

4-H Knitting & Crocheting Guidelines

The general guidelines on this page pertain to both projects. See below the general guidelines for specific guidelines on each project.

General Knitting & Crocheting Guidelines

The following are suggestions and helpful guidelines for the Knitting and Crocheting projects. They are not hard and fast rules but rather some guidelines for providing learning experiences in knitting and crocheting.

1. Each member who signs up for a knitting and/or crocheting project should be given a copy of these guidelines or print them from the County 4-H website to share with their parents. This would be helpful when choosing an appropriate pattern and yarn.
2. Listed below are guidelines for techniques that could be learned at the various levels of experience. It doesn't mean that the member has to learn all of the techniques during that time period since it depends on the individual and how much they can handle. Each member should have a new learning experience with each project. It is important not to let the member get overwhelmed with their project. Knitting and Crocheting skills, techniques or methods should be taught and advanced from year to year.
3. The new member who has no knitting or crocheting experience will need to start at the beginning level and learn the basics in order to build on those skills. Perhaps the older 4-H member who has good coordination could combine more than one year into their project or complete two stages in one year. This should be a determination to be made between the member, leader and parent.
4. The project selected each year should be made with regard to the member's interest, length of attention span and ability, and be mutually agreed upon by the member and the project leader.
5. Members should attend at least 5 project meetings and evaluate projects with leaders throughout the year using the Knitting or Crocheting Evaluation Form, which is available on the website.
6. Members must select projects each year in which they will develop new skills.
7. Project leaders should stress quality work, not quantity.
8. Fashion Revue – members must model their own project/garments in order to be eligible for Fashion Revue awards.
9. Any questions can be answered by contacting the Knitting and Crocheting Superintendent.

Knitting

Basic Knitting skills should be stressed with all beginning members regardless of age division. Leaders: a good reference booklet is: How To Knit, published by The National Needlework Association (red cover). Most Yarn Shops carry the booklet, if not they will order.

Age Divisions:

Beginners: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Intermediate: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Advanced: Junior (12-14), Senior (15-19)

Suggested projects for age divisions

Beginners: very simple and quick-to-do projects are recommended for the first-year member.

Members should be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skills according to their age and ability. Likewise, members should be discouraged from undertaking too difficult a pattern or making numerous items.

Suggested projects

1st year projects (select 2 items)

- Hat and scarf (counts as 2)
- Simple purse
- Potholder
- Slippers

2nd year projects (select 1 item)

- Mittens
- Simple poncho
- Sleeveless shell
- Vest
- Simple socks

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- NO boucles

Suggested skills to learn:

- What is Knitting? (see page 11 in recommended booklet)
- For the first project, stress simplicity. Make sure the member has a good grasp of the basics (i.e., holding needles and yarn, etc.)
- Use of basic knitting tools
- Yarns

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- reading a yarn label and understanding fiber content, care, yardage vs ozs
- dye lots
- how to substitute a yarn when pattern calls for another
- suitable yarn for type of pattern
- Simple knitting terms and abbreviations
- How to wind yarn (if necessary)
- Casting on
- How to knit
- How to purl
- Binding off
- How to use correct tension to gauge correctly
- Ribbing
- Stockinette stitch
- How to join new strand of yarn
- How to increase and decrease
- How to recognize and correct mistakes
- How to sew seams – back-stitching and woven
- Correct way to wash and care for knitted garments.

Intermediate: as skills increase, members should use a pattern suitable to that skill level. Be sure to pick a new learning experience. Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed!

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leader’s decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects:

3rd year project (select 1 item)

- Simple cardigan sweater w/long or short sleeves – stockinette stitch
- Simple pullover sweater w/long or short sleeves – stockinette stitch
- Simple poncho – garter stitch
- Simple cape – garter stitch or stockinette stitch
- Simple skirt – stockinette stitch
- Simple socks with ribbed leg

4th year project (select 1 item)

- Cardigan sweater with long or short sleeves using a pattern stitch
- Pullover sweater with long or short sleeves using a pattern stitch
- Poncho with a pattern stitch
- Cape with a pattern stitch
- Skirt with a pattern stitch
- Mittens and hat with a pattern stitch
- Socks with a pattern stitch

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- Boucles (with leader’s approval)

Suggested skills to learn:

- Yarns
 - reading a yarn label and understanding fiber content, care, yardage vs ozs
 - dye lots
 - how to substitute a yarn when pattern calls for another
 - suitable yarn for type of pattern
- How to read more complicated patterns
- Use of stitch holders, tape measure and markers
- How to do knit-in buttonholes
- How to set in sleeves
- How to backstitch, crochet and invisible graft seams
- How to do pattern stitches (cables, cluster, bobbles, twists, etc.)
- Use of circular needles
- How to launder and block garment

Advanced: members are expected to make a more difficult type of garment. Be sure to pick a new learning experience. Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed!

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leader’s decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects: (should be more challenging)

- Sweater with knit-in design using 2 or more colors (Fair Isle, Intarsia)
- Gloves, tie and socks (all 3) with knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Suit with pattern stitch, knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Skirt with pattern stitch, knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Dress with pattern stitch, knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Coat with pattern stitch, knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Afghan with multiple pattern stitches, knit-in design using 2 or more colors
- Any other project that requires equal skill

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- Boucles (with leader’s approval)
- Any yarn desired to complete project (with leader’s approval)

Suggested skills to learn:

- Work with more complicated patterns
- How to interchange colors
- Use of different types and weights of yarns
- How to make machine sewn buttonholes
- Pattern drafting
- How to use multiple pattern stitches in a project
- How to do knitted in hem
- How to combine knitting with fabric

Comments and Recommendations:

- Clean hands and clean needles must be constantly stressed
- Correct tension must be stressed from the beginning
- Size 8 (10 inch) needles and knitting worsted weight yarn, are recommended for beginners.
- White, black, and navy yarns are not recommended until knitter is advanced. White shows the dirt too quickly and black and navy are hard for beginners to spot mistakes.
- Leaders may want to give a mini-exam to older members in first year of knitting and who have some previous knitting to determine their ability to: cast on, rib st, knit, purl, tension, gauge. This would better help the member to choose a project in line with their capabilities.
- Learn how to combine needles, yarn, stitches, tension and gauge.
- Learn how to select all materials needed and a pattern for project.

Knitting Guidelines

1. Pattern Selection – suitable for the member's age and ability

- Suitable yarn

2. Cast-on and Bind-off

- Proper tension – stitches close together but not too tight.
- Even tension

3. Seam

- Smooth seam finish
- Suggested seam finishes
 - Back stitch
 - Single crochet
 - Weave
 - Invisible stitch
 - Do NOT use the overcast method – it adds bulk and sometimes produces uneven looking seams.

4. Workmanship

- Correct gauge (do a test swatch to check gauge)
- Stitches follow pattern correctly throughout garment
- Uniform tension
- Suitable yarn for project
- Finishing techniques
- Knit to fit (take measurements before starting to size correctly)

5. Yarn ends

- Join yarn at edges whenever possible and weave ends into seam allowances
- If yarn must be joined in the middle of row:
 - Knit old and new yarn together for 4 or 5 stitches and work ends in
 - Joining yarn by knotting is NOT recommended because it is difficult to hide knots and present a finished look and knots are sometimes not durable.
- Leave ends long enough to be worked into garment
- Make sure all ends are worked in so they are not visible.

6. Clean and Blocked

- All garments must be clean
- Block where appropriate
- Care of knit garments (see yarn labels)

Knitting Evaluation Form

Criteria	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Additional Comments
Cast on stitches				
Bind off stitches				
Increased stitches				
Decreased stitches				
Tension				
Seams: tight, loose, bulky, even				
Holes at tip and end of mittens				
Holes at thumb base				
Crossed or reversed stitches				
Choice of yarn				
Choice of pattern				
Picked-up stitches for bands				
Button holes and eyelets				
Loose threads, woven ends				
Blocking				
Fair Isle or pattern tension				
General appearance				
Overall workmanship				

Things to consider (given by Fair Judges)

- The first appearance of the garment is important (how the garment looks).
- Tail ends must be woven in.
- No knots. If there is a knot in the yarn, cut it out and make a single loop around, weaving in the ends in opposite directions.
- It is usually best to start new skeins at the beginning of a row whenever possible.
- Seams should be neat, not too bulky, and sewn together properly.
- No twisted stitches.
- Even stitches, uniformity of tension.
- More advanced projects as knitter gets older.
- When using more than one color in a pattern stitch, yarn should be carried along loosely so the pattern will not pucker. Loops on inside should not span more than 3 stitches at a time.
- Blocking: do not press too heavily. Over blocking ruins the pattern.
- If garment has to be washed, be sure it is dry before bringing it in to the Fair for judging. It will be marked down if it is still damp.
- If practice squares are made, they will not be judged as an exhibit.
- There should not be any holes in tips of mittens or at base of thumb. Also, toes of slippers should be pulled up tightly, without leaving any holes.
- Inside of project should look as neat as the outside.

Crocheting

Basic Crocheting skills should be stressed with all beginning members regardless of age division.

Leaders: a good reference booklet is: How To Crochet, published by The National Needlework Association (blue cover). Most Yarn Shops carry the booklet, if not, they will order.

Age Divisions:

Beginners: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Intermediate: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Advanced: Junior (12-14), Senior (15-19)

Suggested projects for age divisions

Beginners: very simple and quick-to-do projects are recommended for the first-year member. Members should be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skills according to their age and ability. Likewise, members should be discouraged from undertaking too difficult a pattern or making numerous items.

Suggested projects:

1st year projects (select 2 items)

- Hat and scarf (counts as 2)
- Beret and scarf (counts as 2)
- Simple purse
- Potholder
- Slippers

2nd year projects (select 1 item)

- Mittens
- Simple poncho
- Sleeveless shell
- Vest
- Simple socks

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- NO boucles

Suggested skills to learn:

- What is Crocheting? (see page 3 of recommended booklet)
- For the first project, stress simplicity. Make sure the member has a good grasp of the basics (i.e., holding hooks, yarn, etc.)
- Yarns

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- reading a yarn label and understanding fiber content, care, yardage vs ozs
- dye lots
- how to substitute a yarn when pattern calls for another
- suitable yarn for type of pattern
- How to hold the hook so yarn can flow smoothly in order to make stitches of uniform size and tension
- How to hold yarn and/or thread correctly
- How to make a slip knot
- How to do the chain stitch
- How to do basic stitches: single crochet, double crochet and triple crochet
- How to slip stitch
- How to increase and decrease
- How to make a sample circle and square for practice
- How to read crochet abbreviations and follow directions
- How to gauge correctly
- How to turn work
- How to sew seams or crochet together

Intermediate: as skills increase, members should use a pattern suitable to that skill level. Be sure to pick a new learning experience. Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed! New skills should be learned each year.

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leader’s decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects:

3rd year project (select 1 item)

- Simple cardigan sweater w/long or short sleeves – one of basic stitches
- Simple pullover sweater w/long or short sleeves – one of basic stitches
- Simple poncho – one of basic stitches
- Simple skirt – one of basic stitches
- Simple cape – one of basic stitches

4th year project

- Cardigan sweater with long or short sleeves using a pattern stitch
- Pullover sweater with long or short sleeves using a pattern stitch
- Poncho with a pattern stitch
- Cape with a pattern stitch
- Skirt with a pattern stitch
- Mittens and hat with a pattern stitch
- Socks with a pattern stitch

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- Boucles (with leader’s approval)

Suggested skills to learn:

- Yarns
 - reading a yarn label and understanding fiber content, care, yardage vs ozs
 - dye lots
 - how to substitute a yarn when pattern calls for another
 - suitable yarn for type of pattern
- How to read more complicated patterns
- Use of stitch holders, tape measure and markers
- How to do double triple (treble) crochet and half double crochet stitches
- How to do popular pattern stitches: simple shell stitch, puff stitch, cluster stitch, reverse crochet (or crab stitch) and mesh crochet
- How to change colors at the beginning of a row
- How to do button bands with crochet-in buttonholes
- How to set in sleeves
- How to launder and block garment

Advanced: members are expected to make a more difficult type of garment. Be sure to pick a new learning experience. Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed!

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leader’s decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects: (should be more challenging)

- Sweater with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors (Intarsia)
- Gloves, tie and socks (all 3) with crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Suit with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Skirt with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Dress with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Coat with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Cape with pattern stitch, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Afghan with multiple pattern stitches, crochet-in design using 2 or more colors
- Any other project that requires equal skill

Suitable yarn suggestions for projects:

- Worsted weight acrylic
- Worsted weight acrylic/wool or cotton blend
- Worsted weight wool
- Some novelty yarns (not fussy with a lot of texture)
- DK weight
- Sport weight
- Boucles (with leader’s approval)
- Any yarn desired to complete project (with leader’s approval)

Suggested skills to learn:

- Work with more complicated patterns
- How to use different hook sizes
- How to change colors
- Use of different types and weights of yarns
- How to make machine sewn buttonholes
- How to use multiple pattern stitches in a project
- Pattern drafting

- How to do crocheted finished borders
- How to combine crocheting with fabric

Comments and Recommendations:

- Clean hand and clean hooks must be constantly stressed.
- Learn how to combine hooks, yarn, thread, stitches and gauge.
- Learn how to select all materials needed and a pattern for project.

Crocheting Guidelines

1. Pattern Selection – suitable for the member's age and ability

- Suitable yarn

2. Beginning chains and fasten off technique

- Proper tension – stitches close together but not too tight.
- Even tension

3. Seam

- Smooth seam finish
- Suggested seam finishes
 - Back stitch
 - Single crochet
 - Invisible stitch
 - Weave
 - Do NOT use the overcast method – it adds bulk and sometimes produces uneven looking seams.

4. Workmanship

- Correct gauge (do test swatch to check for gauge)
- Stitches follow pattern correctly throughout garment
- Uniform tension
- Proper methods of turning work depending on stitch used
- Suitable yarn for project
- Finishing techniques
- Crochet to fit (take measurements before starting project to size correctly)

5. Yarn ends

- Join yarn at edges whenever possible and weave ends into seam allowances
- If yarn must be joined in the middle of row:
 - Crochet old and new yarn together for 4 or 5 stitches and work ends in
 - Joining yarn by knotting is NOT recommended because it is difficult to hide knots and present a finished look and knots are sometimes not durable.
- Leave ends long enough to be worked into garment
- Make sure all ends are worked in so they are not visible.

6. Clean and Blocked

- All garments must be clean
- Block where appropriate
- Care of crocheted garment (see yarn label)

Crocheting Evaluation Form

Criteria	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Additional Comments
Starting chain				
Tension				
Increased stitches				
Decreased stitches				
Seams: tight, loose, bulky, even				
Choice of yarn				
Choice of pattern				
Button holes and eyelets				
Loose threads, woven ends				
Pattern stitch tension				
Blocking				
General Appearance				
Overall workmanship				

Things to consider (given by Fair Judges)

- When finishing off last of a round item, the row should be tapered by gradually reducing the size of stitches and finishing with at least two slip stitches.
- Granny squares should be woven together rather than overcast.
- A left-handed member can be taught to crochet more easily if the teacher sits opposite the member rather than beside the member.
- If the member crochets too tightly to too loosely, use different size hook than pattern calls for, until correct gauge is obtained.
- The first appearance of the garment is important (how the garment looks).
- Tail ends must be woven in. They can be kept from popping out when item is stretch, if they are woven first in one direction for an inch or two, and then woven back in the opposite direction for about an inch.
- Be careful to let the pattern keep its stretch when using this method.
- No knots. If there is a knot in the yarn, it should be cut off and worked in at the end of a row, or worked in the following manner: in a single crochet stitch when two loops of yarn are left on hook, drop old yarn tail, pick up new yarn and pull through last two remaining loops.
- Be sure to leave long enough tails to thread up a big needle and weave them into the pattern.
- Seams can be backstitched or crocheted, or woven together.
- Seams should be neat, not too bulky, and sewn together properly.
- No twisted stitches.
- Even stitches, uniformity of tension.
- More advanced projects as member gets older.
- When using more than one color in a pattern stitch, yarn should be carried along loosely so the pattern will not pucker.
- Loops on inside should not span more than 3 stitches at a time.
- Blocking: crocheting doesn't always have to be blocked. However, if the pattern calls for it, do not press too heavily. Over blocking ruins the appearance and flattens the pattern.

- If garment has to be washed, be sure it is dry before bringing it in to the Fair for judging. It will be marked down if it is still damp.
- If practice squares are made, they will not be judged as an exhibit.
- Inside of project should look as neat as the outside.