

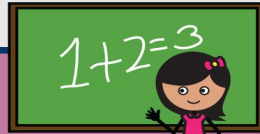


Back to School Considerations During Covid-19



Communicating Orally

- Speak slowly and slightly louder, but don't shout or exaggerate your speech
- Optimize hearing by reducing background noises
- Ensure that hearing aids or cochlear implants are worn
- Consider wearing a mask with a clear panel
- Wear a photo of yourself unmasked, smiling, and not wearing protective equipment.



Using Non-Verbal Reinforcers

- Use body language to add information to your speech:
 - Emphasize eyebrow movement
 - Squint eyes when smiling
 - Add a friendly wink as a sign of support
 - Exaggerate nodding
- Pair verbal messages with visuals e.g. objects, photographs, pictos, drawings, and written words to promote independence

Having Fun with Facial Expressions

- Play "guess the emotion" game with cues to help identify emotions (e.g. happy crinkles of our eyes when we smile)
- Place a picture on each desk of masked & unmasked face
- Use real photos of masked faces showing a variety of emotions and have students match picture to teacher's facial expression
- Explore facial expressions using digital photos of peers demonstrating emotions and placing cutouts of masks on them



Classroom Considerations

- Allow time for students to readjust to the classroom
- Provide a predictable yet flexible routine
- Create a designated calm space for students
- Allow multiple breaks during instruction
- Use a timer and visual schedule to indicate times of mask-wearing
- Face students when speaking
- Consider using closed captions



Wearing Masks and Hygiene

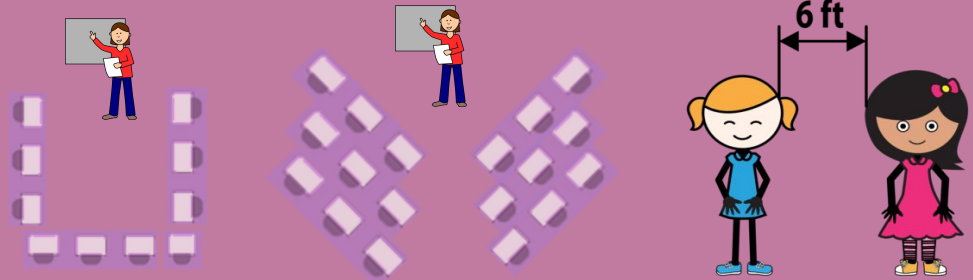


- Provide numerous visuals of hygiene procedures
- Have students place used masks in a ziplock bag
- Anticipate that some students will not tolerate mask wearing
- An adjustable strap can be added to the mask
- Teachers should change masks often to ensure clarity of speech



Classroom and Seating

- Consider appropriate seating accommodations (chair/desk height)
- Use storage solutions that do not interfere with seating
- Avoid tripping hazards such as materials stored on floor between desks
- Consider desk placement to facilitate an unobstructed view of teacher



Social-Emotional Wellbeing



- Create a warm, safe and connected environment
- Anticipate behavioural changes (e.g. crying, not eating)
- Talk about and validate students' feelings
- Discuss how school will be different and how it will be the same
- Be sensitive to the different experiences of each student

Establishing New Routines



- Include students in discussions (e.g. what's different)
- Go on a school wide tour, looking at markers for distancing, designated play areas, etc.
- Prepare students that they will remain in the same classroom and that outside play will be with their class
- Explain and practice the new hygiene routines

Resources

- [Wearing a Mask Social Story](#)
- [Helping Children Adapt to Wearing a Mask](#)
- [Information on Corona Virus](#)
- [Coronavirus Parent Checklist](#)
- [Considerations for students with chronic illness and return to school](#)