



Masks for Kids: COVID-19

Governor Polis' recently extended Colorado's stay at home order through April 26th while **reminding Coloradans that they should be wearing a face mask whenever they leave the house.** So what does that mean for kiddos? Particularly those with special needs or sensory sensitivities? Here's what we know...

Is this Really Necessary?

CDC's answer at this point is yes. Face masks present several benefits including, decreasing the likelihood of touching your own face, protecting you from directly inhaling someone else's cough/ germs, but the biggest reason is protecting others in case you are unknowingly infected. **There is evidence to suggest that many kids are asymptomatic carriers who get mild- no symptoms of coronavirus and can unknowingly spread the disease.** The masks don't have to be surgical grade, they can be made out of common household materials. Checkout our other resource: "DIY COVID-19 Masks" to learn how to make some yourself.

Who Does and Who Doesn't?

When it comes to kids, the CDC specifies that face covering are **NOT for anyone under the age of two**, due to their small airways. However, it is also recommended that masks are not best suited for anyone who is **"unable to remove the mask without assistance"**. The benefit of the mask is highest when you keep the mask on without touching it. Let's be honest, that's going to be hard for most kids, but remember, recommendations are first to stay home and keep social distance. So if at all possible, keep your kids away from crowds and public places, but if it simply must happen, below are some tips and tricks to getting your kiddo to wear a mask.

Tips and Tricks for Kids

Start by clearly **telling your kiddo why they are wearing a mask.** *"We are wearing a mask to stay healthy and safe."* You can use the "Wearing Masks" social story we created to help your child understand. Then make practice playful! Play **dress-ups** (ninjas, doctors, or dustbowl farmers). Plan a **family game night** where everyone has to wear a mask, every time someone touches their mask they have to do a pushup. Make it fun by **decorating your masks** with markers (don't use stickers or paint that will obstruct breathing). Remember, like any sensory play we want to make it engaging and short, growing tolerance little by little, as they can handle.

1

Remember, your best option is keeping kiddos home and social distancing.

2

Masks are not suitable for children under the age of two or unable to remove without assistance.

3

These are strange times, talk about it openly with your kiddos and make practice fun!

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>