



Tip of the Month - Teaching Children



Teaching a child to Knit – perspectives of a Grandmother

I'm not a teacher, but the strong desire of my 6 ½ year old granddaughter to knit could not to be ignored.

Unfortunately, cartoons had given her the strong understanding that the needles were held in a certain way (which of course was portrayed wrongly). 6 years of watching cartoons, and she knew best!

Holding the needles was the greatest stumbling block and needed continual correction and reminding. When she held the needles correctly the yarn movement required little help and tension was consistent as shown in the photo. We started with 6 stitches and by the end of the weekend we still had 6 stitches and some very 'lumpy' work. But her enthusiasm never faltered. And the smile on her face when she achieved this was so huge and memorable—making it all worth it.



The saddest part for me is that her mother has no idea how to knit nor her other grandmother. So, in a few months when I see her again most will be forgotten or she will have developed bad habits by persevering on her own and with the aid of cartoons!!

We (that know how) need to keep these hand crafts alive. Even when teaching them is hard, the benefits are numerous. It is both mentally challenging and emotionally satisfying both to the teacher and the learner.

Tips for teaching Children

- Showing is better than telling—demonstrate often in short blocks and ensure the child has a hook and yarn when you are demonstrating so they can try immediately.
- Keep it fun—Don't demand perfection. Go with the flow and don't dwell too long on one thing. Once they feel comfortable form will come. At the start, work around mistakes and don't rip them out. Keep the lessons short (no more than an hour), and before the lesson ends, get them excited about what they will learn on the next lesson.
- Be patient—Children love attention and the quality one-on-one time you spend with them is very important. Give praise, and maintain a sense of humour.
- Preparation—Sometimes it is easier to begin by giving children a crochet hook with a few rows of crochet already completed. By using this method, they learn the stitches easier. Creating a foundation chain in crochet can be tricky for beginners because of their tension. Once they feel comfortable with the basic stitches, you can go back and teach them how to begin a foundation chain.
- Projects—The satisfaction from completing a project will keep them going—even a chain necklace/bracelet will give them a sense of achievement and wanting to learn more.
- Thinking outside of the norm—if a student is having difficulty with a particular task/step, try finding an alternative way to explain it—use different words, different ways of using the tools or different ways to achieve the same result. For example, if making a foundation chain is difficult, try finger chains instead.
- Step by step instructions—Experienced crocheters often forget to explain some of the steps—take it slow and break each step down.
- Use other resources—Use tutorials available as DVDs, with books, or online as supplements. Children are very familiar with technology and this can reinforce or help explain what you are teaching them. Be wary of the terminology differences though.

See more tips for sharing your love of crochet at the Craft Yarn Council [website](#).

And of course don't forget our learn to crochet guides, hints and tips on our website—in the [Crochet Australia Learning Centre](#).