



## Help your Child Feel Good about Using and Seeing Others Wearing Face Masks



Explain the reasons for using a face mask as simply as possible. Frequent review of pictures, videos, and picture stories may help your child learn and become more familiar.



Your child may need to wear a face mask at times when leaving the house. Since it may take weeks or even months for a child to become comfortable with wearing it, start now and practice often to help make wearing face masks as positive as possible.



To help your child tolerate and become more comfortable with how the face mask feels on the skin, look for face mask fabrics, textures, and colors/patterns your child will tolerate and prefer.



Your child will be seeing other people wearing masks. It may be hard to recognize who the person is or determine facial expressions and feelings. Your child might associate face masks with something scary, such as a traumatic experience, a character in a movie, or a Halloween costume. When at home, have family members wear their face masks at various parts of the day so your child can see you in different situations.



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.



At first, your child may be touching the face mask often, playing with it, or taking it on-and-off. It may be helpful to have your child wear the mask during favorite activities such as when watching a favorite video, playing a favorite game, or getting a piece of a favorite snack. This will show your child that the mask isn't only for situations that are unfamiliar or scary.

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