



## Teaching Your Child to Wear a Mask



### Get Ready

- ▶ Set aside a few times every day to practice this skill.
- ▶ Choose a mask that fits your child well and is comfortable.
- ▶ Find different items that your child may want to earn for wearing the mask.
  - ▷ Save these items for when you are working on wearing the mask – don't let your child have them at another time.
  - ▷ Ask your child for ideas of what they would like to earn.
  - ▷ Switch it up! Keep your child motivated by changing what is available often.

### Practice Wearing the Mask

#### ▶ Teaching Sequence

1. Ask your child, "What do you want to work for?" and have them choose an item to earn for wearing the mask. Set the item they select in view but out of reach.
2. Say, "Put on your mask" and prompt your child to place the mask on their face.
  - ▷ Help as necessary, using hand-over-hand prompts if needed.
  - ▷ Fade your prompts as your child gets better at putting on the mask.
3. Praise your child for putting on the mask. "Great job putting on your mask!"
4. Have your child wear the mask for 10 seconds, and then take it off of them.
  - ▷ Do not let your child remove the mask on their own.
  - ▷ If your child is crying, pretend you don't hear the crying – don't tell them to stop or that they are okay or say anything else about it. (This sounds unnatural, but it will help your child get used to the mask more quickly & be less upset about it!)

### Practice Wearing the Mask (cont.)

- ▷ You can distract your child while you wait for the time to be over – tell a story, sing a song, make funny faces – just don't talk about the mask or the child's behavior.
  - ▷ When time is up, remove the mask. Say, "Good job wearing your mask!" and provide the item your child was working for right away.
5. Provide the reward **immediately** upon removing the mask, and allow your child to play with the item for at least 1 minute.
- ▶ Repeat the teaching sequence multiple times until your child tolerates the mask without attempting to take it off or having any tantrums.
  - ▶ When your child can do this for the current length of time (10 seconds), increase the time for the next practice session.
  - ▶ Gradually increase the length of time required to wear the mask in order to receive the reward.
    - ▷ 10 seconds, 30 seconds, 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, and so on.
    - ▷ Continue practice sessions until your child can wear the mask for the desired length of time.

### Maintain Progress

- ▶ When your child is able to wear the mask consistently without problems, reward them every once in a while for wearing it.
- ▶ Switch up the reward if your child is losing interest.

### Seek Help

If you need further assistance, seek services from specialists such as behavior analysts or behavioral psychologists.