

Masking Up:

Ways to support kids with wearing a mask during COVID-19

- Involve the child/offer a choice or sense of control whenever possible
- Normalize mask wearing: look at photos of family members, friends, and favorite characters wearing masks!
- Explain in simple terms that wearing a mask protects others and us from germs like the Coronavirus. Everyone who is wearing a mask is a helper!

Recommendations for Parents, Caregivers, and Community Health Providers	
Birth → 2 years of age	<p>No expectation for mask wearing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide exposure through play. • Play peek-a-boo with masks at home.
Preschoolers	<p>Learn about masks through play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it playful by decorating or choosing a mask with favorite characters and themes. • Make or decorate masks for stuffed animals or dolls to encourage desensitization through play.
School-Aged Children	<p>Understand how the body works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down “why” we are wearing masks with age-appropriate language.
Teens	<p>Want to be understood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate feelings. Rationalize each person’s responsibility to wear a mask.
Children with sensory or developmental needs	<p>Consider if there are sensory components of the mask that might bother the child:</p> <p>Does it cause pressure/discomfort on the ears?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider use of headbands with buttons, a tie mask rather than elastic on the ears, extenders or clips. <p>Are they sensitive to their breath in the mask?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a hard candy or mint for older children. Provide a choice of scent for inside the mask or on the upper lip (try scented lip balm). • Talk to your doctor if your child’s skin is sensitive or irritated by extended mask wear.

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Additional resources: www.connecticutchildrens.org/coronavirus

