

The Cajun Girl

Recovered Infant Car Seat Tutorial



Materials List

by Tasha

- 1 ½ yards of fabric (2 yds fabric with nape)
- 1 yard of coordinating fabric (1 ½ yds of fabric with nape)
- 3 packages of extra wide double fold bias tape
- 2 snaps for the headrest
- 2 spools of thread - you will need about 300 yds total
- seam ripper or sharp scissors
- zipper foot

Recommended Fabrics

by Tasha

The best choice is a high quality cotton or cotton blend fabric. Choose a fabric that is very durable and sturdy. Avoid any fabric that has stretch such as knits. Also, choose a fabric that is not too stiff such as canvas, denim, or decorator's fabric.

Always preshrink fabric before cutting according to the manufacturer's recommendation. This way when the cover is washed the it will retain its shape.



General Tips

The basic concept behind recovering the car seat is as follows:

1. Take out the original stitching, and take apart the components in a systematic manner.
2. Label the pieces as they are removed.
3. Save the batting and any securing pieces (elastic, etc.) for reuse. Do not save the bias binding pieces. These should be discarded along with any button snaps.
4. Use the original fabric pieces as a pattern.
5. Begin reassembling the cover in the reverse order that it was taken apart. The original stitching lines can be seen after the fabric has been removed. They serve as a wonderful guide to help reattach the fabric using the right seam allowance.



Before beginning disassembling the car seat components, wash all the components of the car seat (the cover, headrest, and canopy). The cover can usually be wash in a washing machine with cold water and air-dried. See your specific seat for the manufacturer's recommendations on product care.



Wash all the fabric that will be used to recover the seat. This way when the completed cover is washed, the seat will retain its shape. After the fabric is washed, use a warm iron to smooth out any wrinkles.



Read through all the instructions before beginning. As you read through the instructions, familiarize yourself with the different components and how they are connected. If at any point in the instructions for your cover are different, simply write down the step in the instructions. It also helps to take pictures of the different sections. I have found that most covers are made very similarly.



When stitching the cover always use the secure stitching function (i.e. backstitching) for all the seams.



The following steps (1, 2, and 3) can be completed in any order. If you would prefer to start with the headrest, no problem!



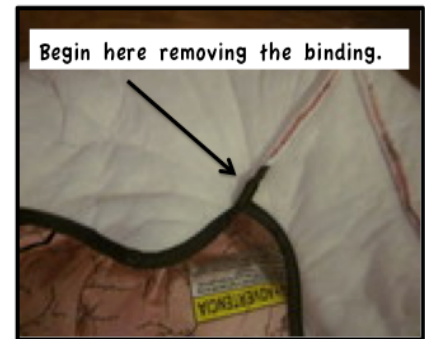
Disclaimer: Changing the original fabric could void the manufacturer's warranty. The Cajun Girl is not responsible for the finished product or any injury incurred by its use.

Step-by-Step Instructions

by Lesha

Step 1: Recover the car seat.

1. Start by removing the bias binding that goes around the entire outside edge of the cover using a seam ripper or sharp scissors.
2. As you are removing the bias binding, the top and bottom sections that fold over the edges will be removed as well.



Top Section



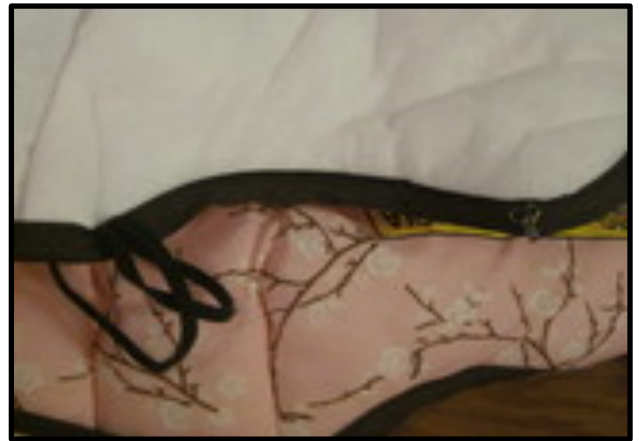
Bottom Section

3. After the top and bottom sections are removed, the bias binding should be removed from these sections as well. See photo.



Bottom Section

- Remove the side hook and eye that is on the outside of the bias binding and mark the position with a fabric marker. Label the position on the original fabric or batting. If your particular seat has any additional snaps that need to be removed with the bias binding, remove them and mark the position with a marker. The elastic in the photo does not have to be removed at this point.

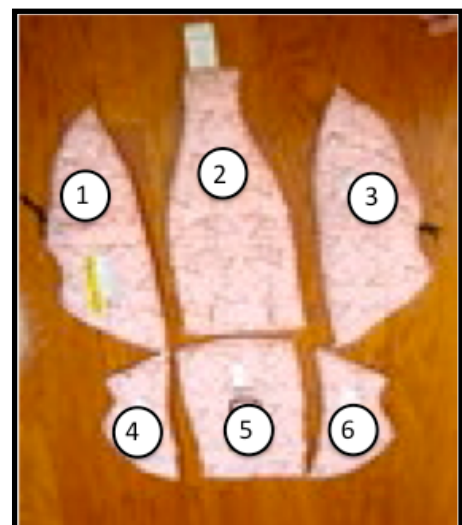
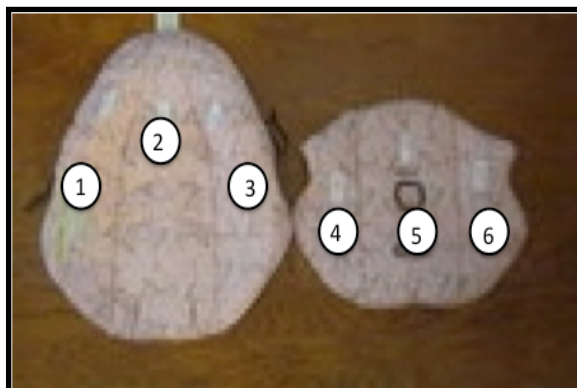


- Once you have removed the bias binding and the top and bottom sections, label the 6 main sections of the cover. Label the pieces from left to right and from top to bottom. See picture for details.

Most of the major car seat brands have six main sections. If your cover has more or less, just label the pieces 7, 8, etc. Label the side pieces with the pleats 1 and 3. The section with the slots for the straps section 2 and the section with the flap for the buckle section 5.

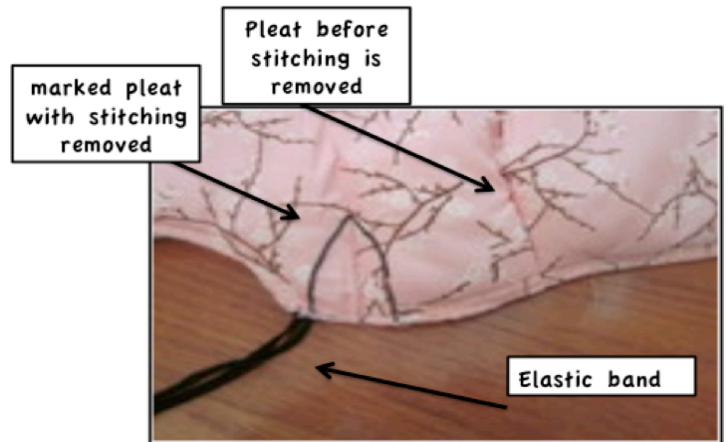


- Next, remove the stitching that connects the top of the cover (sections 1, 2, and 3) from the bottom (sections 4, 5, and 6). Sections 1, 2, and 3 should remain connected as well as sections 4, 5, and 6.



7. Remove the stitching connecting sections 1, 2, and 3. Also, remove the stitching connecting sections 4, 5, and 6 and separate the pieces. The pieces will still be connected to the batting.
8. Remove the stitching from each piece to separate the fabric from the batting. Be sure to label the batting pieces as you remove them. We will go through each of the sections.

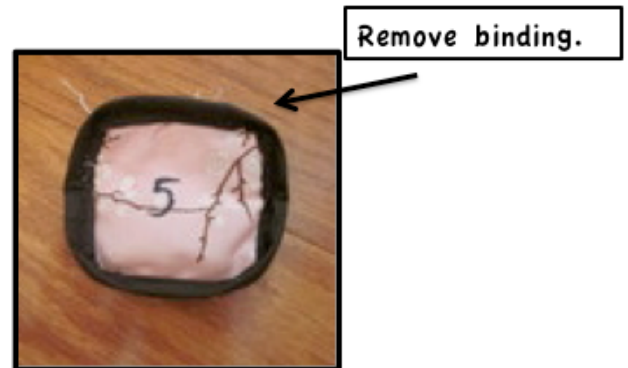
9. Begin with sections 1 and 3. Remove the elastic bands on the side of the section and mark the placement with a fabric marker. There are also pleats along the outside edge of both sections. Remove the stitching and mark the pleat lines using a fabric marker. Then remove the outside stitching and separate the fabric from the batting. Label the batting pieces "1" and "3".



10. For section 2, you will have to remove the outside stitching as well as the stitching around the slits that are placed for the straps and buckles to go through. Then separate the batting from the fabric. Label the batting piece "2". (Not pictured)



11. For sections 4 and 6, there are no special markings or adjustments. Remove the outside stitching and separate the batting from the fabric. Label the batting pieces "4" and "6". (Not pictured)



12. For section 5, remove the small flap that is covering the opening for the buckle. Remove the stitching around the hole for the buckle. Remove the outside stitching and separate the batting from the fabric. Label the batting piece "5". For the small

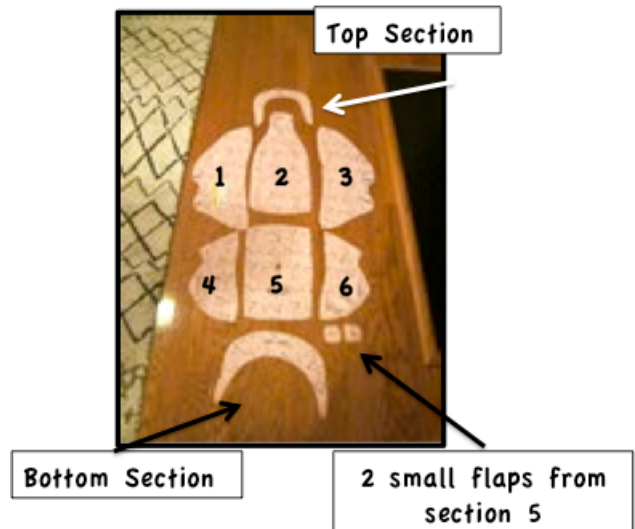
Small flap covering the hole on section 5

flap that was removed, remove the bias binding around the piece and separate the two pieces of fabric from the batting. Label the fabric and batting pieces “5”.

13. With an iron set to the proper setting for your fabric material, iron all the fabric pieces that were removed from the batting. I use an iron set on low or “synthetics”.

14. The following pieces will be used as pattern pieces. See picture.

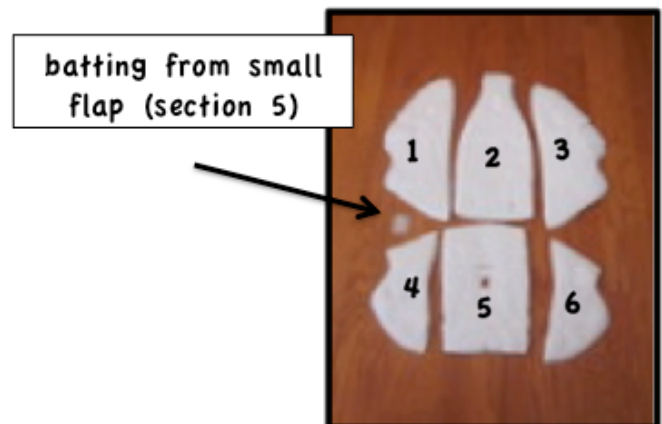
- a. top section
- b. Section 1
- c. Section 2
- d. Section 3
- e. Section 4
- f. Section 5 (including 2 small square flaps)
- g. Section 6
- h. bottom section



15. This is the cutting layout for fabric with a nape or stripes (about 1 ½ yards are needed.) If you are using fabric without a nape, the pieces can be placed on the fabric in any direction with a lot less waste of fabric (about 1 yd of fabric is needed). Place the fabric right side up in a single layer and lay the fabric sections right side up on the fabric as well. Cut out all the fabric pieces. After cutting the fabric pieces, there should be the same pieces as pictured above.

16. The following pieces were removed for the batting:

- a. Section 1 batting
- b. Section 2 batting
- c. Section 3 batting
- d. Section 4 batting
- e. Section 5 batting (including batting piece from small flap)
- f. Section 6 batting



17. Now it is time to start reassembling the cover.

18. Begin with the small flap piece from section 5. The pieces needed for this step are:

2 small flap fabric pieces
the small batting piece



19. Place the two fabric pieces with wrong sides together. Place the batting piece in between the layers as pictured. The right sides should be out.



20. Stitch the pieces together using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance. Then stitch around the raw edges using a zigzag or interlocking stitch. This will keep the piece from raveling.

21. Replace the bias binding around the finished piece. See below photo

22. At the corners, make a small pleat as shown. Tuck the bias binding under as shown in step 2 number 23 for the ends. Pin the binding in place. Any method of covering the piece with binding can be used. If you have a favorite, please use that method.

23. Stitch around the entire bias binding securing it in place. Make sure that you are stitching on the short side of the binding near the edge.



24. Set aside the completed flap.

25. Now, reattach the fabric pieces to the batting pieces by the stitching around the outside. At this point do not worry about any of the pleats, holes, snaps, etc. Focus first on reattaching the pieces by the outside stitching.



26. Begin with section 1. Place the fabric right side up on the batting. At this point, it may look as though the fabric piece is too large. Don't panic! The batting must be stretched back to fit the fabric. Begin pinning the pieces together at the edges. Pull the batting to fit the shape of the fabric. I pin the entire edges as you can see in the photo. (Section 2 is shown)



27. Next, stitch the pieces together around the entire edge using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance. I stitch with the batting side up on the machine. Then go back around the raw edges again using an interlocking or zigzag stitch to minimize raveling and give the piece a nice finished edge. (See picture from small flap at top of last page)



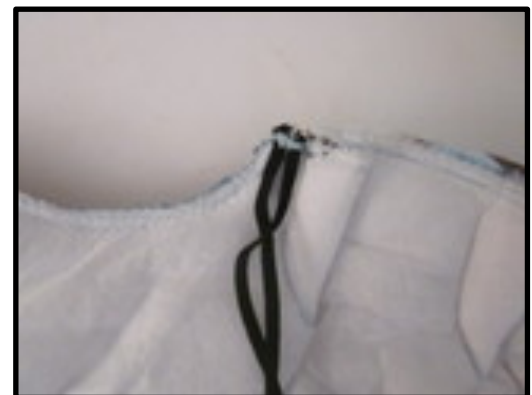
28. Repeat the same steps for the remaining sections 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. See photo.

29. Now Sections 4 and 6 are complete. We will go through the rest of the sections individually before stitching the pieces back together.

30. Begin with sections 1 and 3. You will need to re-pleat the sides. Place the 2 marked lines of each pleat together and stitch on the line. There should be an original stitching line on the batting. Leave the "tacos" up. They will be secured in a later step.



31. Attach the elastic bands at the marked dot. I use a zigzag satin stitch to reattach the elastic. Any stitch will work as long as it is stitched over many times to secure. Now, sections 1 and 3 are complete.



32. Next, stitch around the strap holes on section 2.

33. First begin by pinning the hole together. Place pins on either side of the opening.

34. Using a satin stitching for appliquéing, stitch around the raw edges of the batting. A zigzag stitch or a buttonhole stitch can be used as well.

If using a zigzag stitch, just reduce the stitch length to make the stitches closer together. Stitch on the batting side first.

35. After the initial stitching of the hole. Flip the piece over and stitch again from the fabric side. This really secures the opening and allows you to make sure the stitching looks nice. The picture is a view after stitching the batting but before topstitching.

View after topstitching. Notice that the lines are not perfectly straight. That's okay. They just need to secure the batting and follow the natural line.

36. After completing all the openings, now is time to open the slits. Using a seam ripper or sharp scissors, cut the opening in the fabric. Be sure not to cut the stitching. If the stitching is accidentally cut, don't fret just re-stitch the opening.



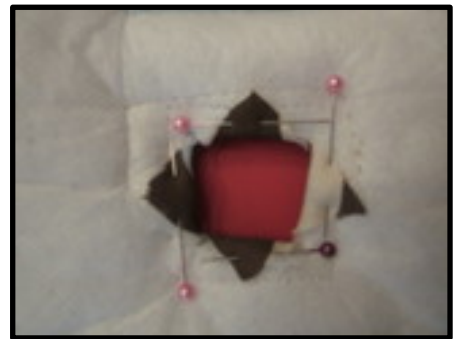
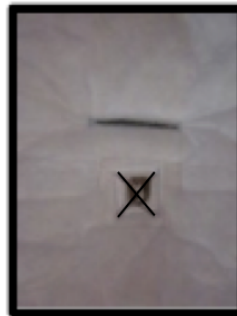
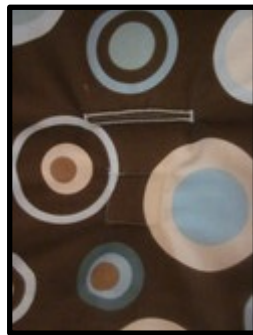
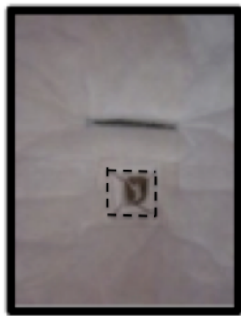
37. section 2 is now complete. There is only one section left to complete, section 5.

38. Begin by stitching the opening for the straps in the same manner used for section 2.

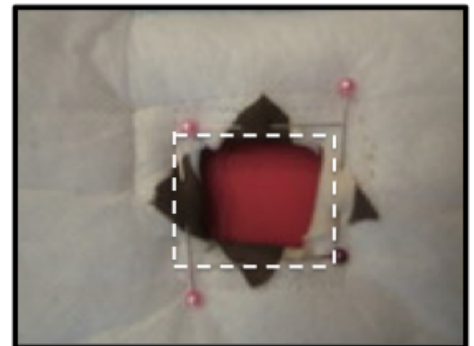
39. Next, make the opening for the buckle. Start by stitching around the opening. The stitching line has been enhanced in the photo (view from back). The other photo is view from the front after stitching.

40. Using sharp scissors cut an x in the fabric from one corner of the square to the opposite corner. Cut on the lines shown in the photograph. Be sure not to cut the stitching. This will make 4 “triangles” in the fabric.

41. Pull the cut triangle of fabric back on all sides and pin in place.



42. Stitch around the square to secure the triangle flaps. Stitching line is enhanced in the photo.



43. Trim the excess fabric. Basically, cut the points off the triangle.



44. Using a zigzag or interlocking stitch, stitch around the opening.

45. Center the small flap over the opening of section 5.

46. Stitch around the upper half of the flap. Stitch over the stitching line on the bias binding. Do not stitch around the entire small flap. There should be an opening at the bottom to pull the strap through.



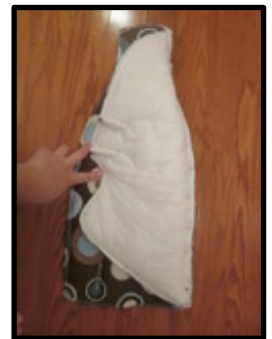
47. Now all the pieces are ready to be sewn back together. Begin by stitching section 1 to section 2 at the side seams. Pin the pieces with right sides together. Stitch the seams together using a $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. There should be an original stitching line to follow.

48. Repeat the same procedure with section 3. Stitch to section 2 with the right sides together. Now sections 1, 2, and 3 should be sewn together.

49. Stitch together sections 4 and 6 to section 5. Now the top cover sections should be sewn together as well as the bottom cover sections.

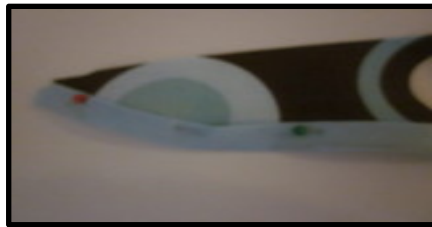
50. Place the bottom cover section on the top cover section with the right sides together. Match the two middle seams and pin the 2 pieces together. Make sure that the top of the bottom cover sections and the bottom of the top cover sections are matched together.

51. Stitch the 2 sections together following the original seam line (about $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch).





52. Place the bias binding on the top and bottom sections. Open the bias binding and place the raw edge inside. Make sure that the bias binding is placed on the inside of the sections. Cut the bias binding at the end of the top and bottom sections even with the raw edges. They will be stitched into the seam later. Pin in place. Stitch the inside edge of the bias binding securing it in place.

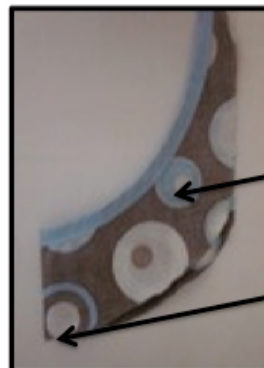


53. When replacing the top and bottom sections to the car seat cover, they must be centered over the top and bottom. In order to find the center, pinch the car seat cover together at the bottom. Match the seams on section 5 and place a pin in the center.



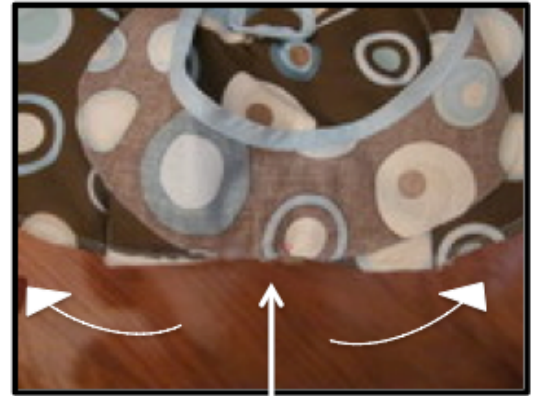
2 side seams from section 5 matched together
Center (mark with a pin)

54. Fold the bottom section in half with the wrong sides together and mark the center with a pin.



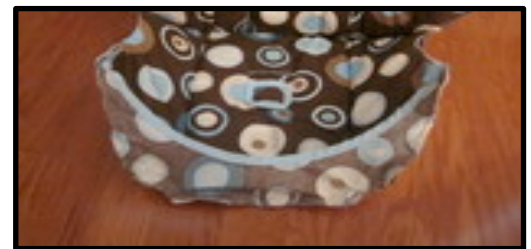
right side of fabric out
Center (mark with a pin)

55. Place the bottom section on top of the bottom section of the cover with right sides together. Align the pins marking the center and pin the 2 pieces together. Notice that the piece doesn't fit exactly. It will have to be aligned. Start pinning the raw edges from the center out. Follow the directions of the arrows when pinning. Pull the raw edges so that they align.

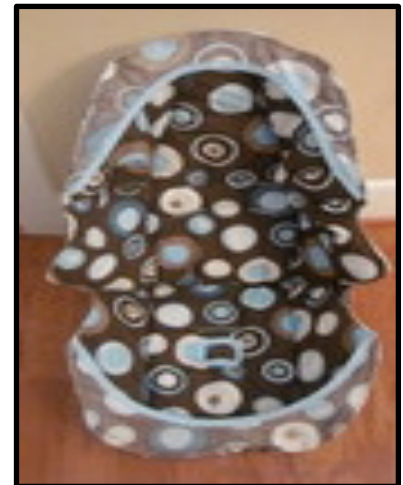


Center (pinned at raw edge)

56. Stitch the bottom sections together using a 1/4" seam allowance.



57. Repeat the same steps to connect the top section to the cover. Center the top section on section 2 and stitch in place using a 1/4" seam allowance. Leave the top and bottom sections as pictured for the next step.



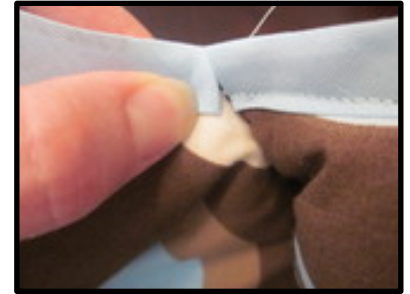
58. Apply bias binding around the bottom sections of the cover (4, 5, and 6). Begin at the side of section 4 and continue to the same point on section 6. Tuck in the ends of the bias binding. Do not leave the raw edges out. Stitch in place. The bias binding should cover all the raw edges and stitching. This is the finishing seam for the bottom of the cover.

Begin here at section 4
applying bias



End here at section 6
applying bias

59. Begin at the same point and apply the bias binding around the top section of the cover (1,2, and 3). Tuck in the ends of the bias binding. Do not leave the raw edges out. View in picture is at the bias meeting point on section 4 and section 1.

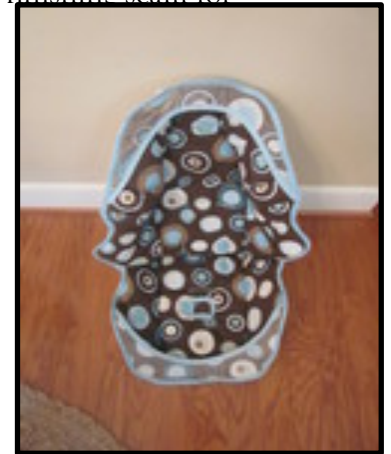


60. Stitch in place. As discussed in the previous step, the bias binding should cover all the raw edges and stitching. This is the finishing seam for the top of the cover.

61. Replace the hook and eye snap at the side.

62. Place the car seat cover back on the car seat.

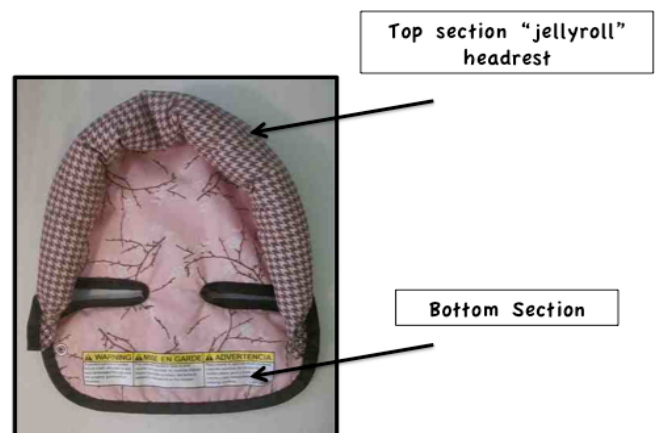
Now the car seat cover is complete!



Step 2: Recover the headrest.

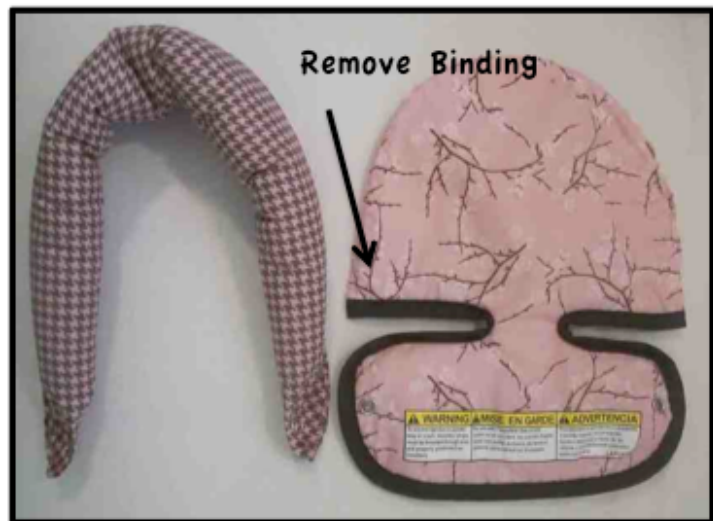
1. Save all the major pieces as you take apart the headrest. The pieces that will be discarded are the bias binding and the old snaps. There are 2 main sections to the headrest. The top section which is the "jellyroll" headrest and the bottom section

2. Begin by removing the bias binding along the back edge. This binding runs along the entire back of the top section from one end of the "jellyroll headrest" to the other end. There are 2 pictures to help show you where to begin.





3. Once the binding is removed, this will separate the two main sections of the headrest.
4. Remove the bias binding from the bottom section of the headrest. Do not remove the snaps at this time.

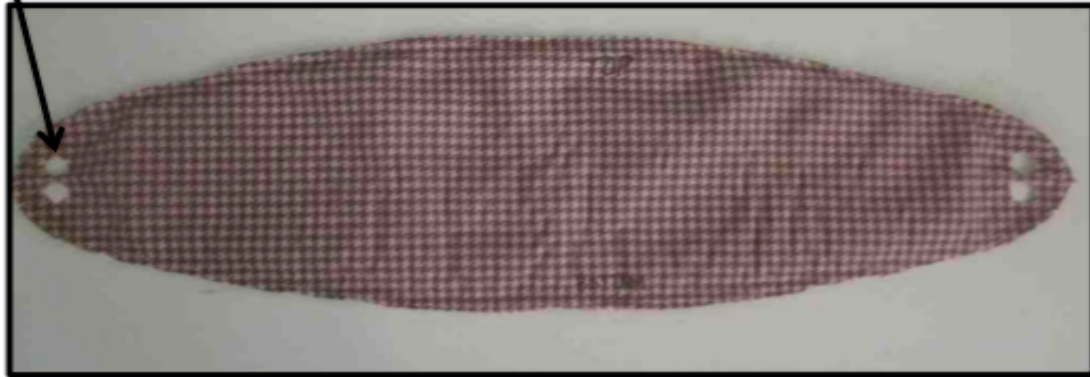


5. Take the stitching out of the “jellyroll headrest” and remove the snaps from the top section ONLY (DO NOT REMOVE BOTTOM SNAPS YET). To remove the snaps, simply cut around the fabric at the base of the snaps. Save the batting piece that is inside the headrest. You will reuse it. If your snaps are connected to the batting, remove them using the same method in the next step.



Top Section with the snaps and batting removed.

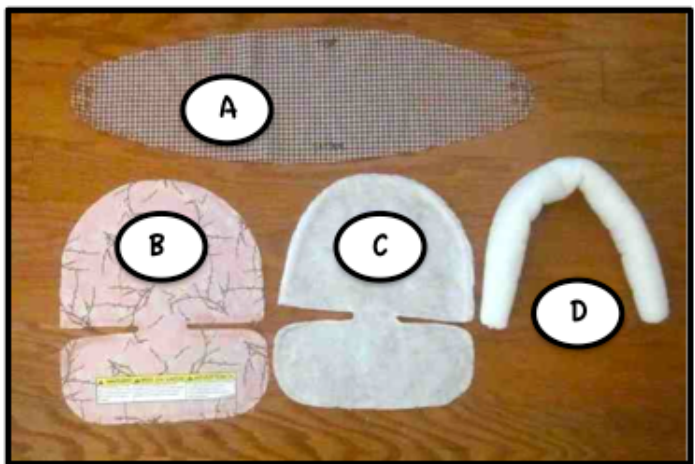
Snaps Removed



6. For the bottom section, the batting is connected to the snaps. DO NOT CUT THE SNAPS OUT of the bottom section. Remove the snaps by sliding a flathead screwdriver under the claw clamp. Turn your wrist clockwise as you slide the screwdriver between the snap and the batting. Take care not to rip the batting.

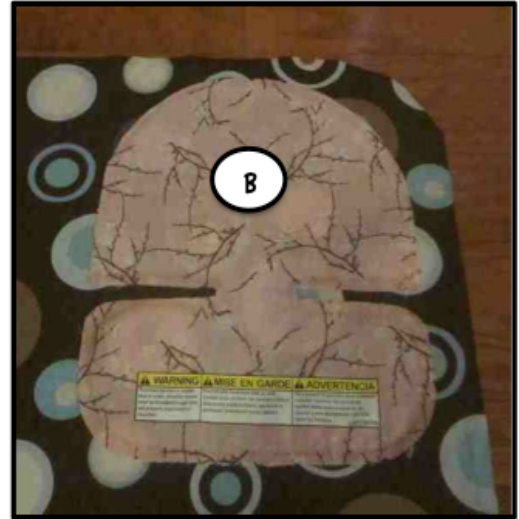
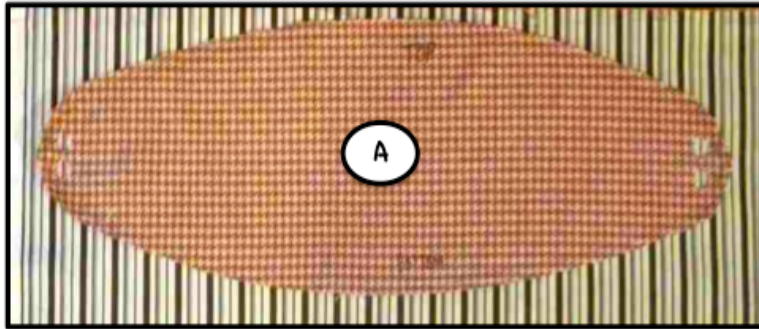


7. When finished removing the snaps, you should have the following pieces:
 - a. top section
 - b. bottom section
 - c. batting from the bottom section
 - d. batting from inside the top section



8. At this point, I like to use a warm iron to press A and

9. Now, you will use A and B as your pattern pieces. When placing the pieces on the fabric, make sure the right sides are not together. Place the fabric to be cut right side up. Then place the pattern piece right side up as well.



10. Using a fabric marker, mark the placement for the snaps on pieces A and B.

11. Now, it is time to reassemble the headrest. Begin by placing the cut fabric piece B on top of the batting piece C. Stitch around the entire raw edge using a 1/8" seam allowance. This will secure the 2 pieces together. Pictures below are views from front and back of finished stitched piece.



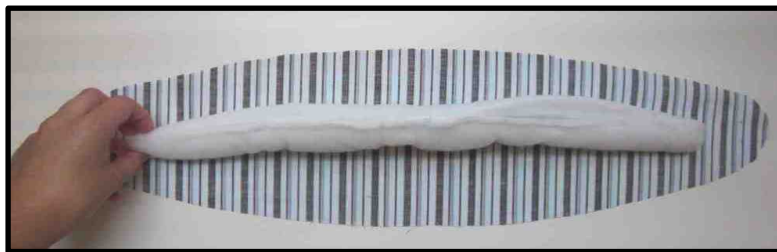
12. Place the bias binding around the bottom half of the headrest. To place the bias binding, open the binding and put the raw edges inside the binding. Begin at the side edge of the bottom section. For the curves, straighten the headrest to allow the bias binding to fit around the curves without puckering (see photo below).



13. Stitch around the bias binding to secure in place. Stitch on the shorter side of the binding close to the inside edge. Put this piece aside for now and continue to follow the steps to complete the headrest.



14. For the next step, you will need the cut fabric piece A and the batting piece D to make the “jellyroll” headrest top.



15. Place the fabric piece A with the wrong side facing up. Center the batting piece D on top of piece A. Notice that it



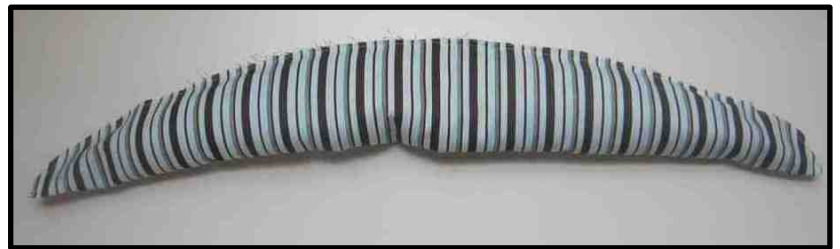
doesn't extend all the way to the edge.

16. Fold the fabric piece in half lengthwise over the batting aligning the raw edges. Pin in place. The wrong sides on the fabric should be together.

17. Pin the raw edges together along the seam.



18. Stitch the fabric piece closed along the raw edges using a 1/8" seam allowance. The second picture is an up-close view of the stitching and the marked placement for the snaps.



19. Now it is time to reassemble the headrest.

20. Place the finished bottom piece with the right side up. Find the center point and mark it with a pin. Find the center point of the finished "jellyroll" headrest and mark it with a pin as well. Place the 2 center points together with the raw edges aligned. Begin pinning the 2 pieces together from the center point out. The ends of the "jellyroll" headrest will extend past the ends of the bottom piece. See below photos for a guide.





21. Begin stitching at the side corner where the 2 headrest and bottom sections meet. Sew using a 1/8" seam allowance to the other side at the same point. This will secure the 2 pieces together.



22. To finish the raw edge, place bias binding around the entire length. Begin at the "jellyroll" edge.

23. Place the raw edges inside the bias binding. Let the binding extend 1" past the end of the raw edge of the headrest. With the binding open, fold under the binding 1" encasing the raw edge inside.





24. Continue to place the raw edges inside the binding until the opposite end is reached. Then repeat step number 23 for the opposite edge.



25. Stitch the binding in place. Stitch on the shorter edge of the binding. Stitch close to the inside edge.

26. Place the snap closures at the marked dots following the manufacturer's recommendation. The top of the snaps should be secured to the "jellyroll" section. The bottom of the snaps should be placed on the bottom piece.



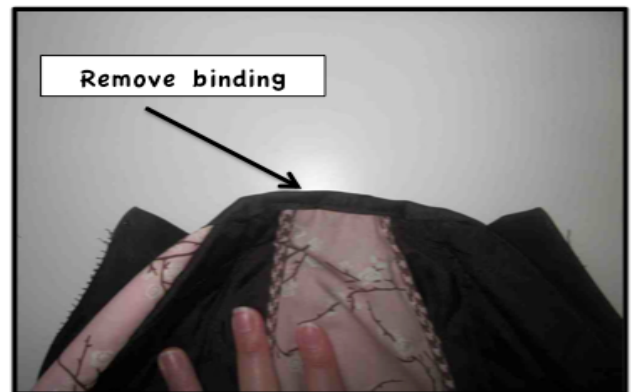
Now the headrest is completed!!

Step 3: Recover the canopy.

1. Start by removing the plastic handles that snapped into the car seat and holds the canopy in place. The stitching must be removed in order to take the plastic pieces out. Remove the stitching from the front and back flaps and take the plastic pieces out and set aside.



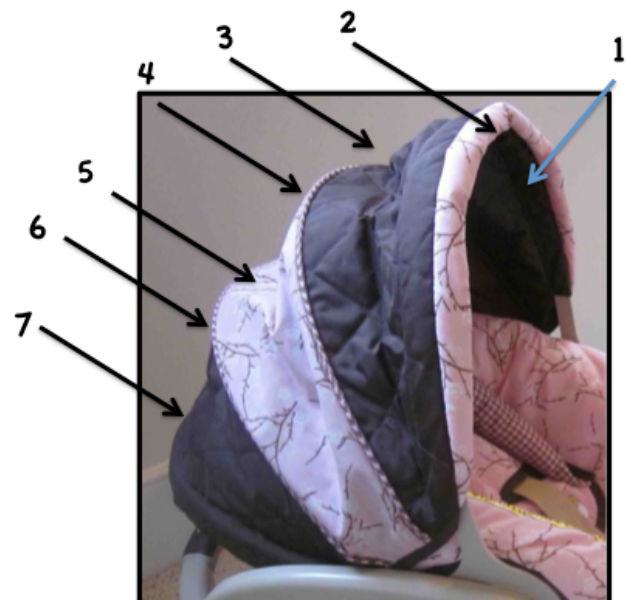
2. Once the plastic is removed, remove the bias binding from both of the side edges.



3. Begin ripping out the stitches connecting the fabric pieces. Use a seam ripper or sharp scissors to remove the stitching. Try not to rip or cut the fabric pieces.

4. Start taking apart the canopy from the front. Begin with the flap that secured the plastic handles in place. As the pieces are removed, label them as follows:

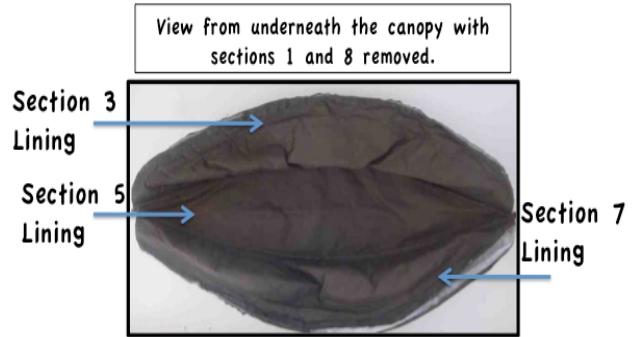
- a. Section 1
- b. Section 2
- c. Section 3
- d. Section 4 (bias binding)
- e. Section 5
- f. Section 6 (bias binding)
- g. Section 7
- h. Section 8 (not shown in photo - flap that held plastic piece in place)



**Note: Sections 4 and 6 bias binding can be discarded.

5. Lining pieces that will need to be labeled:
- a. Section 3 lining piece
 - b. Section 4 bias binding
 - c. Section 5 lining piece
 - d. Section 6 bias binding
 - e. Section 7 lining piece

**Note: sections 4 and 6 bias binding lining pieces can be discarded.

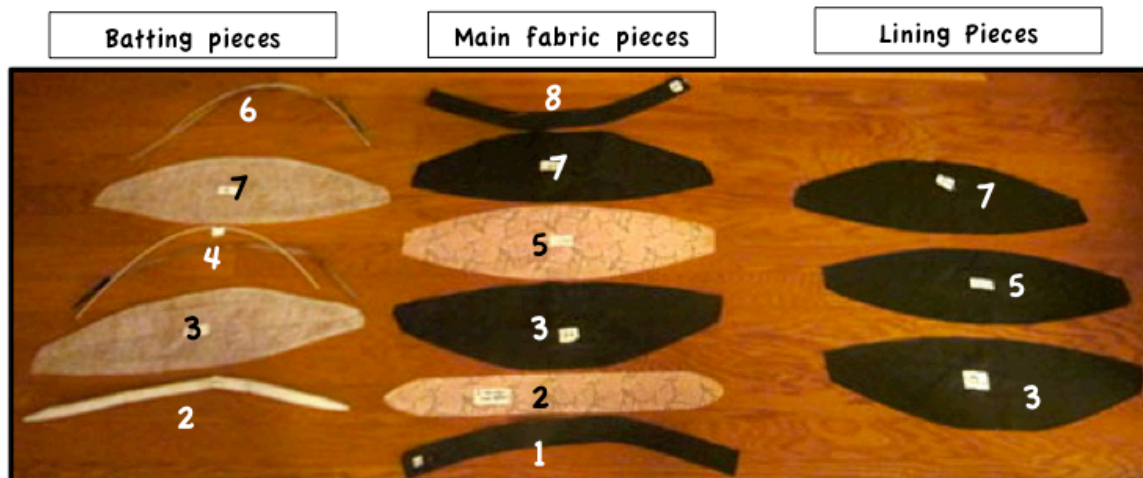


6. Batting pieces that will need to be labeled
(They are sandwiched in between the top fabric pieces and lining pieces:
- a. Section 2 batting
 - b. Section 3 batting
 - c. Section 4 plastic ribbing
 - d. Section 6 plastic ribbing
 - e. Section 7 batting

View from underneath the canopy.
Sections 4 and 6 bias binding close up view.



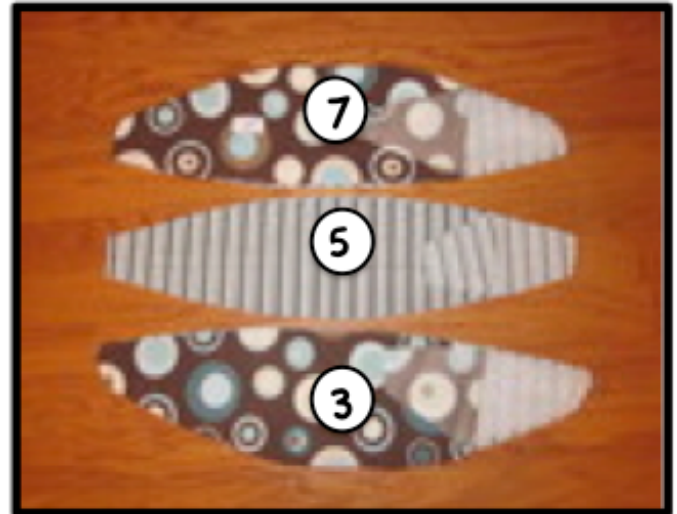
View after the canopy pieces have been completely taken apart.



7. Iron the main fabric pieces and lining pieces with a warm iron set to the appropriate setting for the fabric.
8. Use the main fabric pieces and lining pieces as a pattern. If the fabric has nape or a stripe use the cutting layout above. If the fabric doesn't have a particular direction, place the pieces so that there is little fabric waste. (Once the fabric pieces are cut you should have 1 on each of the top photo.)

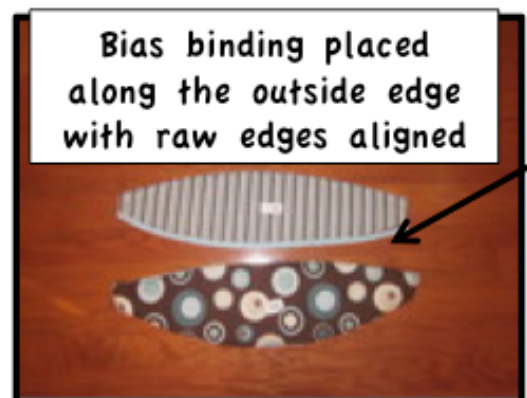
9. Reassemble the headrest beginning with the middle sections. The following sections will be needed for this step:

- a. Section 3 main fabric, lining piece, and batting
- b. Section 5 main fabric and lining piece
- c. Section 7 main fabric, lining piece, and batting

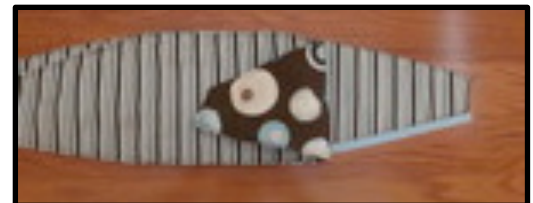


10. Place the section 3 main fabric and lining piece with the wrong sides together aligning the raw edges. Then sandwich the batting piece in between the main fabric and lining piece. Repeat for sections 5 and 7 (no batting piece for section 5).

11. Using a 1/4" seam allowance stitch around the raw edges securing the fabric, batting, and lining pieces together. Then stitch around the entire raw edges with an interlocking stitch or zigzag to prevent raveling. (See photo at the top of page 8.) The right sides of the fabric should be out when the step is completed.



12. Cut 2 pieces of bias binding 27" in length or measure the outside edge of section 5. This will be the casing for the plastic ribbing pieces (section 4 and 6).



13. Place one strip of bias binding along the edge of the completed section 5. Align the raw edges. Do not put the raw edges inside the bias binding.

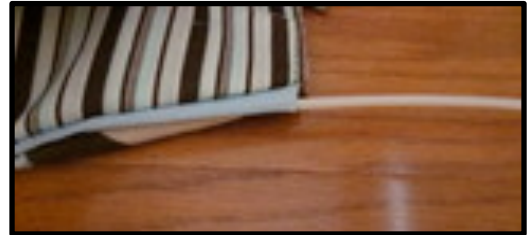


14. Then place section 3 on top of the bias binding and align the raw edges. The lining fabrics should be out. Stitch pieces together using a 1/4" seam allowance.

15. Place the second bias binding strip along the opposite edge of the complete section 5. Align the raw edges.

16. Then place section 7 on top of the bias binding and align the raw edges. The lining fabrics should be out. Stitch pieces together using a 1/4" seam allowance.

17. Place the plastic ribbing sections 4 and 6 into the bias binding casing that was formed in the previous steps.



18. Cut 2 pieces of bias binding 27" in length or measure the inside raw edges of the canopy.

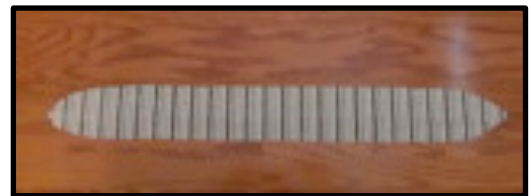
19. Place the raw edges inside the bias binding on the lining side of the canopy. This will cover the raw edges where sections 3 and 5 were sewn together as well as sections 5 and 7. Stitch the bias binding in place. Leave the plastic ribbing pieces 4 and 6 in the top of the canopy while stitching.



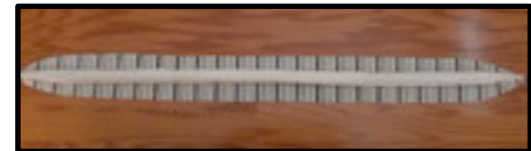
View after stitching the bias binding in place.
View from the lining side.



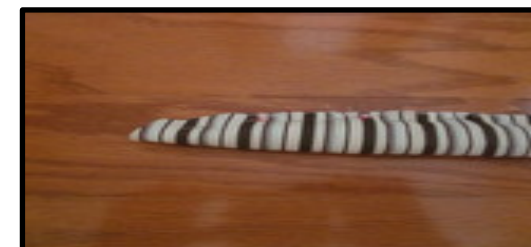
20. Now place section 2 on the work surface with the wrong side facing up.



21. Place section 2 batting on top of the wrong side of the fabric. Center the batting.



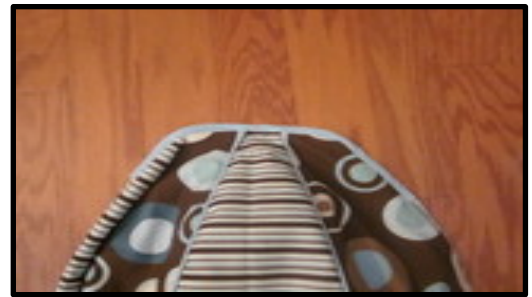
22. Fold section 2 in half lengthwise aligning the raw edges. Pin in place. Stitch section 2 together using a 1/4" seam allowance.



23. Place section 2 on top of section 3 aligning the raw edges. Pin in place and stitch using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



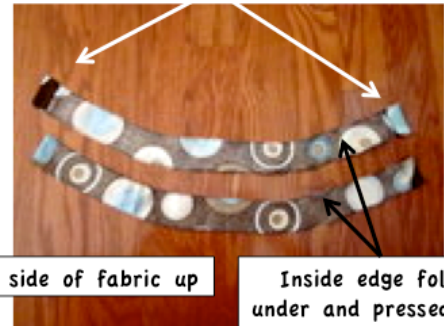
24. Cut 2 pieces of bias binding 12" in length. Open one of the bias binding and place the raw edges of the sides of the canopy inside the casing. Center the binding on the sides of the canopy. The ends will extend up both sides of section 2, 3, and 7. Do not worry about the ends of the bias binding because they will be covered when the canopy is complete. Stitch the bias binding in place. Repeat with the opposite side edge of the canopy.



View in the photo is from the lining side of the canopy.

25. The last step is to secure sections 1 and 8 to the canopy. Fold the ends of sections 1 and section 8 under 1" toward the wrong side of the fabric. Stitch in place.

Ends of sections 1 and 8 folded under 1" and stitched in place



26. Next, on the inside of section 1 and 8, fold the inner raw edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press under with a warm iron.

Wrong side of fabric up

Inside edge folded under and pressed with an iron.

27. Pin section 1 to the front of the canopy with the right sides together. Align with the raw edges of section 2. Stitch in place using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. The stitches should start on the inside edge of the bias binding, otherwise the bias binding will be visible after stitching on the top of the canopy.



View after section 1 is attached.



View from lining side after section 1 is attached.



28. Repeat previous step with section 8. Attach section 8 to the back of the canopy (section 7).
29. Now it is time for the most difficult part, Section 1 and section 8 are flaps that will secure the plastic handles of the canopy in place. The flaps must be sewn with the plastic handles in place. In order to replace the plastic handles, lay the canopy down with the lining side up. Lay the plastic handle on section 3 and place the section 1 flap over the plastic handle. Start pinning in place. Using a zipper foot, carefully stitch along the folded edge of section 1. Keep the canopy straight as possible because the stitching will be seen on top of the canopy.



30. Repeat the same procedure with section 8 attaching the 2nd plastic handle.

31. Snap the plastic handles back in place on the car seat base.

