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KENTUCKY AUTISM
TRAINING CENTER 

Preparing Our Individuals for COVID-19 Precautions

Presenters:
Michelle Antle, Ed.S.
Field Training Coordinator



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What do we know about our individuals?

- ✓ Excel with routines and predictability
- ✓ Thrive with visual supports to interpret their world
- ✓ Are concrete thinkers
- ✓ Have difficulty with theory of mind/perspective taking
- ✓ Can misunderstand abstract concepts such as social norms (distancing, no physical contact, limited access to people)

What helps you move through your day? How do you handle changes in your schedule?





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How can we help prepare them for the new expectations of their routines?



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Give them time to process

- Talk to them ahead of time about changes they will see
- Show pictures!
- Why are these changes important to them?
 - ✓ People wearing masks
 - ✓ Standing 6 feet apart/social distancing
 - ✓ New procedures in familiar environments
 - ✓ Favorite locations/stores may be limited





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1. Use pictures/visuals to aid comprehension

- ✓ Think about taped markings on the floors in stores
- ✓ New entry and exit procedures in stores
- ✓ Shelves empty or changes to stock



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How will I teach these new expectations in our setting?



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2. Use Social Stories

Mr. Mike's Social Story:

https://youtu.be/lnP-uMn6q_U

Samples on our website:

<http://www.kyautism.org/>

Create your own!


- Read before you leave the house
- Outline what they can expect to see
- Teach replacement behaviors

Eating With My Friends

There may be changes in where I have to sit when I eat. The rule is we have to be 6 feet apart. Sometimes I may have to eat in my room. Sometimes I may be able to eat in the cafeteria but will have to sit at a different table. This is a safe thing to do!

Social Stories are a PREVENTATIVE strategy...NOT a reactive one!






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Use Social Narratives

Wearing a Mask






www.theautismhelper.com




Because of coronavirus, I need to wear a mask when I go out into the community.



Masks help keep everyone safe and healthy. Masks make it so germs don't spread as easily.


It may feel weird or uncomfortable to wear a mask at first. The mask should cover your nose, mouth, and chin.

Wash your hands before putting on your mask. Make sure to wear your mask whenever you leave your house.

We won't need to wear masks forever. Wearing them now helps keep everyone safe and healthy.

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Show examples


3. Find videos of other adults

Examples:

<https://youtu.be/51gRWiJL32g>
(May 11 Governor Recommendations)

<https://youtu.be/2RLcPN1FUYY>
2:55 (July Governor Mandate to Wear Masks)

<https://youtu.be/Rn7LhJeqYil>
(Medical Facility Expectations)

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4. Teach replacement greeting options

- air hugs, air fist bump, peace sign when entering or exiting
- Have them think about what their favorite movie character would do?
 (mocking jay from the Hunger Games, Chewie on Star Wars, Ironman from Avengers, etc)



Use Power Cards



Governor Beshear likes it when we:

- Stay Healthy at Home
- Use social distancing
- Wash your hands
- Wear masks in public



Another resource: <https://kycss.org/sswpledge/>

Exposure Opportunities

- Practice at home or where they feel comfortable
- In small time frames
 - throughout the day
- Model with others first
- Use Reinforcement



Encourage each other by using behavior specific praise!



Sensory Needs and Considerations: How can we help?



Guidelines

1. Don't wait till the last minute
2. Incorporate their preferences
 - Have them shop with you to pick a material
 - Make the mask together
 - Consider scents they like to put on the inside of their mask
3. Give them time to process:
 - Figure out WHY they don't want to wear it
 - Let them explore the mask—touch/smell
 - Try them on gradually for a few seconds at a time
 - Celebrate small steps toward goal
 - Model appropriate wearing and use of mask
4. Never force them!
5. Attempt to use in alternate environments (house, car)—slowly!



REINFORCE!





Guidelines

Practice each of these steps.....

- Holding the mask
- Bringing the mask toward their face
- Touching the mask to the face
- Fitting the elastic over the ears
- Keeping it on for specified amounts of time

REINFORCE!!!!



Other ideas:

- Provide choices (which mask do you want today?)
- Embed in daily routine to practice daily
 - Formally practicing at different times of day
 - Practice in different settings to promote generalizations
- Identify Mask-Free areas/times
- Task analysis for putting on a mask



Mask Free Zone



Additional Resources:

- [https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/sites/afirm.fpg.unc.edu/files/covid-resources/Supporting Adults with Autism through Uncertain Times Full Packet.pdf](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/sites/afirm.fpg.unc.edu/files/covid-resources/Supporting%20Adults%20with%20Autism%20through%20Uncertain%20Times%20Full%20Packet.pdf)
- <https://www.alpinelearninggroup.org/media-center/video-library.php>



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Questions?

Michelle Antle

Michelle.Antle@louisville.edu

(270) 792-7840

Center contact info:

www.kyautism.org

Telephone:

(502) 852-4631

Fax: (502) 852-7148

