



Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19

Face Covering Guidance for Child Care Operations

Face Covering Guidance for Child Care Operations during COVID-19 Response

Child care providers are essential and must be protected

Providers and the children in their care must stay healthy and safe in order for care to continue. Group size, social distancing, screening for signs of illness, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, and disinfecting remain essential for keeping child care safe, opened, and operating.

Our state is now recommending face coverings or non-medical masks for all Coloradans when they leave their homes **and all essential workers who interact with the public**. Science is telling us that some people may spread COVID-19 even when they do not have symptoms. 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 wear a mask or face cover while in the facility

Although CDC recommends that children under 2 should not wear a facemask, the child care environment poses unique challenges since groups of up to 10 young children may be supervised by one caregiver for several hours at a time. For that reason, our recommendation is that children under the age of 3 within the child care should not wear masks and no child should wear a mask while napping.

Additionally, children between the age of 3 and 5 should be supervised if they are wearing a mask. If the mask is creating discomfort or resulting in the child touching their face frequently, reconsider whether a mask is appropriate for that child. Parents dropping off and picking up children should be asked to wear masks while they are at the facility. **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. Masks for children over 3 who are not napping are recommended but not required.**

Where do I get a mask?

Non-medical masks can be purchased or made with materials you have at home. You can use bandanas, scarves or even fabric from an old shirt. Simple instructions can be found at [ColoradoMaskProject.com](https://coloradomaskproject.com). The CDC has a video <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4> or you can Google “CDC cloth masks.” Masks should have multiple layers of fabric, fully cover your nose and mouth, be snug and stay in place without needing adjustments while you perform day to day tasks.

How to wear a mask or face cover while in the facility

Choose a face covering that will stay in place and not need adjustment as you perform day to day tasks. Masks must be clean, free of holes and must not restrict your breathing. Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible including while putting on and taking off your mask. Always wash your hands before putting on your mask, after taking it off and anytime you touch your mask.

When to wash your mask or face covering

Masks should be washed after each day of use and anytime they become soiled. Be sure to dry the mask completely between uses. We recommend washing and drying your mask on the highest heat setting of the washer and dryer. It's a good idea to have more than one mask or face covering available to allow time for washing and drying after each use.