

# COVID-19/coronavirus planning for in-person learning

A new school year usually brings excitement and anticipation. But getting ready for the coming year will take extra planning because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## **what should we do before in-person learning?**

Before school starts:

- Kids should get all needed vaccines to protect them from many illnesses.
- If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, find out how the school will handle those.
- Know your school's plan if there are COVID-19 cases, possible cases, or exposures to the virus in the school. Be ready in case the school turns to remote learning, where students use the internet to attend school and do assignments from home. Being prepared can help make the change easier if it happens. Work with school staff if your child needs help getting a device or internet access.
- Make sure your child has all needed school supplies. Kids also should have:
  - Several masks that fit well. The masks should not have valves.
  - Hand sanitizer.

## **how can parents help kids get ready for in-person learning?**

When you know what the school's plan is, start talking about it so kids are better prepared. Let your child know that school rules might be a little different this year. But they help keep the students, school staff, and teachers healthy.

Talk about how things might change, such as:

- The schedule for in-person days might be different from regular school days.
- The same smaller group of kids might have the same teacher all day.
- Lunchtime might mean smaller groups of kids eat at different times. Some schools might have kids eat at their desks.
- Schools may need to close sometimes, or some kids or teachers may need to learn or work from home for a bit.

Kids should be ready to:

- Wear masks at school.
- Keep a physical distance from friends. Explain that even though kids miss each other, they can't hug or share supplies yet.
- Wash their hands well and often or use hand sanitizer.

*(continued on reverse)*



- Teach your child how to judge their physical distance from others. Schools might say that kids should stay 3–6 feet apart. Find out what your school requires. Then, use a tape measure to show your child what these distances look like. Find things in your home that are 3–6 feet apart so your child has visual cues to keep in mind. You can have your child practice by putting toys at a distance and measuring it.
- Let kids know ahead of time that schools might need to close and that students will continue learning online from home. This will help them — and you — be ready if that happens.

### **how can parents help kids be ready to wear a mask at school?**

- Make sure your child has plenty of masks or face coverings that fit well and are comfortable. They should fit snugly, cover the nose and mouth, have 2–3 layers, not have valves, and be washable or disposable.
- Put your child's name on the masks with permanent marker.
- Remind your child that masks are not toys and are not for trading.
- Make a plan for the mask when your child eats lunch. Check if the school has a plan. Options might include:
  - Putting the mask in a paper bag. A plastic bag is OK if your child doesn't have a paper bag.
  - For older kids, hanging the mask on a lanyard, string, or chain around their neck. Younger kids should not hang masks from a string around the neck.
  - If kids eat in their classrooms, schools might put hooks on the desks for hanging masks during lunch.
  - Wearing a fresh mask after lunch.

### **what should we do before each school day?**

- Leave extra time to do a quick symptoms check. If anyone in your house has any symptoms of COVID-19, even mild ones, don't send your kids to school. Know the person to contact at school to let them know if this happens.
- Keep clean masks by the door. Get in the habit of grabbing a mask when putting on shoes so you don't forget.
- Your child's backpack should have:
  - Several masks in case a change is needed
  - A labeled bag to store dirty masks
  - Hand sanitizer

### **what should we do after each school day?**

Coronavirus can live on some surfaces for a little while, but we are still learning about this. When kids get home:

- They should wash their hands when they come into the house. This is one of the most important things to do.
- They should take off their shoes and leave them by the door. You might also have kids change into clean clothes.
- Put their backpacks and school supplies in a place that is not near where you eat.
- Put washable masks in a chosen dirty laundry spot or put them into the washer. If disposable masks will be reused, store them in a paper bag for ventilation for a few days before re-wearing.

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## what else should I know?

- Talk about how school is going. Some kids adapt more easily than others. Reassure your child that getting used to change takes time.
- Help your family keep healthy routines like eating well, washing hands well and often, and getting exercise.
- Set a routine for going to bed and getting up on time.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older in your family should get the flu shot when it is available. Doctors don't know yet if having the flu and COVID-19 at the same time could lead to more severe illness.

Check the CDC's website for more information about getting ready for school.



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