

Smocking Ideas

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**Creative
Keepsakes**

Outlining smocked figures (or sections of a smocked figure) is most commonly helpful when there is very little contrast between the floss and fabric colors or between floss colors within the figure. For example, in the bunny design, the white stitches were outlined to separate them from the green fabric & also from the yellow (bunny body) stitches. In the pink *Pat-A-Cake* figure, the white stitches blended to closely with the pale pink fabric, but the darker pink stitches were fine. Only the sections where the white is against the pink fabric are outlined in this design.



Position different floss colors against figure to determine the best color for outlining. Dark gray floss seemed to work well with the bunny design. Medium gray was selected for the pale pastel colors of *Pat-A-Cake*.

Using one strand floss, work outline stitches around figure, inserting needle very close to figure & holding thread against the figure on each stitch. When working on a horizontal or diagonal section of the figure, simply work each stitch in a different pleat. (Note that it's easiest to work from left to right & turn design as necessary so that you can continue working in this manner.)

When working beside vertical areas of a figure, multiple stitches are taken in the same pleat--along the side edges of the figure. Even when working along side of only two touching cables (example: widest rows on bunny head), at least 2 outline stitches should be taken to help hold outline thread on outer edge of figure. Entire stitcy will actually be along the side of a pleat, so they may not be as visible as in horizontal & diagonal areas. In some vertical areas, outline stitches can be eliminated because the shadow created by the valley of the pleat can provide ample outline between the floss & fabric colors (example: bunny leg). Simply take needle to back side in these areas.



Duplicating apron tie stitches in gray provided an outline effect in this area.

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Smocking design plates to demonstrate this technique are #17, *The Carrot Patch*, and #41, *Pat-A-Cake*. On the green dress (*Carrot Patch*), flowerettes were substituted for the carrots on the design plate. They have darker French knots (4 strands, 1 wrap) in centers. Lazy-daisy leaves add extra embellishment. Also, babywaves were worked on "grass" cable row & flowerettes were centered over the babywaves.