

COSTUMES FOR BABIES IN THE NICU

What is it?

This is an activity for anyone who wants to use a little creative skill to make handmade costumes for babies in the NICU. These costumes are simple to make but make a huge impact and help families connect with their babies.

Gender neutral preferred.

Why is important?

Becoming a parent can be an exciting and challenging time. But when mom and baby are in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or at the hospital unexpectedly, it can also become scary for families. Too many families are experiencing this today and these costumes allow parents to participate with their child for a fun holiday tradition.

HOW YOU CAN DO IT:

1. **SIGN UP**
2. Determine the site for your donations.
See page two.
3. Based on your site, select the pattern(s) you'd like to make, determine how many, and purchase the materials needed to get started.
4. Assemble the costumes.
5. Make your donation. If you are shipping to the March of Dimes fulfillment center, please reference those instructions on page four.
6. Share your project with GFWC and March of Dimes by posting on social media tagging @MarchofDimes and @GFWCMembers.
7. Go to your volunteer profile by logging in at GetInvolved.MarchofDimes.org to log hours and how many you assembled.

RESOURCES

- Options for site donations
- Key questions ask the site
- Materials Needed
- Assembly Steps
- Instructions for shipping to March of Dimes Fulfillment Center
- Patterns & Instructions



DETERMINE THE SITE FOR DONATIONS

Your chapter has a few options when determining where to donate. Please select the option that works best for chapter and members and your local community needs. Please keep in mind that any shipping costs are at the expense of the volunteer(s).

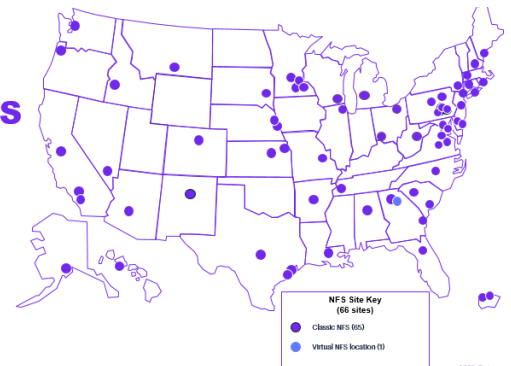
SITE DONATION OPTIONS

- **Connect to a March of Dimes NICU Family Support Partner Hospital.** Connect with your March of Dimes staff contact to let them know your interested in providing costumes to a NICU/hospital partner.

Your March of Dimes staff contact will reach out to the March of Dimes NICU Family Support Team/Market Staff to determine a hospital in your area that your chapter can partner with. **It's important to reach out first to the MOD staff contact.** Depending on the relationship with the site, your chapter might work directly with a contact at the hospital or through the local MOD staff contact. It's recommended to reach out early in the project coordination and to reconfirm details prior to delivery, drop-off or shipment due to the potential changing COVID-19 and other safety protocols.

NICU FAMILY SUPPORT® PARTNER SITES

- More than 65 hospital partners
- Reach more than 50,000 families each year



- **Connect to NICU in your community.** Connect directly with local NICU's in your area to determine if they can partner. Members may have connections to hospital through their employment or you can reach out to NICU sites that may have the greatest need for patient support. Be sure to ask them how many costumes are needed and what types are most requested. You'll also need to check if the hospital has any restrictions on materials and on volunteers due to infection control policies.
- **Ship donations to March of Dimes Fulfillment Center.** Assemble any number of costumes, follow the assembly steps provided, [use this donation form](#) to send in your donation and we'll get these back out to our NICU hospital partners across the country. See page four for shipping instructions.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN WORKING WITH NICU SITES

Each site/NICU/hospital partner has different requirements, policies and training requirements to access the facility or have strict infection control policies that prevent direct access. Be sure to check-in with the hospital.

Start with your primary contact, but also be sure that the NICU Director/Nurse Manager (or equivalent role) is involved.

It's important to check on the following:

- Are there any regulations around what can be delivered?
 - What can be accepted? How many and what type of donations are needed (approx.) for this site?
 - What materials should the costumes be made out of for this site (foam/felt)?
 - Are there any families that don't participate in this holiday? If so, is there something else our group can provide to include all families?
 - If providing any food or snacks, what can they accept (individually packaged, internal hospital catering vs. externally sourced meal, homemade items)? Any food preferences or limitations (allergens, etc.)
- If volunteers are involved, are volunteers able to bring the donations to the hospital? Can volunteers interact with the families? If so, what's the best timing? Is there a location onsite to set-up?
- Does the hospital have restrictions on volunteers?
 - If so, be very specific in what is feasible for volunteer engagement at the site. Often, NICU's don't allow visitors during cold and flu season, have infection control policies, or else keep volunteer activities separate to protect the babies.
- Be sure to confirm prior to delivery/drop off/shipment:
 - What is the total number of costume or donations you are delivering? Has anything changed since the last check in?
 - Date/timing for delivery/drop off
 - If shipping, confirm address and to whose attention the items should be mailed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Purchase items:

- Large Zip Lock Storage Bags –Larger size to fit your completed costume(s)
- Craft materials needed for pattern(s) of your choosing (see page 5 for instructions and patterns included at the end of the toolkit)
- Foam Sheet (wipe able)

ASSEMBLING THE KITS

As you begin to assemble each package, you could follow these steps. Please be sure to keep each costume to one large size zip lock bag.

STEP ONE

Assemble the costumes. Lay out each costume created on a table creating your assembly line. Don't forget to cut out enough gift tags and sign your name!

STEP TWO

Grab a zip lock bag and insert each item into the bag. Adding one costume, the personalized gift tag, and then zip up the bag. Repeat until finished.

STEP THREE

Once you've assembled each kit, set aside or if shipping, grab a shipping box and pack all the finished kits.

DONATIONS TO MARCH OF DIMES FULFILLMENT CENTER

Please complete and email (subject line: NICU Costume Project) [this donation form](#) to your March of Dimes staff contact, Patty Gentry at pgentry@marchofdimes.org.

Please include a printed copy of the donation form in your shipment as well.

Timing:
Year round activation.

Costumes received by 8/31 will be distributed for 2022 holiday.

CONTACT Patty Gentry **PHONE** (571) 257-1199

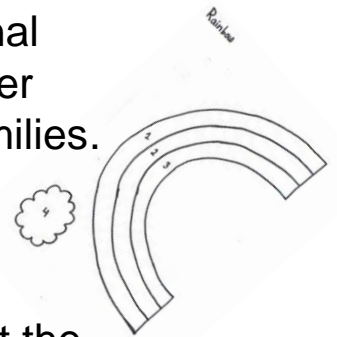
EMAIL pgentry@marchofdimes.org

PATTERNS & INSTRUCTIONS

Below are five sets of instructions and patterns can be found at the end of the toolkit. You are welcome to find additional patterns. Please keep in mind costumes should be gender neutral, non-religious, not political and sensitive to all families. [Additional patterns available in this google drive.](#)

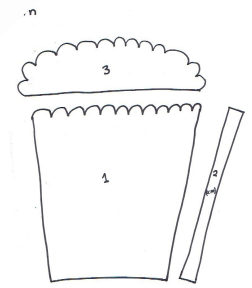
To make the Rainbow Costume:

1. Cut out pieces 1, 2, and 3, in choice colors and cut out the two of piece 4 in white.
2. Sew together the first three pieces to make the rainbow and attach the clouds to complete the costume.



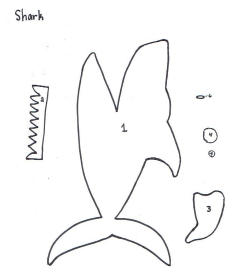
To make the Popcorn Costume:

1. Cut out piece 1 in white felt, piece 2 (10 times) in red felt, and piece 3 in yellow felt.
2. Sew piece three and the red stripes on piece 1.



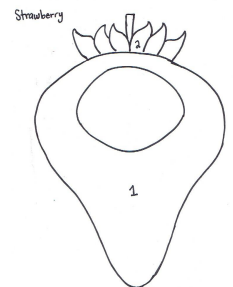
To make the Shark Costume:

1. Cut out pieces 1 and 3 in blue felt, pieces 4 and 6 in black felt, and pieces 2 and 5 in white (cut 2 twice).
2. Sew 5 to 4 and attach the nostril (6), eye (4/5), teeth (2), and fin (3) to the shark body (1).



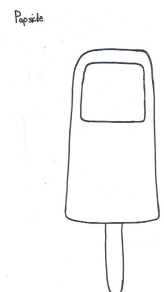
To make the Strawberry Costume:

1. Cut out piece 1 in red and piece 2 in green felt.
2. Sew piece 2 to piece 1.
- OPTIONAL 3. Cut out and sew seeds on piece 1.



To make this Popsicle Costume:

1. Cut out the popsicle in any color felt remembering to cut out the hole for the baby's face and cut out the stick in brown felt.
2. Sew the stick to the popsicle.



**HEALTHY
MOMS.
STRONG
BABIES.**



Our hearts and thoughts are with you during this time in the NICU with your baby. To help you take care of yourself so you can be there for your baby, we want to provide you with this gift to allow your family to participate in a fun holiday tradition.

For additional support and information from March of Dimes, please download the free MY NICU BABY app.

Provided by a partnership between the General Federation of Women's Clubs and March of Dimes.

For more information visit www.gfwc.org or www.marchofdimes.org.

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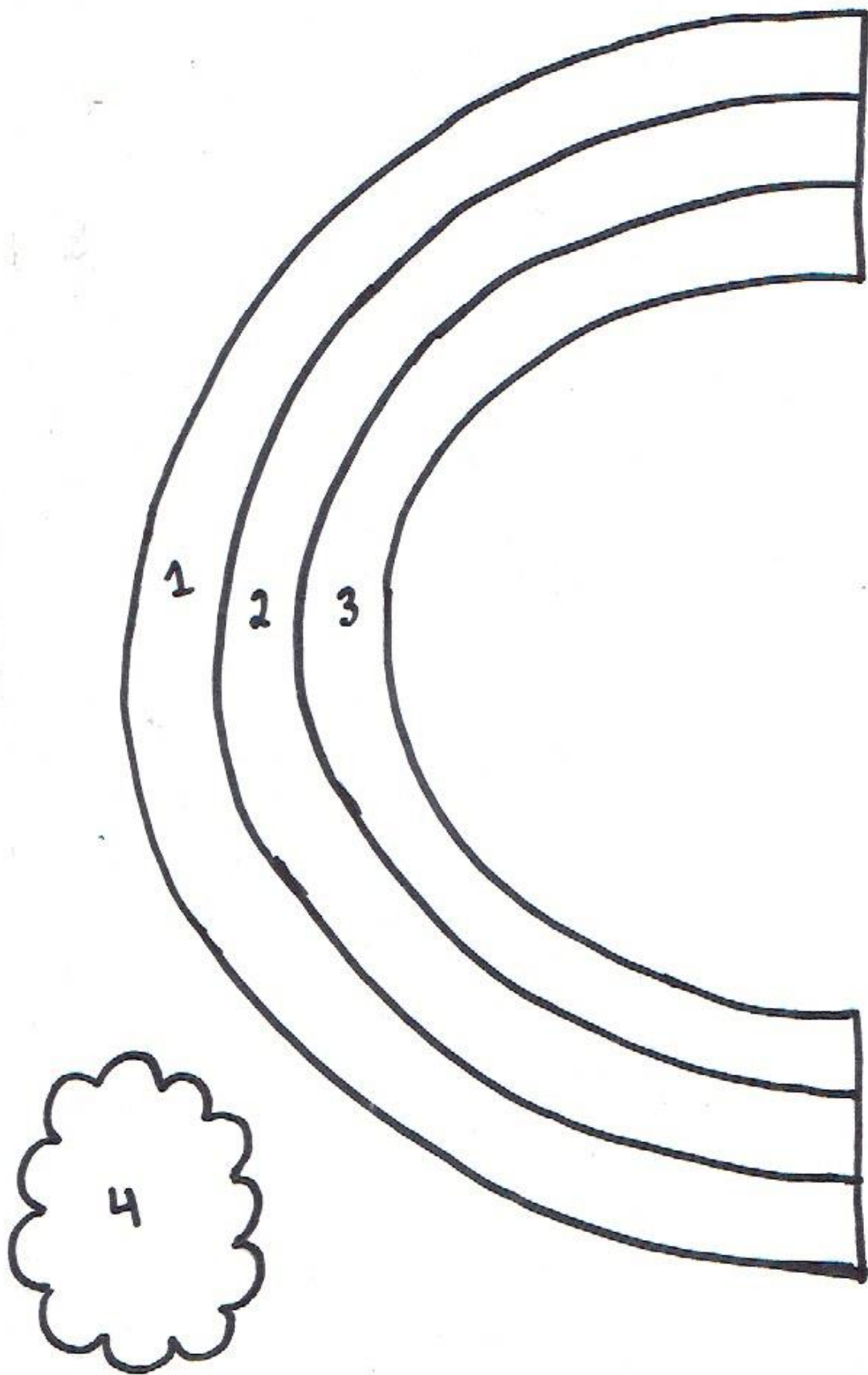
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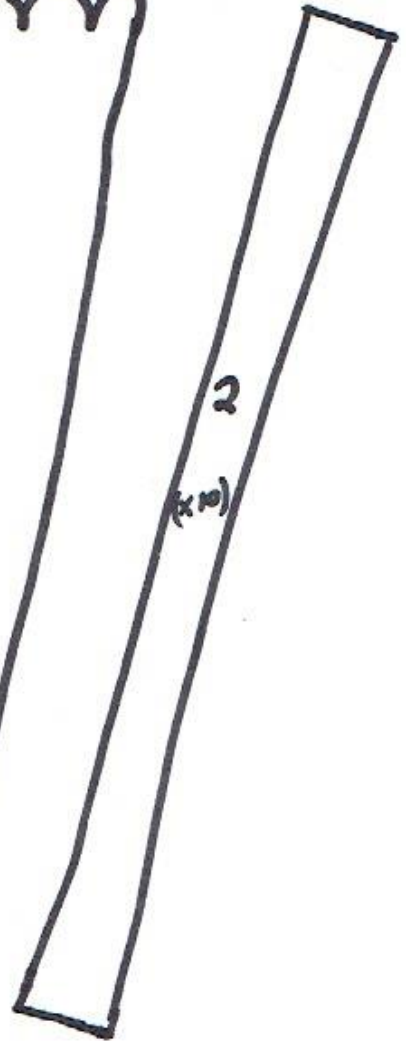
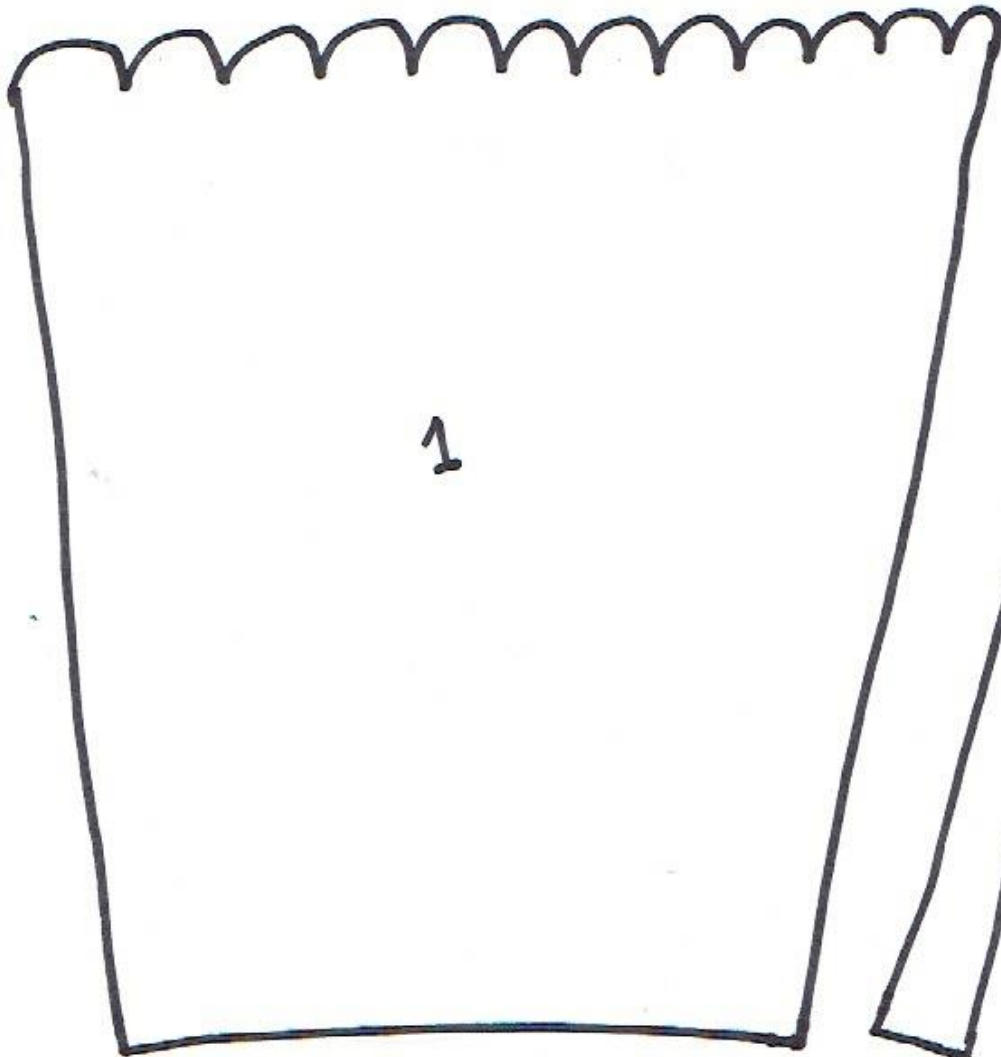
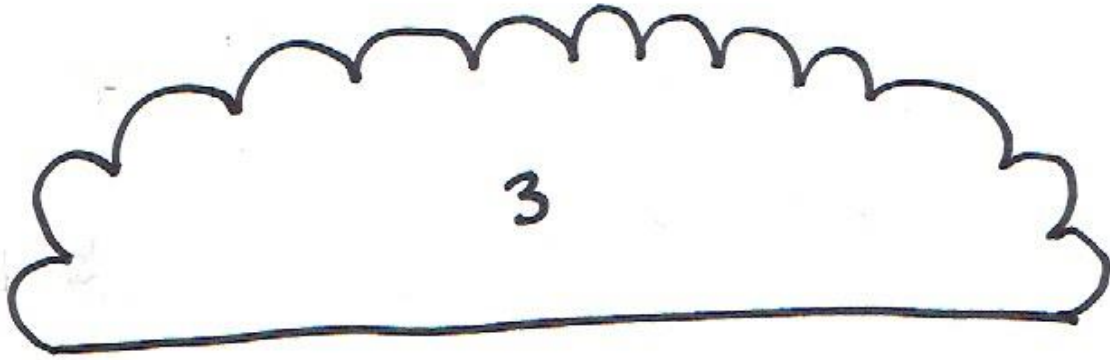
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Rainbow



Popcorn



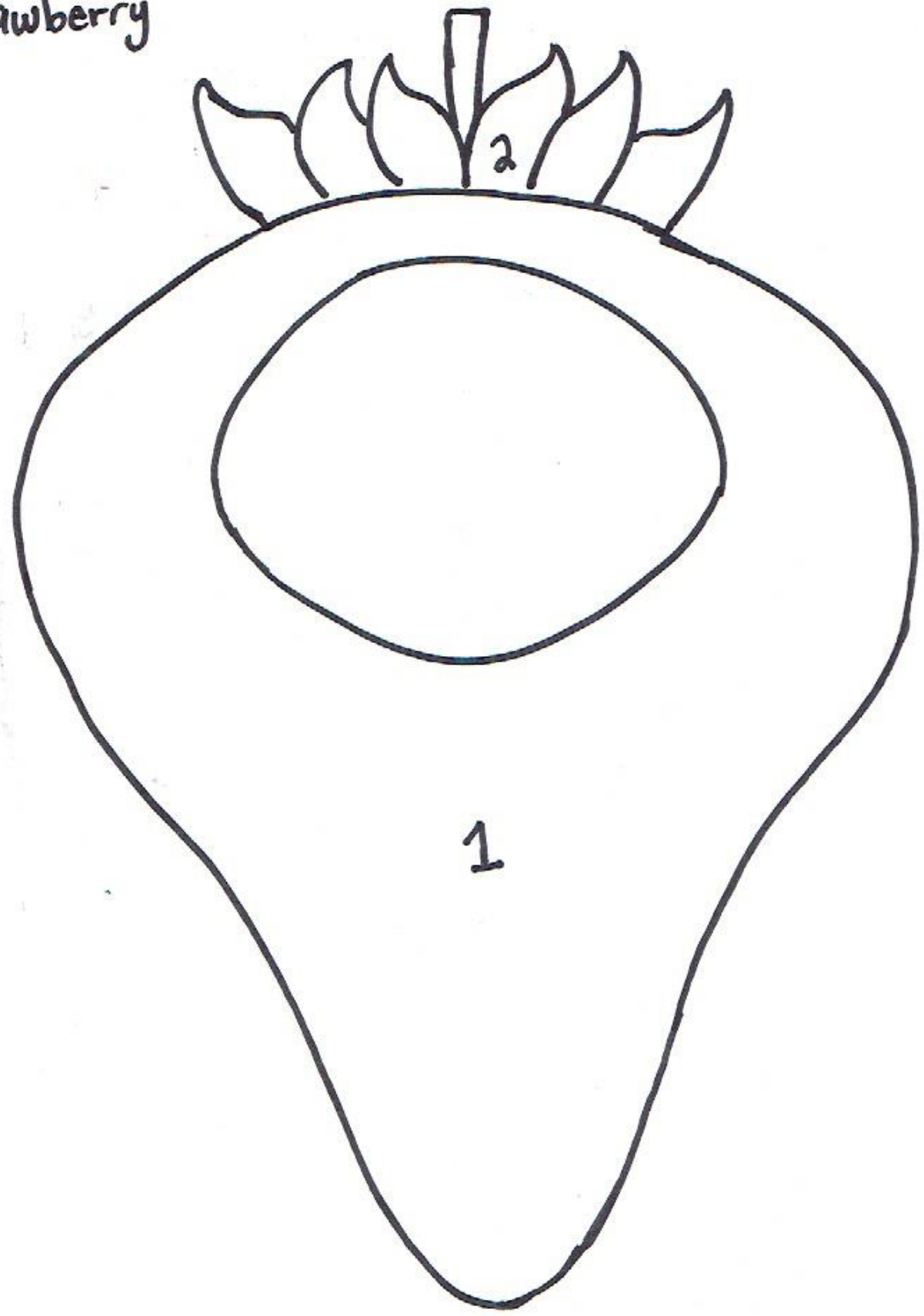
Shark



0-6



Strawberry



Popsicle

