

BASIC HAND PUPPET

Kindly donated by Val Holmes in East Yorkshire

The hand puppet pattern is the basis for all of our sets of puppets.

The most requested puppets are the family sets. These consist of **Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy(s) and girl(s)**. Each of these puppets is double faced, with **a happy smiling face on one side and a sad face with downturned mouth on the other**.

The family puppets are used in role play to work through children's troubling situations. You can find more about why they are helpful on the website.

Female puppets can be made either with skirt or trousers. Choice of colours and hairstyle indicate gender. There are lots of ideas for creating family members on the picture below and on the Gallery page of the website.

The Professionals Set is also much in demand. These puppets represent the people with whom children in trouble may come into contact: doctor, nurse, policeman, teacher, social worker and judge. These puppets have one face, the smiling face. The reverse of the puppet will show the back of the person it represents. Suggestions for creating professionals are at the end of this document.

Although the puppets are sent out in full sets, and we love to receive complete sets, please don't feel that you *have* to knit everything. Knit what you enjoy.



You will need:

Double knitting yarn in the colours of your choice – if making ethnic puppets, use brown/tan for the face, but not black thanks. You can knit the dress in any colour you like, or change half way up to indicate a blouse and skirt effect, see the picture below for more ideas.

4 mm (size 8) needles

For the eyes: buttons or the sew-on type of toy eyes, or you can embroider the eyes –(please don't attach anything with glue)

No need for a nose, although instructions are included for either a knitted in, or an embroidered nose.

For the mouth: stranded embroidery thread – please use this, separated into 3 strands, rather than your yarn, as it's easier and more effective, and ensure that you sew it low down the face, not too close to the eyes (so that a nose can be imagined).

For the hair: Double knitting yarn in the colour of your choice (grey for the Gran?). Patterns also included for knitted hair.



TO MAKE: (NB. KNIT 2)

TIP: leaving a long tail of yarn at cast on, cast off and colour change gives you ready attached matching yarn for sewing up your puppet.

PUPPET IN DRESS

Skirt: Cast on 20 stitches and knit 6 rows in garter stitch. Work in stocking stitch or moss stitch until work measures 3 inches from commencement, ending with an even row. You can make the skirt about half an inch shorter to make a girl puppet smaller than an adult.

Bodice: If knitting the whole dress in one colour, change to k1 p1 rib and work 6 rows for a child or 8 rows for an adult.

If changing colour for the bodice knit one row of the new colour then change to k1p1 rib for a further 5 or 7 rows

Arms: 1st arm row: Cast on 10 stitches. If you cast on by putting the tip of your needle between stitches instead of into the previous stitch you will get a firmer edge. Knit back along these 10 stitches knitting into the back of the 2 stitches where the arm joins the body, which will prevent a small hole appearing at the underarm join. Continue in rib (30 stitches)

2nd arm row: Cast on 10 stitches, K4, P6, remembering to work into the back of the two stitches at the underarm join. Continue in rib until last 10 stitches, P6, K4 (40 stitches)

Work another 8 rows: (rs: k10,rib 20, k 10. ws: k4, p6, rib 20, p6, k4, ie. the bodice continues in rib, the arms are worked in stocking stitch) – on purl rows knitting the first and last 4 stitches suggests hands.

Next row: rs, cast off 14 stitches, continue in rib until last 10 stitches, K10 (26 stitches)

Next row: ws cast off 14 stitches knitwise and knit to end (12 stitches). Cut **bodice** yarn remembering to leave long tail for sewing up.

* **Change to face colour-** use pale beige or very pale pink for British flesh tones, brown or tan for ethnic skin tones, (no black yarn though thanks).

Neck: work 2 rows in ss starting with a k row

Face: Continuing in ss, inc 1 st at each end of every row until there are 20 sts.

EITHER: ss 8 rows for plain face without nose, (or nose to be sewn later)

OR: Knitted in nose (optional): Row 1:k10, make 1 by picking up yarn between stitch 10 and 11 and knit into the back of it, k10 (21 sts)

Row 2: p21

Row 3: k10, kfbfb into stitch 11, k 10 (24 sts)

Row4: p10, p4tog, p1b, p9

***NB.** If you want to knit the hair as part of the puppet head the hair pattern begins here at row 5 of the nose pattern. For instructions for this please go now to the hair features section below.

OR Row 5: k9, k2togtbl, k10 (20sts)

Shape top of head:

Continue in ss throughout, decreasing one stitch at either end of alternate rows until 12 sts remain, and then on every row until 8 sts remain

Cast off (still working 2 tog at beg and end of cast off row). Break off yarn leaving a good long tail for sewing up. Knit another piece the same.

Add the features next before sewing up your puppet

TIP: the features of the puppet are probably the trickiest part – please use embroidery thread rather than yarn, as the yarn tends to be rather thick and is less realistic! A simple chain stitch or stem stitch works best. Using a 3” square of Vlieseline (formerly Vilene) medium weight, non-iron-on interfacing, on the back of the features makes it much easier to embroider accurately and securely Trim it into a rough circle before sewing the two halves of the puppet together and it can stay in place inside the puppet’s head. Please place the mouth well down from the eyes so that a nose can be imagined, it looks more natural that way.

EYES: if using buttons or sew-on type eyes please sew them on extra firmly. Use white sewing thread to sew on black, blue or brown button eyes. This gives them a highlight and brings them to life. Please see the end of this document for some hints on embroidering eyes.

MOUTH: Embroider smiling mouth one side and downturned mouth on the other, well down the face, see tip above. No need for a nose if you don’t wish to add one.

Continued



Sew the two pieces together, leaving the bottom open. We encourage you to use your own creativity and add a handbag made of felt if you wish, or other features, but please ensure that anything you add is extra securely attached. All items are tested for strength before being donated. See the website galleries for lots of ideas.

See the next page for puppet in trousers

PUPPET IN TROUSERS

The pattern for the puppet with trousers and the puppet in a dress is the same from the neck upwards, and you can choose whether to put any of your female characters in dresses or trousers.

You will need small amounts of DK yarn in colours suitable for shoes, trousers and jumper, or uniform in the case of professionals.

In shoe colour, cast on 22 sts and work 4 rows of garter stitch (knit every row).

Change to trouser colour remembering that your cut ends will be used to sew up later.

Knit 1 row

Trouser legs:

Ws: P10, K2, P10

Rs K10 , P2, K10

Repeat last two rows until legs are about 12 rows long.

Trouser body

On a rs row change to ss, work 5 rows

Work 1 knit row on the wrong side. This gives the puppet a waistband.

Jumper

Change to jumper colour.

Ss 8 rows. (You can be creative here and add stripes or patterns to the jumper.)

For the arms cast on 10sts (using the cable cast on method; needle *between* the previous two stitches rather than *in* the next stitch, gives a firmer cast on edge.) Knit to end of row. (30sts)

Next row: (ws) cast on 10sts. K4, p to last 4 sts, k4. (42 {40})sts

Ss 8 more rows BUT remember to knit the 4 sts at the beginning and end of the purl rows. This suggests the hands.

Shoulders

Next row: Cast off 15 sts and k to end [27sts]

Next row: Cast off 15 sts knitwise. Knit to end (12)sts. This gives a purl row on the rs and divides the jumper from the neck.

***Change to face colour and follow the basic “puppet in dress” pattern for neck and head.**
Note, the cut end from the jumper yarn has to sew all the way around the arms and to the waistband. Leave a long enough end.

BOY HAND PUPPET WITH HAT – this is an alternative boy pattern

By Karen Lang - with thanks to Katherine Charles, as the pattern is adapted from her ‘Doll Hand Puppet’ / ‘New Dolly Puppet’.



You will need:

Double knitting yarn in the colours of your choice – if making ethnic puppets, use brown/tan for the face, but not black thanks.

4 mm (size 8) needles

For the eyes - buttons or the sew-on type of toy eyes, or you can embroider the eyes –(please don’t stick on anything with glue)

For the mouth - embroidery cotton

Abbreviations: SSK: Slip, slip, knit: Slip the first stitch as if to knit, slip the second stitch as if to knit, then slide the left-hand needle into the front part of both stitches and knit them together. M1: Make 1: Pick up and knit (or purl) the strand of yarn between the 2 stitches. Stitching into the back of this loop helps avoid a hole.

Shoes: Cast on 24 stitches. Row 1 and 2: Knit. Row 3 & 4: K1, SSK, knit to three stitches before the end, K2tog, K1 (20 stitches).

Trousers: Change colour for trousers; a light / medium colour will show the trouser leg divide more clearly than a dark colour. Row 1: Knit Row 2: P9, K2, P9. Row 3: K9, P2, K9. Note: The K2 / P2 in the middle 'divides' the two trouser legs. Continue alternating rows 2 and 3 until the trousers measure about 5 cm from the top of the shoes. Then continue in normal stocking stitch for 4 rows (i.e. row 1 = knit, row 2 = purl, row 3 = knit, row 4 = purl).

Jumper: Change colour for jumper. Knit 2 rows to create the waist band for the jumper. Continue in stocking stitch for about 4 cm. 1st arm row: Cast on 10 stitches, then knit across this row (30 stitches). 2nd arm row: Cast on 10 stitches, K4, purl across the rest of the row until 4 stitches before the end, K4 (40 stitches). Work another 8 rows alternating rows 1 and 2. On purl rows, knitting the first and last 4 stitches suggests hands. Row 11: Cast off 14 stitches, K26 (26 stitches). Row 12: Cast off 14 stitches in purl, P12 (12 stitches).

Face: Change to face colour. Use white British flesh tones or brown or tan for ethnic skin tones. Row 1: knit Row 2: purl Row 3: K1, M1, K10, M1, K1 (14 stitches)

Row 4: P1, M1, P12, M1, P1 (16 stitches) Row 5: K1, M1, K14, M1, K1 (18 stitches) Row 6: P1, M1, P16, M1, P1 (20 stitches) Continue in stocking stitch until face measures about 4 cm.

Hat: Change to hat colour. Row 1 and 2: Knit. This gives a border for the hat. Row 3: K1, SSK, knit until 3 stitches before the end, K2tog, K1 (18 stitches). Row 4: purl Continue alternating rows 3 and 4 until there are 8 stitches left. You can then either cast off or thread the yarn through the stitches and pull to gather the hat at the top.

Knit two pieces the same and sew together, leaving the bottom open.

For eyes and mouth please see the same instructions as in the "puppet in dress pattern" (above) - and as this puppet has a hat you won't need to do hair.

HAIR

Important note: the hair must be impossible to pull out. If you only attach the hair by using a separate piece of yarn to tie the bundle this doesn't hold it, as the hair can still be pulled through. **So we have asked knitters for various different ways of doing it, the patterns for which are below.** Please choose your preferred method, (some are easier than others!), but all must be super safe, thank you.

HERE ARE PATTERNS IF YOU WISH TO KNIT IN YOUR PUPPET'S HAIR, OR ALTERNATIVELY IF YOU WISH TO ATTACH HAIR TO YOUR ALREADY KNITTED PUPPET PLEASE SKIP TO THE SECTION ENTITLED "HINTS FOR ATTACHING PUPPET HAIR WHICH WON'T PULL OUT".

KNITTED IN HAIR.

The easiest way to knit in hair is simply to change colours, always on a rs (knit) row round about the start of the top-of-head shaping. This gives a straight hairline, which is not very realistic, but can be improved by the addition of plaits or bunches sewn to the sides of the head. To make a plait or bunch, cut 6 strands of hair coloured yarn slightly more than twice as long as the finished plait. Knot the six strands together in the middle. Using ordinary matching sewing thread, sew knot to base of hairline at side of face. Leave a long tail on your sewing thread. Make a plait, 4 strands to each section, and include the sewing tail in one section. Use the sewing thread to bind off the finished plait, rethread it on a sewing needle and sew through the bound end a few times. Trim end of plait.

KNITTED IN HAIR, SHAPED HAIRLINES

Shaped hairlines require two colour knitting. The secret of changing from one strand of yarn to another mid row without creating a hole in the knitting is to cross the two strands at the back of the work at changeover so that the contrast yarn is trapped at the base of the working yarn stitch or vice versa. There are plenty of helpful video tutorials on YouTube if you want to see this technique in action.

To introduce a new colour, fold about 3" of the new yarn back on itself so that it is shaped like a hairpin. Leaving the old colour at the back of the work, put your working needle into the next stitch and use the loop you have made as the loop you pull through it. Work the next stitch in the new colour with both strands of your "hairpin" together. Drop the short strand of the hairpin and knit on.

In these two patterns the face colour will be referred to as F and the hair colour as H.

CENTRE PARTING

Wind off a small ball of hair coloured yarn to work the left hand side of the hairstyle. About 20 wraps around your hand will give you enough for a couple of puppets. Use the main ball to work the right hand side. This is indicated in row 1 and assumed thereafter. Because you will be twisting your yarns together, they will become tangled. It's a good idea to sort them out every couple of rows.

***Beginning at Row 5 of knitted in nose pattern, or 5th row after 20 sts are reached at base of face shaping.** In ss, beginning with a knit row, work in two colours as follows:

Row1: H3 (with main ball of hair yarn), F14,(finish row 5 of nose pattern mid row), H3 (with small ball of yarn)

Row 2 H4, F 12,,H4

Row 3 H5, F10 H5

Start of top of head shaping

Row 4: H4, in H work next 2 sts tog, F8, in H work 2 tog, H4 (18sts)

Row 5: H6 F6, H6

Row 6: H5 H2tog, F4, H2tog, H5 (16sts)

Row 7: H7, F2, H7 (14sts)

Row 8: H across whole row. When the small ball meets the full one work one stitch with both H strands together, then continue with just the main ball. Cut the small ball and the face yarn just leaving enough tail to weave in. BUT if you have knitted a plain face without a nose and intend to stitch on a nose, leave the face yarn tail long enough to weave in later to the mid point at the back of the face and make three or four small straight stitches on top of each other (more or less) on the rs for the nose, before weaving in the end of the yarn.

Row 9: work 14 sts

Row 10: Work 2 tog at beg and end of row (12 Sts)

Continue decreasing at each end of every row until 8 sts remain, then cast off still working 2 tog at beg and end of cast off row.

WIDOW'S PEAK

Work as for centre parting until Row 5

Row 5: H6 F2, H2, F2, H6 (18sts)

Row 6: H across whole row , knitting main strand and small ball strand together for one st where they meet, cont with just main strand. Cut F and small H .(See row 8 of centre parting pattern)

Continue in H decreasing one st at each end of next and alt rows until 12 sts remain, and then on every row until 8 remain. Cast off, still working 2 tog at beg and end of row.

Continued

IF NOT KNITTING THE HAIR AS PART OF THE PUPPET,

HINTS FOR ATTACHING PUPPET HAIR WHICH WON'T PULL OUT

METHOD 1 – knitting the hair separately, then attaching it. These instructions and pictures were kindly sent in by Yvonne in Leicester.

For male or female 2-sided (happy/sad) puppet or monster with no plaits – DK yarn, 3.5mm needles.

Cast on 29sts and work in moss stitch (Row 1 – K1P1 to end, row 2 – P1K1 to end) or reverse stocking stitch for 5 rows. Cast off. Sew firmly across the top of the head of the puppet. Do more rows if attaching to a large monster.

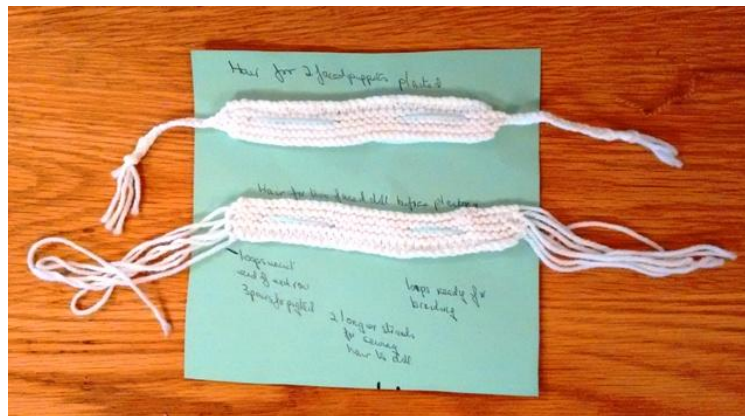


For male or female puppet/monster with plaits – DK yarn, No.10 needles

Cast on 37sts and K one row. Work 6 more rows in moss stitch or reverse stst, leaving a long loop each end to make plaits. Do more rows if attaching to a large monster. Cast off purlwise. Cut loops, tightening knitting as you go, tying together tightly each 2 strands from each loop next to knitting. Leaves 3 prs to make plait each end.

Plait the pairs and attach your hair piece to the puppet or monster by sewing it on firmly.

Add ribbons to the ends of the plaits, tied on securely, if you wish.



NB. Loop stitch is also very effective – see the bottom of this document for instructions for that.

METHOD 2 – attaching a sheaf of hair

- 1 Make one sheaf of yarn – whatever thickness you like and either long or short
- 2 Knot the sheaf on itself in the middle – this is the important part, please don't tie up the sheaf with a separate piece of yarn, - the yarn needs to be knotted ON ITSELF!



- 3 Trim the ends and then attach the knot firmly to the top of the head in the middle. Embroidery thread is the strongest.



- 4 Attach the hair at intervals round the head – at this point if using long yarn you could plait it each side and tie firstly with yarn and then with ribbon if desired. For a male puppet without hat, just clip the ends a bit shorter and it looks fine!



METHOD 3 – threading strands through separately

For this you thread each strand through the top of the head individually, just like when you do the tassles of a scarf.

To root the hair, you need a crochet hook (3.5mm hook works well) and strands of yarn at least twice the length of the hair you're creating. Fold a strand of yarn in half to create a loop, insert the hook under a stitch on the right side of the work and grab the loop, pulling it part way through so that the 'hair' passes behind the stitch.



Then use the hook to grab the ends of the hair and pull them through the loop, tightening gently. Repeat through other stitches until you have the hair you want. When it comes to the hair line, follow one row of knitted stitches across the upper face to get a straight hair line. It takes maybe 20 minutes to do a full head of hair.





METHOD 4 – making ringlets for curly hair – do try this, it's such fun!

You can thread the hair through just the same as in Method 2 above, but make the hair in ringlets.

The following instructions were sent in by our knitter Viv in Ripon, who knitted the puppets in the pictures – they're so effective!



Viv says: The ringlets are so easy! I take no credit for this - I learned it from YouTube. You need wooden skewers and yarn with synthetic fibres in it. Wrap the yarn tightly round the whole length of the skewers. Don't worry if it unravels a bit at the end. Wet the yarn. Place the skewers on a baking tray and put them in the oven at 120° until they are dry (5-10 minutes). Let them cool then pull the yarn off the skewer. It'll be super-curly! I cut it into lengths and root it as normal with a crochet hook. The number of skewers needed depends on how long and wild you want the hair to be. 3-4 will usually do short to medium hair, but if you want massive hair, that takes about 5-6 skewers. As I did with the Grandma puppet, you can use more than one colour.

See picture below for the wooden skewer.



METHOD 5

Knitting curly hair and then sewing it to the puppet/monster*.

This pattern was kindly donated by Jean in Essex. It refers to a right-handed knitter.

Cast on about 30 stitches using size 3.5mm needles, (hold against puppet's head to gauge length required ear to ear.)

Row 1 Knit 1 stitch. Next stitch. Insert right hand needle into stitch to knit plain wise. Then wind yarn around left forefinger once and then just round the needle once, resulting in two loops – knit those 2 loops together. Pull the loops firmly down as you knit across the row.

Continue to last stitch. Knit 1.

Cast off. Sew across top of puppet's or monster's head as firmly as possible. For attaching anything to a puppet or monster embroidery thread is preferable to sewing thread, as it's stronger. You may need to embroider a few stitches to make a fringe, or a few more loops to improve the look.

You could also try doing 2 rows of loops before casting off – or more if on a monster.

Loops can be cut to achieve a spiky appearance, the yarn is safely anchored.



These are only suggestions – there are many other brilliant ways of attaching hair securely to a puppet or monster. If you have any instructions on other ways that you do it, please do send them to Knit-for-Nowt.

ADAPTING THE PATTERN FOR DIFFERENT CHARACTERS

– please note, characters such as doctor, nurse, policeman, social worker etc. don't need happy/sad sides, just happy please!

POLICEMAN/WOMAN



Here's Val's police puppet – we hope to have a pattern for this one soon.



DOCTOR/NURSE

Use basic puppet pattern. Both male and female doctors and nurses wear trousers with top nowadays.

For the stethoscope you can use wool rope 50p per metre from a haberdashery, or simply a piece of your knitting yarn with an old button at the end (very firmly sewn on – please in that case attach the button so that it doesn't swing freely).



For the Social Worker, teacher and judge there is a separate pattern on the website.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NATURAL COLOURED HANDS

If you would prefer your puppets to have natural coloured hands which match the face colour of your puppet, instead of the garter stitched 'suggested' hands, work as follows:

Follow the basic puppet pattern to the point where you cast on stitches for the arms.

Instead of 10 sts, cast on 8 sts for each arm. Work completely in st st. At shoulder, if you are knitting a 22st puppet, cast off 13 sts each side. For a 24 st puppet, cast off 14 each side. You should have 12 sts left on the needle for the neck

Complete the puppet sides as usual, and sew up the head.

Making up: join shoulder seams.

I prefer to use a finer gauge needle to make the hands, 3.25mm perhaps, but this is a matter of preference.

Pick up and knit 16 sts across the wrist, 8 from each half.

Beginning with a purl row, st st 2 rows.

Next row: (P2tog, p4, p2togtbl,) twice(12sts)

Next row: (k2togtbl, k2, k2tog) twice (8 sts)

Cast off.

Sew up side and finger ends seam.

Instructions for embroidered eyes on a lightly stuffed puppet head

Kindly sent in by Elaine Stevens

These eyes are embroidered through the knitted face and heavier vlieseline backing. The workings are completely enclosed by a knitted facing and lightly stuffed.



You will need:

- Embroidery thread in eye colour, white, black, or dark blue.
- A small piece of vlieseline backing, about the weight of felt.
- An extra knitted face to use as facing
- A small amount of stuffing – this must have had a CE or BS safety label on the packaging and must be stuffing suitable for toys

Method:

Tack a small piece of vlieseline backing into position behind the face, just enough backing to serve the eyes, mouth and nose if sewn. Some of this can be trimmed away afterwards.

The coloured part of the eye is simply over sewn across one knitted stitch horizontally. The dark part is just three stitches. One across the top of the coloured part, one from almost centre bottom up to the top stitch, and finally another stitch across the top. The white part is two stitches each side of the coloured part.

All the workings at the back should be as flat as possible, so tiny back stitches are recommended although knots won't be seen. Trim away some backing if you like.

Next place the extra knitted face over the puppet face, right sides together and back stitch around three sides, leaving the neck edge open, then turn the head out side in and very lightly stuff. Sew the neck edge preferably with mattress stitch for neatness. This is important, as for safety no stuffing must be able to work its way out.

This process is repeated for the other side of the puppet with a sad or happy face, the two complete sides then sewn together to finish, leaving the bottom open this time so that the therapist's fingers can work the head.

