

DR. DARRIA'S MASK-WEARING FOR KIDS GUIDE

How to go from mask aversion to forgetting they have it on - in less than 2 weeks

- Mask-wearing CAN become second-nature to children - I know many children who have gotten so used to them that they forget they're wearing them (and have to be reminded to take them off when picked up!).
- BUT - it is a skill - and can take time to learn
- Plus, we DON'T want children to have to learn this on the first day of school - it distracts them from learning, distract teachers, and increases risk of spread
- YOUR behavior and POV re: masks matters more than anything.

You've GOT this. (from a fellow mama, doing the same with her own children)

---All my best, Dr. Darria

Ways to attach

- Ear loops
- Tie behind the head
- Face-mask extender / ear saver (to convert ear loops to attaching behind-the-head)
- Headband with a button to attach ear loops
- Glasses with a button
- To keep from losing/dropping it, keep attached with a lanyard or pacifier clip

Purchasing Notes

- Buy 3-5 styles NOW (many have long delivery times + you need time to test + practice)
- Once you know what fits best, buy at least 5 of it

Places to purchase

- MANY different places! (The places below are just suggestions - not an endorsement of any products :))
 - Vistaprint
 - Etsy
 - ShopDisney
 - Rothy's
 - Old Navy
 - Carters,
 - Amazon
 - Vida
 - Marcella Moda
 - and many, many more

For more, watch [Dr. Darria's Getting Kiddos to Wear Masks Without a Fight - Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

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HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT MASKS

- **Parents' attitude = kids' attitude. If you're anxious, angry, doubtful of their benefit, or sad...your CHILD will be too.** Try to remove judgment or anxiety when discussing. I say: This is just an extra step we have to do right now. It's not for forever, but it's an extra protection so we can do other things we love, like see our friends, family, got to school, (insert favorite activity here).
- Hear them out. Ask if they have any questions or concerns - and give them a chance to express their feelings (some couldn't care less; others have a weight of questions. Both (and everything in between) is totally normal.
- Logistics comment: tell them that we think of masks like underwear - you change it out every day, and you DON'T share it (yes. this must be said). :)

HOW TO TALK TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO WEAR MASKS

Make It Interesting / Fun

(use what is most age-appropriate)

- Think of masks like a fun costume (ninja, superhero, princess, transformer)
- Make it a new fashion accessory / way to express their individuality
- Allow your child to choose styles/masks
- Buy masks that match YOUR mask
- Wear YOUR mask when child does
- Put mask on a favorite doll/stuffed animal
- Allow them to decorate/use iron-on patches/other washable decor

Set rewards

- Allow screen / TV time ONLY when wearing a mask (also a good way to ease in masks, since they're distracted)
- Sticker reward chart (like those old potty-training charts)
- Other rewards - a sweet treat, a new toy, game, or book
- Wearing a mask lets you see friends!
- Tie with other interests - can have another privilege (for each successful 1-2 days of mask-wearing)

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FOLLOWING THE SCHEDULE

- Wash masks, then have them try on while talk, yawn, laugh, walk or jump around, to see which masks stay on best.
- Wear a mask yourself too, while they practice.
- Reinforce how to wear it (covering nose and mouth at all times, not touching our face or mask except to remove it and after washing our hands) - **but don't worry TOO much about mask-touching in the first few days.**
 - If this is still an issue after Week 1, then start to inquire/remind more often. But at first, you just want them to think of the mask as easy and just get comfortable with it.
- ****NOTE:** if your child complains of shortness of breath or other concerning symptoms, have a discussion with your pediatrician before proceeding.
- **Should you do the Shorter or the Longer Schedule?** Some children may be able to advance much more quickly, some may need the longer process. Either is fine - advance at the speed that your child is comfortable. Whichever schedule you are on, you can ALWAYS add an extra day to stay at that level if needed.
- On the first day, have them do easy activities (reading, watching TV). Slowly increase the level of activity (schoolwork, talking, focused work, etc)
- Take weekends OFF

Other resources

- Helping [children with autism wear masks](#) (great tips for any child who needs a little extra understanding)
- [Tips for getting comfortable in your mask](#) (for ALL ages)
- [How to combat mask anxiety](#) (for parents + teachers too!)
- [Dr. Darria's Getting Kiddos to Wear Masks Without a Fight - Part 1 + 2](#)

How to store the mask

- Place in a brown paper bag (replace daily and always fold in half before storing to keep inside from touching surfaces contacted by outside of mask)
- Plastic "Tupperware" (always lay face-down, + trap loops between lid + container to keep from bouncing around. Wash container nightly)

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	Shorter Method	Longer Method
<p>**Remember – these are NOT rigid schedules. If your child has no problem with it, go ahead with the shorter method. But if they have any trouble or need an extra day at a certain interval, switch to the longer method. As I've learned as a doctor and mom – “no child follows the guidelines”. That's OK. And it's ok to go back and forth.</p>		
Day 1	Wear mask for 5 minutes, 3 separate times in the day. (If your child cannot do 5 minutes, then do shorter intervals, for a total of 15 minutes / day).	
Day 2	10 minutes, 3 times in the day	5 minutes, 3 times in the day
Day 3	20 minutes, 3 times	10 minutes 3 times
Day 4	20 minutes, 4 times	15 minutes, 3 times
Day 5	30 minutes, 4 times	15 minutes, 3 times
Day 6	WEEKEND! Mask break! (This schedule assumes Monday as Day 1. But if you start another day, just adjust the schedule to pause on weekends)	
Day 7	<p>***END OF WEEK 1 CHECK – by now, they should naturally be touching/tugging their mask less. If so, GREAT. If not, try to find out why – does the mask not fit well? glasses fogging etc.? Is it just habit? Now start to reinforce not touching it.</p>	
Day 8	40 minutes, 4 times	20 minutes, 3 times
Day 9	50 minutes, 4 times	20 minutes, 4 times
Day 10	60 minutes, 4 times	25 minutes, 4 times
Day 11	YAY! You did it!! Reinforce with periodic practicing (60 min at a time is long enough). The goal is that your child forgets they're wearing a mask.	30 minutes, 4 times
Day 12		35 minutes, 4 times
Day 13	WEEKEND BREAK!	
Day 14		
Day 15		40 minutes, 4 times
Day 16		45 minutes, 4 times
Day 17		50 minutes, 4 times
Day 18		55 minutes, 4 times
Day 19		60 minutes, 4 times
Day 20		YAY! You did it!! Reinforce with periodic practicing (60 min at a time is long enough). The goal is that your child forgets they're wearing a mask.