

Foot of the Month > Pajama Bag with Ruffles & Ribbons

The gathering foot is our featured Brother accessory foot this month. Use your Brother sewing machine and this special foot to make a pajama bag with matching ruffles. You will learn to use the gathering foot as a fast and easy way to ruffle up light weight fabrics. Add ribbon trim to the bag front for yet another creative touch. If your Brother machine has built in lettering you can use it to personalize the bag for that special little girl in your life. She will be thrilled to pack her PJ's in her very own bag when the next sleep over party comes around!

Materials and Supplies

- [Brother Sewing Machine](#)
- [SA120](#) Brother Gathering Foot
- [Brother Embroidery Thread](#) for decorative lettering.
- [Brother Stabilizer](#), Tear Away or Wash Away for stitching ribbons.
- Basic sewing notions including sewing thread to match fabrics and ribbons and a wash out marker or chalk. **Note:** Be sure to pre-test your marker on your fabric. Some markers require removal prior to pressing.
- Seam sealant for treating ribbon ends.

Fabric for Bag:

- Two pieces of cotton or cotton blend fabric measuring 16-inches Wide X 18-inches long for bag front and bag back.
- Three pieces of cotton or cotton blend fabric measuring 3-inches Wide X 32-inches long for ruffles. **Note:** Select soft lightweight fabric for the ruffles. Piece strips if necessary, sewing seams on the diagonal to reduce bulk. *See **Figure #1**.

Ribbon for Bag:

- Three pieces of coordinating Gross Grain ribbon measuring 5/8-inches Wide X 16-inches long for trim. Two pieces of coordinating Gross Grain ribbon measuring 7/8-inches Wide X 46-inches long for drawstring closure.

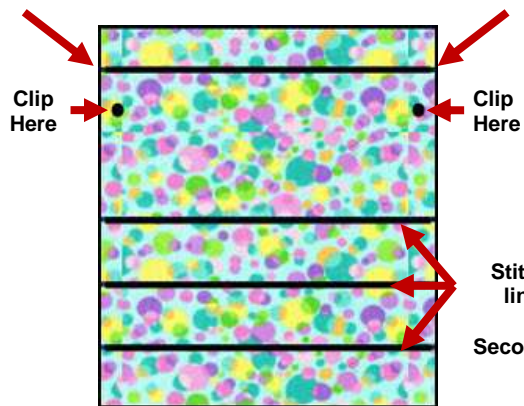


Figure #1

Instructions for Preparing Bag Front

1. Select one of the fabric pieces to use for the bag front. Designate one 16-inch edge for the top. Measure 4-inches down and 1/2-inch over on each top side. Use scissors to make a small clip at each of these locations. Fold and press the casing line at the top edge. Mark the ruffle stitching lines on the bag front. **See below:**

Fold line for drawstring casing: 2-inches from top edge.



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Instructions for Top Casing for Drawstring.

1. Serge finish or use a machine overcast stitch to finish raw edges at the top of each bag piece. Fold and press under ½-inch along the side edges, beginning at the top and ending at the clip.



2. To finish forming the casing, topstitch ¼-inch from the top fold line, and 1 ¾-inches from the top fold line. *See **Figure #2**.

Instructions for Creating Ruffles

1. Select the ruffle strips. Fold and press each strip in half lengthwise, having wrong sides together. Serge finish or overcast the top raw edges.
2. Prior to gathering, please read more [About the Gathering Foot](#) at the end of these instructions. To attach the gathering foot to the machine, remove the existing foot holder and then use your screwdriver to attach the foot. **Note:** Take care to make certain the foot is tightened securely. Gather each of the three strips, beginning and ending the gathering ½- inch from the short end.



3. Pin one gathered strip along the marked line at the bottom of the bag front. Adjust strip to fit the front piece. Next, pin a piece of 5/8-inch wide ribbon directly over the gathered strip. Attach the standard foot to the machine. Beginning at one end, topstitch close to each edge of the ribbon, securing the ruffle in the process. *See All Steps in **Figure #3**.

Figure #2



Figure #3

(Step One)



(Step Two)



(Step Three)



(Step Four)



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- Repeat the previous process for the remaining two ruffle strips. You have completed the front piece.

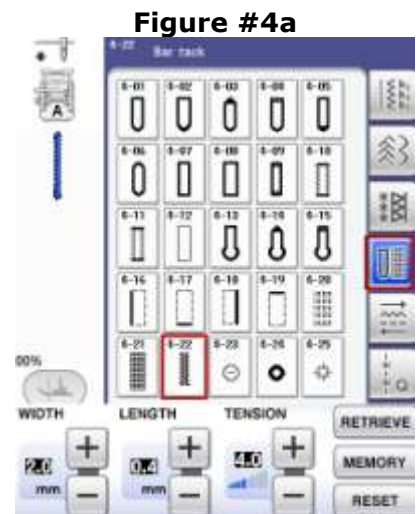


Figure #4a



Figure #4b

Instructions for Finishing the Bag

- Place bag front and bag back right sides together, matching raw edges. Using a 1/2-inch seam allowance, stitch side seams, beginning at the clipped point and continuing to the bottom edge. Serge finish or overcast the raw edges and press seams toward the back of the bag. Sew the bottom of the bag closed using a 1/2-inch seam allowance. Serge finish or overcast the bottom seam. Turn bag right sides out and press.
- If your machine has a built in Bar Tack stitch you can sew Bar Tacks to re-enforce the top edge on each side of the bag. *See **Figure #4a, #4b, and #4c**. As an alternative, sew a line of short zig zag stitches for re-enforcement.
- To insert the ribbons for drawstring, lay the bag flat on a table having the casing at the top. Select one of the 46-inch pieces of ribbon. Attach a safety pin or bodkin to ribbon end. Beginning on the right side, feed the ribbon into the top casing on the front of the bag. Continue to pull the ribbon through the opening on the left, into the casing on the back of the bag, and finally back out to the right side where you began. *See **Figure #5**. Select the remaining piece of ribbon. Beginning on the left side, feed this ribbon through the front and back casing in the same manner as you did for the first. When finished, you should have two loops of ribbon with loose ends on opposite sides of the bag.
- Optional: To personalize your bag, set up machine for decorative stitching. Add a strip of stabilizer under the ribbon and stitch your desired message and the child's name on loose ends of ribbon. *See **Figure #6a, #6b, and #6c**.



Figure #5



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5. Cut the ribbon ends at an angle and treat with seam sealant to prevent raveling. Tie each set of ribbons into a knot near the end of the casing.



Figure #6a



Figure #6b

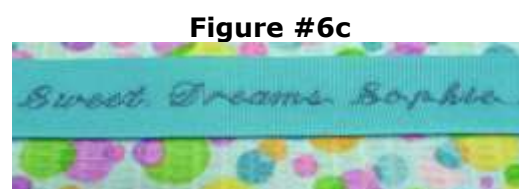
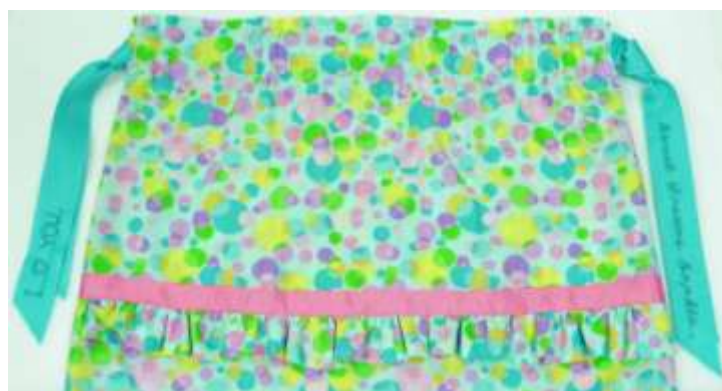


Figure #6c

6. To close the pajama bag simply pull on ribbon ends from both sides at the same time. *See **Figure #7**.

You are finished!

Options and Ideas:

- Use your Brother Gathering Foot to make pretty ruffles for curtains, pillows, dresses, skirts, and more! This foot is ideal for quick and easy gathers on a wide variety of projects.
- Use this same ruffle and ribbon technique to trim the band of a matching pillowcase.
- Enlarge or reduce the size of this drawstring bag. This type of bag is suitable for carryalls, storage bags, laundry bags, etc., etc., etc.!



Figure #7

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About the Gathering Foot

Your Brother Gathering Foot is a very special foot. It is designed for creating soft gathers on lightweight fabrics. Using this foot makes it fast and easy to create ruffles such as those featured in this project. Unlike many other feet, this foot has an included shank and it attached by using the screw that connects the standard foot holder. The underside of the foot has a ridge that helps create gathers while sewing with a simple straight stitch. In effect, the foot pushes the fabric layer against the feed dogs as the stitch is formed, producing a puckered or gathered effect. By selecting a longer than normal stitch length and a tighter than normal tension, the fabric gathers up as you sew.



Always be sure to choose soft and lightweight fabric for this technique. You can adjust for different effects by modifying both the stitch length and the upper tension. Generally, the longer the stitch and the tighter the upper tension, the more pronounced the gathering will be. Settings vary with different fabrics so you will want to test on remnants before beginning. When gathering, it is helpful to place your finger behind the foot, forcing in more gathers. Release and then reposition your finger every few inches.

It is not always possible to judge the exact amount of gathers to fit a specific area. If you strive for more gathers rather than less you can ease off excess gathering at each end of a strip. We suggest leaving several extra inches of needle and bobbin thread tails at the beginning and the end of your stitching. After gathering your strip you can adjust the gathers to fit your specific area, and then tie off the threads by hand to keep the gathering in place. As a final step, smooth the gathers until they are even. Alternatively, you can create a gathered strip that is longer than necessary, and then trim and finish the ends when you apply the strip to your project.

You can also see that there is actually a slot in the foot which allows for gathering the bottom layer while sewing it to a flat top layer. We will cover that technique in a future project

Enjoy using your Brother Gathering Foot and your Brother Sewing Machine!