

How Can Parents Help Kids Wear a Mask?

- **Help kids get used to masks.** As much as you can, give your kids time to practice wearing their masks before they might need to wear one outside of your home. Teach them how to put them on and take them off.
- **Encourage kids to decorate their mask.** This might help them feel a sense of ownership and control over the situation. A personal touch can help make it more of a normal part of their routine, and make it more likely they'll want to wear their mask. Depending on the type of mask, kids can draw on it with markers or put stickers on it.
- **Make them together.** If you make face coverings at home, let older kids help you. There are no-sew masks that are easy to make, often with materials you probably already have (T-shirts, bandannas, etc.). If you sew masks, maybe kids can select the fabric or patterns for the masks they'll wear.
- **Help make it fun.** With younger kids, introduce a sense of play. Kids can pretend to be a doctor or nurse while wearing their masks. They might want to use a doctor kit and "take care" of a stuffed animal or doll.
- **Have a few masks handy while kids play.** This lets them use their imagination about how to use them during playtime. It also helps make masks a more normal part of their everyday world. You can ask your child to put a mask on a stuffed animal, and then ask follow-up questions about why the stuffed animal is wearing the mask. Depending on your child's response, you can clear up any confusion and offer reassurance.
- **Introduce social stories.** Social stories use words or images to explain specific occurrences, behaviors, social interactions, concepts or skills. Below are some great social stories about wearing a mask:
 - a. [Wearing a mask](#)
 - b. [Social Story](#)

c. [I Can Stay Healthy by Wearing a Mask](#)

If your child refuses to wear a mask a simple shaping procedure can help. Have your child see, hold, touch, and wear the face mask in stages. Provide praise, tickles, tokens, tapping elbows, cheering, or other rewards after each success. Each step may take a different length of time for your child to become comfortable. Examples of steps are:

1. See the face mask in different places in your house.
2. See family members wear their face masks at home. You can also put the mask on a favorite doll or stuffed animal.
3. Touch the face mask with hands.
4. Hold the face mask in hands.
5. Hold the face mask closer to the face, and even smell it.
6. Have the mask touch the face.
7. Let the mask cover the nose and mouth.
8. Stretch the face mask around the ears.
9. Wear the mask on the face.