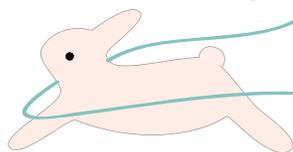




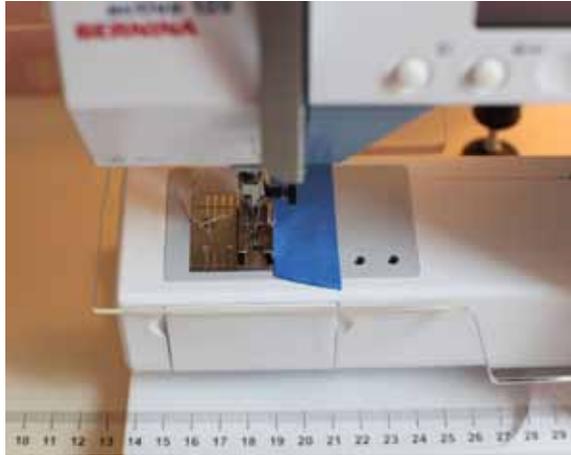
USING THE SEWING MACHINE

- **WHAT TYPE OF MACHINE?** It's easier to learn on a real machine. I don't recommend toy machines for children. Let them try sewing on your machine first to make sure machine sewing is something they love. When it's time to buy a machine for children, I recommend the small Janome or if you can afford it, the Bernina Activa.
- **REACH FOR THE PEDAL:** Find a small step stool or have your husband make a wood platform for the foot pedal to rest on. Make sure your child is sitting high enough to be able to sew. Ergonomics are important for children too. It's hard to sew if you have to push the pedal with tippy toes.
- **GO EASY ON THE PEDAL:** This is the hardest thing for children...don't push hard on the pedal! I compare it to driving a car and I say to them "slow down or I'll have to give you a ticket". (If you can set the machine speed to slow it will help.)
- **TEACH THE BASICS OF THE MACHINE:** It may not be something they pick up on the first try, but show them how to thread the machine, wind the bobbin, thread the needle, change feet, raise and lower the needle and guide the fabric. Call the parts by their right name and before you know it your child will remember! Always make sure you talk about safety when sewing. My girls know how to keep fingers out of the way.
- **SEWING A STRAIGHT & CURVED SEAM:** Cut 2 pieces of fabric. Draw straight lines on top piece and have your child stitch on the lines through both pieces of fabric. Do this at the start of every lesson and soon sewing straight will be easy. Once they can sew straight draw a large "S" and have them practice sewing curves. Have them keep a sample of each in their binder and write the date on the sample.
- **SEWING WITH PINS:** Show them how to pin 2 pieces of fabric together. This may feel a bit clumsy at first and they may need your help. Soon they'll be pinning on their own. Have them stop sewing when they come to a pin, remove the pin and start sewing again.
- **SEWING A 1/4" SEAM:** Show your child where the 1/4" mark is on a ruler and draw 1/4" seam line on fabric for practice stitching. The concept of 1/4" will probably be new but with a little help they can learn to sew 1/4" seam. (Continued on next page)...





- **SEWING A 1/4" SEAM (CONTINUED):** It may help to mark the 1/4" seam line on the machine with several pieces of masking tape as shown below. Make sure you use a 1/4" foot! It may not have come with your machine but you can order one from your local sewing machine shop.



- **BACK STITCH:** Teach your child to back stitch (sew in reverse for a few stitches and then forward) at the beginning and end of each seam. This will knot the thread and it's a good habit for children to learn. They won't have to worry about a seam pulling apart. Cut the threads close to the fabric and put scraps in the garbage.
- **IRONING:** Teach ironing safety. Seams will have to be pressed but you don't want any burns. You may want to buy a little Rowenta Travel iron for your child to use. It's not as heavy as a regular iron and the small size makes it easier to use. Teach them to unplug the iron when finished sewing (the little Rowenta doesn't turn itself off).
- **CLEANUP:** Teaching children to clean up after sewing is important for safety. You don't want any pins or threads left laying around. Teach them to clean up each time they sew and it will become a habit. Bad habits are hard to break but good ones stay with us forever!

