

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, children ages 2 and older should wear a face covering in settings where they cannot keep a distance of 6 feet away from others. We can help children understand how to protect one another and make face coverings part of our daily routine so that play, learning, and other activities can be as safe as possible.

Homemade or purchased face coverings are fine for most people to wear. For children, the right fit is important. Pleated face coverings with elastic ear loops are best for kids. Try to find the right size for your child's face and adjust it for a secure fit.

Who Should Wear a Face Covering?



- Children age 2 and older who can wear it properly

Face coverings are appropriate for a child's stage of development when they can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering.

Who Should Not Wear a Face Covering?



- Children under age 2
- Children who have a medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a face covering **should not** be required to wear one.

Face coverings may not be appropriate if a child's stage of development would make wearing a face covering difficult.

Parents and any child care and school staff should discuss the needs of the individual child, and consult with a health care provider if necessary (for example, for children with conditions such as asthma) to determine if they can safely and consistently wear a face covering.

When Should Face Coverings Be Worn?

Face coverings should be worn in settings where children and adults cannot keep a distance of 6 feet between themselves and others. This includes childcare settings, summer camps and schools. Other examples include:

- Running errands, such as trips to the store
- In a health care setting for an appointment
- Visiting family members outside your household
- Riding public transportation or sharing a ride with people outside your household
- Walking on a busy or crowded street
- At home if someone in the household is sick

Safety

- Face coverings should NOT have any attachments (such as buttons, stickers, etc.) that may be a choking hazard.
- Face coverings with strings are not recommended for young children as they pose a risk of choking or strangulation.
- Remove face coverings while children are sleeping, eating, or swimming (or when they would get wet).

How Can I Help Children Wear a Face Covering?

Younger children may need help while wearing a face covering. Follow these guidelines when helping children to put on and remove a face covering:

- Wash hands before putting on a face covering and after removing it.
- Place the face covering over the nose and mouth.
- Teach children to avoid touching the face covering or their face while wearing a face covering.
- Face coverings are not to be shared with friends.
- Remove the face covering by touching only the straps.
- Place the used face covering in a clean paper bag until it needs to be put on again; the bag should be labeled if there are multiple children in the setting.
- Wash the face covering after daily use.

Tips to Help Children Adapt

Help children understand that wearing face coverings can prevent the spread of germs. You can use the following expert tips, books, and videos:

- For children over age 3, explain that germs are special to their body. Some germs are good and some are bad. The bad ones can make us sick. Since we cannot always tell which are good or bad, the face coverings help make sure you keep bad germs away from your body.
- If a child is afraid of wearing a face covering, try putting one on a favorite stuffed animal or doll, decorate it with drawings, practice wearing it at home, and show the child pictures of other children wearing them.
- Refer to online resources such as:
 - [COVID-19 Activity Book](#)
 - [PBS Kids video](#)
 - [Tips for talking to toddlers about face covering](#)