

# Helping students prepare for back to school



**Parents can play a big role in helping their children prepare for what school may look like this fall.**

**First, talk about why it's important to wear a mask.** Explain how masks protect oneself and others from germs that can make a person sick. Give a visual demonstration by blowing a handful of confetti, and then try doing that while wearing a mask. Children can see that our breath can't travel very far with a mask, making it much harder to spread germs.



**Teach children to cough and sneeze into their elbow.** Practice with them so they know what it should look like.

**Remember, frequent handwashing should be a part of your routine. Make sure your child washes his or her hands for at least 20 seconds; singing a song like "Happy Birthday" or "Itsy Bitsy Spider" is a good timer!** Make the routine fun by mixing it up with different songs and rhymes.



**Let them know what will be different at school this year.** Since parents probably won't be able to walk into the building with their children, explain that in advance. Knowing what to expect on the first day helps kids feel confident and prepared. It's important to stay informed about your school's procedures so you can communicate that information to your children when necessary.



**Children's Hospital**  
New Orleans  
LCMC Health

**When it comes to social distancing, empathize with your child that it's going to be hard to stay socially distanced from their friends.**

Explain that while it's hard to stay away from friends, it's an important way to keep both them and their friends safe. Remind them to wave to friends, instead of hugging. Help them practice visualizing a "bubble" around their bodies and keep it from popping by avoiding contact with someone else's bubble.

**When talking about preparing for school in a pandemic, be mindful of your own anxieties.**

Ask your child what they know about the coronavirus, give them an opportunity to ask questions, and talk about how they feel and what their concerns are. Remember that they take their cues from you. Reassure them that we are keeping them safe by washing hands, keeping distance, and wearing masks.

Limit children's exposure to media coverage of the virus.

**Lastly, remember to be a good role model.**

Practice safe health measures yourself in a positive, upbeat manner. Remember that your attitude is important whenever you have to put on a mask, wash your hands, or cover a cough. In all, be understanding when discussing these safety measures with your children. Parenting in a pandemic is challenging but show your child how to be resilient and adaptive during changing times.



**If a parent has concerns about his or her child's adjustment, they can always speak with their primary care doctor about seeking professional help.**



**Visit [chnola.org/school-wellness](https://chnola.org/school-wellness) for additional COVID-19 resources for parents and kids.**