



Tips and tricks for helping children wear face masks

September 2020



Let your child choose their favourite mask.

Your child can choose from fun prints and colours, or design your own using fabric markers. Offer different options of fabrics if your child is sensitive to textures (i.e., cotton, silk) and ear pieces (i.e., elastics, nylon ear wraps, ties that are longer so an extender can help avoid ties around their ears).



Explain why masks are needed.

Use simple phrases to explain why masks are needed. For example, you can say "masks help to keep us safe and healthy" or "we wear masks to protect others from our germs."



Model wearing a mask.

The more your child sees you wearing a mask, the more comfortable they will be with the idea of wearing their own mask. Consider matching your mask to theirs.



Praise your child for wearing their mask.

Tell your child how great they look wearing a mask and remind them that they are doing a good job.



Reward your child for wearing their mask.

Celebrate with your child for wearing their mask. Offer them a special treat, toy or activity as a reward.



Desensitization process

How to help your child wear a face mask

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Try this...

- Let your child hold the mask and touch it.
- Put the face mask on yourself or let your child put it on you.
- Put the face mask on your child's favourite doll, stuffed animal, or character toy.
- Then say, "your turn."
- Bring the mask toward your child's face.
- Continue to provide social praise, like "Wow! Good job! You look so cool!"
- Place the elastic over the child's ears.
- Using a visual timer, keep the mask on for a few seconds then take it off and provide social praise.
- Gradually increase the length of time or number of time your child wears the mask.
Use a visual timer as a reference.

Helpful resources

[I can stay healthy by wearing a face mask](#) - free downloadable children's book by Rutgers.

Autism Little Learners: [COVID-19 resources](#).

[Wear a mask song for kids](#) - by Drs. Bop n' Pop

