



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

Policy Bulletin 2021-08

EEC Licensing Policy

Title: Mask Usage in EEC Child Care Programs

Effective date: September 7, 2021

All EEC licensed or approved programs must require face masks to be worn by adults at all times, unless outside. This includes educators, staff entering the program space, parents or guardians during drop-off and pick-up, facilities maintenance professionals performing upkeep and maintenance duties, and any adults providing services to children in the program space (e.g., 1-1 aides or in-person service providers).

(1) Face mask use requirements for children are as follows:

- a. Children age 5 and older must wear a face mask while indoors.
- b. Children age 2-4 who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle face masks should be strongly encouraged, at family discretion, to wear face masks indoors and must be supervised at all times while wearing a face mask.
- c. Children under the age of 2 years must not wear face masks or face coverings of any kind, unless requested by a parent and the program receives written parental consent.
- d. By federal public health order, all children over the age of two and staff are required to wear masks on child care transportation.

(2) Exceptions to the use of face masks:

- a. Individuals while outdoors.
- b. Children while eating drinking, sleeping, or napping;
- c. Staff while eating or drinking
- d. Individuals who have difficulty breathing with the face covering or who are incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance;
- e. Children with severe cognitive or respiratory impairments who may have a hard time tolerating a face mask;
- f. Children for whom the only option for a face covering presents a potential choking or strangulation hazard;
- g. Individuals who cannot breathe safely with a face covering, including those who require supplemental oxygen to breathe; and
- h. Individuals who, due to a behavioral health diagnosis or an intellectual impairment, are unable to wear a face covering safely.