

# Student Support Packet



The materials in this packet are designed to help support students and their families with Bridgeway Academy's reopening in response to the Coronavirus.

## Table of Contents

Back to School (Bridgeway) social story .....	pg. 3
Visual Support Signs your child will see around the building .....	pg. 18
I Can Wear a Mask social story .....	pg. 19
Mask Sensory Experience Tolerance Strategies .....	pg. 29
Mask Options and Adaptations .....	pg. 32
Sensory Strategies for the Face .....	pg.35
Teaching Your Child to Wear a Mask Guide .....	pg. 38
Making Masks Fun! .....	pg. 48
MASKerades Game .....	pg. 49



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# Back to School



BRIDGEWAY  
— ACADEMY —

# I'm going back to school!

(circle which school you are attending)



Primary School



Secondary School

# I will be at school on:

(circle or color in the days you will be at school)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Some things will be the same.  
Some things will be different.  
Things are different to help me  
stay healthy!

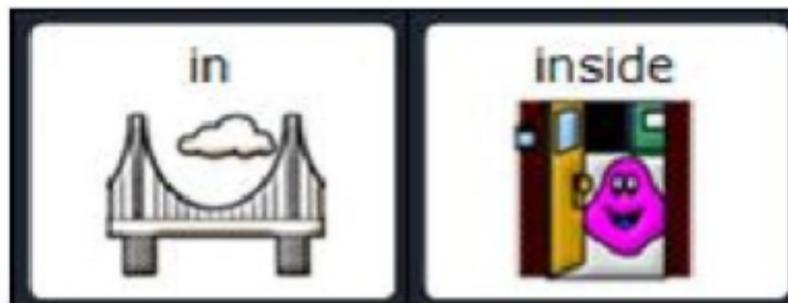


I will stay in my car with my family until my therapist gets me. First my temperature will be taken, then I'll get out of my car.

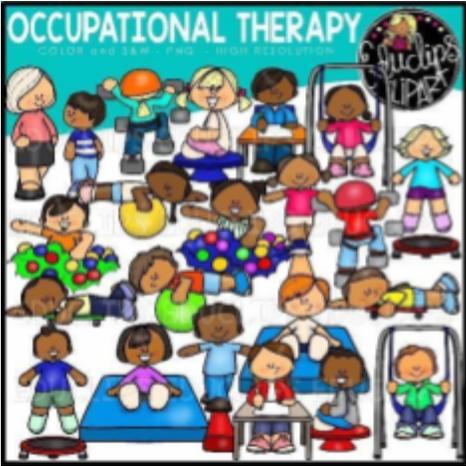


New signs around the building will help me know where I can go and not go.

## ENTER



My schedule is going to be different. I will not be going to my class. Instead, I'll get to have some fun with my therapists!



OT

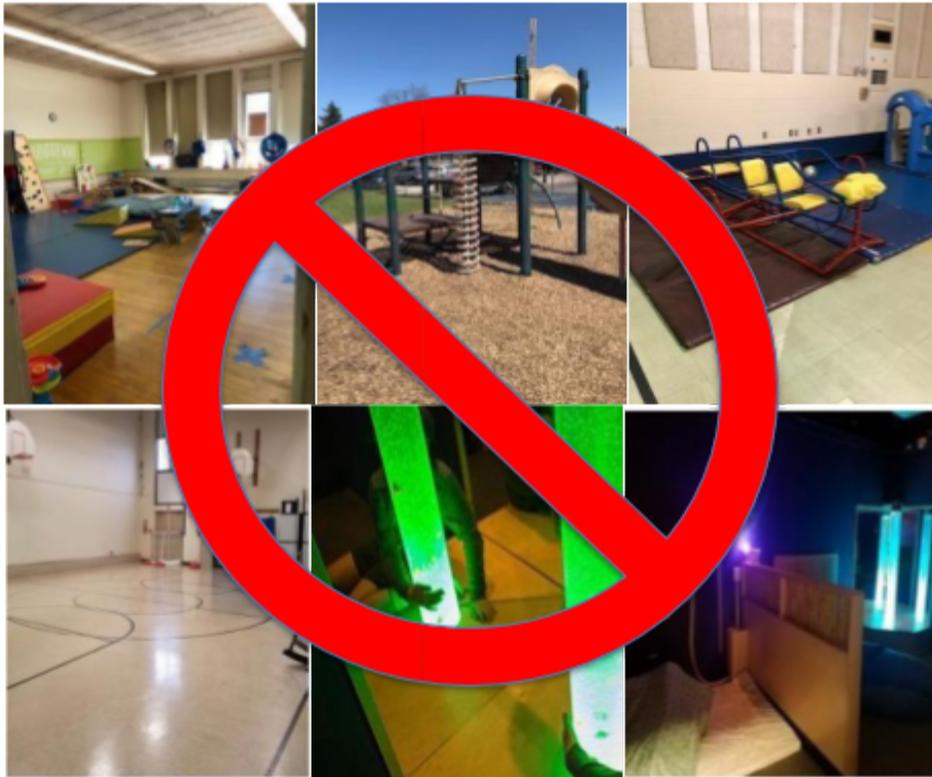


PT



Speech

Some rooms will be **closed**.



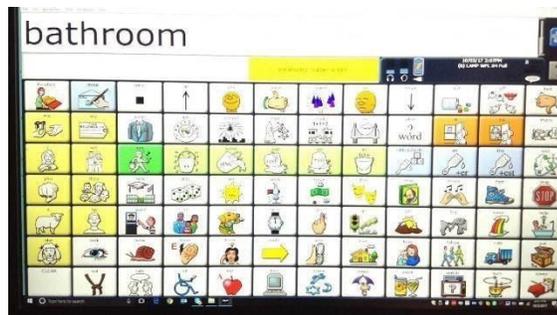
I'll see my therapists in classrooms instead!



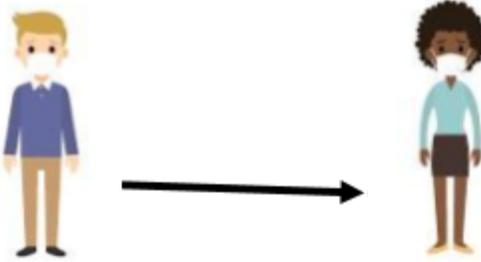
The bathroom is **open**. I can ask my therapist to go to the bathroom.



I have to go to the bathroom



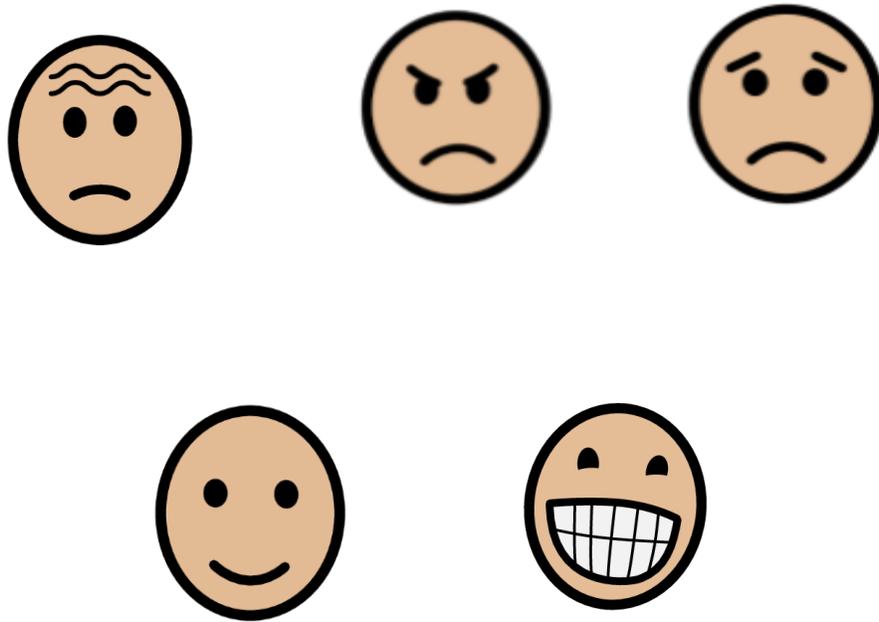
# My family and therapists will help me stay healthy at school.

<p><b>Wash Hands</b></p> 	 <p>Space</p>
 <p>Masks</p>	 <p>Cough in elbows</p>

My therapists will wear facemasks to stay healthy. It's clear so I can see their faces. I can hear them. They might look a little silly!



My new school routine is different.  
I might feel nervous, angry, sad,  
happy, or excited. It is okay to feel  
any of these emotions!



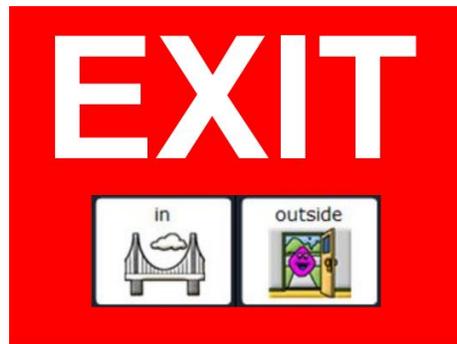
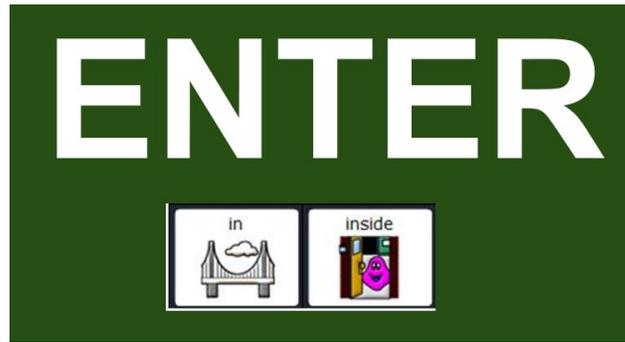
I can talk to my family and therapists about how I'm feeling.



# The End!



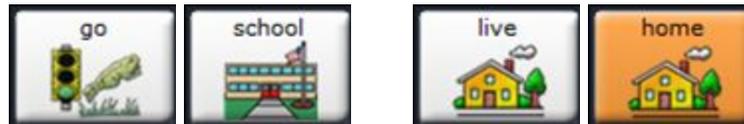
# Visual Support Signs Around the Building



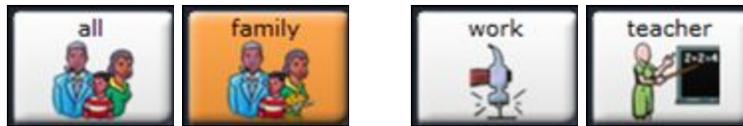
# I Can Wear a Mask!



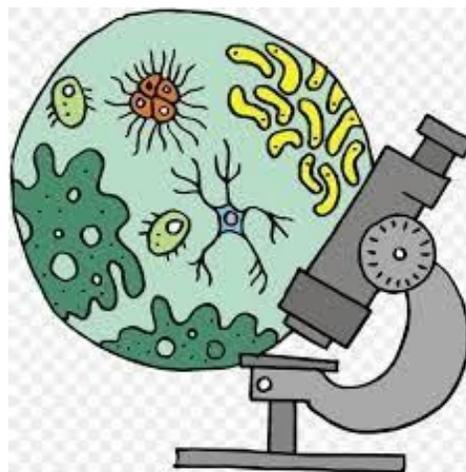
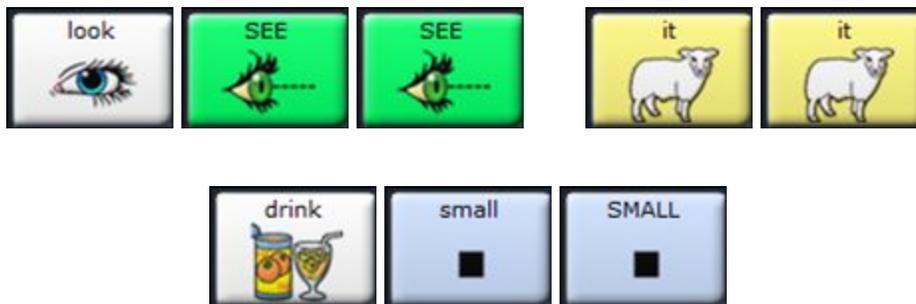
I have been doing school at home.



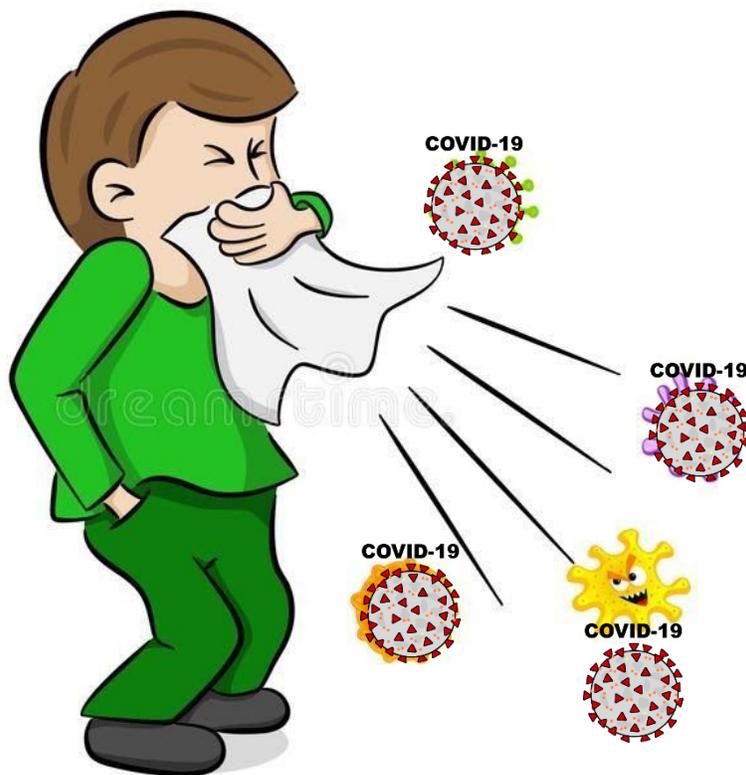
My family and teachers want me to stay safe. Some people are getting sick from a virus called coronavirus.



I can't see the virus because germs are really, really small. But people can see it with a microscope.



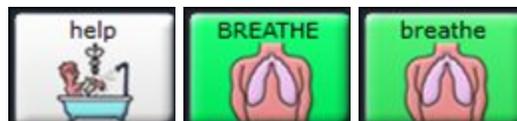
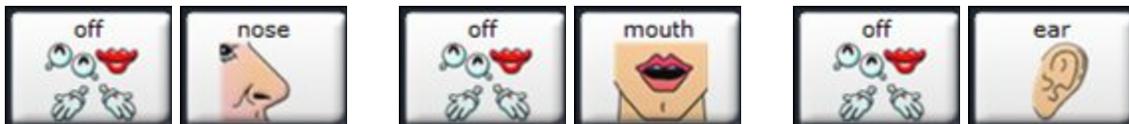
Germs pass from person to person from tiny droplets when people sneeze or cough.



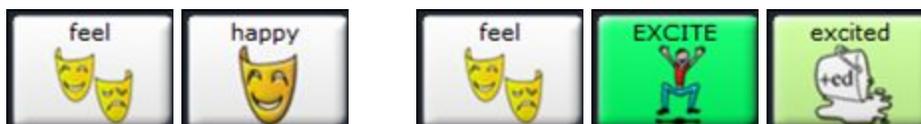
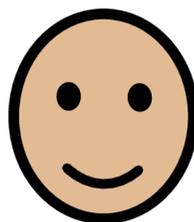
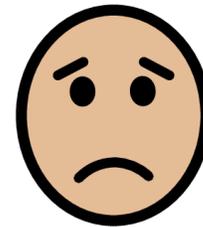
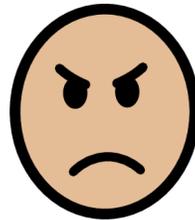
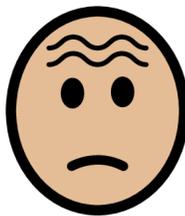
I've been staying healthy by staying at home. When I need to go out, I can stay safe by wearing a mask and keeping space. Other people will be wearing masks, too.



Masks are made of paper or fabric. The mask will cover my nose and mouth. It might have strings that go around my ears. I can still breathe with my mask on.



Wearing a mask is new and different. I might feel nervous, angry, sad, happy, or excited. It is okay to feel any of these emotions!



I can practice wearing my mask at home. I can put masks on stuffed animals. I can look at superheroes with masks!



# I can wear a mask to stay healthy!



# How Can I Help My Child Learn to Wear a Mask?

## A Sensory Experience



Wearing a mask is something that is new to most of us, even to adults. There are several reasons your child might be nervous or anxious about putting on a mask and many of them are because of sensory related issues. As we know, people who have difficulty with sensory regulation try to keep their world “safe” by avoiding things that they aren’t used to because they don’t know what the experience will feel like or be like.

Wearing a mask has so many sensory unknowns:

How will a mask feel? Will I be able to breathe or talk? Who is that person behind the mask...I just can’t tell for sure? Doctors and nurses wear masks and that makes me nervous-is this person a doctor?

All of these are very valid concerns for a child who has never had to wear a mask. If you have a child who isn’t willing to put on a mask, here are some suggestions of things you can try with your child to make the process not so intimidating and encourage them to become more comfortable.

**Visual strategies:** If your child appears nervous with just looking at a mask or someone wearing a mask near them, here are some things you can do to ease them into having a mask in their environment:

1. Have a mask in their space. Don’t put any expectations in regards to the mask other than it sitting on the coffee table while you are watching a movie or near the dinner table while you are eating. This allows the child to become used to seeing the mask but in a non-invasive, pressure free way.

2. Wear a mask around your child. Having someone they know and trust wearing the mask is key to them understanding that the mask is an “okay” thing. If you find that they are nervous with it up on your face initially, try just wearing it around your neck so they can see it clearly but also see your face. As they get used to that you can slowly introduce it to your mouth.
3. Engage in pretend play. Have your child use the mask during play time and allow them to place it on their favorite stuffed animal or even put it on/off a family member. Getting to interact and touch the mask without an expectation to put it on will help with decreasing the fear and anxiety associated with it. If they don't appear ready for this step because they are still nervous about touching it, you can demonstrate the play activity together as a family. The more they can watch interaction with a mask the more comfortable they will feel.
4. Place stickers of a favorite character on your mask so that when your child is looking at you wearing it they see a safe, friendly visual.
5. Don't be afraid to be silly with the mask. Try making goofy faces with your child and using the mask to play peek-a-boo.
6. Use the mirror: Wear masks while looking in the mirror and talking about it. It often makes a child feel safer when they can see what is going on with their face instead of just having someone approach them and try to put the mask on them.

**Tactile Strategies:** If your child appears nervous with the idea of touching or putting on a mask here are some things you can do to ease them into how the mask feels and tolerating it touching their face:

1. Hands on desensitization: Some children may need an actual hands on physical approach to help them tolerate the way the mask will feel touching their skin. Talk to your occupational therapist if you believe your child may benefit from these strategies.
2. Start with just having your child wear a face covering around their neck so they can get used to it close to their face. Once they get used to that you can slowly introduce it to their mouth.
3. Engage in pretend play. Along with this being a great visual strategy, pretend play is a safe way for your child to touch and interact physically with a mask with no pressure to actually put it on their face. Putting the mask on and off a trusted sibling or adult or playing check-up with favorite stuffed animal or doll are great, no pressure ways to start physical interaction with a mask. As they become more comfortable, encourage them to place it on their own face.
4. Options: There are many different options that you can use as a mask depending on what your child will tolerate. Different textures or ways that a mask attaches to the face

can make a big difference. Refer to the handout regarding mask options and adaptations for ideas.

5. Adaptations: There are some different adaptations that can be made to a standard surgical mask depending on what your child will tolerate. Refer to the handout regarding mask options and adaptations for ideas.

**General Strategies:** Here are some general strategies that are helpful when introducing a mask:

1. Use a social story.
2. Use a first/then strategy: Have them put the mask on for even just a few seconds followed up by a preferred activity or reinforcer. “First try the mask, then you can play with the iPad” As they tolerate the mask you can increase the time.
3. Use a countdown: This can be used in conjunction with a “First/then”. Establish a set count or amount of time you want them to wear the mask for. This makes the task have a set ending which takes out the unknown of how long they will be expected to wear the mask. Once they put the mask on immediately start the countdown (counting to 10, counting down from five, using a timer to go off after 1 minute)
4. PRAISE! Whether you want to use a simple verbal praise or reinforce the behavior with an edible reinforcer or another preferred activity, always praise interaction with the mask.

Your Bridgeway occupational therapist is a great resource to talk to about your child’s sensory needs and can help you problem solve what tips, techniques, and ideas might work best for your child! Please feel free to reach out with specific questions or concerns.

## Mask Options and Adaptations



Keeping your mouth and nose covered is very important when trying to decrease the spread of germs. There are a variety of options that can act as a protective shield for your child's face. Below are some examples of items you can use as a face covering as well as some adaptations you can make to a traditional surgical or cloth mask in order to help your child as they learn to better tolerate wearing a mask.

## Options for Covering the Face

### 1. Scarf



### 2. Bandana



**3. Winter neck warmer**



**4. Cloth Masks**



**5. Traditional Surgical Mask**



# Mask Adaptations

1. Headband



2. Ballcap



3. Hair



## Sensory Strategies For The Face

Here are some hands on sensory strategies to try with your child that may help with tolerating wearing a mask. If you have any specific questions in regards to what techniques might work best for your child please don't hesitate to reach out to your individual occupational therapist.

### General Tips:

1. Always tell your child what you are going to be doing prior to doing it.
2. Demonstrate on yourself, another person, or a favorite stuffed animal or doll to let your child see how you are going to touch them.
3. Try activities in front of the mirror if possible.
4. If your child appears to feel uncomfortable, in pain or asks you to stop, do so right away. Sometimes having someone in your personal space can be intimidating at first. It is okay to try again later.

### Deep pressure

Deep pressure is a firm but gentle touch that relaxes the nervous system. This pressure can be applied with the hands, special massage tools, or simple household items to help stimulate the face and help prepare the child's sensory system to tolerate wearing a mask.

1. **Facial Massage:** Provide gentle pressure to your child's face in the patterns shown below



**2. Stroking with a washcloth:** A wash cloth gives added sensory input when giving deep pressure and massage to a child's face. You can do the massage and stroking in the same manner as the above pictures, but with using the cloth. You can use the wash cloth dry or with warm or cold water, depending on what your child enjoys. The different temperature of the water just adds to the sensory experience.



**3. Circle on cheeks:** Use both hands on your child's cheeks and provide gentle pressure as you massage in a circular motion. You can make the circles in either direction.



**4. Lotion on cheeks:** You can use lotion on the cheeks while completing any of the massage patterns. Like the different temperatures of water on the washcloth, it just adds another dimension of sensory experience. You can use a neutral scent of lotion or if your child tolerates it, can use a calming scent such as lavender.

## Vibration

Vibration is like touch “on high speed” and for some kids can be a great way to desensitize. For children who are more intensely stressed, anxious, withdrawn or distracted, vibration can be used to calm and to alert. This vibratory sensation can be used to help stimulate the face and help prepare the child’s sensory system to tolerate wearing a mask.

1. **Vibrating Toothbrush:** A vibrating toothbrush helps to provide sensory input both in and around the mouth/face. You can use the toothbrush on your child or allow them to explore independently. Try using the brush in the traditional method in your child’s mouth or try using the handle end to provide stimulation to the outside of the cheeks and chin.



2. **Massager Tools:** There are many therapy tools that can be purchased online to provide vibration. Some, like the frog and blue massager can be found at retail stores like Target and Walmart whereas others can be purchased from a therapy catalog or website. Try a cheap vibrating toothbrush first before purchasing something more expensive, just in case your child doesn’t like the sensation.



# How to Teach Your Child to Wear a Mask

## In Response to COVID-19

Developed May 2020



Ohio’s Governor, Mike DeWine, recommends masks be worn in public as the “Stay Safe at Home” order is lifted. Wearing a mask is a new experience for many people. It is a big change in expectation and major disruption to routines. It may lead to frustration, anxiety, and confusion, especially for people on the autism spectrum.

The strategies provided in this guide utilize the principles of ABA (applied behavior analysis). Calm counts can help reduce fears and anxiety related to wearing a mask. Using calm counts in conjunction with reinforcement and additional supports, you can teach your child how to wear a mask with success!

### This Guide Includes:

1. Calm Count Procedure
2. Calming Grid
3. Order of Steps
4. Reinforcement Tips and Other Strategies
5. First/Then Boards



## Getting Started!

- Step 1: Read through this packet
- Step 2: Set up a time to have your child wear/attempt to wear a mask
- Step 3: Complete the Calming Grid and determine the first point of tension
- Step 4: List out your child's steps for wearing a mask
- Step 5: Choose reinforcement
- Step 6: Create any visual supports you plan to use during teaching trials
- Step 7: Establish a time to practice with your child
- Step 8: Gather materials and follow the Calm Counts Procedure
- Step 9: Repeat the procedure regularly, increase the time as your child has success, and have some fun teaching!

## Calm Count Procedure

1. Identify a stressor: Wearing a Mask
2. Present the mask at a level that evokes a little bit of tension.  
\*Do not push to high levels of tension and do not allow your child to back away from the stressor.
3. Complete the Calming Grid (on the next page)
4. Count out loud, to 5 for very early learners, but to 10 for most learners.
5. Use your fingers while counting and make eye contact with your child.
6. Model a very calm tone of voice, and count fairly slowly (approximately at a one-one-thousand pace)  
\*Do not allow your child to push the rate of your counting. You set the pace.
7. At any sign of tension from your child, say something like “Ooh, that’s not calm”. Avert your gaze and stop counting.
8. As soon as tension subsides, resume counting.  
\*Start back at “1” if your child was upset for more than 10 seconds.
9. Provide reinforcement and praise! E.g., “Fantastic job wearing the mask!” (Refer to Reinforcement Tips and Other Strategies Page below)



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\*Adapted from Whole Child Consulting Calm Counts Toolkit

## Calming Grid

(example: wearing a mask)

Easier	Harder
Mask is 3 feet away from face	Mask is close to nose and mouth
Mask strings are not around ears	Mask strings are around ear
5 second count	10 second count

- Choose the easiest, first sign of tension for your child (e.g., the mask is a few feet away from their face, but not touching it) and start there.
- Follow the calm count procedure. Once your child consistently remains calm with the first step (e.g., the mask is a few feet away), move the mask closer (e.g., right in front of the nose and mouth)
- Repeat the calm count procedure with each step until your child is fully wearing the mask while calm



\*Adapted from Whole Child Consulting Calm Counts Toolkit

**Calming Grid**  
(blank)

Easier	Harder

## Steps Toward Fully Wearing a Mask

(example)

- Sometimes an entire task presentation (such as being asked to wear a mask, clipping nails, or haircuts) can be overwhelming. Breaking it down into smaller, more manageable steps is helpful.
- These steps will be different for each child. Use information collected from the Calming Grid to create the list for your child. Adjust the steps as needed.
- Step 1 should be the first point of tension. The final step should be wearing the mask fully.

Child Name: EXAMPLE

Reinforcer: mini m&ms

Materials: First/Then board

Steps	Notes
1. Mask 3 feet away from face	Started 5/15. Count to 5
2. Mask in front of face, not touching	Started 5/18. Count to 10
3. Mask touching face	Started 5/22. Changed reinforcer to small pieces of kit-kats. Ended with time at 1 minute.
4. Mask on with left side hooked to ear	Started 5/26.
5. Mask on with left and right sides hooked to ears	Started 5/30. Played a game while wearing it one day. Another day went on a walk.

## Steps Toward Fully Wearing a Mask

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reinforcer: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps	Notes
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

## Reinforcement Tips and Other Strategies

Reinforcement keeps behaviors we want to see more of (e.g, wearing a mask) happening again and again! It's important to ensure that behaviors we want to see more of are consistently followed with reinforcement. Just like you aren't willing to go to work for free, our kids aren't necessarily willing to work for free. Their hard work can be paid in reinforcement. Below are some tips for setting up reinforcement.

**Deprivation-** Choose an item or activity that your child likes and doesn't get often. Or find a favorite item or activity and put it away for a few days. This helps increase the item/activity's *value* so that your child is more likely motivated to do something (wear a mask) to get it.

**Immediacy-** Give the reinforcer to your child immediately after they complete the expectation. As soon as they wear the mask calmly for 10 seconds, they should get their item/activity.

**Size-** Save the big rewards for the big expectations! Wearing a mask is new, different, and possibly a very hard expectation. What item or activity will make wearing a mask *worth it*.

**Contingency-** The reinforcers are only given when the expectation is met, e.g., your child wears the mask calmly for the designated amount of time. If your child does not meet the expectation, the reinforcer is not given.

### Visuals

- Social Stories are tools that help children understand situations and expectations in a positive way (Several social stories are provided in the Student Support Packet)
- A First/Then chart provides clear expectations for your child and let's them know what they get after wearing a mask. Use this for each step while practicing.

First	Then
 <p>Mask Practice</p>	 <p>Gummy Bears</p>

**Model**

Wear a mask, too! Model the behavior you want your child to have. Put the mask on and count to 10 before removing it. Wear the mask while your child practices, too!

**Make it Fun!**

- Put masks on stuffed animals
- Wear masks and have a dance party
- Practice with superhero masks and capes (or look up Superheros and talk about their masks)
- Choose masks with favorite colors or characters
- Decorate masks together

Below are First/Then templates for your use.

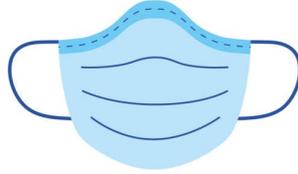
- Take pictures of your child's actual mask and rewards or print them off from a google search. If your child can read, simply write the words.
- It doesn't have to be laminated or fancy! If you don't have access to a printer, draw the chart on a piece of paper!

First	Then

First	Then
	

--	--

## Making Masks Fun!



Pretend you're superheroes!  
Add a cape and run around  
together.



Decorate masks together.  
Draw favorite characters or  
pictures.



Play mask tag. The person  
wearing the mask is it!



Play Peek-a-boo with  
younger children. Hide  
behind the mask and quickly  
remove it.



Have a dance party with  
masks on!



Add a 'mask card' (draw a  
mask on an index card) and  
add it into a family game. The  
player who draws the mask  
card wears a mask until the  
next one is drawn!



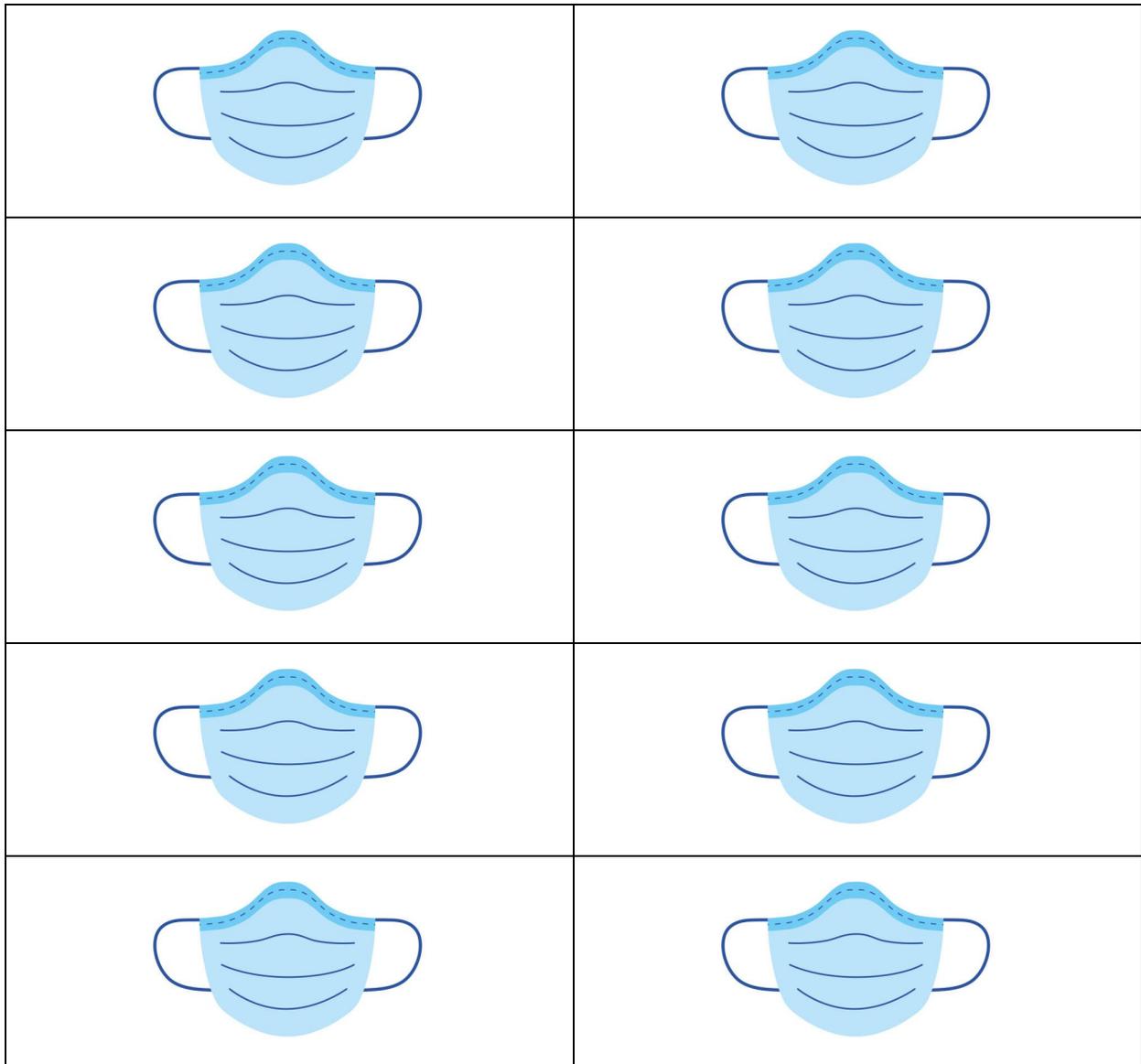
## **MASKerades DIRECTIONS:**

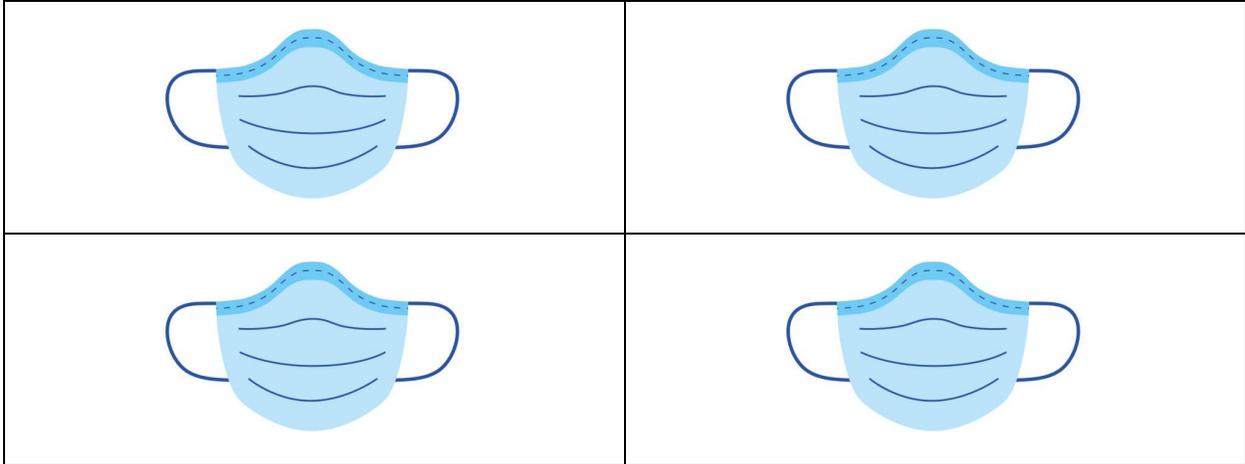
1. Get your friends and family members to play with you. (2+ players)
2. Get a die..
3. Find a little trinket to be your game piece.
4. Everyone starts on the space that says "START HERE"
5. Choose a player to go first.
6. Roll the die.
7. Move your game piece the number of spaces on the die.
8. Do the activity on the space or draw a card.
9. Every time you complete an activity, with your mask on, take a mask card.
10. The person with the most mask cards at the end of the game wins.

\*Cut out the mask cards.

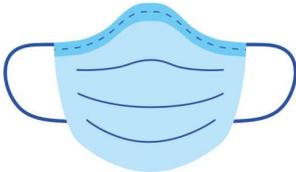
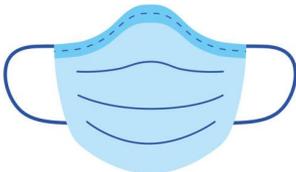
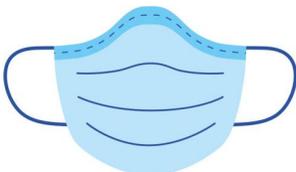
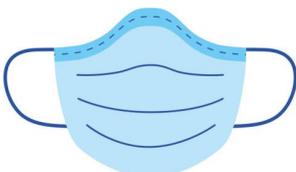
\*Cut out the fun cards, be sure to write in your own fun activities on the blank cards.

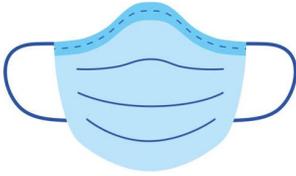
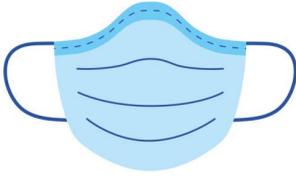
# MASKerades Mask Cards

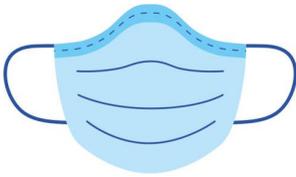
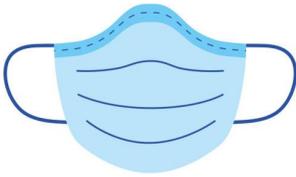




**FUN CARDS, EXTRA MASK CARDS,  
BLANK FUN CARDS FOR YOU TO ADD  
YOUR OWN FUN TO!**

	TURN ON YOUR FAVORITE SONG, PUT ON YOUR MASK AND DANCE LIKE NOBODY'S WATCHING!
	ROLL YOUR DICE AGAIN AND JUMP UP AND DOWN THE NUMBER OF TIMES SHOWN ON YOUR DICE!
	SING YOUR FAVORITE SONG AT THE TOP OF YOUR LUNGS OR PLAY IT SUPER LOUD ON YOUR DEVICE
	PLAY DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE WITH THE OTHER PLAYERS

	<p>LIP SYNC TO YOUR FAVORITE SONG</p>
	<p>LIP SYNC TO THE FAVORITE SONG OF THE PLAYER ON YOUR RIGHT</p>

	<p>ACT OUT YOUR FAVORITE DISNEY CHARACTER. THE PLAYER THAT GUESSES, GETS A MASK CARD. NO ONE GUESSED? YOU GET TWO MASK CARDS!</p>
	<p>PRETEND YOU ARE A DOCTOR AND DIAGNOSE EACH PLAYER WITH A SILLY ILLNESS.</p>
	<p>ACT OUT YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL</p>
	<p>DANCE TO A TAYLOR SWIFT SONG!</p>
	<p>PLAY HOT POTATO WITH YOUR FAVORITE TOY OR STUFFED ANIMAL</p>

	<p>DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL</p>
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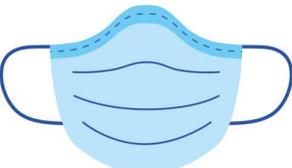
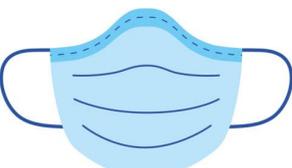
	
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