

Easy, fun and done!

- Sewing must be fun, or kids will not participate.
- Keep the project small with lots of opportunity for creativity.
- Pre-cut lots of parts that can be easily assembled with easy to work with fabrics.
- Textures, colors, and sizes of parts don't need to be "matchy-matchy". Don't suggest better choices to make the project look good to you. It's the child's choice.
- There will be mess. Embrace the mess and don't fix any "mistakes".
- Use real sewing tools with direct supervision. (Ever try to actually sew on a toy machine? Ever try to cut with plastic scissors? They don't work well and will frustrate teacher and student alike.)
- Explain the dangers of sharp things and control access to them. Have a safe spot to keep them during and after the sewing session. (Secure them when you are not there to directly supervise.)
- Avoid too many rules that make the process scary and frustrating. Simple guidelines like right sides together and always gently but firmly repeat the sharp things hurt rule.
- Slow down the speed of the machine. Don't rush the process. Be PATIENT!
- The window of concentration time on a project is usually only an hour or maybe two.
- Draw a sewing line to follow.
- Show them a final completed project as inspiration and encourage creativity.
- The age to start is different for each child and their level of manual dexterity, temperament, and interest. Some teachers accept children as young as five and some start at eight.
- Some teachers start with hand sewing and move onto machine sewing.
- Older children can learn to sew on embellishments, but small pieces are harder to manipulate for small fingers and can present a choking hazard even after the project is finished and played with.

- Don't forget the older children, tweens, teens, and young adults. Start with simple sewing and be prepared to move on to more advanced projects. Up the game with machine embroidery, harder to handle fabrics and embellishments.
- These older groups can be very sensitive about projects that are not worthy of outside exposure. (In my day it was definitely "not cool".) Encourage inside projects like pillows, pajamas or pet accessories.

Encourage and Engage

- Make the lesson stick and encourage more sessions. Make a game out of the process.
- Take pictures of the project.
- End the session with a picnic, tea party or just milk and cookies.
- Make gifts for friends, family and classmates.
- Make a room display or seasonal decorations.
- Don't force a session on a reluctant student.
- Create small hearts for the random acts of kindness project
www.ifoundaquiltedheart.com Make sure to follow the rules of the project to place hearts in the community to be discovered completely at random. Read about this non-profit, neutral and anonymous project on their website and follow the rules for making and distributing hearts in the community. Make it an adventure to distribute the hearts. This is the perfect combination of sewing and secret adventure game.
- Remember the future of sewing is in your hands. (No pressure.)

10 Reasons to Not Use a Toy Sewing Machine to Teach a Child

1. The machine works well and is easy to use.
2. Easy set up when selecting a stitch when using an electronic machine.
3. Kids love funny decorative stitches.
4. Set sewing speed to slow.
5. Scissors are built into machine to clip threads with the touch of a button.
6. Sew without foot pedal using start/stop button.
7. Easy to thread.
8. The machine works well and isn't frustrating to use.
9. Machine will still work when the child and the child's skills grow.
10. The machine works well and can easily be operated by a child when the child is ready to sew solo.