

## Facial Coverings for Transitional Pandemic Child Care

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### Ohio Administrative Code Rule Summary for Facial Coverings

Licensed child care centers, including temporary pandemic school-age child care centers, licensed family child care providers, approved child day camps, and certified in-home aides must follow transitional pandemic requirements which may be reviewed at:

<https://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

### Who must wear a facial covering while indoors?

- All administrators, providers, child care staff members, employees, family child care residents, and in-home aides, unless not medically appropriate.
- All school-age children in care at a licensed child care center including temporary pandemic school-age child care centers, licensed family child care provider, and approved child day camp unless not medically or developmentally appropriate.

### Who must not wear a facial covering?

- Children two years of age and younger must not wear a facial covering.



### Does the rule require that a specific type of facial covering is worn?

- There is not a specific type of facial covering required, however:
  - Facial coverings, including cloth and disposable masks, shall cover the individual's nose and mouth.
  - Face shields are not an acceptable facial covering unless the individual meets one of the exemptions outlined in the Ohio Department of Health Public Order and guidance.

### What is the definition of a school-age child?

- A child who is enrolled in and attending a grade of kindergarten or above but is less than fifteen years old, or in the case of a child who is receiving special needs child care, is less than eighteen years old.

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### Summary of the Ohio Department of Health Director's Public Order Requiring the Use of Facial Coverings in Child Care Settings

Licensed child care centers, including temporary pandemic school-age child care centers, licensed family child care providers, approved child day camps, and certified in-home aides must follow guidelines set by the Governor of Ohio and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health.

The Director of the Ohio Department of Health has provided the following order regarding facial coverings for child care settings that **provide care or education to any child in kindergarten through grade twelve**:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/public-health-orders/public-health-orders>

**Who must wear a facial covering?**

- All administrators, providers, child care staff members, employees, family child care residents, in-home aides who provide care or education to any child in kindergarten through grade twelve AND
- Kindergarten through grade twelve children in care shall always wear facial coverings when:
  - In any indoor location.
  - Outdoors on program property and unable to consistently maintain six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household.
  - Waiting for a school bus outdoors and unable to maintain six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household.
  - When riding a school bus.

**When does the Ohio Department of Health Director's Order to wear a facial covering not apply?**

- The individual has a medical condition that contraindicates the wearing of a facial covering including:
  - Medical condition, including respiratory conditions that restrict breathing
  - Mental health condition
  - Disability
- An individual is seeking to or is communicating with someone who is hearing impaired or has another disability, where an accommodation is appropriate or necessary.
- An individual is actively participating in outdoor recess and/or physical activity where children can maintain a distance of at least six feet from each other.
- An individual is seated and actively consuming food or beverage.
- Where children and employees can maintain distancing of at least six feet and removal of the facial covering is necessary for instructional purposes including instruction in foreign language, English for non-native speakers, and subjects where wearing a facial covering would prohibit participation in classroom activities, such as playing an instrument.
- Children can maintain a distance of at least six feet and a mask break is deemed necessary by the child care staff member.
- An individual is alone in an enclosed space, such as an office.
- When an established sincerely held religious requirement exists that does not permit a facial covering.

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**Best Practice Suggestions for Facial Coverings/ Masks****Programming**

- Follow all CDC recommendations regarding facial coverings, including:
  - Do **not** allow masks with exhalation valves or vents to be worn.
  - Wash hands before putting on facial coverings.
  - Ensure facial coverings fit properly.
    - Completely cover the nose and mouth.
    - Be safely secured. Allow for breathing without restriction.
    - Fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face.
  - Cloth masks should include multiple layers of fabric and be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.



- Consider whether children older than two who are not yet school-age may also safely wear face coverings.
- Consider whether children older than two should also wear facial coverings outside in situations where social distancing is difficult, and where the children may safely wear facial coverings.
- Consider requiring any visitors to also wear facial coverings.

### Children

- Teach children how to appropriately put on and take off their facial coverings.
- Explain to children why we need to use facial coverings in language they can understand.
- Provide children with an individual, clean, labeled container to put their facial covering in when they take them off to eat, drink, or sleep.
- Make sure the children's facial coverings do not pose choking or strangulation hazards.
- Remind children to avoid touching their faces

### Parents/Families

- Request that parents/guardians label their child's facial covering with the child's name.
- Provide parents/guardians with information about how facial coverings should fit.
- Provide parents/guardians with information about cleaning and caring for reusable facial coverings.
- Communicate with your families about the new facial covering requirements.
- Ask parents/guardians to practice putting on and taking off the facial coverings with their children and to make sure the children can put on their facial coverings by themselves.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Do children, FCC providers and FCC residents have to wear facial coverings while they are sleeping or napping?**

No. Masks must not be worn while sleeping or napping as they may pose a strangulation hazard.

**2. Do child care center employees who are present at times when children are not in care have to wear a facial covering?**

Yes. For example, employees who arrive early before the children arrive, or stay after the children leave must wear a facial covering. Another example include that evening custodial staff must wear facial coverings while cleaning. The only exemption would be when the employees are alone in an enclosed space where child care is never provided.

**3. Are family child care providers and residents required to wear facial coverings during hours when children are not being cared for in the home?**

No, family child care providers and residents are only required to wear facial coverings during hours in which child care is provided.

**4. Are residents of a family child care home required to wear a facial covering if they are not in the same space as the children?**

A facial covering must be worn by all residents when they are in any approved child care space during hours in which child care is provided. This includes school-age children and all adult residents.

**5. Are facial coverings required to be worn outside?**

If a program is serving any school-age children, the Ohio Department of Health Director's Public Order does require a facial covering to be worn outside by school-age children, employees, and FCC residents (school-age and above) unless an exemption is met. If a program does not serve any school-age children, it is a business decision whether they want to require masks to be worn outside in situations where it is difficult to ensure social distancing and it is safe to do so.

**6. What if an individual who is required by rule or the Ohio Department of Health Director's Public Order to wear a face covering is unable to wear one because it is not medically or developmentally appropriate?**

The program must have documentation on file from a physician, physician's assistant, nurse, nurse practitioner, designated representative of the physician's office, a licensed or certified psychologist, a social worker, occupational/physical therapist or any other medical or healthcare personnel the provider determines appropriate stating that the individual is exempt from wearing a facial covering.

**7. Can three, four, and five-year old (not school-age) children also wear facial coverings?**

It is a business decision if the program chooses to require three, four, and five-year old (not school-age) children to wear masks.

**8. Are the children being cared for by a certified In-Home Aide and/or the residents in the home required to wear facial coverings?**

No, school age children do not have to wear a face mask in their own home. Only the In-Home Aide provider needs to wear a mask.

**9. Can children and employees take breaks during the day from wearing face coverings?**

Staff may allow mask breaks if the children in care are able to maintain a distance of six feet or more.

**10. If a program does not have air conditioning, can the school-age children and/or employees be exempted from the mask requirement?**

No, rule does not allow for this exemption. Staff may allow mask breaks if the children in care are able to maintain a distance of six feet or more.

\* Please note that current rules require that if indoor temperature exceeds 85°F, ventilation that produces air movement or air conditioning is required.

**11. Since individuals are not required to wear face coverings while they are actively eating and drinking, is it okay for school-age children to remove their masks during meal preparation and clean-up times?**

School-age children may only remove their masks while they are seated and actively consuming food or beverage. The Public Order does not provide an exemption for meal preparation and clean-up.

\* Please note that CDC guidance is that children's food should be plated and served to them and that children should not assist in meal preparation.

**12. If a child has a hearing impairment and reads lips, is the teacher and/or other school-age children in the classroom allowed to remove their masks to communicate with the child?**

Yes, an individual may remove their facial covering when they are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or has another disability.

**13. May individuals wear clear facial coverings?**

CDC guidance is that employees may wish to consider using clear facial coverings when:

- Interacting with children or staff who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Teaching young children to read.
- Teaching English as a second language classes.
- Teaching children with disabilities.

Clear facial coverings should not cause any breathing difficulties or over-heating for the wearer, should fit well and not have holes or gaps.

\*Please note, clear facial coverings are **not** face shields. The CDC does **not** recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for facial coverings because of a lack of evidence of their effectiveness for source control.

#### 14. What is a clear face covering?

A clear face covering is not a face shield. It is a face covering that covers the individual's nose and mouth but has a clear panel in front of the mouth to make it easier for people to read lips and see facial expressions.

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#### Additional Resources

The Ohio Children's Hospital Association (OCHA) and the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Ohio AAP) Joint Letter

American Academy of Pediatrics – Cloth Face Coverings for Children During COVID-19

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/media-center/odh-news-releases/face-shields-not-appropriate-substitute-for-masks>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>