



HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT MASKS*



Explain the why for wearing a mask, but keep it simple and not scary: “We are wearing masks to keep our coughs and sneezes in while we are at school.”

Introduce the mask during playtime. Use pretend play to help your child get used to the mask if wearing one is new. “Let’s play grocery store. We have to get ready! We have to get our bag and we need to put on our masks!”

Frame the mask as a big kid thing. Remind your child that only big kids get to go to school and they all wear masks.

Offer choices, if possible. You can head this off at the pass by letting them choose between two child-sized masks.

Remind your child about what’s going to happen before you leave: “We are going to school. When we get there, we will put our masks on in the car. We will wear our masks the whole time we are at school unless we are eating or playing outside. When we get in the car to go home, we’ll take them off again.” (Or whatever your family practice is, as some families keep masks on in the car.)

Review the rules when you arrive. As you are putting on masks, remind your child: “We’ll wear the masks the whole time you are at school. When we are done and back in the car, we can take them off again.”

Prepare yourself for mask fails. Rather than getting upset or scaring children about the possibility of getting sick, it’s best to focus on the routine: “We have to wear our mask at school to stay healthy.”

- » When mask fails happen (and they will happen), remind your child about your “family mask rule.” Point out your own mask and gently replace the mask on your child’s face.
- » If your child shares that the mask is uncomfortable, it’s okay to validate that sometimes masks do feel itchy or hot., Then re-direct your child’s attention to something else.
- » While wearing masks is something new for all of us, children respond well to the safety and security of daily routines. If masks are consistently part of your family’s “going out” routine, over time, children will adjust and go with the flow.



WEAR



WASH



WATCH

STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY. YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19!

