Crochet Baby Dress Pattern: Free Square Yoke Dress, 3 to 12 Months

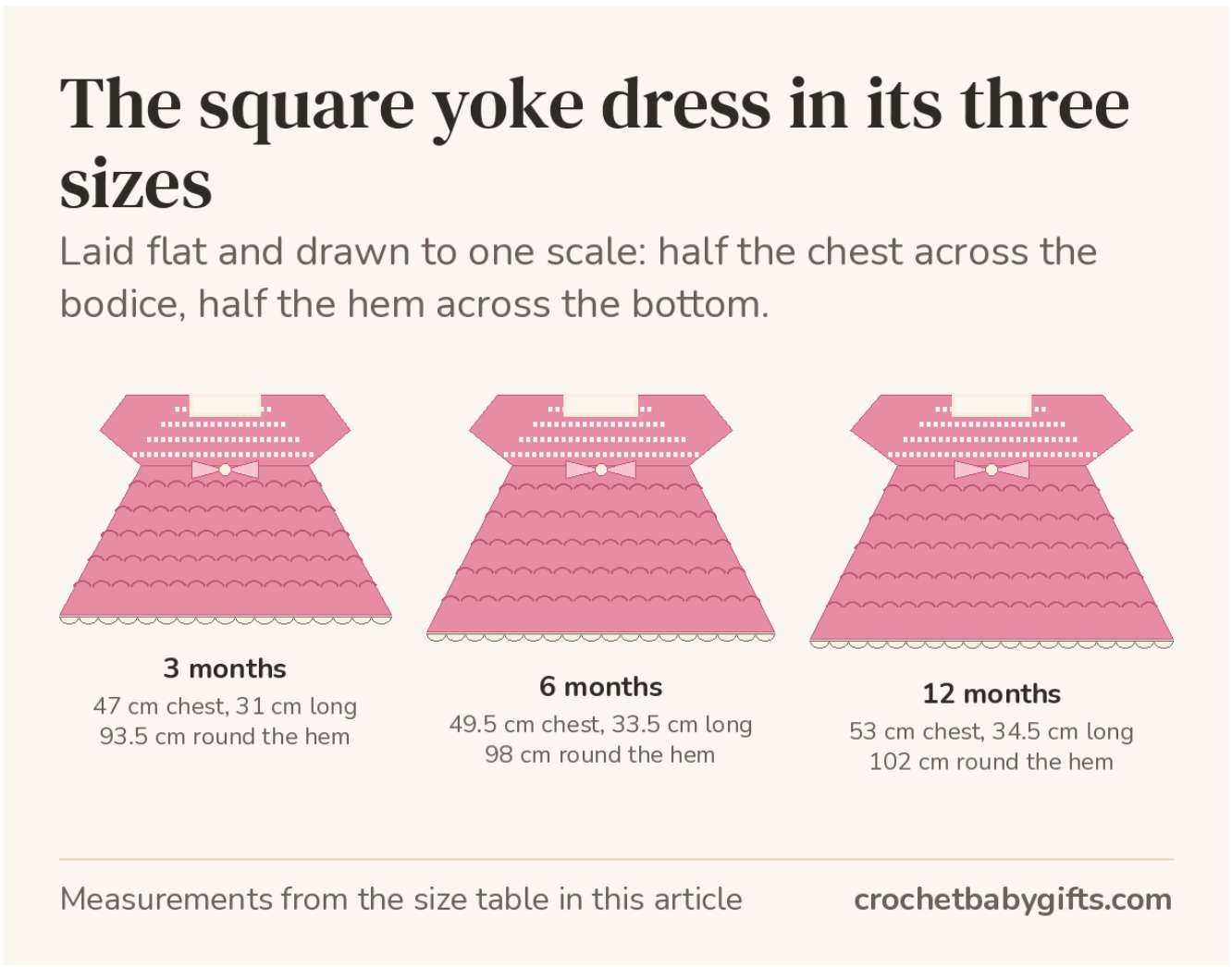
Crochet a square yoke from the neck down in rows of double crochet and eyelets, divide for two cap sleeves, then work the skirt in rounds of shells that grow halfway down, and finish with a cream edge. The back has an overlapping opening instead of a button, so the dress goes over the head with nothing small to fasten. In DK yarn on a 4 mm hook the 3 month dress is about 47 cm round the chest and 31 cm long.

This is our own design. A script re-works every row and round against the one before it and checks the sizes against published baby measurements, and the sizes are worked out from a planning gauge, so they are estimates. Measure row 1 before you go on.

Pick your size

Size	Dress chest	Hem round	Length	Neck, opened out	Yarn
3 months	about 47 cm	about 93.5 cm	about 31 cm, yoke 10 cm	about 47 cm	about 285 m pink, 35 m cream
6 months	about 49.5 cm	about 98 cm	about 33.5 cm, yoke 10 cm	about 49.5 cm	about 325 m pink, 35 m cream
12 months	about 53 cm	about 102 cm	about 34.5 cm, yoke 10 cm	about 53 cm	about 355 m pink, 35 m cream

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The three sizes are for a baby's chest of 16, 17 and 18 in (40.5, 43 and 45.5 cm), the Craft Yarn Council's measurements in our baby clothing measurements (https://crochetbabygifts.com/baby-clothing-measurements/) guide. The Craft Yarn Council calls 2 to 4 in (5 to 10 cm) more than the chest a classic fit, and the dress is 6.5 to 7 cm bigger round the chest than the baby. The length is measured at the centre back, from the neck edge to the tip of the hem shells. It reaches the Craft Yarn Council's tunic length for a child, 30 (33, 34) cm, which is the back waist length plus 15 cm. The yoke is a little deeper than the Craft Yarn Council's armhole depth for each size, and the cap sleeve opening is about 24.5 (22, 24.5) cm round, at least 5 cm more than the upper arm.

The neck has to go over the baby's head, and a crochet neck edge hardly stretches. So the back is open the whole depth of the yoke, and the two back edges overlap by 4 stitches when the dress is on. Spread out, the neck opening goes round about 47 (49.5, 53) cm, and the heads it has to clear are 42.9, 45.8 and 48.6 cm: the World Health Organization's head size at 3, 6 and 12 months that only about 2 babies in 100 are bigger than, taking the boys' figures because they are the larger. That leaves at least 2 cm to spare without counting on any stretch. With the back overlapped, the neck is about 25 (27, 30.5) cm round.

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What you need

Every tool our patterns use is on the Crochet essentials (https://crochetbabygifts.com/essentials/) page.

- DK (#3) baby yarn, soft and machine washable: pink for the dress and the bow, cream for the edging and the flower, the amounts in the size table. Cotton or a cotton blend holds the shells best.
- A 4 mm crochet hook. The hook size chart (https://crochetbabygifts.com/crochet-hook-size-chart/) gives the US letter near it.
- A few stitch markers, a blunt tapestry needle and scissors.

There are no buttons, snaps, beads or ribbon on this dress. The bow is crocheted.

Gauge and abbreviations

Gauge: about 18 double crochet and 9 rows to 10 cm (4 in) on a 4 mm hook. We have not measured this on the dress yet. It is a planning figure from published DK gauges, and every size on this page is worked out from it. Measured along its outer edge and round the corners, Row 1 should be about 34 (36, 39.5) cm long. If yours is much longer or shorter, change your hook by half a size before you go on.

US crochet terms throughout. The UK name is in brackets.

- ch: chain. sl st: slip stitch. st(s): stitch(es). sp: space.
- sc: single crochet (UK: double crochet). dc: double crochet (UK: treble).
- sc3tog: single crochet 3 together (UK: double crochet 3 together). Pull up a loop in each of the next 3 sts, then yarn over and pull through all 4 loops on the hook.
- Eyelet: a ch 1 over a skipped stitch, the little hole in the yoke rows.
- Shell: 5 or 7 dc worked in one stitch.
- Picot: ch 3, then a sl st in the 3rd ch from the hook.
- Row end: the side edge of a row, one dc tall.
- 21 (22, 23): the first number is for 3 months, the ones in brackets for 6 and 12 months. A single number is for every size.

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The video

Crochet for Baby's video makes a pink dress on the same plan as ours: a square eyelet yoke worked in rows, cap sleeves, a shell skirt and an edge in a second colour. Her counts, her shells and her sizing are her own, and she closes the back with a button where ours overlaps, so follow the counts on this page. It is well worth watching for how a square yoke grows at its corners and how the skirt shells stack.

Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V-2buWRByQ

- Starting the yoke on the foundation chain from 1:09.
- The second yoke row, with its ch-1 eyelets, from 4:22.
- Dividing for the sleeves from 15:22.
- The shell stitch skirt from 19:20. Her shells are 4 dc; ours are 5, then 7.
- Her border in a second colour from 34:39.
- The sleeve edging from 36:46.
- The neckline from 40:13. She adds a buttonhole and a button; we leave both out.

Video: Crochet for Baby, "Easy Crochet Dress or Frock for 0-3M baby girl with headband" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V-2buWRByQ), 2021, 52 minutes. Her written pattern is sold in her own shop; the counts on this page are our own.

The pattern

The yoke is worked flat in rows from the neck down, which leaves the back open. At the end of the yoke the two back edges are overlapped and the dress is joined into rounds for the skirt. The ch 2 at the start of a row or round never counts as a stitch. In the yoke a ch-1 space counts as one stitch and a ch-2 corner space as two, so the counts in brackets include them.

1. Yoke

Chain loosely, or make the chain on a hook a size bigger: the neck edge has to go over the baby's head.

- Foundation: with pink, ch 51 (55, 61) loosely.
- Row 1 (WS): dc in 3rd ch from hook and in next 7 (9, 9) ch, (dc, ch 2, dc) in next ch, dc in next 9 (7, 9) ch, (dc, ch 2, dc) in next ch, dc in next 11 (15, 17) ch, (dc, ch 2, dc) in next ch, dc in next 9 (7, 9) ch, (dc, ch 2, dc) in next ch, dc in last 8 (10, 10) ch. [61 (65, 71) sts]
- Row 2 (eyelet row): ch 2, turn, dc in first 2 sts, [[ch 1, skip next st, dc in next st] to 1 st before the next ch-2 sp, ch 1, skip next st, (dc, ch 2, dc) in the ch-2 sp] 4 times, [ch 1, skip next st, dc in next st] to the last st, dc in last st. [69 (73, 79) sts]

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- Row 3: ch 2, turn, [dc in each st to the next ch-2 sp, (2 dc, ch 2, 2 dc) in the ch-2 sp] 4 times, dc in each st to the end. [85 (89, 95) sts]
- Row 4 (eyelet row): ch 2, turn, dc in first st, [[ch 1, skip next st, dc in next st] to 1 st before the next ch-2 sp, ch 1, skip next st, (dc, ch 2, dc) in the ch-2 sp] 4 times, [ch 1, skip next st, dc in next st] to the end. [93 (97, 103) sts]
- Row 5: as row 3. [109 (113, 119) sts]
- Row 6 (eyelet row): as row 2. [117 (121, 127) sts]
- Row 7: as row 3. [133 (137, 143) sts]
- Row 8 (eyelet row): as row 4. [141 (145, 151) sts]
- Row 9: as row 3. [157 (161, 167) sts]

Row 1 places the four corners of the square: a back half, a sleeve, the front, the other sleeve and the other back half. The eyelet rows add one stitch on each side of every corner and the plain rows add two, so the yoke grows into a square that sits over the shoulders. Work into each ch-1 space as if it were a stitch. Rows 2 and 6 start with 2 dc and rows 4 and 8 with 1, so the holes stay in line at the back edges.

2. Dividing for the sleeves

Do not fasten off after row 9.

- Rnd 1: ch 2, turn, overlap the two back edges by 4 sts, the edge you are at in front, and working through both layers, dc in next 4 sts; dc in next 17 (19, 19) sts, ch 5 (3, 5), skip the next ch-2 sp, 35 (33, 35) sts and ch-2 sp, dc in next 37 (41, 43) sts, ch 5 (3, 5), skip the next ch-2 sp, 35 (33, 35) sts and ch-2 sp, dc in next 17 (19, 19) sts; join with a sl st in the first dc. [85 (89, 95) sts]

Lay the edge you are at over the other back edge, so that 4 stitches of each sit on top of each other, and work the first 4 dc through both. The sleeve stitches you skip become the cap sleeves, and the chain under each arm joins the front to the back. From here the dress is worked in joined rounds with the right side facing; do not turn.

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3. Skirt

- Rnd 2: ch 2, dc in next 3 (3, 9) sts, [dc in next st, 2 dc in next st] 41 (43, 43) times; join with a sl st in the first dc. [126 (132, 138) sts]
- Rnd 3: ch 1, [sc in next st, skip 2 sts, 5 dc in next st, skip 2 sts] 21 (22, 23) times; join with a sl st in the first sc. [126 (132, 138) sts]
- Rnds 4–10 (4–11, 4–11): sl st in next 2 sts, ch 1, [sc in next st, skip 2 sts, 5 dc in next st, skip 2 sts] 21 (22, 23) times; join with a sl st in the first sc. [126 (132, 138) sts]
- Rnd 11 (12, 12): sl st in next 2 sts, ch 1, [sc in next st, skip 2 sts, 7 dc in next st, skip 2 sts] 21 (22, 23) times; join with a sl st in the first sc. [168 (176, 184) sts]
- Rnds 12–18 (13–20, 13–21): sl st in next 3 sts, ch 1, [sc in next st, skip 3 sts, 7 dc in next st, skip 3 sts] 21 (22, 23) times; join with a sl st in the first sc. [168 (176, 184) sts]
- Rnd 19 (21, 22): with cream, sl st in next 3 sts, ch 1, [sc in next st, skip 3 sts, 7 dc in next st, skip 3 sts] 21 (22, 23) times; join with a sl st in the first sc. [168 (176, 184) sts]

Rnd 2 gathers the skirt to about one and a half times the chest. The slip stitches at the start of each shell round carry you to the centre of the first shell, so each sc sits on the middle dc of a shell and each shell sits on an sc. Halfway down the skirt the shells grow from 5 dc to 7, which is what flares it. Join cream in the last sl st of the round before the hem round, and fasten off after it.

4. Edging

- Neck edging: with the right side facing, join cream at the lower end of one back edge, ch 1, 2 sc in each row end up to the neck, sc in each ch along the neck with sc3tog over each corner ch and the ch either side of it, then 2 sc in each row end down the other back edge; fasten off. [77 (81, 87) sts]
- Sleeve Rnd 1: join cream at the middle of the underarm chain, ch 1, sc in each ch and st round the armhole with 2 sc in each ch-2 sp; join with a sl st in the first sc. [44 (40, 44) sts]
- Sleeve Rnd 2: ch 1, [sc in next 2 sts, ch 3, sl st in 3rd ch from hook] 22 (20, 22) times; join with a sl st in the first sc and fasten off. [22 (20, 22) picots]

Work the sleeve edging on both sleeves. Weave every end into the inside of the stitches, back and forth through several stitches, then trim it.

5. Bow and flower

The bow in the picture at the top is satin ribbon, with a pearl in the middle of its flower. Ours is crocheted, one size for every dress, and every piece is sewn down flat.

- Bow foundation: with pink, ch 17.
- Row 1: sc in 2nd ch from hook and in each ch across. [16 sts]

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- Rows 2–8: ch 1, turn, sc in each st. [16 sts]
- Band foundation: with pink, ch 4.
- Row 1: sc in 2nd ch from hook and in each ch across. [3 sts]
- Rows 2–10: ch 1, turn, sc in each st. [3 sts]
- Tail foundation: with pink, ch 21.
- Row 1: sc in 2nd ch from hook and in each ch across. [20 sts]
- Rows 2–3: ch 1, turn, sc in each st. [20 sts]
- Flower Rnd 1: with cream, 10 sc in a magic ring; join with a sl st in the first sc. [10 sts]
- Flower Rnd 2: [ch 2, 2 dc in next st, ch 2, sl st in next st] 5 times; fasten off. [5 petals]

Fold the tail strip in half into an upside-down V and sew it to the front at the centre, just below the yoke. Pinch the bow piece in the middle, wrap the band round the pinch and sew the band's ends together at the back. Sew the bow over the top of the tails and the flower onto the band. Sew every piece down all the way round its edge, with small stitches through the dress, so that no loop, end or petal stands free. Leave out the pearl.

Made for a baby

- No buttons, beads, pearls or snaps. That is why the flower has no pearl and the back has no button.
- A back that closes without a fastener. The two back edges overlap instead of buttoning or tying.
- No long ribbon or ties. The dress in the video ties a narrow ribbon all the way round the waist and finishes with a satin ribbon bow. We leave the ribbon out, and crochet the bow and sew it down on every edge, so there is no end to pull, wrap or chew.
- Not for sleep. Take the dress off for naps and at night.

Turn the dress inside out before each wear and check that no end or loop has worked loose.

The sources for each point are on our handmade baby gift safety checklist (https://crochetbabygifts.com/handmade-baby-gift-safety-checklist/#safety-sources).

Yarn

The 3 month dress takes about 285 m of pink and 35 m of cream. The amounts come from counting every stitch and allowing a published length of yarn per stitch for DK, plus tails, so they are estimates. Check the metres on your ball band before you buy.

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Frequently asked questions

Which size should I make? If you do not know the baby, make the 6 or 12 month size. Our baby clothing measurements (https://crochetbabygifts.com/baby-clothing-measurements/) guide explains why a gift that is a little big gets worn and one that is small does not.

Can I make it longer? Yes. Each extra round of 7 dc shells before the cream hem round adds about 1 cm. Keep the hem round in cream and the count stays the same.

Will the back stay closed? The two back edges overlap by about 2 cm and the yoke holds them together while the dress is on. Do not add a button, a snap or a tie to close it.

Can I use a different yarn? A DK cotton or cotton blend holds the shells best. A thicker yarn makes a bigger dress, so check row 1 against the length given under the gauge first.

Is there a dress with a round yoke? Yes. Our crochet baby dress with a round yoke (https://crochetbabygifts.com/crochet-baby-dress-round-yoke/) is also worked from the neck down, with cap sleeves, a narrow waist band and a lattice skirt.

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