

Hello Families!

Below are some strategies to help your child start wearing a mask. Under each strategy there is a link that will take you to a video showing what the strategy looks like and how to implement it. Copy and paste the link into your browser/or click on link.

Strategies to increase tolerance/duration of mask wearing – (Please view videos for strategy)

Give your child choices between masks (characters, colors, materials). Prior to asking him/her to put it on, lay out a variety of different masks for him/her to choose from.

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/9351fc06-9438-4b5b-9b40-a52ec61e6067>

Shape your child's behavior to wear a mask- Offer a treat (e.g., 1 skittle) when your child puts loop over his/her ear, then again when the loop is on the other ear, then again when they wear it for 15 seconds, then again when they wear it for 30 seconds, then 1 minute, then 5 minutes etc. This will help increase the time they wear it and associate wearing it with something they like.

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/47c80509-c055-4989-91d1-e7aacf9b77c0>

Token board (Fixed interval, thin over time) – Your child can earn a reward for wearing his/her mask. One way you can do this is utilize a token board. Many of our students use token boards in school so this is a strategy they are used to. You can make a deal – for every minute, your child wears the mask him/her will get a token. Once he/she earns (e.g., 5 tokens) then he/she can cash the tokens in for a reward (e.g., ice cream).

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/31ad6375-6740-4a12-a6f7-b15338391bab>

First/Then (First wear mask then watch movie, pause movie if child removes mask, play movie again when child puts mask back on)

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/b9bb3648-74b6-4f62-8dff-9f825b6b186e>

Wearing mask outside the house - Drive to favorite place (Safely pull car over when your child removes mask, drive safely again when your child puts mask back on). At first, have your child choose a favorite place that is very close to home, so he/she only needs to wear the mask for a couple minutes. Increase time wearing a mask and duration of destination as your child gets use to wearing a mask outside his/her home.

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/4dead4af-60c3-4403-9396-67b4348cd137>

Playing games on iPad (Pause when your child takes off mask, play when he/she puts mask back on)

Taking dogs for a walk – model wearing mask- praise when child does.

General tips-

1. Make it fun - Have your child's favorite stuffed animal/doll wear a mask.
2. Parents/siblings can get in the habit of wearing a mask around your child (e.g., getting ready for work, when coming home after running errands, while talking to neighbors, etc.)
3. Model wearing a mask around house and give specific praise/attention to each other (i.e., I love that you are wearing your mask and staying safe!)
4. Ask family/friends to "show off" wearing their mask during zoom or facetime.

5. Set up a play date on zoom/facetime, for your child and his/her friend to show off their mask. (*Younger kids might like having the same masks as their siblings and/or parents, and older kids might feel more motivated to wear their masks if they match the ones their friends are wearing*).
6. Give your child the opportunity to practice putting their own masks on and off so they get use to the process.
7. Start with your child wearing it in the comfort of their home (e.g., during a favorite show, while playing with Legos).
8. Let your child look in the mirror while wearing their masks.
9. Sensory issues –
 - Your child might need some time to get use to wearing the mask.
 - Find masks that resemble materials your child prefers to wear (e.g., cotton t-shirts).
 - Experiment with different breathable fabrics.
 - If the mask bothers your child's ears – start by having him/her wear a ponytail holder on his/her ears to help get use to the feeling without the mask at first.

Lastly, be patient. This is a big adjustment for all of us. If big feelings present themselves, validate those feelings, help your child calm down, and then try again later.