

# Kids ages 2 and older should use face masks, CDC says. How to get them to wear one

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Children 2 years and older should wear cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The [face masks](#) are to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus to others, especially if they are infected but aren't showing symptoms, the CDC said.

The CDC said to monitor [children](#) for symptoms of coronavirus and to keep them away from others if they display any, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

A CDC study of children with coronavirus showed they don't always display symptoms and as asymptomatic carriers, "are likely playing a role in transmission and spread of COVID-19."

Dr. John Williams, chief of the division of pediatric infectious diseases at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Children's Hospital, told ABC that "asymptomatic infection is common in children, occurring in 10-30%" of cases.

So is there a way to get children to wear their face [masks](#)?

Health experts say to try to make face masks as exciting as possible to make sure children understand the importance of wearing face coverings.

"Have them make it and decorate it," Dr. Deborah Gilboa, a [family physician](#) and youth development speaker, told TODAY. "It was the same thing with bike helmets when we first started requiring kids wear them. Lots of parents said, 'They don't like how they look, they're not comfortable, they're not cool, my kid won't do it.' ...

"We said the same things. Can they pick out their bike helmet, can they decorate it, can they pick the color? If you can give your kid some autonomy about it, not about when or where but about what, that might help."

Gilboa also told TODAY that parents should "model the behavior that they want to see" and wear masks with their kids.

"Kids are looking for stuff they can control," Gilboa said. "There's research that shows that kids are less likely to do something to keep themselves safe, but more likely to do something to keep other people safe. ... Help them feel like the hero that they are by wearing that mask."

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