



Mask Wearing Resources, Recommendations, and Suggestions

On February 12, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education released [ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume 1: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#). This first volume supplements the [CDC's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#) and specifically addresses masking practices beginning on page 8 and contains hyperlinks directly to the CDC's guidance. Please find below additional resources to assist students in wearing masks.

The [Montana Autism Education Project](#) blog is frequently updated with information that can assist districts and families with the COVID-19 challenges, including a page [specifically for mask wearing resources](#). On the right-hand side of the blog, click on the tag for, "coronavirus" to see the COVID-19 resources.

One option of masks that can benefit communication is a mask with a window; such as [The Communicator mask](#). Window masks make it easier for others to see facial expressions and read lips.

[This mask toolkit](#) includes suggestions for parents and teachers. A cooperative relationship between parents and teachers can boost the positive relationship individuals have with wearing masks.

Practice wearing masks. Suggestions that can help students adjust to wearing masks can be found on the [Children's Minnesota](#) website.

Speaking positively of wearing masks and [more helpful tips from actionlearningnetwork.org](#) can assist with the transition to wearing masks. This [kadiant](#) article offers suggestions of keeping students motivated in wearing masks.

[Autism Resource Central](#) is already sharing social stories regarding COVID-19, mask wearing, and other guidance that may be beneficial for older and younger individuals with disabilities and for staff.

Some things to keep in mind when choosing masks:

- All masks should fit well, with no gaps or openings around the mask.
- Some masks may fog glasses. [Nose fittings](#) can assist with this issue.
- Some masks can lose shape/hold after wearing. Fitted masks tend to have a longer wear life.
- Have a "just in case" extra mask available for "emergencies"; such as band breakage, dropping on ground, etc.

- While do-it-yourself masks are not hospital-grade, they still offer an extra protective layer between individuals.