

Helping Your Child Wear a Mask

The number one thing you can do to help your child wear a mask properly and without complaint is to do so yourself. Modeling the behavior your child should show helps them understand that it is normal and not scary.

Young children:

- Let them practice wearing a mask at home to get used to it before starting school.
- Model wearing a mask yourself.
- Let them decorate their own (or choose a fun pattern).
- Make play masks for your child's stuffed animals or dolls.
- Talk to your child about protecting themselves and those around them by wearing a mask, washing their hands well, and keeping a safe distance from others.
- Invite your child to draw a self-portrait wearing their mask or a picture of their new class.

Older kids and teens:

- Tell them what the school rules are related to wearing a mask including what consequences may exist if they don't wear it. Think of it as a school supply or a part of the dress code instead of an option or annoyance.
- Help them understand why it is important to wear a mask to protect themselves, their family, and those around them.
- Consider masks as part of their outfit or an accessory and let them choose ones they like to wear.
- If they find one type uncomfortable (such as those that attach to the ears), look for another style such as a gaiter, one that attaches behind the neck, or use one with ties that go behind the head.
- If your child is expected to wear a mask all day, consider sending them a second one to change into after lunch.

Tips for school:

- Like every other part of their supply list, be sure to label your child's masks with their name.
- If your young child is wearing a mask to school, on the bus, or at an after school program, it will be helpful to send an extra mask in a plastic sandwich bag or other sealed container in case your child loses their mask or it is dropped or otherwise soiled.

Example flier: <https://med.umich.edu/mott/thrive/tips-for-helping-kids-wear-masks>

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.