

VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

May 26, 2021 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers*

Wendy Davis, MD, FAAP, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, UVM

Breena Holmes, MD, FAAP, Physician Advisor, Maternal & Child Health, VDH (VDH), VCHIP Senior Faculty

Questions/Discussion

Q: I'd like to check my understanding on child care mask guidance. Do I have it right that children (over 2) are required to wear masks outside at child care? And will this guidance change to allow children to take masks off outside after VT hits the 80% threshold?

A: Chloe Learey, The Winston Prouty Center: Strongly recommending over 2 or requiring? I thought the current guidance was "mask use is strongly recommended in child care", not required.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Correct. We never required masking in children. Even now we only strongly recommend masks at all for children. So, there is space to consider a conversation about that with your child's provider. (verbally) When we hit the threshold, we will have very clear guidance on what to do. The general concept is that once we hit the 80% threshold, the government steps out. There will be no more requirements. At that point, it becomes a community conversation about indoors, outdoors, and what to do about unvaccinated children and masking.

A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: A few of our school and child care callers are needing emotional support as they anticipate the mask mandate turns into a strong recommendation for the unvaccinated.

*A: Nathaniel Waite, RN, VDH: Masking guidance for child care/camps (currently) is on **page 9** here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/2021-child-care-and-summer-guidance.pdf>*

A: Chloe Learey, The Winston Prouty Center: Thank you for not requiring. WHO recommendation is that children under 5 should not be required to wear masks: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19>

A: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: The younger kids are feeling left out of all of this. Some depression/anxiety as they are the "only" folks masking. This was when talking with elementary kids.

A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: The child care/school providers seemed to appreciate that gentle science and grounding in pre-COVID hand washing, staying home when sick and why it was/still important.

A: Becca (Rebecca) Bell, MD, UVM Medical Center: I wrote a Twitter thread about this (how I think about risk of infection, vaccine, masks) as a parent and pediatrician: <https://twitter.com/RebeccaBellMD/status/1395847557000146944?s=20>

A: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: This is different (from driving, etc.) as the kids cannot get the vaccine and it is harder with the warm temps/humidity.

A: Sally Kerschner, RN, MSN, VDH: A child care provider told me today she thinks her younger kids are very good at reading her expression by looking at her eyes. She has been working on this technique.

A: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: I agree. Kids are so used to masking.

*Note: This is a paraphrased synopsis of the call and is not a word-for-word transcription.