Mask Training & Endurance

1. **Introduce the idea of wearing masks for long periods**
   a. Let your child choose their mask. Please [click here](#) for guidance from the CDC on mask recommendations and considerations. Additionally, please remember to send your child to school with extra masks.

2. **Gradually increase mask tolerance**
   a. Provide your child with the opportunity to wear a mask for longer and longer periods at home and in public. They can pair wearing a mask with a favorite activity, like playing video games, going on swings, or riding a bike, to help distract them while they form the habit.

3. **Acknowledge that mask wearing may be difficult**
   a. Talk to your child about why they may be experiencing discomfort or difficulty wearing a mask. There are many solutions available to help masks feel more comfortable, including different fabrics, ear loops, and various ways of wearing the mask.
      i. **Extender Straps**
      ii. **Headband with buttons**
   b. If your child is sensitive to touch, smell, or appears uncomfortable with certain mask fabrics, contact the OT department for strategies to help desensitize the mouth and nose area.

4. **Wear a mask yourself**
   a. It’s so important to model behaviors for children. If children see adults wearing masks on a regular basis, they are more likely to wear them as well.

5. **Use transition warnings**
   a. It is important to remind your child that they will need to wear a mask when leaving the house/arriving at school. For example, “We are leaving for school in 5 minutes. Remember you will need your backpack and your mask.”

**Make wearing a mask fun for your child:**
- Allow your child to decorate their mask or make a beaded “mask chain”
- Use pretend play - pretend you are masked doctors, nurses, superheroes, etc.
- Put masks on stuffed animals, dolls, or other toys
- Color pictures of people wearing masks (download a sample [here](#))
- Watch videos and social stories about the importance of wearing masks
Independence with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Activities of daily living (ADLs) are self-care activities and routines one engages in on a daily basis such as dressing, bathing, eating, and personal hygiene. Due to social distancing and COVID-19 precautions, school staff may not be able to provide hands-on assistance with ADLs as they have in the past. It’s important that we help promote independence in areas such as shoelace tying, opening and closing lunch containers, and fastening buttons and zippers. The following list contains ideas for practicing and fostering independence in ADLs at home with your child.

Strategies for Maintaining Social Distancing with ADLs

- If your child is not independent with shoe lacing, use shoes with Velcro or slip-on shoes
- If your child requires assistance with buttons, zippers, etc., do not send him/her/them to school with those types of fasteners
- Send your child to school with food and containers they can handle independently
- Practice dressing, hygiene, and feeding skills at home to promote future independence at school
- Provide frequent opportunities for practice at home, not only during dressing times; consistency and repetition are essential
- Children can further build independence with dressing through pretend play by using dress-up clothes

I am here to help support you and your child throughout this transition back to school. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

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