

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Guidance for Mask/Cloth Face Coverings in Child Care Facilities

Are child care programs/facilities required to have children wear masks/cloth face coverings?

No, mask/cloth face coverings are a recommendation, they are not being required at this time. Mask usage in a child care setting poses many challenges and may not be feasible for every program. If your facility does implement the use of masks/face coverings for children, try to adhere to the recommendations to the best extent possible. If the usage of masks becomes too challenging or burdensome for your program, you may need to consider discontinuing masks/face coverings use.

Is it required that staff wear masks/face coverings?

Masks are required for staff caring for children and interacting with parents to the extent possible and as long as it doesn't impact the health of the wearer.

Why are masks/cloth face coverings being recommended?

The use of simple cloth face coverings is advised to slow the spread of the virus and to help people who may have the virus, even if they do not know it (asymptomatic), from transmitting it to others. Wearing a non-medical mask protects others by reducing the droplets and viral particles that spread between people as we talk and interact -- especially in situations where a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained.

Who should NOT wear a mask/cloth face covering?

Masks/cloth face coverings are not intended for those that have a chronic respiratory disorder that precludes the use of a face mask. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

Should children wear masks/cloth face coverings while napping?

No, children should not wear masks while napping for risk of suffocation or strangulation.

Should teachers require that children wear masks/cloth face coverings?

No, do not force children to wear masks/cloth face coverings, instead provide education to make using the masks/cloth face coverings fun and encourage their usage. If the mask/cloth face covering is creating discomfort or is resulting in the child touching their face frequently, reconsider if a mask/cloth face covering is appropriate for that child.

What should I consider if I implement mask/face covering usage in for my program?

- Ideally, each child should have at least two masks/cloth face coverings in the event a mask/cloth face covering is broken or becomes soiled. Due to limited supply this may not be possible.
- Masks/cloth face coverings should have multiple layers of fabric, fully cover nose and mouth, be snug and stay in place without needing adjustments while performing day to day tasks.
- Ensure the masks/cloth face coverings are clean, free of holes and do not restrict breathing.
- Ensure children do not share masks that haven't been laundered between uses. Children should be assigned their own mask/cloth face covering.
- Ensure staff do not share masks/cloth face coverings that haven't been laundered between uses. Ideally staff should be assigned their own mask.
- Masks/cloth face coverings should be laundered daily and anytime they are used and/or become soiled.
- Masks/cloth face coverings can be taken home by parents/guardians to be laundered or can be laundered by the facility. Laundering should include either use the highest heat setting of the washer and dryer or use of an EPA approved disinfectant in the washer. Make sure masks/cloth face coverings are completely dry before use.
 - Also see [Center for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC's\) COVID laundry guidance](#)
- Heighten direct supervision of children wearing masks/cloth face coverings, especially between the ages of 3 and 5.

What are the requirements around hand washing and mask/cloth face covering usage?

- Always wash your hands before putting on masks/cloth face coverings, after taking masks/cloth face coverings off, and anytime the mask/cloth face covering is touched. Encourage children to do the same hand washing. Try to the best extent possible to keep children from touching or handling the masks/cloth face covering as this will result in more required hand washing.

Do parents/guardians also need to wear masks/cloth face coverings when picking up and dropping off their children?

Yes, parents/guardians that drop off or pick up children should be asked to wear masks/cloth face coverings while they are at the facility.

What tips do you have for helping introduce children to the masks/cloth face coverings?

It might be scary for children to wear a mask/cloth face covering, or see the adults around them wearing masks/cloth face coverings. Here are some tips from a newsletter recently provided by the Colorado Office of Early Childhood:

First and foremost, child care providers should pass this information along to families so they can have conversations with children first. Child care staff can reiterate what families are saying at home.

Supportive relationships are key during emergencies and will go a long way with children.

If children ask about people wearing masks or other face coverings, parents and caregivers can explain:

- Sometimes people wear masks to stay safe and teachers are wearing masks to stay safe.
- Sometimes people wear masks to be a germ buster.
- Sometimes people wear masks when they are sick. When they are all better, they stop wearing the mask.

Keep answers to questions simple and developmentally appropriate. As caregivers, we talk about not sharing germs and that is why we wash our hands and use tissues to blow our noses.

- Children need to know they are safe, remind them you are here to keep them safe.
- Children may ask if they will get sick. Answer them honestly. Everyone gets sick. Ask them about the time they had the sniffles or a tummy ache. Remind them if they get sick their family will be there to take care of them.
- Allow children to role play with masks. Be creative and use art materials to design masks that are for the individual child.
- Give them control. It's also a great time to remind your children of what they can do to help – washing their hands often, coughing into a tissue or their sleeves, cleaning tables or toys, etc.
- Watch for signs of anxiety. Children may not have the words to express their worry, but you may see signs of it. They may get cranky, become clingier, have trouble sleeping, or seem distracted. Keep the reassurance going and try to stick to your normal routines.



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- If you have questions or need assistance with children experiencing anxiety, please reach out to 1.800.799.5876 to connect with an Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Specialist in your area. ECMH Specialists can help you more effectively support children who have difficulty adjusting to changes at home or in child care and education programs.

Contact TCHD's COVID-19 call center with questions at 303-220-9200, option 2, then option 1

Please note: Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) cannot provide guidance on who (facility or parent/guardian) should provide/pay for masks/cloth face coverings. Donations are highly encouraged. Visit <https://www.coloradomaskproject.com> for more information about resources. Additional information can be found on the [CDC's website](#) for face coverings.

This document has been adapted from [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's \(CDPHE\) Face Covering Guidance](#) and the [Colorado Office of Early Childhood](#).