

Wearing a Mask 101: Tips for parents

Students in grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks indoors on school property in Ontario. This is an important measure to stop the spread of COVID-19 when kids go back to school. School is only a few weeks away – follow these tips for helping your child get used to wearing a mask.

Step 1: Find the right mask

- The mask you choose for your child should be comfortable, breathable, fit properly and cover the nose, mouth and chin.
- Let your child help choose their mask – picking one that they like and reflects their personalities and interests may encourage them to wear it.
- Purchase a few extras – it's a good idea to have a clean extra mask in a sealable bag in your child's backpack or cubby, in case the one they are wearing gets wet, dirty, or lost.



Step 2: Teach your child how to use their mask

- There are many videos that show how to properly put on and take off a mask, such as the World Health Organization's www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk or Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc1mqyPCOpo. SickKids Hospital also has a great poster for teaching kids how to wear a mask. [www.sickkids.ca/VisitingSickKids/Staying-at-SickKids/81068-1275.How%20to%20wear%20a%20mask%20REV%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.sickkids.ca/VisitingSickKids/Staying-at-SickKids/81068-1275.How%20to%20wear%20a%20mask%20REV%20(1).pdf).
- Explain to your child why wearing a mask is important. See "10 Videos to Help Students Understand How to Wear a Mask" from weareteachers.com (www.weareteachers.com/mask-videos-for-kids/).
- Provide your child with a labelled container to store their mask if they need to take it off, for example during lunch to eat. You can also prevent mix-ups with masks if you label it with your child's initials.
- Both the mask and the storage container will need to be cleaned at the end of the day with hot water and soap or detergent.



Wash your hands before putting the mask on or taking it off.



Change the mask by only touching the straps or ear-loops as soon as it gets damp or soiled. Do not touch the front of the mask.

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Step 3: Start normalizing mask wearing ahead of time

- Have your child practice wearing a mask at home to get used to it. Start off with short periods of time, such as the length of a TV show.
- Do it together! Kids need to see their adult role models wearing masks too.
- For younger students, mask wearing can be incorporated into playtime, by putting them on their teddy bears or dolls.
- Appoint your child as “mask monitor” in your house – they can be responsible for reminding family members to make sure they have a mask before they leave the house and reminding everyone to wear one when needed. They can also remind everyone where to put dirty masks at the end of the day for cleaning.



Throughout all the steps, keep talking to your child. Remind them that wearing a mask is one of many tools in their belt to stay safe at school. Remind them to wash their hands and try to keep a distance from others when they can. Teach them that everyone has a role to play in the fight against COVID-19 and this is how they can help.

If after trying these steps, your child is still unable to wear a mask, focus on the mitigations measures you can do to protect yourselves. See “Family Tipsheet: What to do if your child cannot wear a mask” www.hollandbloorview.ca/services/family-workshops-resources/family-resource-centre/online-family-resources-centre/masking-tips.

