

# Girls' Pinafore & Pantaloons Pattern Instructions



## Notes:

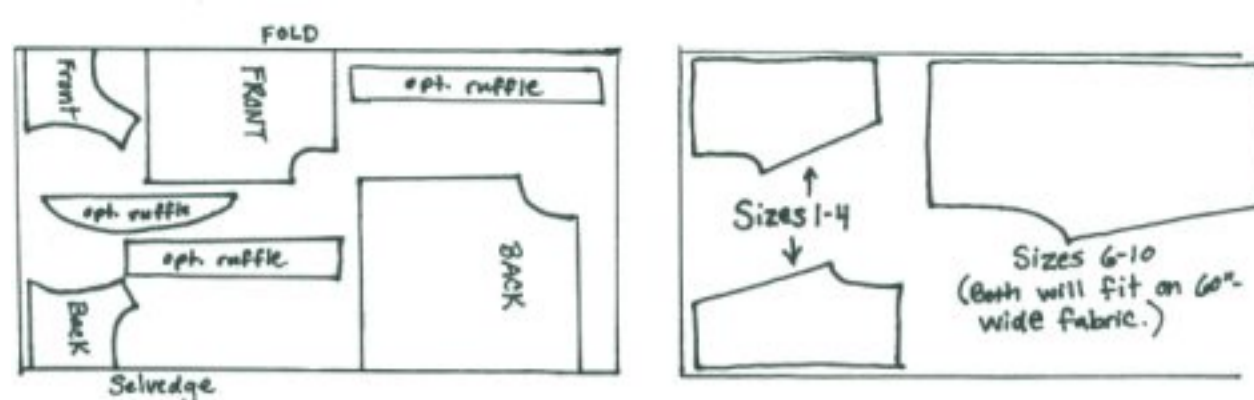
I created this pattern to add a couple of charming accessories to a girl's wardrobe. The pinafore can be worn over dresses made from my Girls' Regency Dress pattern or the Girls' Romantic Dress pattern. It is also appropriate for late Victorian (1890s) and early Edwardian dresses. Pinafores served a couple of different functions throughout this entire timespan. First of all, they served as handy play aprons to keep dresses cleaner. A plain pinafore with good coverage keeps dirt, grass, food spills, and other stains from hitting the dress beneath. You can make half a dozen play pinafores in unbleached muslin or calico and use them over everyday dresses, sparing the dresses from frequent washing! Secondly, pinafores could be made out of heirloom materials like voile, organdy, or batiste and fancied up with ruffles, tucks, lace, and/or embroidery for wear over tea dresses, for visiting, and for church. These look especially charming over solid-colored dresses, since all the fancy work shows up beautifully against such a background. Either way, pinafores are fun and easy to make and a great addition to a little girl's wardrobe.

I've also included a "bonus" pattern for pantaloons. Because I had extra room on the sheet, I thought it would be nice to add this all-but-forgotten wardrobe staple to the pattern line. Pantaloons first appeared for little girls in the late 18th century and continued in use throughout the Victorian era. They later changed to shorter "bloomers" gathered just below the knee. You can certainly shorten them and gather them to create bloomers if you like. As-is, the pattern makes pantaloons that are long enough to peek out from beneath a mid-calf or slightly longer dress. You can create plain, sturdy pantaloons for play (and for warmth in the colder seasons), and you can create fancy ones with tucks and lace for dress-up. They look especially darling beneath the shorter, fuller skirts of the Romantic Era. They make it possible to climb trees and fences without a loss of dignity or modesty, so you might find your daughter or granddaughter pulling them on for play as often as she does for dress-up!

When you are ready to start, trace all of your pattern pieces onto interfacing or pattern paper. This keeps your original pattern intact, so you can use other sizes later if you wish. It is absolutely *essential* that you measure the child for whom you will be making the pinafore or pantaloons. Do not look at the size on the chart and assume that a "6" in patterns corresponds with a "6x" off-the-rack. It does not! Pattern measurements are very different from retail clothing measurements. Go by the measurements, not by the "size." Skirt hem length and pantaloons length will also vary quite a bit, depending upon the child. Some six-year-olds are tall, while others are short. The hem lengths shown on the skirt piece are just suggestions. I recommend that you measure the child from empire waistline to desired hem length prior to cutting out the skirt. Measure from the waist to the desired hem length for pantaloons as well, remembering to add enough for the casing at the waistline and the hem at the bottoms of the legs. (Also check the "rise" —the length from waistline to crotch—to make sure there's enough length to make the pantaloons comfortable for standing and sitting.)

For play pinafores, cotton, muslin, linen, and flannel are a few good fabric choices. For fancy pinafores, I recommend voile, organdy, batiste, and Irish linen. The same fabrics apply to pantaloons. You might also want to purchase eyelet lace to trim the pinafore or the pantaloons. If you purchase wide, ungathered eyelet lace, you can use it for the ruffle on the pinafore's armhole instead of creating a fabric ruffle if you like.

## Pattern Layout:



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

At left is the suggested layout for the pinafore pieces on 45" wide material.  
At right is the suggested layout for the pantaloon pieces.

## Assembly Instructions for Pinafores:

### A. BASIC PINAFORE:

1. I'll give you the "plain Jane" pinafore instructions first, then add some details for the "heirloom" version. This is a quick and easy accessory to put together and can even make a good project for a beginning sewist. To start, sew the pinafore bodice front to the backs at the shoulders. Press the seams open. Repeat this for the lining.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

2. Now pin the lining to the bodice, right sides together.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Starting 5/8" from the bottom of one back edge, stitch up the edge, around the neckline and down the opposite edge, stopping 5/8" from the bottom. Now do the same at each "armhole" edge, starting and stopping 5/8" from the bottom. Grade seam allowances and clip curves.



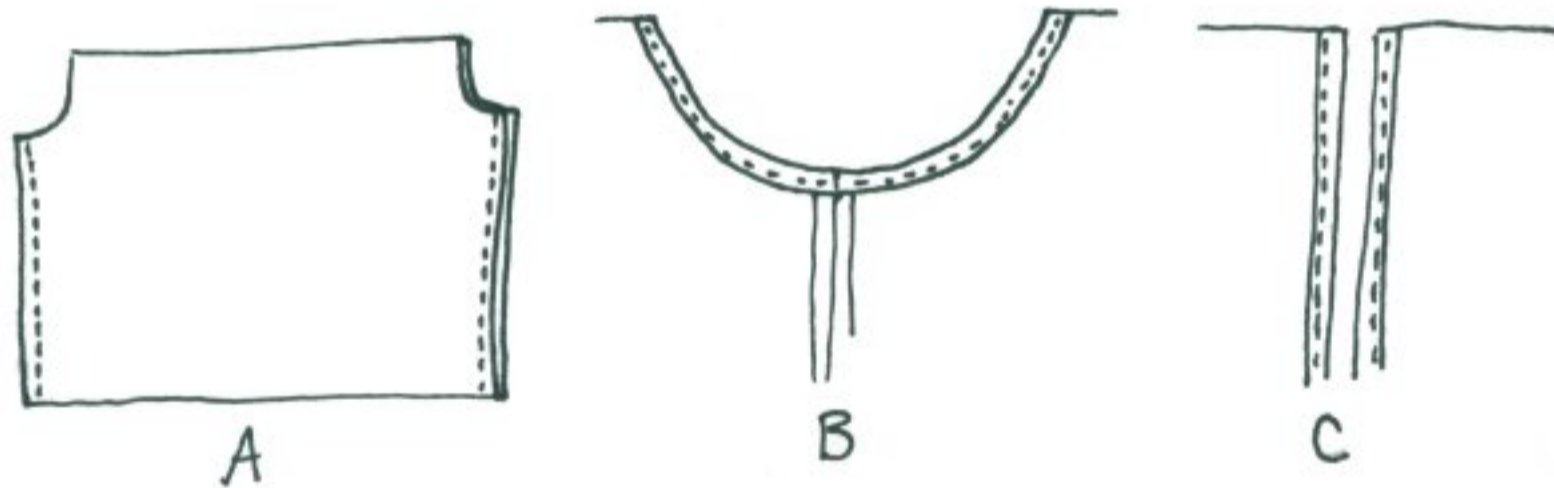
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

3. Turn the bodice right side out by "feeding" the back pieces through the shoulder "tube" and out the front. Press neatly and set bodice aside.



(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

4. Sew the skirt front to the skirt backs at the side seams (A). Hem the "armholes" with the smallest hem you can make on your machine (B). Hem the back edges of the skirt (C). [Note: Photographs of white thread on white fabric didn't show very well for these steps, so I've just included the pattern illustration here.]

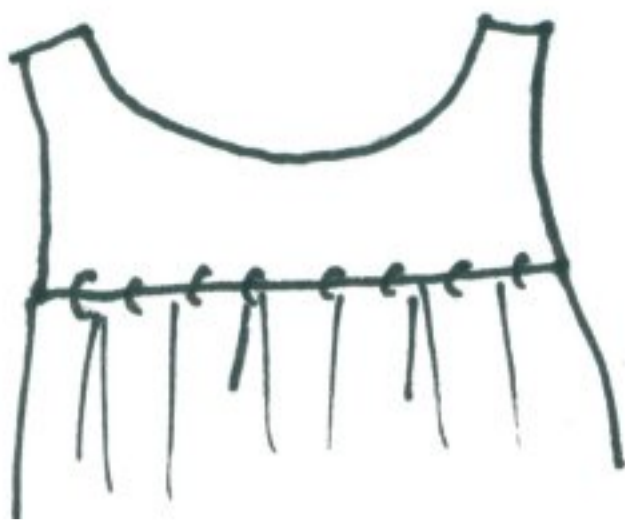


5. Run gathering stitches at the top of each skirt section. Pin skirt to bodice, keeping bodice lining free and matching appropriate sections, right sides together, then pull up gathering stitches evenly and stitch.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

6. Turn bodice lining under and whipstitch over the waistline seam in each section, enclosing the raw seams completely.



*Whipstitching lining to bodice.*

7. Hem skirt by hand or on the machine.

8. Mark buttonholes on back overlap, spacing evenly. Stitch, then cut open. Sew buttons corresponding to the holes on the opposite side. That's all there is to it!



*Buttons in place.*



*Finished play pinafore, front and back.  
(Click thumbnails for larger images.)*

## **B. HEIRLOOM PINAFORE:**

1. The heirloom version is meant to be constructed out of fine, sheer materials, so you will omit the bodice lining. [Note: If you want to make tucks in the skirt, be sure you calculate their width and how many you will use prior to cutting out the skirt pieces, since you'll need to add length. If you plan to add a ruffle, factor that into the length calculation as well.] Sew the bodice front to the backs at the shoulders, using a French seam as shown below. The first seam (with wrong sides together) will be scant (presser foot on the edge of the material). The second seam (right sides together), which encloses the first, should be taken up along the  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seamline marking on your machine. This uses up your  $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam allowance, and there is no need to trim the first seam.



*Shoulders sewn together with French seams (note how the first scant seam is totally enclosed within the second seam).*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

2. Press the back edges of the pinafore bodice outward (wrong side out) 5/8".



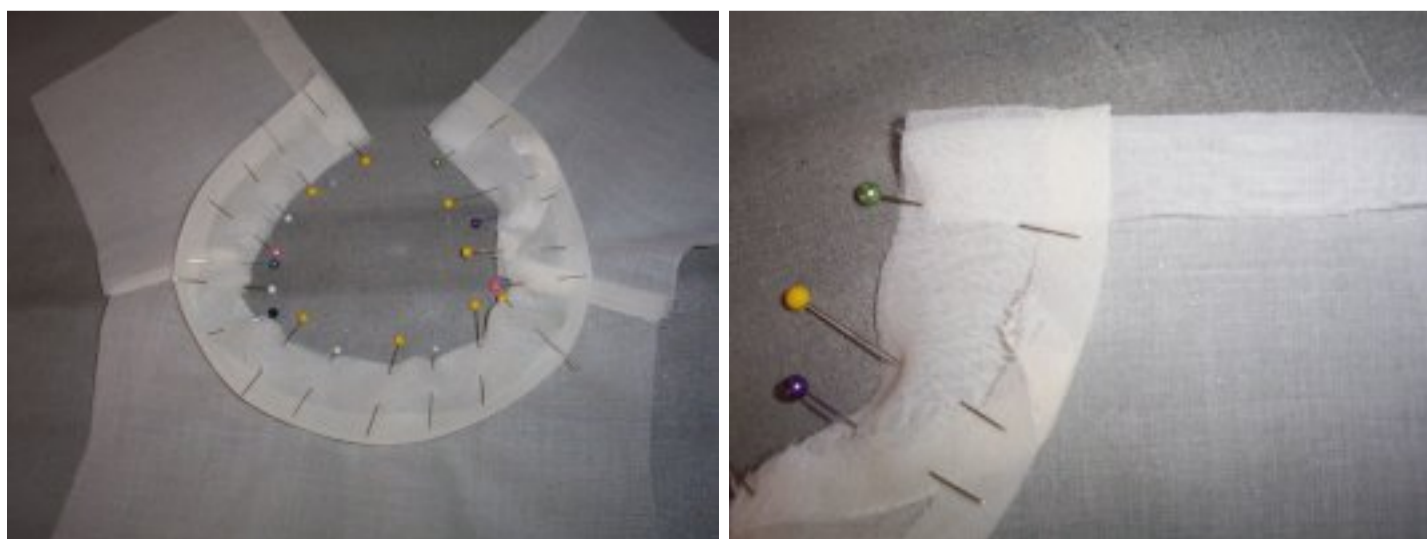
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

3. Create self-binding from your fashion material by cutting a bias strip of material 1 1/2" wide and as long as the neckline measures around. Press under 1/4" of one side, making one folded edge and leaving the other edge raw.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Pin the binding to the neckline, right sides together, starting at the folded back edge of the bodice and going all the way around to the other side. (You will be matching the raw edge of the binding to the raw neckline edge.)



(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Stitch, taking up a 5/8" seam. Clip curves and trim seam down to 1/4".



(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

4. Turn each side of the folded bodice back towards the inside along the pressing line and press again so that the edge is turned under 5/8" (you cut this out on the selvedge, so there is no raw edge to worry about).



(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Now the raw end of the neckline binding is enclosed.

5. Turn folded edge of binding over the raw neckline seam to cover it, then turn again so that the seam and the binding are inside the bodice neckline.



(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Whipstitch or topstitch in place to enclose neckline seam.



*Back edge pressed toward inside, covering enclosed neckline seam.*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

6. Hem the curved edge of the armhole ruffles with the narrowest hem possible, either by hand or on the machine. (Traditionally, most "heirloom" garments are sewn completely by hand, but French sewing by machine is now very popular and looks lovely). OPTIONAL: Omit fabric ruffles and use flat eyelet lace instead.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

7. Run gathering stitches along the straight edges of the armhole ruffles. Pin ruffles to "armholes" of bodice, right sides together, having "points" of ruffles at bottom of each armhole. Pull up gathering stitches and spread evenly (most of the gathers should be at the shoulder). Stitch ruffle to armhole. [Optional Heirloom Method Shown Here: Pin ruffles to armholes with *wrong* sides together for a French seam. Stitch with the presser foot at the edge of the seam the first time (A), then take up a 3/8" seam after folding the ruffle to face right sides together with the bodice (B).]



**A.**



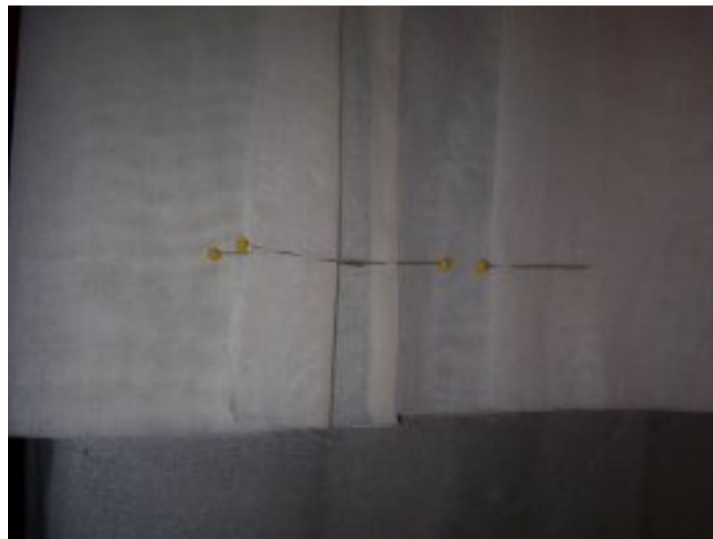
**B.**

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)



*Left: Finished French seam; Right: Ruffle finished and pressed.  
(Click thumbnails for larger images.)*

8. If you did not French seam, you can finish the raw seam with self-bias binding (double-fold). Set bodice aside.
9. Sew skirt front to backs at sides, using French seams. Hem "armholes" with the narrowest hem possible (either by hand or on the machine). Hem back edges of skirt. Run gathering stitches along the tops of the skirt sections.
10. If you plan to make tucks in the skirt, mark where you wish to place them by folding the skirt in half vertically and marking the first tuck's fold with pins (folding the skirt in half helps you keep the tuck line even across the skirt).



*Left: Marking the first tuck (placing pin at both back edges); Right: Checking to make sure the first tuck is marked evenly all the way around the skirt (skirt fabric has been folded to "meet" in the middle to check the tuck).  
(Click thumbnails for larger images.)*

Stitch the first tuck by folding the skirt in half horizontally (wrong sides together) along the marked (pinned) fold line, then stitching the tuck (the width of which you can determine according to your tastes – anywhere from 1/8" on up).



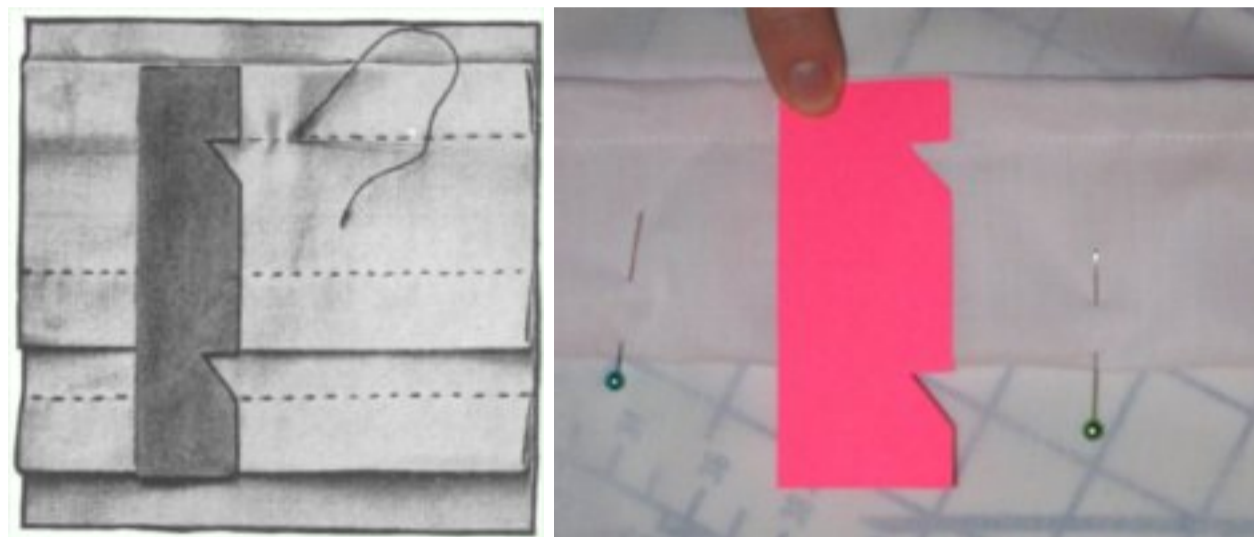


(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

11. Place remaining tucks by measuring from the first tuck's fold line to the fold line of the next tuck, leaving room for space between tucks (a tuck gauge is a handy tool to create for this purpose).



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)



*Left: Vintage illustration of a tuck gauge; Right: My homemade tuck gauge (you can use posterboard or something heavier if you like).*

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

12. If you do not plan to add a ruffle, hem the skirt by hand or on the machine. If you'll be adding a ruffle, you can cut it out of your remaining material now. The ruffle should be at least one and a half times the width of the bottom of the skirt, but it can be longer if you want a more gathered ruffle. You can cut the ruffle as one long piece if you wish, or you can break it down into three pieces (each one at least one and a half times longer than each skirt section is wide). If you cut it in sections, French seam the sections together before gathering. The width of the ruffle is up to your personal tastes; just be sure to include enough room for your seam allowance and a hem.
13. Hem back edges of ruffle and bottom edge of ruffle. Run gathering stitches at top of ruffle. Pin ruffle to bottom of skirt, pulling up gathers to fit. Stitch.



*Ruffle hemmed and sewn in place.*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

14. Pin skirt to bodice, pulling up gathering stitches evenly to fit each section and matching center backs.



*Here you see one gathered skirt section pinned to one bodice section.  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)*

Stitch skirt to bodice (see step A5 above). Finish the raw waistline seam by enclosing it in self-binding (double-fold).

15. Mark buttonholes on back overlap, spacing evenly. If you are using very fine fabric, I recommend "sandwiching" a small piece of the same material inside the turned under back edges where you'll be placing each buttonhole. This prevents your fine material from tearing or pulling when you sew the buttonholes in place. Stitch buttonholes and cut open.



*Ready for buttons!  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)*

16. Sew buttons corresponding to the holes on the opposite side. You're finished!



*Pinafore finished and ready to wear.  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)*



*Finished heirloom pinafore on my daughter.*

[Note: In the first two pictures, she is wearing a "onesie" under her dress, thus the white line above the pinny's neckline!]

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

**Note:** Obviously, you can take this simple heirloom version and jazz it up with fine lace and embroidery. Fancy pinafores make wonderful samplers for embroidery!

## Assembly Instructions for Pantaloons:

1. You'll have four identical pieces. Pin two of each together along the curved (crotch) edge and stitch from top of waist to end of curve (you can use French seams or conventional seams; I recommend French seams for heirloom fabric).



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

2. Pin sections, right sides together, matching straight (outside leg) edges. Stitch.



(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

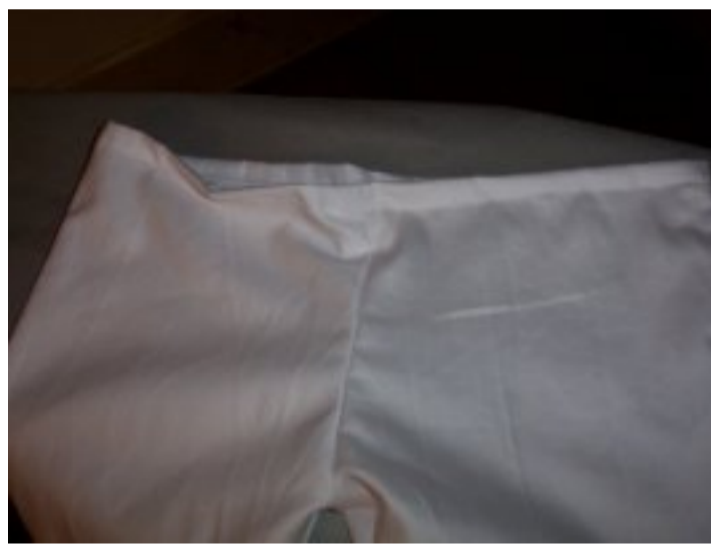
3. If you plan to add tucks, now is the time to do that (follow instructions for tucks in heirloom pinafore steps above).

Hem bottom of each leg. Add gathered or flat lace after hemming if you wish .



*Eyelet lace sewn to hemmed leg section.*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

4. Pin inner leg sections, right sides together. Stitch up from the bottom of one leg, pivot around the curve at the crotch, and continue down to the bottom of the opposite leg.
5. Turn under the top of the waistline once, then once again, just enough to create a casing for either a drawstring or  $\frac{1}{4}$ " elastic. Stitch, leaving a small opening in the center front or center back to run drawstring or elastic.



*Waistline Casing Ready for Elastic or Drawstring.*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

6. If you'll be using a drawstring (authentic method), cut it twice as long as the child's waistline measurement. Run it through the casing, leaving the ends out so they can be tied together. If you'll be using elastic, it should be cut just slightly smaller than the child's waistline measurement (too loose, and the pantaloons will fall down; too tight, and they will be uncomfortable). Run the elastic through the casing, then overlap the ends and stitch them in place to secure them.



*Pantaloons finished and ready to wear!*  
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

**Alternative method for "bloomers":** Cut pantaloons so that they will hit just below the knee when hemmed. Instead of hemming the bottoms of the legs, make another casing for elastic **OR** use heirloom "beading" to run a ribbon drawstring.

***Ta-da!***

# Enjoy your new creations!

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