

Getting Your Child Comfortable with Face masks

As children begin leaving the house more, we want to encourage you to take the time to **emotionally prepare** them for the changes that are taking place. To help maintain the safety and health of the community, many people will be wearing face masks in public. We understand that this can be scary and confusing for children of all ages. Below you will find guidance to help prepare your child for these changes. This includes talking to them about face masks, answering any questions they have, and ultimately, getting them comfortable with the masks themselves.

Talking to your child about facemasks:

Begin by talking with your child about the changes that are currently taking place in the community. Inform them that they may see many people now wearing face masks to help keep everyone safe! It is important to reassure children and emphasize that the masks are to help keep everyone safe. Talk about the people they may see wearing one such as grandparents, neighbors, or the mail carrier! Having an open discussion about face masks can help minimize any fears they may have.

Answering their questions:

- Use clear and simple language when talking about the mask
- Explain masks in terms your child will understand. For example, "Sometimes people have to wear masks to keep others safe, like doctors, nurses, and even your teachers!"
- Explain that masks help stop the spread of germs and keep everyone healthy
- Give your child the opportunity to see you in a face mask, try one on themselves, or see pictures of professionals wearing face masks

Getting them comfortable:

There are things that you can do to help your child feel more comfortable with the idea of masks. Some of those activities include:

- Put a mask on your child's favorite stuffed animal
- Decorate a mask to make it more fun
- While wearing a mask, look in the mirror and talk about it with your child
- Read the Social Story created by Learning Care Group to help your child become more familiar and comfortable with masks

Practicing at Home:

There are activities you can do at home to help children become comfortable with face masks. If you have one at home, let them play with it, put it on, or even put it on their stuffed animals! This will help them feel more comfortable with the mask. Another activity you can do is allowing children to create their own mask. This helps them feel in control of the changes happening around them. Below is a template of a face mask. Print it off and encourage your child to decorate the face mask and have fun with it!

