

Fruitport Community Schools



MASKS FOR KIDS: Why and how?



THE WHYS:

- ➔ Kids need to be in school for their mental health and ours.
- ➔ Kids can catch COVID19, and they can spread COVID19. Masking is a straightforward, safe and effective tool to help prevent outbreaks in schools.
- ➔ Masking can be used in addition to other strategies for prevention of viral spread like physical distancing, good hand hygiene, screening for illness and rapid response to any symptoms. The more tools we use, the better chance we have to contain COVID.
- ➔ From a healthcare perspective, masks play a large role in determining who is at risk after a COVID exposure. If both the positive person and the exposed person were masked when the exposure occurred, the need for a 10 to 14 day quarantine for the exposed person is decreased.
- ➔ Universal masking in schools could prevent large-scale school quarantines/ closures when COVID is found in some students.
- ➔ Kids under 2 years old should not wear masks. If your child has a serious health condition, check with your doctor to find out if masking is appropriate.

THE HOW:

- ➔ Masking is a new skill and needs to be taught.
- ➔ Kids need time to learn and adapt to this new skill before they are expected to implement it for extended periods of time.
- ➔ Learning to mask properly is not a skill that can or should be taught on the first day of school.
- ➔ Teachers can then reinforce the skills learned at home.
- ➔ If most kids can learn this skill at home, good peer modeling can help kids who are not able to master masking at home.

BE safe **BE** ready

14 Day Plan to Help Kids



Learn to Mask



DAY 1

Talk with your kid/s about masking. Explain why it is important and how it can help keep everyone safe and healthy and help us get back to our previous activities, like school. Choose a mask from the wide variety of masks available. Kids may be more likely to try a mask if they have helped pick out the mask. There are so many different styles and designs to choose from-the goal is a piece of fabric that can cover the nose and mouth and stay in place with normal movement and talking.

⇒ **Wash the mask before wearing it.**

⇒ *Avoid masks with an exhalation valve since those masks allow droplets to pass from the wearer to other people around.*

DAY 2

Now that the new mask is clean and dry, have your child try it on. Play around, talk, yell, jump up and down. Is the mask staying in place? If the fit is not great, there are strategies and products to help improve fit. There are straps that secure the ear loops behind the head instead of behind the ears. There are plastic cord lock/buckle pieces that make the ear loops adjustable.

Try talking, running, jumping and playing in the mask again. If it still doesn't fit well, you may need to try a different style or size of mask. Kids may not (ok, probably won't) like the way the mask feels at first. This is ok. It doesn't mean they cannot wear one. It would almost be odd if kids loved masking from day one. But maybe you'll get lucky!

⇒ *If your child persistently complains about the feel of the fabric, check it and if it feels rough, select a different mask. There are masks made of t-shirt material, wicking athletic material, fleece, etc. The skin of the face is sensitive, so trying a few different*

DAY 3

Now the work begins.

Have your child wear the mask for 5 minutes of indoor activity 3 times today.

Don't stress if your child is constantly touching and adjusting the mask. This is normal. As time goes on, they will adjust to wearing a mask, and the touching and adjusting will get better.

⇒ *If 5 minutes is too long for your child, use shorter intervals, but try to get 15 minutes of cumulative mask wearing time throughout the day.*

If your child complains of shortness of breath with short duration of mask wear, consult your pediatrician for further guidance. Never force continuous wear.

DAY 4

Now the work begins.

Have your child wear the mask for 5 minutes of indoor activity 3 times today.

Don't stress if your child is constantly touching and adjusting the mask. This is normal. As time goes on, they will adjust to wearing a mask, and the touching and adjusting will get better.

⇒ *If 5 minutes is too long for your child, use shorter intervals, but try to get 15 minutes of cumulative mask -wearing time throughout the day.*



Have your child wear the mask for 5 minutes of indoor activity 3 times today. You may have noticed the focus on indoor activity. Outdoor activities rarely require masks. Outdoor time at school will be a nice break from masking.



No masks! Give your kids weekend breaks. They need to ease into this and have days to not even think about masks or COVID. Praise them for their efforts this week. **Wash the mask(s).** Use this time for make-up time if you missed any days from earlier this week.

⇒ *Weekend breaks are for this training plan-if your child is going out in public with you where they cannot maintain a 6 foot distance at all times or if you are indoors in public, they should absolutely be wearing a mask.*



Have your child wear the mask for 10 minutes 3 times today. **Remember to vary the activities.** If 10 minutes is too much, back off to a lower number as long as it is more than 5 minutes.



Have your child wear the mask for 10 minutes 3 times today. Is your child touching and adjusting the mask less? If so, praise them. If not, **don't worry-they will get there.** Reinforce the importance of covering the nose and mouth whenever wearing the mask.



Have your child wear the mask for 15 minutes 3 times today. **Consider a treat** at this point for all of the hard work you guys are putting into this effort. Could be something sweet and frozen or maybe renting a new release movie at home.



Have your child wear the mask for 15 minutes 3 times today.



Have your child wear the mask for at least 15 min and try for 20 min 3 times today. **Shoot for longer times today,** reminding your child that they are about to have a 2 day mask break.



No masks! Check in with your child and see how they are feeling about masking. **Is it getting easier?** Would they like to try a different style of mask? At this point, consider getting more masks. Ideally, once school starts, your child will have at least 5 masks. Masks are like underwear and shouldn't be worn more than one time between washings. And like underwear, discuss with your child that masks are not to be shared with friends, loaned or traded. **Wash the mask(s)!!!**

BE safe BE ready