**Linus Learner**

Oct. 8, 2016;

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**Preemie Baby Blanket**

Preemie baby blankets are used primarily in neonatal intensive care units (NICU).

**Size:**

Finished size should be 30” x 30”, to fit the NICU incubators.

**Elements:**

Fleece center square with applique, scored (about 20” x 20”). Wide border (crocheted). You may need from 7 to 9 rows or more. (The number of rows you need to get to the size of the 30” x 30” finished blanket).

**Yarn**

Please use acrylic, soft, 3-ply baby yarns. (Some examples are: Bernat Softee, Bernat Sport, Lion Brand Baby, Anne Geddes Baby.)

Plan on about 8 to 10 oz. total. Yarn may be solid or variegated. Colors should complement one or more colors in the applique, and coordinate with the color of the fleece. This is where your creativity comes in! Select one or more coordinating solids, one solid and one variegated, or all one variegated. You choose! As a suggestion, consider doing two or more rows before switching to the other color. This can result in a pleasing balanced look.

**Crochet Hook**

Size E, F, or G (depending on selected yarn, and on your tension. The goal is to have stitches close together, not loose for little fingers and toes, or IV tubing to catch in.)

**Stitches:**

Single crochet (sc)

Double crochet (dc), back loop only (blo)

Chain (ch)

Slip stitch (ss)

**Directions:**

**Row 1**

Begin with a fleece square (approximately 20” x 20”). With right side facing you, insert crochet hook through one of the scored holes and pull loop through. Ch 1, sc in same hole. In next hole, do 2 sc (note there is no chain stitch between).

As you crochet, tuck the edge of the blanket down, so as to form a hem. Continue around fleece, placing 2 sc in each hole. In each corner do 3 sc. When you reach the start, join the row with a ss. *(Note: If the “corner” hole is not in the exact corner of the fleece, you can make your own hole. Use a small hole punch, or the tip of sharp scissors.)*

**Row 2**

Ch 2. Do one dc in back loop only (blo) in each sc. Continue around to group of 3 sc in corner. In the first sc, do 2 dc. In middle sc of the group, do 3 dc. In last sc of the group, do 2 dc. (Your corner pattern is **2, 3, 2**.) Continue around, placing 1 dc in blo to next group of 3 sc corner. Repeat corner pattern. Join with ss to top ch of beginning row.

**Row 3**

Repeat Row 2 to first corner. At the grouping you did in Row 2, do **1** dc in each of the first of the 2 dc. **Now you are at the group of 3 dc**. This is where you do your corner pattern. So, **2** dc in the first dc in that group; **3** dc in the middle dc, then **2** dc in the last dc in that group. Continue with one dc in each dc to next corner. Repeat corner pattern.

Repeat Row 3 until blanket reaches desired size.

**Optional:** You may crochet a border edge as a finish. Please be sure the edging is not “holey,” so nothing can catch in them. Examples include:

* One sc in blo around. Follow the corner pattern to add sc in the corners so that the corners lay flat. End with slip stitch in first sc.
* Little Loops – \*ch 2, skip 1, slip stitch in next stitch\*. Repeat. At the corners, do not skip 1, so that corners lay flat.

Weave in ends. Sew Project Linus silk tag on the back side of your work.