



No buttons for the snowman

Roy and I are rather stressed out this year—him with work and me with preparations for our second baby. With that in mind, we decided to let Melise, our 2-year-old, create all the ornaments for our tree.

That would save us the work of digging out the decorations and would also eliminate worries about which ornaments are child-proof.

As soon as Roy set the tree up, I asked Melise if she'd like to make an ornament. She said, "Yeah! Snowman!" She just can't get enough snowmen in her life.

So I got a piece of white felt and cut out a snowman shape while Melise recited a list of everything he needed: carrot nose, buttons, eyes, arms, and hat (carrot nose and hat made the list a few times because they are so vitally important to the snowman). I nodded in agreement as I finished the basic shape and set it in front of her.

"What does he need first?" I asked.

"Hat!" she screamed in excitement. So I cut out a black paper hat and glued it where she indicated on his bare head.

"Carrot nose!" She ran to the fridge for the carrot, but I handed her an orange paper triangle instead. She made a face, but must have decided it wasn't worth arguing about because she stuck it in the glue spot I put in the middle of the snowman's face.

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Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

“Now what?”

She looked blankly at the snowman.

“What else does the snowman need?” She looked at me, bewildered. I couldn’t help but laugh because she had quite the list of demands just moments earlier.

“Does he need something else on his face?” She shook her head. “How about down his front?” She shook her head again. “Are you sure?”

“Feet,” she said, “pink feet.” Stifling more laughter so I wouldn’t make her feel bad, I cut out a pair of pink paper feet and glued them to the bottom of the snowman. She was very happy with the results, but she still couldn’t remember what else he needed.

I walked over to a cabinet and brought back some little boxes. Opening them, I revealed the many colored buttons inside. “Melise, does the snowman need any of these?” She nearly flew out of her chair in excitement. In the blink of an eye, the table was covered with buttons as she sifted through them.

“You better pick a few to put on the snowman because they won’t all fit. This looks like a good one.” I handed her a little round, red button.

She said, “Nope.” I tried a few more buttons and only got, “Nope, nope, nope.”

Finally, she found a pink, flower-shaped button that she liked. With the air of authority, she handed me the button, pointed one chubby little finger to the snowman’s belly and said, “Here!”

I glued that button on and about 10 more followed. They didn’t match, they didn’t line up, but

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they were beautiful to me! I was so excited to be helping her make her first ornament and envisioned hanging it proudly on the tree every year into her adulthood.

And then she tore all the buttons off! I tried to convince her that they were perfect as they were, but she just shook her head and said, “Nope, nope, nope.”

As much as it saddened me to watch all the buttons come off, I decided to respect her creative mind. In the end, Mr. Snowman was bare except for his black hat, pink shoes, and a carrot nose. Oh, and that pretty pink flower button that I glued back on when she wasn't looking!