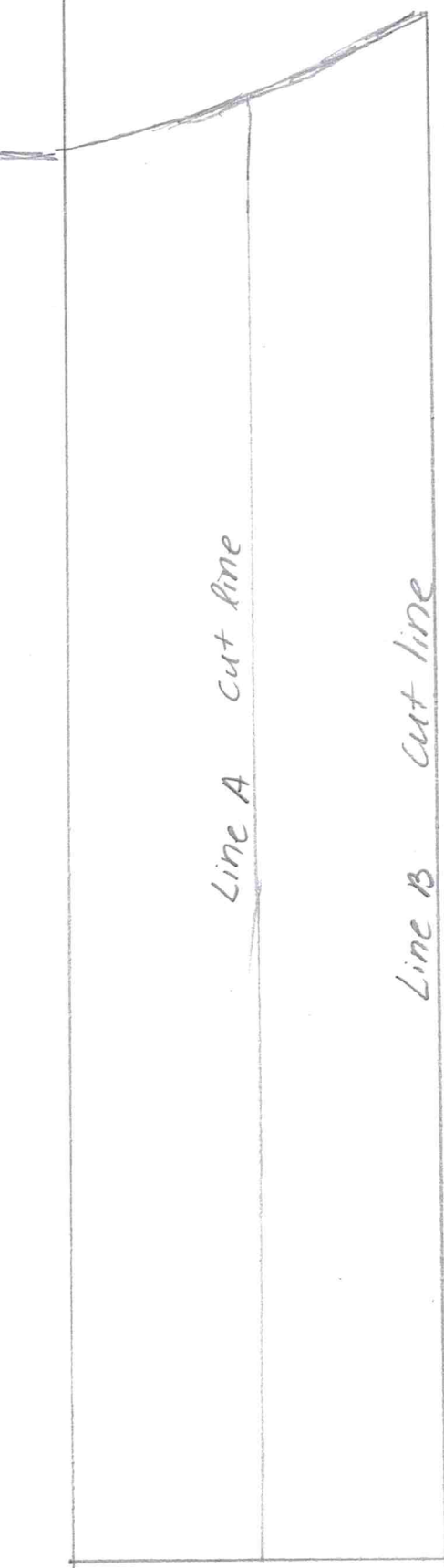


B

Back

Line A cut line

Line B cut line



## Bottom of Back

- Fold back where ever needed on child.
- make sure one side overlaps  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$ " for hook & eyes
- if back is too small you can always piece the fold, or you can cut larger and trim down.

1 inch

C