

Children and Masks: Tips for Parents and Teachers

By David Fassler, MD and Christopher Streeter, MD

As children return to the classroom, many schools are requiring masks for both students and teachers. At others, they are optional, but recommended. Here are some tips and suggestions for parents and teachers:

1. Follow current CDC guidelines regarding children and masks. Recommendations can and will change over time as the pandemic evolves and more data becomes available.
2. Explain to children why we need to wear masks, using words and concepts kids can understand. Gear your explanations to the child's age, language and developmental level.
3. Acknowledge and validate the child's thoughts and feelings about wearing masks. Let them know that you think their questions and concerns are important and appropriate.
4. For young children, look for fun and colorful masks.
5. Give kids choices about which mask to wear. Make it part of their daily wardrobe selection.
6. Kids will observe and learn from the behavior of the adults around them. Model appropriate mask wearing, consistent with current guidelines and local regulations.
7. Some children, including those with ADHD or developmental delays, may have more difficulty keeping masks on throughout the school day. Parents and teachers should be patient, tolerant and understanding, to the extent possible. Use positive reinforcement to support and encourage appropriate mask wearing.
8. If children have ongoing questions or concerns about masks, talk to their pediatrician or the school nurse.

Changing guidance and routines can be challenging for both kids and adults. Fortunately, most children are quite resilient. They will adjust and adapt to wearing a mask with little difficulty. Parents and teachers can help by listening to their questions and responding in an honest, consistent and supportive manner.

For more information:

[AACAP Resource Library on Coronavirus](#)

[Face Masks](#) | American Academy of Pediatrics

[Talking to Children About Coronavirus](#)

[Face Masks for Children During COVID-19](#)

[Mask Mythbusters: Common Questions About Kids and Face Masks](#)

[Mask Up! Talking to Young Children about Wearing Masks](#)

[Your Guide to Masks](#) | CDC

[Activities, Gatherings & Holidays](#) | CDC

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