

Tips for County Fair Exhibitors



The county fair . . . what a great time it is! Every summer, families flock to county fairs to see the latest 4-H project exhibits. Exhibiting is a fun way for you to showcase your project work. When you enter a clothing exhibit at the county fair, you'll be showing the public, and the judge, what you've learned in the project. Make your exhibit the best it can be. Here are some tips:

Clothing Construction Exhibits

1. General Guidelines
 - a. All washable fabrics should be prewashed before cutting, using the same washing and drying technique intended for the finished garment.
 - b. Garment should be cut following pattern grainline. Garment should be clean and neatly pressed.
2. Alterations – pattern should be altered so the garment fits.
3. Buttons and Buttonholes
 - a. Placket area should be interfaced.
 - b. Buttons that do not have attached shanks should be stitched with thread shanks.
 - c. Button stitching should be neat on the wrong side of the garment.
 - d. Buttonholes should be the same distance from the edge.
 - e. Stitching should not be cut when buttonholes are opened.
 - f. Buttonhole length should be appropriate for button size.
4. Casings
 - a. Casings should be just large enough for the elastic.
 - b. Exhibitors should stitch around the upper edge of the casing to help keep the elastic in place.
 - c. Casing should be a uniform width.
 - d. If the casing fabric ravel, its edge should be finished to prevent raveling. (With knit fabrics, it is usually not necessary to turn under the edge of the casing, since knits don't ravel.)
 - e. Elastic should be smooth in the casing, with no twisting.
 - f. Elastic joining should be smooth and bulk-free.
 - g. Exhibitors should stitch in the ditch at seams to prevent the elastic from twisting.
5. Collars
 - a. Collars should be interfaced.

- b. Collar should be understitched at the outer edge.
 - c. Points or curves should be uniform on both sides.
 - d. The two ends of the collar should be the same lengths.
 - e. Points should be crisp and sharp, with no bubbles.
6. Darts
- a. The final few stitches should be right on the fold.
 - b. Threads should be secured at the end of the dart.
 - c. Point should be smooth, with no bubble or bulge.
 - d. Horizontal darts should be pressed down; vertical darts should be pressed toward the center.
7. Facings
- a. Facings should be interfaced.
 - b. Facings should be an even width.
 - c. Outer edges of facings that ravel should be finished by zigzagging, serging, turning under the edge, etc.
 - d. Seam should be trimmed, graded and clipped.
 - e. Facing should be understitched.
 - f. Facings should be tacked only at seams.
8. Gathers
- a. Gathers should be evenly spaced.
 - b. Gathers should be smooth and straight.
9. Hems
- a. Hems should be a uniform width.
 - b. Seams within the hem should be trimmed to reduce bulk.
 - c. Hand stitching should not be visible on the right side of the garment.
 - d. Hem stitches should not pucker.
 - e. Hemming should use a single thread.
 - f. Hems should lay flat and smooth.
 - g. Edge finish should be appropriate for the fabric.
 - h. Hand stitches should be an appropriate distance apart (not too close, nor too far apart).
- 10 Hooks and Eyes; Snaps
- a. Threads should not show on the right side of the garment.
 - b. The end of the hook should be stitched to the garment.
11. Knits
- a. Shoulder seams should be stabilized to prevent stretching.
 - b. Seams should have built-in stretch.
 - c. Pockets and closure openings should be interfaced.
 - d. The original centerfold of knit fabric should not be visible on the garment.
12. Markings – should not show on the right side of the fabric.
13. Pants
- a. Crotch seam should be double stitched, second stitching 1/8 inch inside seam.
 - b. Crotch seam should be continuous from front to back.
 - c. Crotch seam should be trimmed from notch to notch.
 - d. Crotch seams should match where inseam and crotch seams intersect

14. Pressing

- a. Seams should be pressed flat as sewn, then pressed open. (Knit or serged seams are an exception. These seams should be pressed flat, then pressed to one side.)
- b. Seams should be pressed before crossing them with any other seam.
- c. Vertical darts should be pressed toward the center. Horizontal darts should be pressed down.
- d. Imprint of seams, darts, facings, etc., shouldn't show on the right side of the garment.
- e. Garment should not be over-pressed. To prevent "shine" or damage to the fabric's surface, press cloth should be used.

15. Seams

- a. Stitch length should be adjusted for the fabric.
- b. Thread should match the fabric. (Thread looks darker on the spool than it does on the fabric. Exhibitor should choose thread a shade darker than the fabric so that it blends when a single strand is used.)
- c. Seams that ravel should be finished by zigzagging, turning under the edge, serging, or using French seams. Pinking usually is not sufficient. Choose a finish appropriate for weight of the fabric.
- d. The stitches should be straight. As sewing guides, exhibitors can use a seam gauge, machine markings or the width of the presser foot.
- e. All thread ends should be clipped close to the fabric. Stripes and plaids should match.
- f. Threads at the ends of seams and rows of stitching should be fastened.
- g. Seams should hang straight and flat, without puckers.
- h. Seams should be stitched a uniform width. Usual seam width is 5/8 inch. Knits sometimes use only 1/4 inch.
- i. Where two seams cross, seam corners should be trimmed diagonally to eliminate bulk.

16. Sleeves

- a. Fullness should be evenly eased; sleeve cap should fit smoothly.
- b. Underarm seam should be double stitched, second stitching 1/8 inch inside seam.
- c. Underarm seam should be trimmed from notch to notch.
- d. Cuffs should be an even width.
- e. Cuffs should lap toward the back.
- f. Sleeve plackets should be neat and a uniform width.
- g. Edge stitching should be straight and a uniform distance from the edge.
- h. Seam intersections should match where seams cross each other (for example, at sleeve underarm).

17. Stitching

- a. Stitching should be straight.
- b. Stitching should be locked at the beginning and end of each seam.
- c. All thread ends should be trimmed close to the fabric.
- d. Stitching should be an even distance from the cut edge.
- e. Seams that ravel should be finished to prevent fraying.

f. Seams should be correctly pressed.

18. Waistbands

- a. Ends should be square; corners should be at right angles.
- b. Edge should be finished appropriately for the fabric.
- c. On lapped side, the waistband should extend straight up from the zipper opening.
- d. A single lap zipper should lap toward the back.
- e. The waistband should be interfaced.
- f. Edge stitching should be straight and a uniform distance from the edge.

19. Zippers

- a. Stitching should be straight and a uniform distance from the seam.
- b. Stitching should be the same distance from the seamline on both sides of a double lap zipper.
- c. Upper edges of the zipper should be even, rather than one edge being longer than the other edge.
- d. The zipper should lay flat, without puckers.
- e. The zipper lap should completely cover the zipper teeth

Clothing Revue Exhibits

- 1. Suitability of garment to the individual purpose
 - a. Style, design of costume
 - b. Color
 - c. Appropriateness of fabric
 - d. Selection of undergarments
 - e. Selection of accessories
 - f. Fit
- 2. General appearance of the member
 - a. Poise
 - b. Posture
 - c. Grooming
- 3. Construction of garment
 - a. Appropriateness of trimmings
 - b. Selection and quality of construction method
 - c. Present condition of costume
 - d. Upkeep in relation to costume value