

MASK GUIDANCE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12



Fully vaccinated residents are no longer required to wear masks in most indoor and outdoor settings following CDC and Washington state guidance. King County removed the local mask directive now that 70% of King County residents 16 and older have completed their vaccine series and are fully vaccinated. This level of vaccination is an amazing achievement. At the same time, children under the age of 12 are not yet able to get vaccinated. This means there are over 300,000 children in King County who are not protected from COVID-19 infection.

Masks are still an important way to protect children. Since unvaccinated children can still spread the virus to others, mask wearing protects others as well. We continue to depend on one another for this community protection. All adults should continue wearing masks in schools and childcare settings and consider wearing them in other public, indoor settings when children are present in large numbers.

For parents, caregivers, and families here, are ways you can continue to keep children under the age of 12 safe.

GET VACCINATED IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR COVID-19 VACCINE

CONTINUE MODELING MASK WEARING BEHAVIOR.

Even if you and other family members are fully vaccinated you can show support for your children when you are all out together.



EXPLAIN WHY IT IS STILL IMPORTANT.

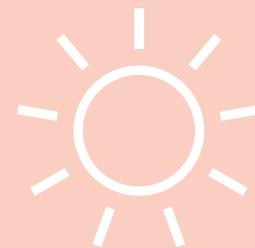
Younger children may be confused why they still need to wear masks when older children and adults around them no longer must. Share that things are getting better, but face masks will continue to keep them safe while we wait for a vaccine for everyone.

ASSESS RELATIVE RISKS BASED ON ACTIVITY TYPE AND SETTING.

Everyone's risk tolerance is different. Those with children under 12 should consider the community transmission risks and impacts of participating in settings where you are indoors, with unvaccinated people or people outside of your home, and the likelihood and ability for physical distancing and consistent mask use.

CHOOSE OUTSIDE WHENEVER POSSIBLE

The risk of spreading COVID-19 is much lower outside than inside.



MAKE A FAMILY PLAN.

As your family and younger children spend more time around groups of people who are and are not wearing masks, having a plan for different gatherings or locations can help children know what to expect.

- Openly discuss comfort levels based on risk assessment and health history with immediate and extended family.
- Be consistent so that kids know what to expect in different situations and are more able to cooperate within an established routine.
- For example, your plan could establish:
 - There is no need to wear masks indoors with vaccinated family members, but kids and adults will wear masks running errands at grocery stores, etc.
 - There is no need to wear masks for outdoor playdates with friends, but masks are still required at busy, public playgrounds and for indoor playdates.
 - There is no need to wear masks indoors or outdoors with a small, select group of friends, including unvaccinated children (often considered a pod).

For more information visit:

[KINGCOUNTY.GOV/VACCINE/YOUTH](https://kingcounty.gov/vaccine/youth)