

Two–Minute Tips

COVID-19 Edition: PPE for Children and Adults

Face masks or coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19. They have been called the “most powerful tool we have to slow the spread of the disease.”¹ Masks made with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric worn snugly over the nose and mouth and secured under the chin are the most effective.² However, any face covering is better than no face covering at all.

Practice Tips

Types of Face Coverings

[This chart](#) shows the effectiveness of different types of face coverings². Consider posting it for families to make informed decisions about the type of mask they wish to use.

[This resource](#) provides a visual display of do’s and don’ts about face coverings. Please share it with families.

Face coverings should not be worn by children under two years of age or by any child that is unable to remove their mask independently.

Seeing Past the Mask

Children rely heavily on facial expressions that unfortunately, masks cover up. Giving children a visual of what your smiling face looks like might put them at ease. Try wearing a button with a picture of your smiling face!

Create a circle time lesson to teach children how to read someone’s emotions when they are wearing a mask. Explain and discuss facial cues in the eyes, eyebrows, and forehead that might be indicative of different emotions.³ Discuss how tone of voice and body language can also provide cues. Use a feelings chart with the mouth and nose covered up (or create your own) to reference what those facial cues look like.

Here are a few helpful resources:

- Check out this [website](#) for tips to help children understand emotions.
- This [website](#) is a great reference to help identify facial expression cues.
- Use this [feelings chart](#) to help children identify how they feel.
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation (NCPMI) has [feeling faces cards](#) with suggested activities.



Social Stories

Social stories are a visual tool used to share information about unfamiliar concepts or situations in a way that is easy to understand. They give children direct contact with social information through pictures and text.⁴

Here are a few great social stories to share with children regarding face coverings.⁵

- [Wearing a Mask to School](#)
- [Seeing Other People Wearing Masks](#)
- [Wearing Masks](#)

Try creating your own social stories!

Make it Fun for Children

Here are some ways to make mask wearing more exciting:

- Put a mask on a doll or stuffed animal.
- Use a sticky note to create a mask and put it on a character in a favorite book.
- Use an old sheet or t-shirt to make masks to decorate for play. Let their imagination take over on how to use them during playtime.
- Have children decorate their mask.
- Put masks on and make silly movements in front of a mirror.
- Search for images of other children wearing masks.



Helping Children Feel Comfortable

Explain to children in simple language why it is important to wear face masks. You might say, “There is a germ right now. We’re wearing masks to keep our bodies and our friend’s bodies healthy and safe.”

Some children may be reluctant or afraid to wear a face covering. Encourage them to express their feelings and be sure to validate and comfort them.

Here are some fun and interesting ideas to help children feel comfortable with masks:

- [How to Help Your Child Wear a Face Covering](#)
- [Masks and New Routines: Helping Children with Special Needs During COVID-19](#)

References

¹Center for Disease Control and Prevention.(2020). [CDC calls on Americans to wear masks to prevent COVID-19 spread](#). USA.gov. (<https://bit.ly/3diSA87>)

²Bendiz, A. (2020, September 8). [One chart shows the best and worst face mask types, based on the latest research](#). *Business Insider*.(<https://bit.ly/3uW23lp>)

³Edwards, V. (2020). [How to read faces...Even when everyone is wearing a mask](#). *Science of People*. (<https://bit.ly/2Q6GOor>)

⁴Beaumont, T. L. (2008). [The benefits of social stories in a prekindergarten classroom](#). (Publication No. 361) [Master’s Thesis, The College at Brockport, State University of New York]. Education and Human Development. (<https://bit.ly/3uUDR91>)

⁵HMEA’s Autism Resource Central. (2020). [Social stories for young and old on Covid 19](#) (<https://bit.ly/3dl5L8x>)

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