

Cloth Face Covering Guidance for Child Care Facilities During COVID-19 Response Phase 2

Those providing care to children of essential workers are critical to our state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While small group sizes, physical distancing, daily health checks, handwashing, respiratory etiquette and disinfecting remain essential to minimize the risk of spreading infection, Missoula City-County Health Department (MCCHD) is now encouraging staff members to wear cloth face coverings during the work day when 6 feet of physical distancing is not possible.

MCCHD does not recommend that children attending child care wear cloth face coverings to reduce the risk of transmission unless the provider determines they can reliably wear, remove, and handle cloth face coverings following CDC guidance throughout the day. Children are more likely to touch their faces or require adjustments, which may lead to more exposure to themselves or others. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on a child younger than two, those who have trouble breathing, or any kid who cannot take it off by themselves. In addition, a child should never wear a cloth face covering while sleeping.

These alternative face coverings are often homemade and should not be the medical-grade face masks such as surgical facemasks or N95 respirators. Cloth face coverings are used to reduce the likelihood that the wearer will transmit the COVID-19 virus to other staff members or children when they may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic.

Key messages about cloth face coverings:

- Create and wear face coverings in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Make sure the cloth face covering covers your mouth and nose, fits snugly but comfortably against your face, and is easy to breathe through.
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer before putting on the face covering and when taking it off. Try to only touch the straps or elastic and not the cloth part when doing so.
- Wash the face covering after daily use. Face coverings can be laundered just as you would any other item by using a hot water wash and a hot air dry. Some may need to be washed on the delicate cycle.
- If you find that staff are frequently putting on and taking off face coverings in a way that they may become contaminated, look to have a back-up supply to cycle through.

- When not in use, store face coverings in a manner that prevents potential contamination to common surfaces. When finished using a face covering, place them in a laundry bin or plastic bag to be washed at the end of the day. Always store unclean items so that they are not accessible to children.
- Wearing a face covering does not replace the need to continue all other measures such as frequent hand washing, avoiding touching the face, practicing physical distancing, and covering coughs/sneezes, which are our best tools to help prevent the spread of illness.
- Face coverings do not provide adequate protection for others if a staff member has symptoms of COVID-19. Ill staff members and children should always stay home.