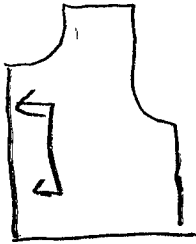


# Basic Pattern Pieces:

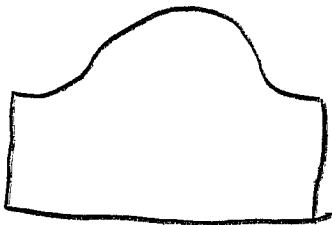


Front  
Bodice

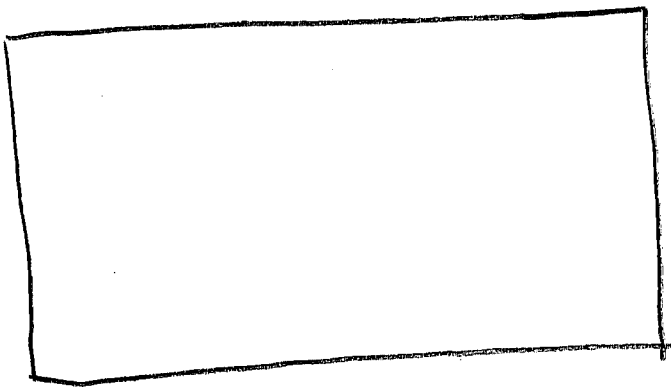


Back  
Bodice

may have zipper, or extend  
beyond center back  
for buttons



Sleeve - usually a puffed sleeve.  
Cap or set in sleeve gives you  
more design possibilities



Skirt front and  
back - it looks  
complicated on the  
pattern envelope  
picture, but it's  
really just a  
rectangle!

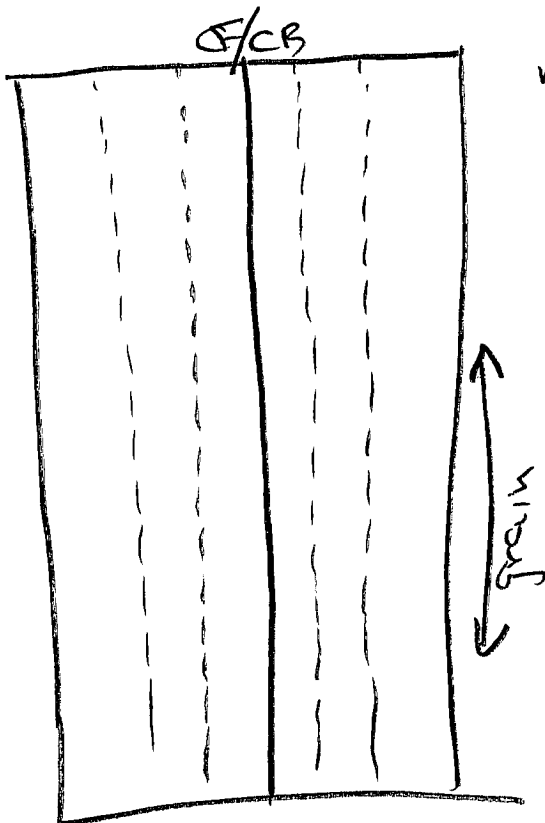
Creative options without changing the pattern

1. Change the fabric. Fancy fabrics make it a fancy dress. Casual fabrics make a casual dress
2. Mix fabrics. Use a contrast fabric in at least three places (preferably at most, as well). Adding a fancy fabric to a casual one or vice versa will make a fancy dress. Example would be contrast collar, cuffs, and skirt, or contrast band on collar, cuffs, and skirt.
3. Add trim - and not just where the pattern says! Some trims can be sewn on directly, some need to be inserted in a sleeve. You can mix two identical trims in different sizes (i.e., two laces in different widths) or two different kinds of trim (i.e., a ribbon trim and a lace) Place the trim along the edge of collars and cuffs, or on the skirt above the hemline, even vertically on the bodice or in a lattice pattern on the hem. Trim can also be made from self fabric.

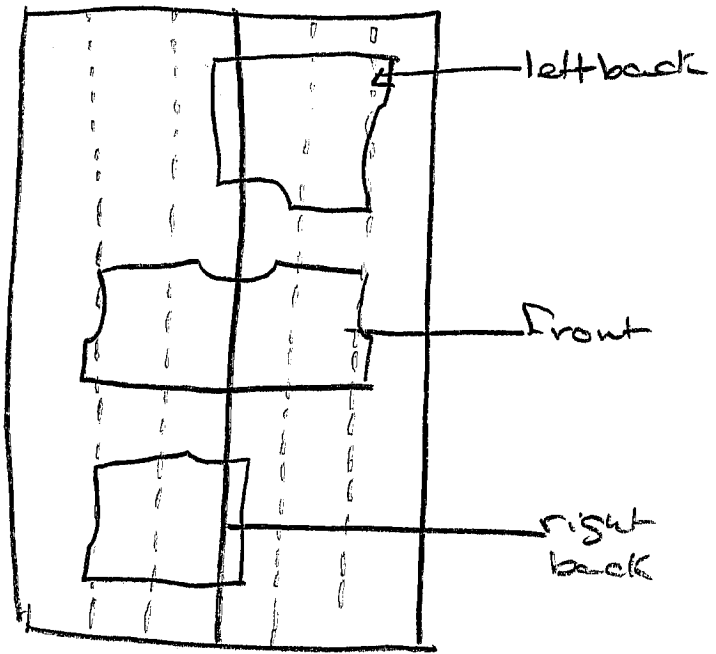
4. If the pattern has different sleeve lengths or collars, use them! The short sleeve dress in gingham with a Peter Pan collar will look very different from the long sleeve in velvet with a square lace collar.

Creating with the fabric:

1. pintucks, pleats, decorative stitching. Horizontally, matching isn't a problem, but vertically, it can be done easily, although with a little fabric waste.



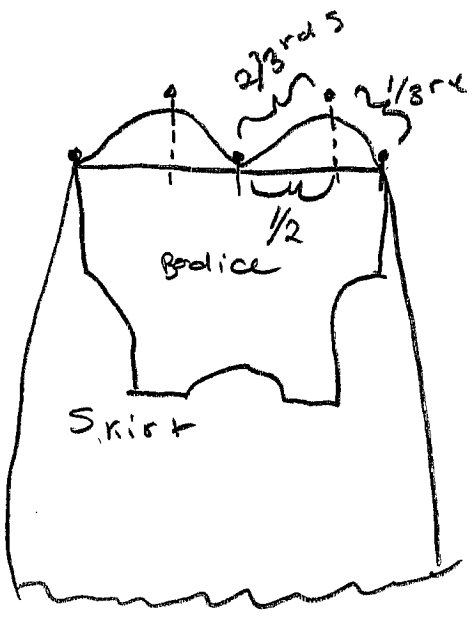
make stitches or attach trim evenly, relative to a line representing the center front and center back



lay out the pattern pieces as shown, matching the decorative elements at the shoulders (not centers. the back is wider than the front!)

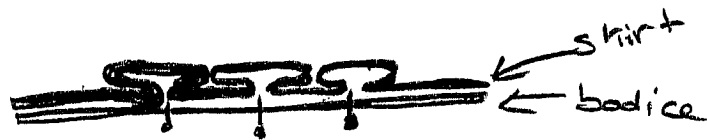
2. Change gathers to pleats

First, pin the skirt to the bodice at the side seams and center back and front, just as you would to gather. Then . . .



match the halfway points between pins on the bodice and the 1/3rd / 2/3rd points on the skirt, and pin them in place

Next, Flatten the fabric out towards the 3 center pins.

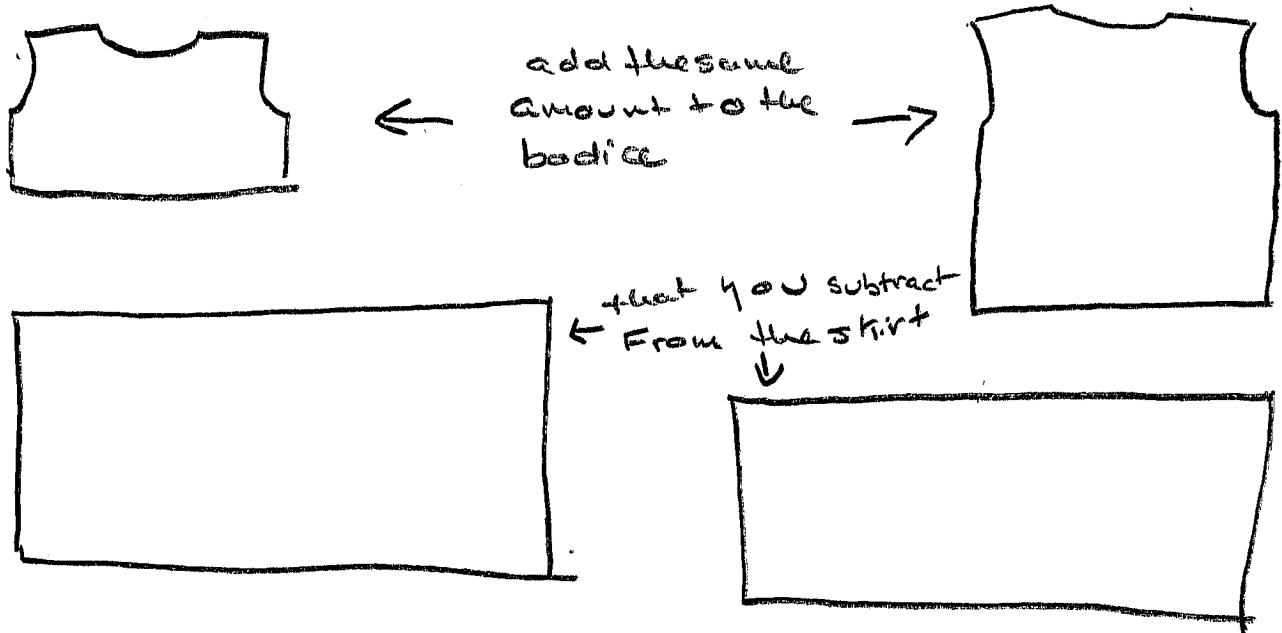


pin this to death if you want, or simply unpin and re-pin. You want the folds at your 3 original pins to butt up against each other on the outside.

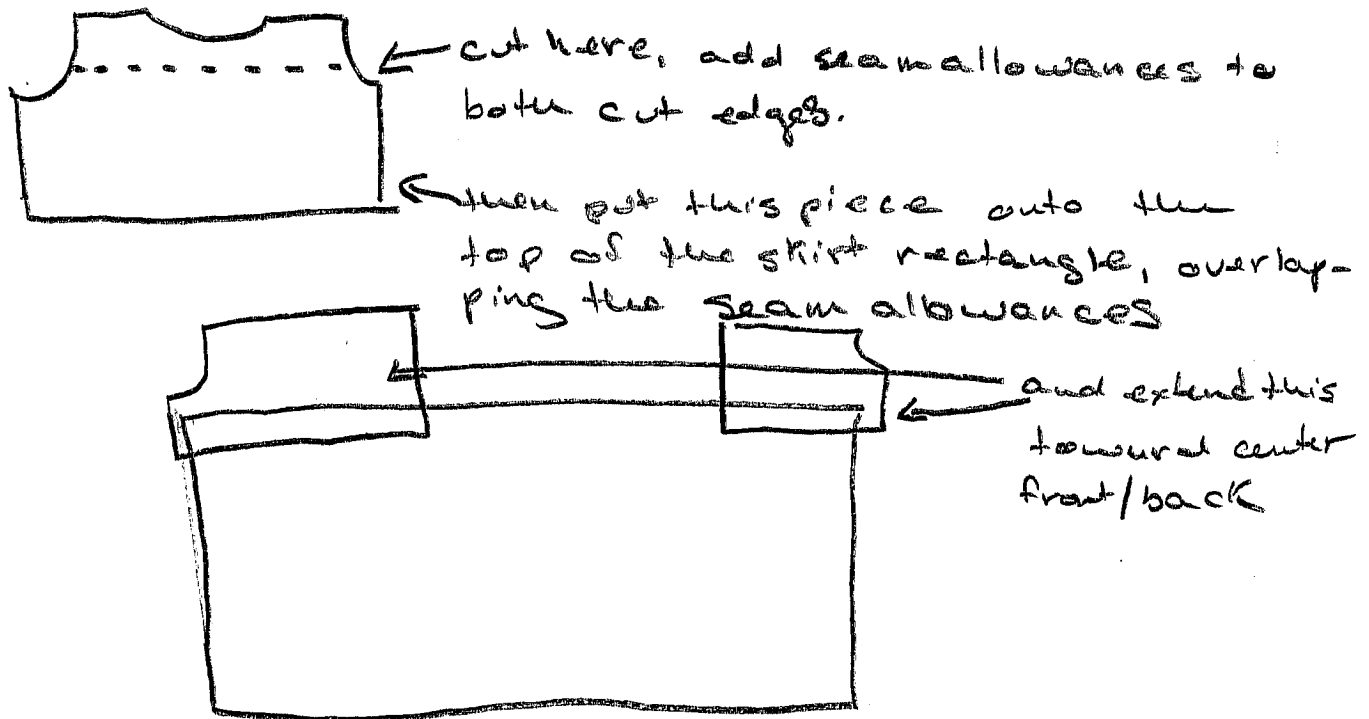
On the back, if there is a zipper, the fold on the overlap side will have to come only to where the zipper is stitched - about  $\frac{7}{8}$ " from the raw edge. The center back pleat, therefore, will be slightly open. If that bothers you, add a tie to the back, or ribbon tie ends, to cover it with a bow!

# Changing the pattern

## 1. Change the waist line

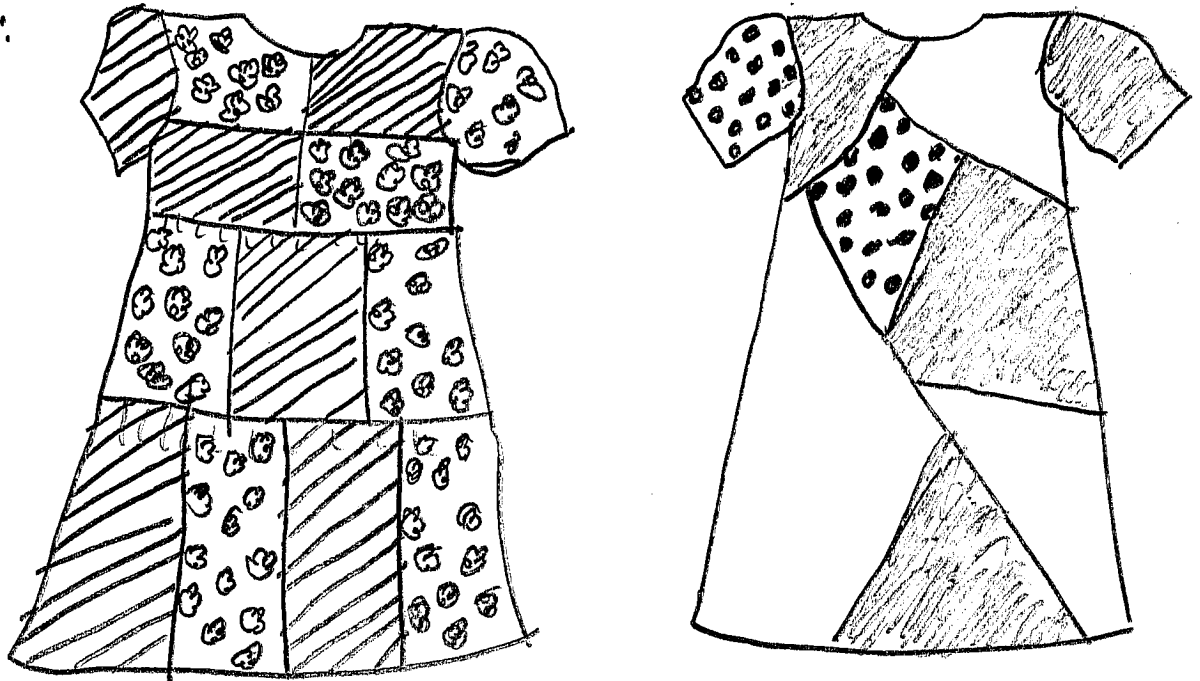


## 2. Change to a yoke dress/shirt



3. Patchwork. You can create a geometric patchwork or a crazy patchwork before or after cutting your pattern pieces.

Ex:

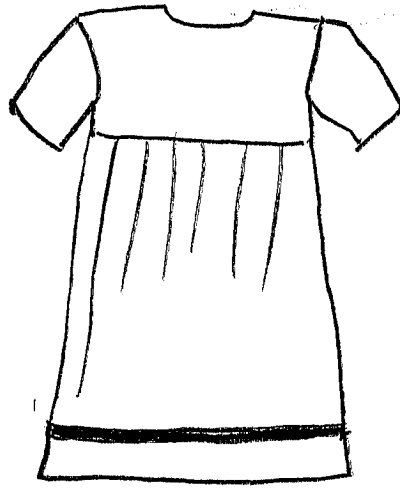


Note: remember to add seam allowances where you have cut pattern pieces!

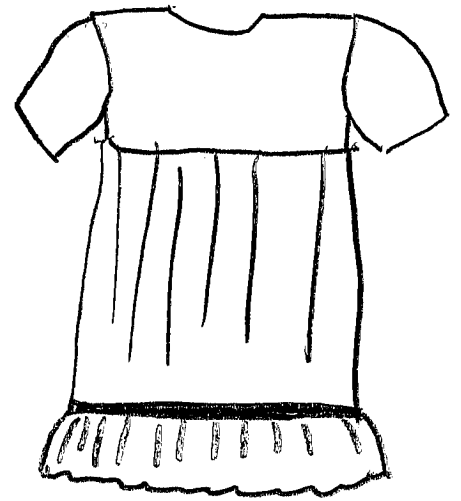
4. Add borders, ruffles, or flounces. Decide on the length of the border, ruffle, or flounce that you want to add to the skirt, and subtract that length from the skirt pattern piece. You can combine borders with ruffles or each other, but a flounce stands better on its own. Make your borders, ruffles, or flounces the desired length plus seam and hem allowances.



1 border



2 borders

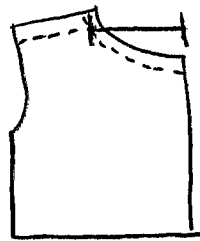
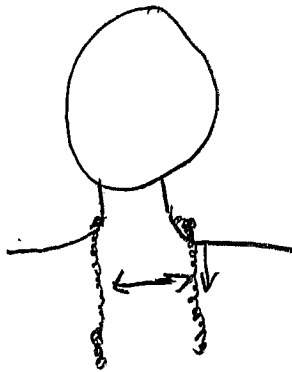
Border with  
ruffle

All skirts are the same length. Borders are the same width as the skirt pattern piece, ruffles are relative to the skirt/bodice ratio, i.e., if the skirt is three times wider than the bodice, the ruffle should be three times wider than the skirt.

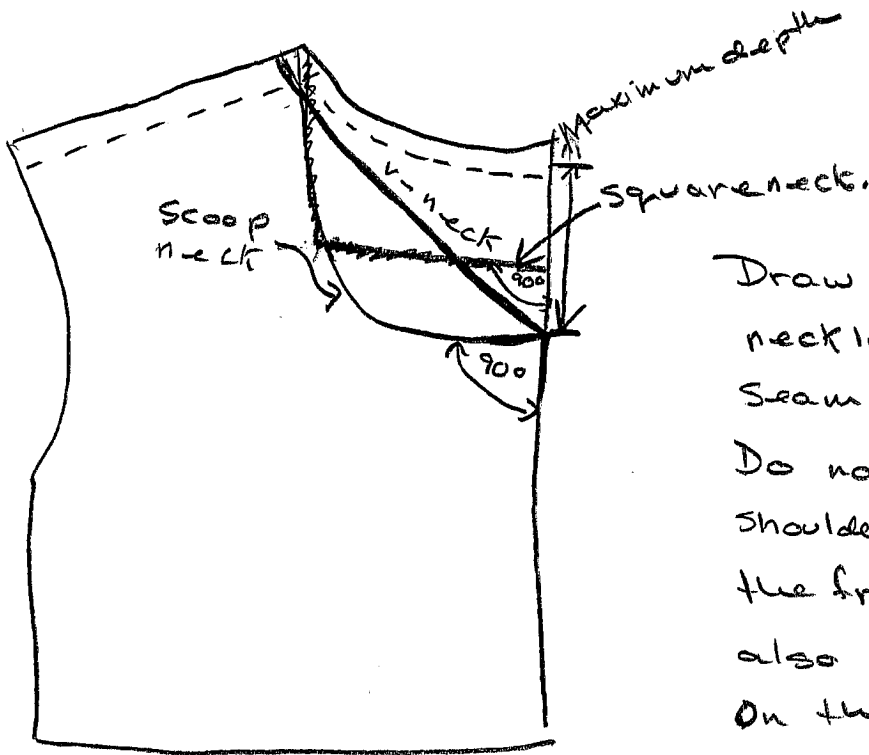
5. Make the skirt a circle skirt. This method is similar to making a flounce. What you are doing is taking a rectangular piece of relatively sturdy paper and cutting it the exact width of the pattern piece to which it attaches, and the desired length, then slashing it, spreading the bottom, and taping it down to another piece of paper. (See "flounces/circle skirts")



6. Change the neckline. Make sure you have a good neckline width by putting a small chain or an open necklace over the back of the child's neck and measure the distance across. Measure from the shoulder down to the neckline depth you want.



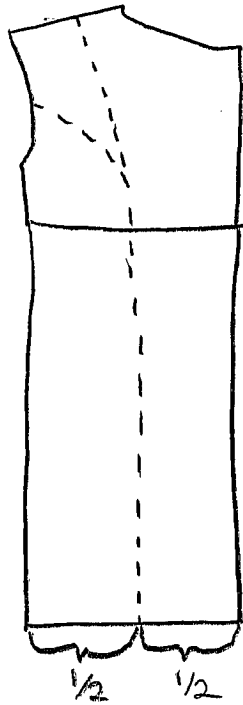
← 1/2 neckline width - take seam allowances into account



Draw in your desired neckline, then add seam allowances. Do not change the shoulder seam length on the front without also changing it on the back.

To make a facing or collar to match, simply trace the bodice with the new neckline onto another paper, design the outer collar edge, and add outer seam allowances.

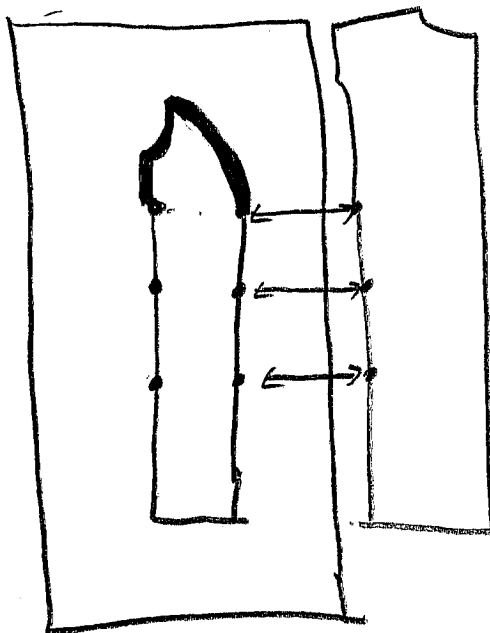
7. Make it a princess line.



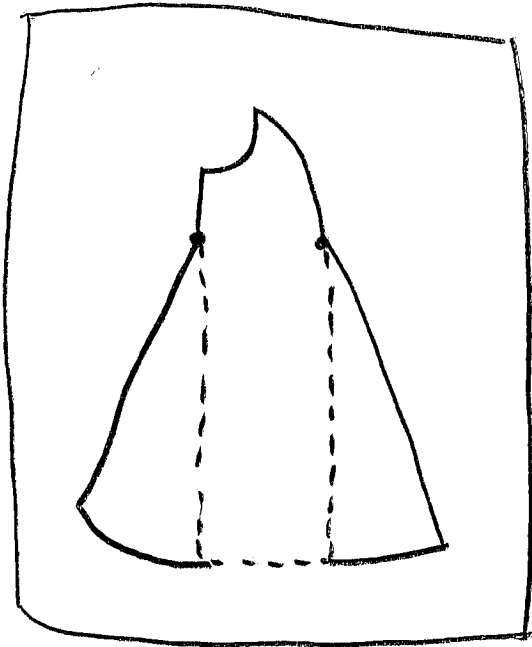
or  
 $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{1}{3}$

depending on your preference.

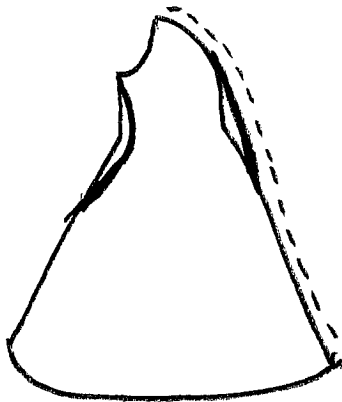
Take the basic bodice and extend the center front/back and side seams by the length of the skirt. Using a curve ruler, draw a cutting line from either the shoulder or the armseye down to the hem.



lay the cut pieces on a larger piece of paper. Choose a pivot point - likely choices are at the original bodice ending, at the waist, or at the hips. Mark all the pieces at the same desired point. Trace the pattern onto the larger paper down to the pivot point.



Place your finger at the pivot point, swing the pattern, and trace the left (or right) side. Place your finger at the pivot point on the opposite side and swing the pattern out an equal amount and trace. True up the hem and trace it.



True up abrupt changes at the pivot points, then add seam allowances.

A child's princess-line dress does not have to be form-fitting, but you can easily take it in at the new seamlines (don't change the armhole if the dress has sleeves!) if that's the style you want. A child who stands still can be fitted wearing the dress, and being pinned in.

A squirmy child will probably need a looser fitting dress anyway, so just take it in in small increments until it fits the way you like.