

The Nest Makers Manual



the nest
collective

The Nest Collective is a registered charity that works alongside social workers and other community partners across New Zealand to provide free packs of baby essentials for whānau in need. Our vision is that all New Zealand babies are given a great start in life to enable them to flourish.

We gift new, pre-loved, handcrafted and repurposed essentials. These include clothing (prem to size 1 and beyond), bedding, toys, books, toiletries, safety items and more.

This is only possible thanks to the thousands of crafting hours volunteered by talented crafters around New Zealand. You and your donations are very much valued – thank you.

Starting Out!

We have helpful craft information here: www.thenestcollective.org.nz/nestmakers

Please read it through before starting out - you'll find the following:

- Craft Guidelines
- Toy Guidelines
- Patterns (that we love and have tested!)
- Downloadable and printable craft tags

Tell us what you've made!

It's important that we know about your items so we can get them to the right homes.

Please use our craft tags at the link above or include a note for each item that includes:

- The age of the baby it is suitable for (size)
- Yarn/fabric type
- Basic washing instructions, if known
- Your first name
- Any other information that you would like the family to know

The Nest Makers group

[The Nest Makers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1358210654561128) is a private Facebook group and it's a community for you – our crafters! It is full of amazing craft photos, ideas and inspiration from across the country.

We would love you to join and get involved:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1358210654561128>

Where to drop off your donations

Our website has local drop-off locations and postal addresses for crafted or other donations: <https://thenestcollective.org.nz/locations/>

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CLOTHING

Please wash and dry all your fabric before you start cutting to avoid shrinkage of the final items.

Sizes: Prem, Newborn, 0 - 3 months, 3 - 6 months, 6 - 12 months and 1 - 2 years

Materials: As the Craft Guidelines explained, there are very real safety reasons for using natural fibres for babies' clothing and bedding.

We love and accept natural fibres (such as wool/cotton/bamboo or a blend of these) for any baby bedding and clothing up to size 1. This includes blankets, sheets and anything that goes against baby's skin.

Items we provide in our packs that could be created by our crafters:

- Merino items (singlets, onesies, top, pants)
- Onesies
- Jumpsuits/all in ones
- Tops
- Pants
- Wool cardigans
- Hoodies
- Sweatshirts
- Jackets
- Beanies
- Sunhats
- Socks
- Booties
- Scratch mittens
- Dresses

Socks and Booties

Socks that rise to mid-calf are practical especially under leggings. Booties with a ribbed cuff or corded closure are excellent.

Sizes: Newborn, 0 - 3 months, 3 - 6 months

Materials: 100% natural fibres – wool or cotton, crocheted ties rather than ribbons which slip open

Hats

Knitted stretchy, pull-on beanies/hats are essential so we include a range of sizes in every pack. No ribbons or ties please. Beautiful crochet hats need a bit of stretch.

Our New Zealand babies have bigger heads than many knitting and crochet patterns allow for. The sizes below are the actual New Zealand average circumference for each age group from the current NZ Ministry of Health growth charts.

Sizes:

	Girls Average Circumference	Boys Average Circumference
Prem	33cm	33cm
Newborn	36cm	36cm
0 -3 months	40cm	40cm
3 -6 months	42cm	43cm
6-12 months	45cm	46cm
12 – 18 months	46.5cm	47.5cm

Materials: 100% natural fibres – wool or cotton

Vests

Vests are woollen and function either over garments as an outer layer or as an extra layer under a bodysuit or all-in-one. A vest with a ribbed or other body pattern, a lot of stretch width-wise, a generous neck opening and no ties around the neck is best.

Sizes: Prem, Newborn, 0 - 3 months, 3 - 6 months, 6 - 12 months

Materials: 100% wool, especially merino

Cardigans

We include cardigans of all sizes in each pack. Wrap-over cardigans or cardigans with a V neck/curved neck work well (because New Zealand babies tend to have larger heads and wider necks). Practical buttons or domes need to be very securely fastened. No ribbon ties please. For colder areas, a style with long sleeves and buttons right down the front is perfect especially if the yarn is 8ply.

Sizes:

	Finished chest size
Prem	26-31 cm
Newborn	41cm
0 -3 months	46cm
3 -6 months	51cm
6-12 months	56cm
12 – 18 months	56-61cm

The measurements are common garment finished chest sizes but they are only approximations because New Zealand babies come in all sizes! The measurement is made up of the average actual chest size plus an extra 5cm ease. While they may seem large compared to some patterns, especially designer ones, they allow for comfort and longer use by a baby whose size we don't know. However a centimetre or two either way is fine.

Materials: 100% wool or cotton or wool/cotton blends in 4ply or 8ply

Knitted Jackets

Cardigans with hoods knitted in heavier yarns are an excellent outer layer for young babies and older ones. We are always running short and love to receive them.

Sizes: Newborn - 12 months

Materials: 100% wool in heavier weights – possibly 8 ply for small babies, 10 ply for mobile babies, 12 ply for 12 – 18 months. But do use your judgment depending on your pattern requirements and availability of yarn.

Repurposed Material Jackets

Jackets or hoodies made of repurposed blankets or other heavier natural fabrics are really valued and keep babies nice and warm.

Sizes: 3 - 6 months, 6 - 12 months, 1 - 2 years

Materials: Heavier weight 100% natural fabric or repurposed blankets

BEDDING AND SLEEPING

Any bedding used in a cot or bassinet needs to be either 100% cotton or 100% wool/merino or a blend of natural fibres.

Blankets

All packs include bedding and a much-loved and beautiful item is the bassinet or cot wool blanket. They can be knitted or crocheted in one piece or made from crocheted or knitted peggy/granny squares. They are usually rectangular and tuck in.

The finished blanket measurements depend on your squares or pattern but here are some guidelines.

Sizes: Pram/ bassinet blanket - 70 x 90 cm or 90 x 100 cm approximately

Cot blanket - 100 x 115 cm or 115 x 125 cm

A multipurpose pram/bassinet/cot blanket of about 80 x 100 cm also works well.

Materials: Blankets are usually 100% wool although lighter weight blankets can also be made using cotton or a wool/cotton blend. Because they are hand-washed they can be made of the more exotic natural fibres that don't fit the machine-washing preference for knitted clothing.

Squares

We gratefully accept donations of crocheted or knitted squares which are then made into blankets by clever Nest Maker crafters. Garter stitch is a quick knitting stitch to use but feel free to be creative.

Size: Squares need to measure 16 cm x 16 cm using 8ply/double knitting wool so we can mix and match donated squares. A swatch may be needed to get the exact size. If you make smaller or larger squares, please donate enough to make one blanket.

Materials: See the blanket materials above. Size 4/4.5mm crochet hook or 4.5mm knitting needles (30 stitches approximately).

If you are clever enough to join your own squares you might like to try the 'join as you go' method on the Patchwork Heart Facebook page:

<https://www.thepatchworkheart.co.uk/2015/05/joining-squares-method-3-continuous.html>

Cotton Quilts

We are very appreciative of colourful creative quilts with 100% cotton outers and cotton wadding. They really personalise a baby's bed. We cannot accept acrylic or polyester outers or wadding.

Sizes: Quilts are smaller than blankets because they don't get tucked in.
Bassinet quilt: 70 x 90 cm up to 80 x 100 cm depending on pattern
Cot quilt: 90 x 110 cm up to 100 x 120 cm

Repurposed Blankets

Excellent quality, used blankets can be thoroughly washed and cut into baby blanket sizes then trimmed with a bright cotton border. (Patterned or colourful leftovers can also be made into gorgeous little shoes and stunning jackets). They are rectangular.

Sizes: Can be flexible and depends on the condition of the blankets.
Pram/ bassinet blanket - 70 x 90 cm up to 90 x 100 cm approximately
Cot blanket - 100 x 115 cm up to 115 x 125 cm approximately

Material: 100% wool or 100% cotton

Bassinet and Cot Fitted and Flat Sheets

We generally need sheets for each pack. We cannot accept polyester sheets.

Sizes: Bassinet fitted sheets are cut 70 x 120 cm with a mitred corner 15 cm in from the point. Bassinet flat sheets are 90 x 110 cm.

Cot fitted sheets are cut 115 x 175 cm with a mitred corner 19 cm in from the point. Flat cot sheets are 115 x 155 cm. (Cot sheets made to these measurements will fit both American and New Zealand cot mattresses.)

Materials: 100% cotton: brushed, flannelette or plain 100% cotton, new fabric or reused sheets in excellent condition. Stretch cotton knit is excellent for fitted sheets but requires a pattern that specifies this fabric. Bamboo is also good. Elastic to fit around the whole fitted sheet.

Wraps/Swaddles

Fitted swaddles are popular but many still prefer a square swaddle that they can wrap themselves. These wraps also have many other uses.

Size: A minimum size of 1m x 1m will fit well up to about 3 months.

Materials: Muslin, stretch cotton, flannelette or merino.

BIBS, BREAST FEEDING AND BURPING

Dribble Bibs

Dribble bibs are worn all day when a baby is teething. They are a triangular bandana-style shape. They may have snaps or velcro as a fastener and they have two layers – the decorative top one and the water-absorbent bottom layer.

Size: See pattern.

Materials: Interesting cotton or flannelette with towelling or PUL on the bottom.

Feeding Bibs

The styles and sizes vary but because they are constantly in the wash we appreciate the flow of hand-sewn bibs. They usually have velcro or snap fasteners. We also have a pattern for an elastic, over-the-head version if you don't have a snap machine or do not like to use velcro.

Size: See patterns.

Materials: Options include interesting cotton or flannelette on top with towelling or PUL on the bottom, or we also often use flannelette for both layers, and some people use polar fleece for the bottom layer. Polycotton is also fine as a top layer too.

Breast Pads

Breastfeeding pads are made from one gentle, absorbent layer next to the skin, one or more layers of core (absorbent) fabrics and backed with one or more breathable layers which will protect clothing from leaks.

Size: See pattern.

Materials: Next to the skin - flannelette, t-shirt material, microfleece, suede fabric (a special wicking fabric) or cotton lycra.

- absorbent layer (one or more layers) - towelling, flannelette (2-4 layers), bamboo or hemp fabrics
- leak-proof layers - PUL, fleece, wool

Example: Cotton lycra topper, 3-4 layers of flannelette core & polar fleece or PUL backing.

Burp Cloths

These useful cloths are sized to fit over a shoulder with an overhang front and back. They need a soft top layer for the baby's face and a bottom layer that protects clothes.

Size: See patterns.

Materials: Cotton, flannelette for top and towelling on the bottom.

BATHING AND CHANGING

Hooded Towels

We aim to provide a hooded towel in each pack. The folded corner reduces heat loss from the baby's head and the towels are generous enough to bundle up a small baby.

Size: Approximately 70cm square but this is only a guide as they do not have to be square (a bath sheet cut in half works well).

Materials: Towelling, excellent quality recycled towels, colourful binding material.

Flannels/Reusable Wipes

A generous pack of wipes provides some cloths to use as flannels and other cloths to set aside for washing bottoms. They are squares of a soft fabric, one or two layers, which are then hemmed or overlapped. They are a great way to use leftover fabric/old flannelette bed sheets.

Size: 20 cm approximately.

Materials: Flannelette, towelling, excellent quality recycled towels or soft fabric that is durable like double or triple layers of muslin.

Change Mats

These useful mats used for nappy changes have two layers - a softer top and more durable bottom layer. As long as a baby fits on them the size is right!

Sizes: See pattern: approximately 45 x 60 cm.

Materials: Fleece, cotton, curtain fabric and perhaps velcro dots for easy folding.

TOYS

Please read the Toy Guidelines on our website:
www.thenestcollective.org.nz/nestmakers

We value beautiful crafted, safe toys - they are fun to make and great to use up scraps of yarn and fabric. Please remember that all toys will be chewed and tugged or sit against the baby's skin. Avoid fabrics or yarns that a little nose/mouse could be buried in or that shed fibre e.g. fur fabrics, mohair wool. Toys should be made without removable clothes.

Knitted or sewn, larger or smaller, the key thing is safety. All seams, arms, legs, heads, and other attached parts should be double sewn to ensure that they are secure and nothing can be pulled off. Use tightly woven fabric or knitting, embroidered eyes and other facial features, with no stick-on motifs or buttons down the front.

The style of toy is your choice however. Smaller toys are great for little hands to feel the texture and larger ones are definitely for cuddling. The traditional dolls, bears and other animals can be supplemented by shapes like squares or balls (which can have tags added to them.)

Lovies

A lovey is for comfort and security. They are soft, cuddly, and usually reasonably small to fit easily in a little hand. Knitted ones can be like squares with a stuffed animal head shaped in one corner. The simple face is embroidered on. The knitting must be tight so little fingers don't get caught. Sewn ones come in a variety of shapes including a simple square or rectangle and are made with two layers of soft material

Materials for knitted lovies: Acrylic yarn is best for knitted lovies as it doesn't stretch when stuffed. Yarn should be smooth so no fibres can come free and get in little

mouths. A smaller size needle than usual for the yarn weight, e.g. 3mm or 3.25 mm for 8ply/double knitting. This makes the knitted fabric of the lovey tight.

Materials for fabric lovies: Must be machine-washable and soft like cotton, merino, cotton flannel, polar fleece.

Taggies

A taggy is a machine-washable, two-three layer shape with a variety of 'tags' around the edges. These protruding tags are made of different trims in a variety of colours and textures. The edges are triple sewn to stop tags pulling off and the square unraveling. Ribbon and ricrac for taggies should be looped to avoid fraying ends - about 4 inches long then folded in half.

Size: 20cm square approximately or the pattern size/shape. Padded versions work well. Tags are about 10cm long then folded in half and stitched in.

Material: Colourful natural material that can safely go in a baby's mouth e.g. cotton, cotton flannel, polar fleece. Must have a tight weave. Contrasting textures/patterns for each side are fun.

Materials for tags: Scraps of zigzag, satin ribbon, cotton ribbon, twill tape, ricrac, cotton lace. **Please do not use cheap** (eg AliExpress) satin ribbon, because it often splits when the needle pierces it and when chewed on a few times. Thin tags can also fall apart. Grosgrain ribbon has been tested by Nest Maker crafters.

Knitted toys

Materials for knitted outer layers: Yarns-acrylic yarn is best for knitted toys as it doesn't stretch when stuffed. Yarn should be smooth so there are no fibres that can come free and get in little mouths.

A smaller size needle than usual for the yarn weight, e.g. 3mm or 3.25 mm for 8ply/double knitting. This makes the knitted fabric of the toy tight.

Materials for inners: Polyester stuffing that is well secured is best (for example, Hobby Fill) but please do not use polystyrene beads as a filling. Safe small circular containers that rattle can be secured in the middle for noise value.

Materials for facial features: Please embroider these on. Do not use buttons or sew on eyes and other decorations.

Fabric Toys

Materials for sewn outer layers: Fabrics - recycled blankets, heavier weight cottons. Please do not have sewn on features like buttons or eyes including glass ones.

Materials for inners: Polyester stuffing that is well secured is best (for example, Hobby Fill) but please do not use polystyrene beads as a filling.

Materials for facial features: Please embroider these on. Do not use buttons, sewn on eyes and other decorations. Safety eyes can be used on larger toys however.

Floor Playmats

These are designed to go on the floor for the baby to lie on and play, with various toys which are attached to the mat. It is good if they can be a little bit thicker so they provide a softness and stop any coldness from the floor surface.

They can be made from a variety of fabrics, especially synthetic ones which are not suitable to use as bedding. It is important to make sure playmats are not confused with bedding hence the idea of attaching toys or at least the loops for toys to them.

We encourage you to add a label to your playmat to ensure it is clear it is not to be used as bedding.

Sizes: Smaller ones 115cm x 115cm approximately, larger ones 130cm x 140cm approximately. See pattern.

Materials: Colourful cottons top and bottom which can be scraps put together to create a variety of patterns, polyester or fleece for the bottom layer if preferred.
Filling: polyester, wool.

MUM ITEMS

Gift/Shopping Bags

On the top of every baby pack sits a bag for the mother/carer. At its simplest it is shaped like a reusable shopping bag but it can have pockets and zips. It contains some everyday essentials for the birth, some treats, some personal items like reusable maternity pads and a reusable mask if possible. Once a baby arrives it can be used for all the gear a parent of a young baby has to carry. It may also include a small toiletry bag or nappy change clutch.

Size: See pattern.

Materials: Colourful cotton, heavy polyester fabric, curtain material

Hats and scarves

Inside the crafted bag we put basic toiletries and gifts such as a warm knitted hat and a knitted scarf.

Hats are usually beanie style in any colour or pattern you wish. Any type of yarn is fine including acrylics.

Scarves can be long or short, straight or infinity style, winter weight or lighter. We always enjoy seeing the creativity and love invested in them.

Masks

In light of Covid-19 we aim to put one mask in the bag too.

Sizes: See pattern.

Materials: You will need fabric for the front (outside) and lining of the mask, cotton or poly cotton fabric is good (used pillowcases works well), plus 16cm of round mask elastic if possible as it is more comfortable and sits better. Use a nice-looking fabric for the outside to brighten up the idea of having to wear a mask.

Nappy change clutch

A fold-over bag, this clutch holds 2-3 disposable nappies, some wipes and perhaps a change mat. It is fastened with a stylish button and loop.

Size: See pattern

Materials: Colourful cotton, large button.