

Lexie's Retro Halter Dress

By: Create Kids Couture



Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Materials Needed:

- Fabric (see chart below for quantities needed)
- Scissors or Rotary Cutter
- Cutting Mat if using Rotary Cutter
- Ruler
- Pins
- Sewing Machine and/or Serger
- Elastic Thread (we recommend Stretch-Rite)
- Iron

Fabric Requirements:

Size	Front bodice	Back Bodice	Straps	Waistband and Back Ties	Skirt	Trim Band	Bottom Band
6-12 mos.	1/4 yard	1/4 yard	1/2 yard	1/3 yard	1/2 yard	1/8 yard	1/4 yard
12-18 mos.	1/4 yard	1/4 yard	1/2 yard	1/3 yard	1/2 yard	1/8 yard	1/4 yard
24 mos./2T	1/4 yard	1/4 yard	1/2 yard	1/3 yard	5/8 yard	1/8 yard	1/4 yard
3T	1/4 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/3 yard	5/8 yard	1/8 yard	1/3 yard
4T	1/4 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/3 yard	5/8 yard	1/8 yard	1/3 yard
5T	1/3 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/2 yard	2/3 yard	1/8 yard	1/3 yard
6	1/3 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/2 yard	2/3 yard	1/8 yard	1/3 yard
7	1/3 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/2 yard	3/4 yard	1/4 yard	1/3 yard
8	1/3 yard	1/4 yard	2/3 yard	1/2 yard	7/8 yard	1/4 yard	1/3 yard

The fabric requirements are based on the use of 7 different fabrics. If you decide to make the straps and skirt out of the same fabrics (as shown in the main picture) you will add those measurements together. The same is true if you decide to make it all out of one fabric.

Size	Average Chest Size	Approx. Finished Length of Dress
6-12 mos.	18"	14"
12-18 mos.	19"	16"
24 mos./2T	21"	17.5"
3T	22"	18.5"
4T	23"	20"
5T	24"	21.5"
6	25"	22.5"
7	26"	24"
8	27"	26"

Cutting the Fabric:

Size	Back Bodice cut 1 Length x Width	Waistband cut 1 Length x Width	Back Ties cut 2 Length x Width	Skirt cut 2 Length x Width	Trim Band cut 2 Length x Width	Bottom Band cut 2 Length x Width
6-12 mos.	5.5" x 16"	5" x 10"	4.75" x 21"	7" x 25"	1.5" x 25"	4" x 25"
12-18 mos.	6" x 16.5"	5" x 10.25"	4.75" x 23"	8" x 26"	1.5" x 26"	4" x 26"
24 mos./2T	6.25" x 17"	5" x 10.75"	4.75" x 25"	9" x 28"	1.75" x 28"	4" x 28"
3T	6.75" x 17.5"	6" x 11"	5.75" x 25"	8.5" x 30"	2" x 30"	5.5" x 30"
4T	7" x 18"	6" x 11.25"	5.75" x 25"	9.5" x 32"	2" x 32"	5.5" x 32"
5T	7.25" x 19"	7" x 11.5"	6.75" x 27"	10.5" x 34"	2" x 34"	5.5" x 34"
6	7.25" x 20"	7" x 12"	6.75" x 27"	11" x 36"	2" x 36"	5.5" x 36"
7	7.5" x 21"	7" x 12.75"	6.75" x 29"	12" x 38"	2.25" x 38"	6" x 38"
8	7.75" x 22"	8" x 13.5"	7.75" x 29"	13.5" x 40"	2.25" x 40"	6" x 40"

****Note that the seam allowance when sewing will be 3/8" and it is included in the measurements above.**

After cutting out all of the pieces you should have a pile similar to this.



Cutting Out The Front Bodice and Straps:

When printing out the pattern pieces make sure the "Auto Rotate and Center" Box is ticked and page-scaling is set to "None". This is VERY important. After cutting out the pattern pieces in the size we are making, tape the

black lines together so they are one on top of another matching up the letters.

We will have one front bodice piece and one strap template piece.



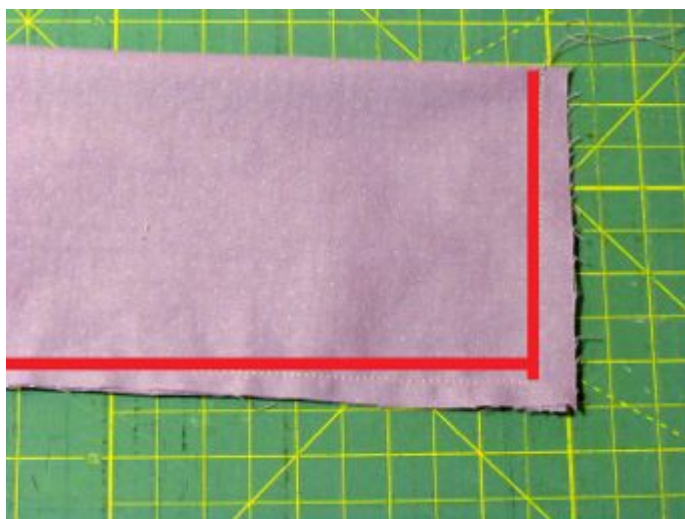
Step 1: After cutting out the front bodice pattern piece in the size we are making, open up the fabric to its complete width and fold both ends in half length wise towards the center. Now fold that in half so both of the end folds are on top of one another.

Step 2: Put the front bodice piece on top of the fabric on the side where both folds are and pin in place. Cut out. You now have two front bodice pieces cut out.

Step 3: Fold your strap fabric in half. After cutting the strap pattern piece of the size you are making, place it on top of the fabric, but not on the fold (as shown). Cut out once; now you have a front and back of one strap. Move the strap pattern piece down; cut again. You will now have 2 strap fronts and 2 strap backs.

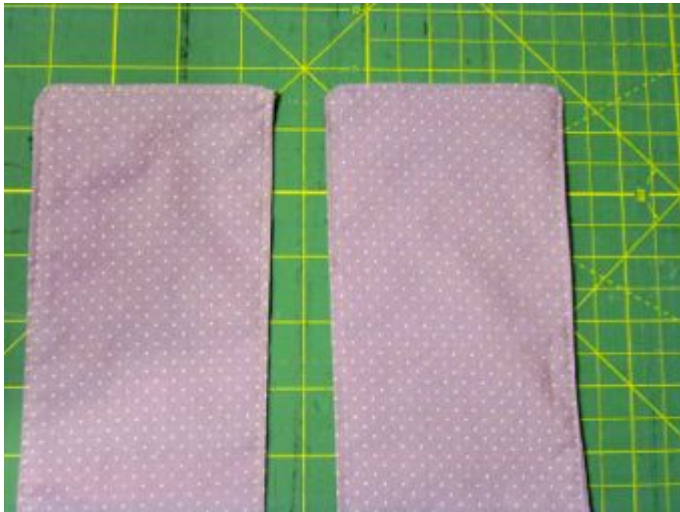


Construction:



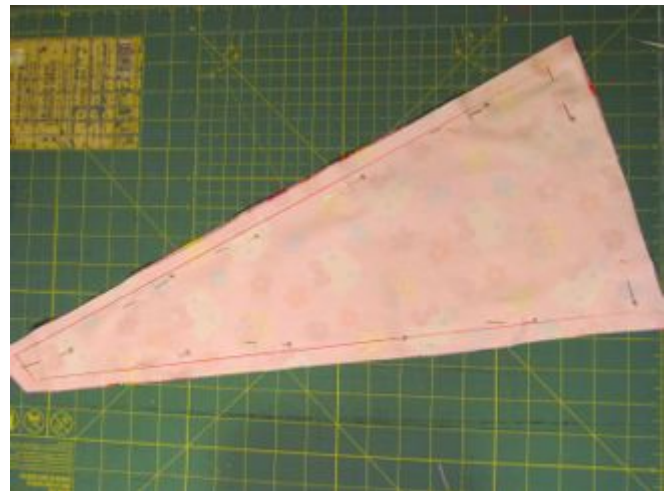
Step 1: Take one back tie and fold it in half lengthwise with right sides of the fabric together. Sew along one short end and the entire length leaving the other short end open. Repeat with the other tie.

When done, using a dowel or chopstick turn both back ties right inside out. Iron the ties so they are nice and crisp.



Step 2: We may now topstitch our back ties. Sew 1/8" from the ends around the three closed edges of the ties. It is necessary to topstitch the ties, because if we do not, every time the garment is washed the ties will need to be ironed.

Step 3: Take a front and back strap; place one on top of the other with the right sides of the fabric facing the other piece. Pin in place along the two long sides and the short angled top. Sew those three sides only following our seam allowance.



Step 4: Cut the corners of the top short edge; turn right side out and press. Repeat steps 3 and 4 with the other strap.

Step 5: We may now top stitch our straps. Sew 1/8" from the ends around the three closed edges of both of the straps. It is necessary to topstitch the straps, because if we do not, every time the garment is washed the straps will need to be ironed.



Steps 6: Take our front bodice piece and lay it on a flat surface with the right side of the fabric facing up. Place the bodice lining on top right side of the fabric down. Pin along the top of the bodices. Sew along the top of the bodice only. Turn and iron; DO NOT top stitch yet.

Step 7: We are now going to be doing a rolled hem on the top of your back bodice piece. This is easiest if you have a serger; if you do not have a serger, we are still able to do it. You can either use your rolled hem foot on your sewing machine (as pictured to the right), or you can fold the fabric back 1/4", sew, then turn it back another 1/4", and sew. It's very simple, just time consuming; but it is worth it!



Step 8: Next we will ruffle the bottom of our straps. Set the sewing machine on the longest stitch length and highest tension possible. Sew 1/4" up from the bottom of the strap, making sure not to back stitch at the beginning or end. Some seamstresses prefer to have two rows of stitching in case a thread breaks; however, if you are using high-quality thread as we do, then one row of stitching should be sufficient. Repeat with the bottom of the other strap.

Step 9: Find the center of the waistband by folding it in half width wise. Mark the center with a pin. Lay your waistband piece on a flat surface for reference on how wide our straps need to be. Now you can adjust your gathers by pulling the top 2 threads and moving the fabric back so it is gathered together. You will want your straps to be 1/2" smaller on both sides to avoid them getting caught in the side seams when we get to that step.



Step 10: Bring your straps down on top of your waistband. The top of your waistband will be lined up with the bottom of your straps, right sides of your fabrics facing each other. Pin, remembering that the waist band should be 1/2" longer on each side. Sew along the red line only. Turn and press the seam down, but do not top stitch yet.

Step 11: Run a gathering stitch down the sides of the waistband only- NOT the entire piece you just sewed. Set the sewing machine on the longest stitch length possible. Sew both of the sides of the waistband 1/4" from the outside, making sure not to back stitch at the beginning or end.



Step 12: Lay your front bodice piece down. You will want the bodice piece open, so that the front of the bodice is in front of you, right side of the fabric up. The bodice lining will be open and above the front bodice so that it is out of the way of any sewing.

*****For steps 13-16 you will only be working with the front bodice; the lining should be completely out of the way.**

Step 13: You are now going to be gathering the waistband until it is the height listed in the chart for the size you are making. To gather, pull the top 2 threads and moving the fabric back so it is gathered together.

Size	Waistband Height
6-12 mos.	2.5"
12-18 mos.	2.5"
24 mos./2T	2.5"
3T	3"
4T	3"
5T	3.5"
6	3.5"
7	3.5"
8	4"



Once you have your waistband gathered to the correct height, lay it on top of the front bodice, with the fabric facing up. The bottom of your bodice will line up with the bottom of your waistband. You will need to pin along the sides, top, and bottom.

Step 14: Now you are going to **baste** the sides and bottom so they stay in place. To baste, set your stitch length to the longest length and sew.

You will also **top stitch** the waistband onto the front bodice. To top stitch, sew 1/8" down from the seam of the waistband and straps, ensuring you are catching the seam underneath. Your bodice should now look like the picture to the right.





Step 15: Take a back tie. Line the unfinished short edge of the tie with the side of the bodice. The top of the tie will meet the top of the waistband, and the bottom of the tie will NOT meet the bottom of the waistband so that it does not get caught up in seams. If you need to scrunch it up a little that is fine; just please ensure that there is 1/2" between the bottom of the back tie and the bottom of the waistband. Pin in place along the sides. You will want to pin the rest of the back tie out of the way. Pin the other tie along the other side, repeating this step.

Step 16: Make sure to pin your straps away from the side of the bodice, so they do not get caught in the side seam. Next we will put our back bodice piece on top of our front bodice piece (with the waistband and back ties in the middle) so that they are right sides together (wrong side facing up) as shown to the right. Pin in place. Repeat with the other side.



Step 17: We will now flip the bodice lining down over the bodice front right sides together. The waistband, back ties, and bodice back are in between the bodice front and bodice lining. Make sure that the top of the back bodice is lined up with the top of the front bodice. It may be hard to decipher in the photo.

Once the bodice is pinned down both sides, we will sew as indicted in red. Be sure to catch the side seams of the front bodice, waistband, back ties, back bodice, and lining as you sew.



Once we open up our bodice it should look like this. If we rolled hem our back bodice with a serger it will be about 1/2" longer than our front bodice; it's no big deal and can be easily trimmed to be the same length as the front bodice.



Step 18: We will now top stitch our front bodice only (not the back bodice). Lower the straps out of the way, and sew 1/8" down from the top of the bodice from side seam to side seam. Here's what it should look like when we are done top stitching.

Step 19: We are moving on to our skirt! Lay one skirt piece with the fabric facing up. Then take the other piece and lay it on top of that with fabric right sides down. Sew along one side only. Do this with the two trim band pieces; again, only sew one side.



Step 20: Place the skirt open with fabric side up. Take your trim band and place it right side of the fabric down on top of your skirt piece. The bottom of the skirt and the top of the trim band will be lined up together. Pin; sew in place. Press with the seam up. We will top stitch in a bit :)

Step 21: Fold your skirt and trim band in half width wise, fabric right sides facing. Pin down the open side; sew.





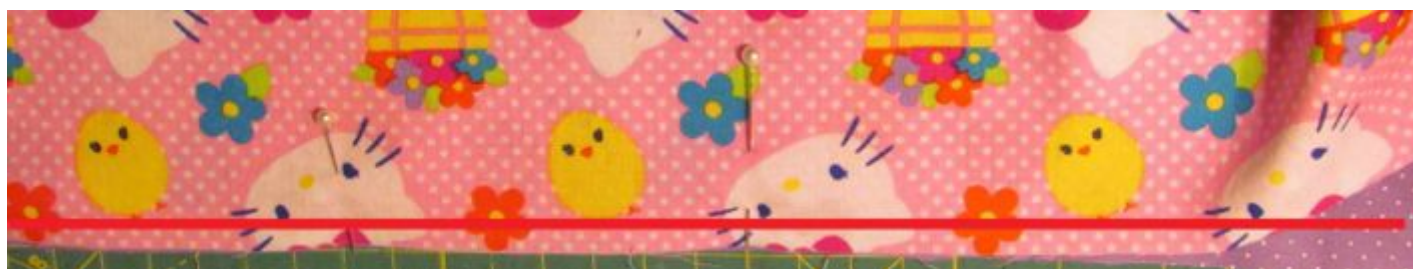
Step 22: Top stitch the seam between the skirt and trim band. To top stitch, sew up 1/8" from our seam.

Step 23: Lay one bottom band piece right side up; lay the other piece on top right sides down. Sew along both edges to make one continuous loop. Before sewing down the second side, compare the length of the skirt & trim band loop to the loop you are about to make; they should be the exact same length.



Step 24: Fold your bottom band in half length wise with the wrong sides of the fabric meeting on the inside. Iron along the length of the bottom band.

Step 25: Pin the raw edges of the bottom band to the bottom edges of our trim band. Sew along the entire bottom.





Step 26: Here we will top stitch our bottom band. This step is not necessary, but we feel that it really completes a garment and makes it look more professional. Press the seam up and top stitch. To top stitch, sew 1/8" up from the seam line you just made.

Step 27: We are now going to gather our skirt so that we may sew it onto the bodice. Set the sewing machine to the longest stitch length possible. Sew 1/4" down from the top of the skirt; do not back stitch at the beginning or end.



Step 28: Lay your bodice out on a flat surface and begin gathering your skirt until it is the same width as the bodice.

(Make sure that your back ties are completely out of the way. It's a good idea to pin them up so that they do not risk getting caught in the seam we are about to make.)





We can now begin pinning the skirt piece to the bottom of the bodice by putting them right sides together and adjusting the gathers as we go. Make sure the gathers in the waistband do not get caught in the seam. Pin in place.

Step 29: We can now sew the dress skirt pieces to the bodice. To sew the skirts to the bodice, be sure to sew below the gathering lines; otherwise, it will be visible on the outside when we are done. Go slow and make sure to catch the bodice and skirt; don't miss taking out any pins as you go! Once sewn it should look like the picture here.



Step 30: Now top stitch the bottom of our bodice. This step is not necessary, but we feel it really completes a garment and makes it look more professional. To top stitch, sew 1/8" up from where we attached the dress skirt, being sure to catch the seams as pictured and avoiding the back ties.

We are now going to begin shirring.

We will keep our upper thread the same as what we have been using. We will then hand wind elastic thread onto an empty bobbin, creating a little tension as we go. Don't make it too tight, or it will not work properly. Put the bobbin in the machine. Put the stitch length at 3.5-5 and adjust the tension to 7. If this is your first time, we suggest practicing on some scrap pieces. When we start sewing, go slowly because sometimes the elastic thread likes to flip causing it to go in the wrong direction. We suggest using Stretch-Rite elastic thread. If you require additional help understanding how to shirr, please see our You Tube video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfqAwJC_a6A



Step 31: We are now able to being shirring the back bodice only. We want the elastic to be on the inside, so when we sew the fabric needs to be right side out. Pin the back ties to the waistband so that they don't get in the way of shirring the back bodice. Be sure to back stitch at the beginning and end of every row, starting on the bodice side seam and ending on the other bodice side seam. W will be using the sewing machine presser foot as the guide, so with the presser foot butted up next to the edge of the bodice, we will begin shirring in a straight line across only the back bodice about 1/2" down.

When we have finished our first row, we will start the second row 1/2" down from the first by using the presser foot as our guide in order to keep our stitches straight. We will continue to do this for all rows until we reach the top stitching at the bottom of the bodice. Do not put any shirring on top of the top stitching. We recommend hitting the shirring with some steam from the iron to tighten up when we are done.

You are now done and you completed it in 31 steps!!! Was that easy or what?!? Here are some more pictures of this dress completed using various fabric combinations for inspiration.



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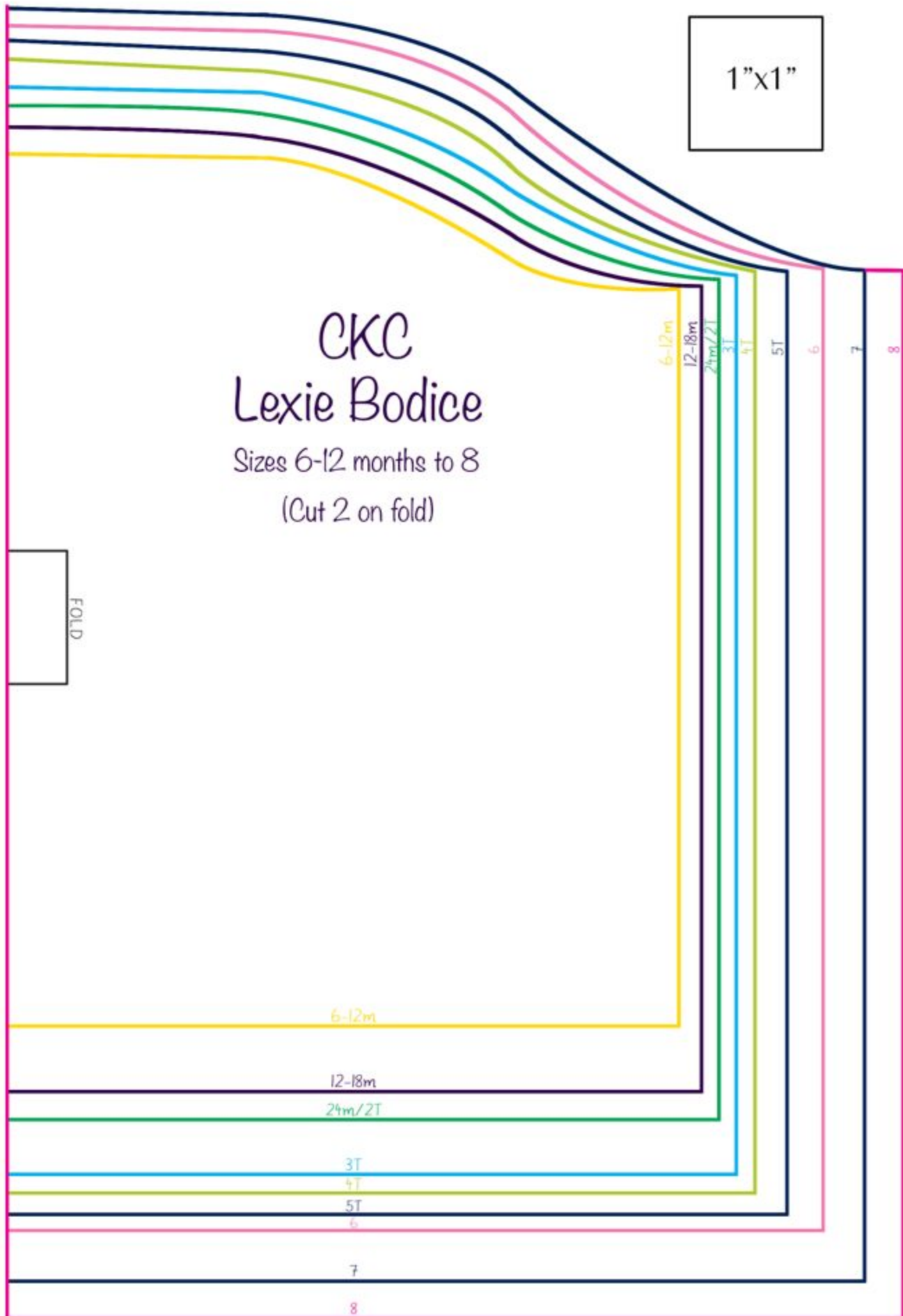
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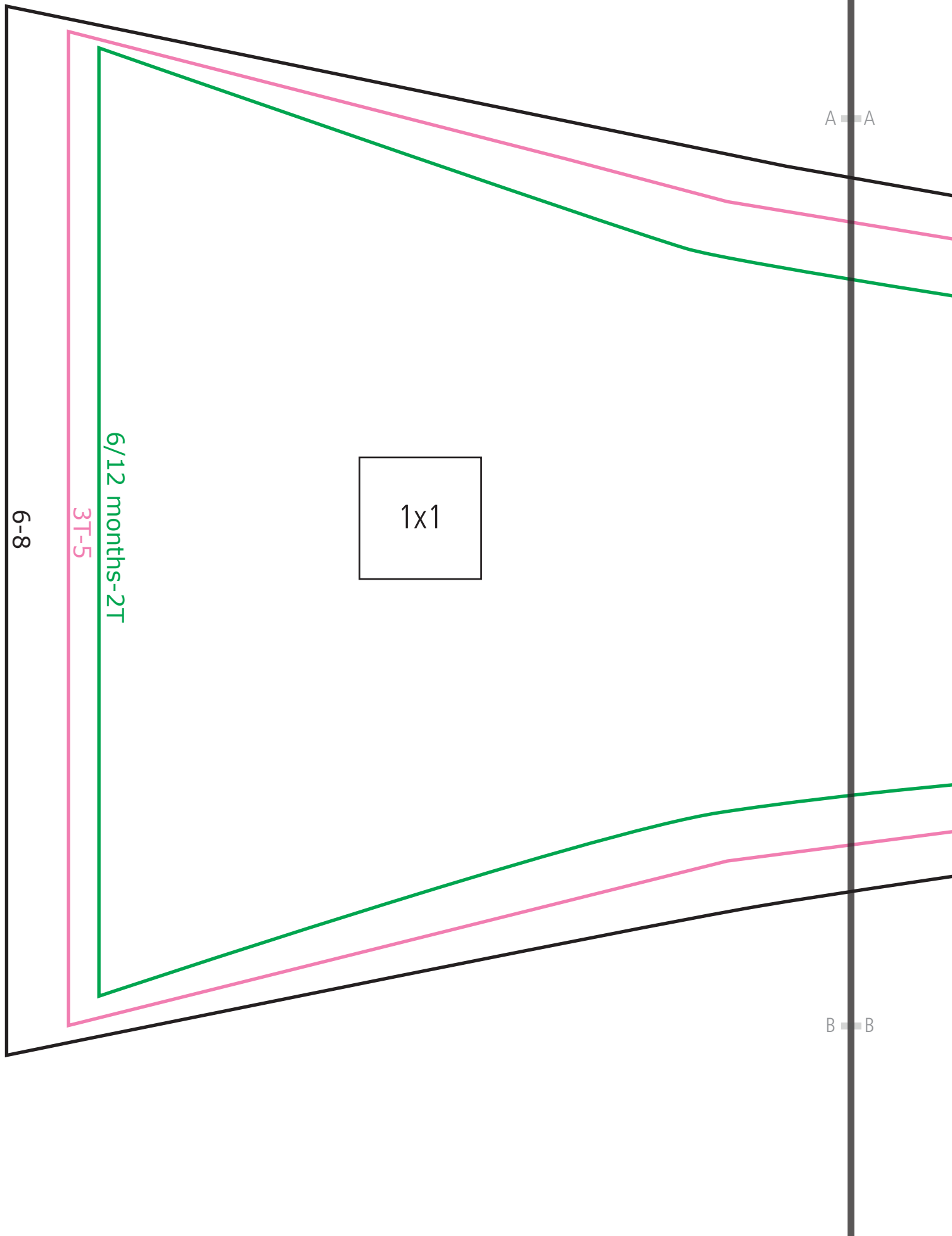
Cover photo courtesy of Twinkle Pink Couture

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1x1

A ■ A

C ■ C

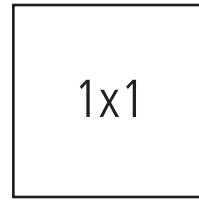
CKC Lexie Straps

Sizes 6/12 months to 8

(Cut 2 regular and 2 mirror image)

B ■ B

D ■ D



- 6/12 months-2T
- 3T-5
- 6-8

