



Connecticut Nurses Association Family Child Care Policy & Procedure Guidance Series (2021)

Topic: Masks

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The **Connecticut Nurses Association Family Child Care Policy & Procedure Guidance Series (2021) (Guidance Series)** was created to support Family Child Care (FCC) Providers when establishing or building upon health and safety policies in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The 2021 **Guidance Series** provides best practice considerations/components, sample language and rationale, so that FCC providers can evaluate their own policies, procedures, practices, and family communications and then identify changes or additions essential to promoting health and safety in their homes. The 2021 **Guidance Series** is based on the latest guidance, practices, or recommendations from the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Caring for Our Children (CFOC) National Health and Safety Standards and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

1. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The *Connecticut Nurses Association Policy & Procedure Guidance Series* (2021) is a resource for FCC providers. Using research informed and evidence-based practices, the *Guidance Series* provides information to assist FCC providers in creating or strengthening their childcare policies, procedures, or practices. Additionally, the *Guidance Series* provides rationale, and answers “why” the information provided is an important component of the policy, procedure, or practice. In understanding ‘why’, we hope that FCC providers will apply this information when making decisions about how activities will be implemented in their FCC homes.

The *Guidance Series* documents are organized as follows

- Overview
 - Provides a brief description of the specific topic being addressed.
- Policy Checklist
 - This section provides a comprehensive Checklist to assist in the development of, or build upon current policies, procedures, and best practices for FCC programs. The Checklist identifies five (5) best practice components/considerations, includes sample language and rationale so that FCC providers can evaluate their own policies, procedures, practices. The Checklist is based on the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Guidance, the Caring for Our Children (CFOC) National Health and Safety Standards and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.)
- Resources/References
 - This section includes best practice resources and references.
- Sample Policies/Procedures
 - Select policies and practices are provided in this section.

2. OVERVIEW

The risk reduction strategies to limit the spread of COVID-19 includes wearing masks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends additional risk reduction strategies that family child care (FCC) providers can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They include

- Washing hands often with soap and water, and if soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. It is important to remember that hands should always be washed with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
 - Covering cough and sneezes.
 - Requiring sick children and staff to stay home.
 - Physical distancing (see CDC, [Social distancing](#))
 - Ventilation (see CDC, [Ventilation](#))
 - Vaccinations for COVID-19 (see CDC, [Vaccinations](#))
- (See CDC, [Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#), 2021).

“COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other (within about 6 feet). When people with COVID-19 cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe they produce respiratory droplets. These droplets can range in size from larger droplets (some of which are visible) to smaller droplets” ([CDC](#), p.1, 2021). Since the “infections occur mainly through exposure to respiratory droplets when a person is in close contact with someone who has COVID-19” (CDC, p.1, 2021), wearing masks provide a barrier that helps to keep respiratory droplets from spreading from one person to another person. In other words, masks offer some protection to the people who wear them, and protects those around them in case they do not know they are infected with COVID-19.

The [CDC](#) recommends that children 2 years of age and up wear masks and that masks should NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation. Effective September 21, 2020, the [Connecticut Office of Early Childhood](#) (OEC) requires that children 3 years and older need to wear masks while in child care programs. Children under 3 years of age are not required to wear masks. This requirement has been put in place to help prevent children, staff, and families from getting and spreading COVID-19.

It is important that FCC providers communicate their policies to families and to anyone who may be providing services to children at the FCC. Masks must be worn by everyone when they visit the FCC home, including during drop off and pick up.

The OEC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for everyone. Therefore, if a child has a medical condition, special health need, disability, special education need, or developmental need that makes wearing a mask unsafe, they may not be required to wear one. FCC providers need to make sure that if a child is unable to remove their mask by themselves, they should not wear a mask at the FCC. Parents should work with their child’s health care provider, special education professionals and family child care to come up with a plan that works best to keep everyone safe. The OEC exceptions to wearing masks in childcare programs are located in [Memo #29](#) on the [OEC Website](#).

Wearing masks by children, staff, and families in FCC settings include the following important guidance:

- Wearing Mask Correctly
 - Put the mask over the nose and mouth and secure it under the chin.
 - Fit the mask snugly against the sides of faces, slipping the loops over ears or tying the strings behind the head.
- Choosing a mask
 - Make sure there are two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.
 - Mask must completely cover the nose and mouth.

- Masks must fit snugly against the sides of faces and do not have gaps.
- Caring for masks
 - Wash your cloth mask whenever it gets dirty or at least daily.
 - If you have a disposable face mask, throw it away after wearing it once.
 - Use regular laundry detergent and the appropriate settings according to the fabric label.
 - If washing by hand, wash your mask with tap water and laundry detergent or soap. Rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove detergent or soap.
 - Dry your mask completely in a warm or hot dryer. If you air dry, hang your mask in direct sunlight to dry completely or lay it flat and let it dry completely.
- Storing masks
 - Store used and unused masks separately.
 - When reusing masks, keep the same side facing out.
 - When taking off masks to eat, drink or for naps, store them in a labeled container such as a paper bag, one for each child.
 - After eating, put the mask back on with the same side facing out.
 - Be sure to wash or sanitize hands before putting on and taking off masks.

3. POLICY CHECKLIST

| CONSIDERATIONS | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Items | Sample Language | Rationale/Resource/Reference | |
| 1 | Who should wear masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families, staff, children and visitors must wear masks upon arrival and at all times when they are at our family child care. Effective September 21, 2020, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) requires that children 3 years and older need to wear masks while in child care programs. Children under 3 years of age are not required to wear masks. | <p>Effective September 21, 2020: See Connecticut Office of Early Childhood</p> <p>This requirement has been put in place to help prevent people from getting and spreading COVID-19.</p> |
| 2 | Exceptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a child has a medical condition, special health need, disability, special education need, or developmental need that makes wearing a mask unsafe, they may not be required to wear one. Any child who is unable to remove their mask by themselves, will not wear a mask at out FCC. Parents need to provide documentation if their child is not able to wear a mask while in child care. Parents may work with their child's health care provider, special education professionals and with our family child care to come up with a plan that works best to keep everyone safe. Masks will not be worn by any child during meal time and nap time. | <p>The OEC exceptions to wearing masks in childcare programs: See Memo #29 on the OEC Website.</p> |
| 3 | Types of masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children should wear masks that fit them well. Mask must cover children's nose and mouth and be secured under the chin. Masks should also fit snugly against the sides of faces. Children should wear reusable masks that are made with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. Disposable masks are also acceptable. Disposable masks can only be used for one day, so children will need to wear a different disposable mask every day. | <p>How to Select a Mask: See CDC Website at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html</p> |
| 4 | Providing masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents must provide at least ___ additional masks for their child(ren) in case their masks become wet or soiled while in our family child care. | |
| 5 | Storing masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used and unused masks will be stored separately for each child in a labeled paper bag. Masks will be removed when children are eating, drinking or when taking naps. Staff will change the child's mask when it becomes soiled. | <p>Your Guide to Masks: See CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html</p> |

4. RESOURCES/REFERENCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- How COVID-19 Spreads
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
- Prevent the Spread of COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- Use Masks to Slow the Spread of COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Vaccinations: COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Your Guide to Masks
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

- Child Care During COVID-19
<https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/child-care-during-covid-19/>
- Exceptions the Mask Requirement
[read OEC Memo #29](#)

5. SAMPLE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Sample Mask Policy

The following mask policy has been developed in response to the new requirement for children and staff to wear masks while in family child care settings.

- Families, staff, children, and visitors must always wear masks upon arrival and when they are at our family child care.
- Effective September 21, 2020, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) requires that children 3 years and older need to wear masks while in child care programs, therefore children attending our family child care will need to wear masks.
- Children under 3 years of age are not required to wear masks.
- Any child who is unable to remove their mask by themselves, will not wear a mask at our FCC.
- If a child has a medical condition, special health need, disability, special education need, or developmental need that makes wearing a mask unsafe, they may not be required to wear one. However, parents will need to provide documentation if their child is not able to wear a mask while in our family child care. Parents may work with their child's health care provider, special education professionals and with our family child care to come up with a plan that works best to keep everyone safe.
- Children should wear masks that fit them well. Mask must cover children's nose and mouth and be secured under the chin. Masks should also fit snugly against the sides of faces.
- Children should wear reusable masks that are made with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.
- Disposable masks are also acceptable. Disposable masks can only be used for one day, so children will need to wear a different disposable mask every day.
- Parents must provide at least 2 to 3 additional masks for their child(ren) in case their masks become wet or soiled while in our family child care.
- Masks will be removed when children are eating, drinking or when taking naps.
- Used and unused masks will be stored separately for each child in a labeled paper bag.

Parent/Guardian/Staff/Name and Signature

Date

Disclaimer: This is a Sample Policy/Procedure only and may not include all the requirements for FCC provisions as outlined in the OEC Regulations.