

# Mask Toleration Training

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Emily Tonucci M.A., BCBA, LBA



## **Introduction**

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Provide ABA-related services for students in the district; Pre-k through Transition-Age
- Coming up on my 4th year in district.



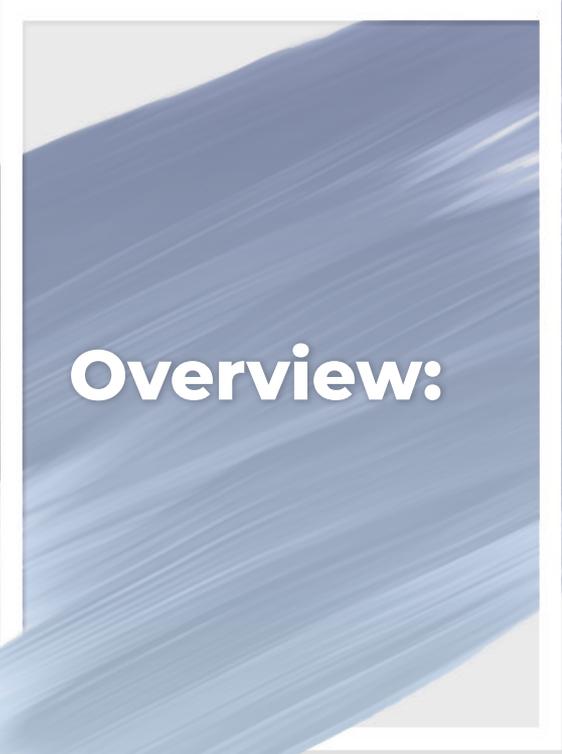
## Expectations:

- Students will be asked to wear their masks for the majority of the school day in situations where social-distancing is not possible.
- Mask breaks will be provided as frequently as possible; both scheduled and upon student request.
- ***If you believe your child qualifies for a medical exemption contact your building principal or school nurse.***
  - *Accommodations will be made on a case by case basis.*



**Source:**

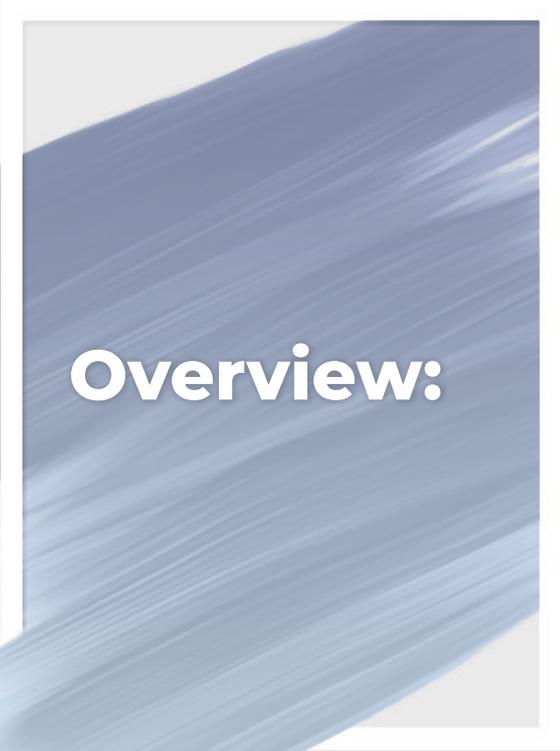
The following protocol we are going to discuss was originally developed by BCBA's (Board Certified Behavior Analysts) from the The New England Consortium and was shared in one of their newsletters.



## Overview:

### **The following protocol aims to:**

- Increase your child's tolerance to the mask being near their face
- Increase the duration they can wear the mask



## Overview:

- Two phases of this protocol
- **Phase 1 is the testing phase**
- Phase 2 has three different starting points
  - **A - For a child that will wear the mask for a short amount of time**
  - **B - For a child that mildly resists wearing a mask**
  - **C - For a child who engages in challenging behaviors when attempting to wear a mask**



## General Tips:

- Use a mask with a preferred pattern/character on it
- Isolate reinforcers
- ***If at any point your child is not successful on one of the protocol steps, go back to previous successful step.***



**Phase 1:**  
**Trying the  
mask**

- Show the mask to your child and say, “It’s time to wear your mask.”
- Attempt to put the mask on them
  - If they protest, move away, or resist, **STOP**
  - If they allow you to put it on them, write down how long they wear the mask.
    - This will be the starting point.

## **Phase 2A:**

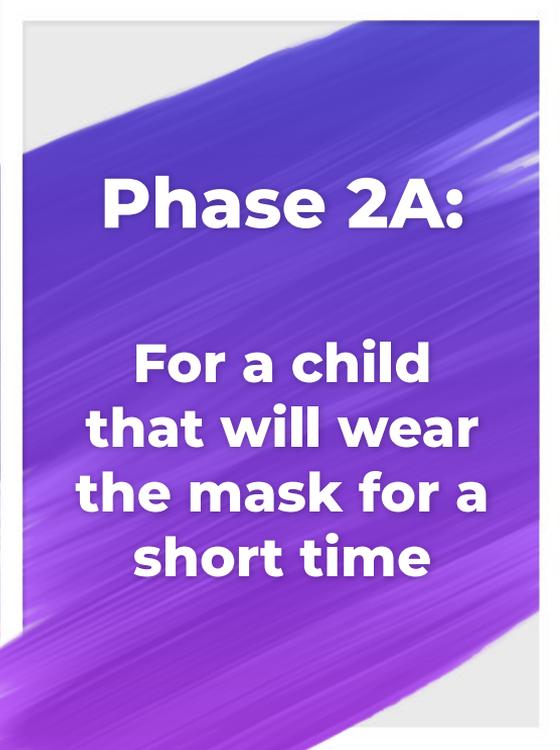
**For a child  
that will wear  
the mask for a  
short time**

1. Get a timer and your child's most preferred reinforcer (favorite toy, show, music, food, sensory input, etc.).
2. Tell them, "It's time to wear our mask. We leave it on until the timer goes off."
3. Place the mask on your child and set the timer for a little less time than they wore it in baseline.

## Phase 2A:

**For a child  
that will wear  
the mask for a  
short time**

4. When the timer goes off, remove the mask and say, “You did great work wearing your mask. You earned \_\_\_\_\_!” and immediately give them their preferred item.
5. Do this **five** times.
6. If they are successful five times in a row, the next time add slightly longer to the timer:
  - a. About 5-10 seconds for a child who will wear the mask for less than a minute
  - b. About 30 s for a child who will wear the mask for a minute or longer
  - c. About 1 minute for a child who will wear the mask for 5+ minutes.



## Phase 2A:

**For a child  
that will wear  
the mask for a  
short time**

**SUCCESS** = leaving the mask on  
for the full time *without*  
attempting to take it off.

## **Phase 2A:**

**For a child  
that will wear  
the mask for a  
short time**

### **Problem Solving:**

- If your child is not successful twice in a row, set the timer for the last amount of time they were successful, and try again.

## **Phase 2A:**

**For a child  
that will wear  
the mask for a  
short time**

### **Continued practice:**

- Run about 10 practice sessions a day but give your child time in between sessions to take a break, relax, or do another activity (at least 10-15 minutes) to avoid making this an uncomfortable process for them.
- Continue to increase the amount of time until your child can wear the mask for the amount of time your situation requires.



## Phase 2B:

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

1. Show them the mask. Say, “It’s time to wear my mask.”
  - a. Put it on **your own face** and have them watch you.
  - b. After about 10 seconds, take it off and say, “I’m all done. Your turn.”



## Phase 2B:

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

2. Hand your child their own mask.
  - a. If they **accept** it, praise them and provide them with access to a favorite item or a bite of snack.
  - b. Allow them about 10-15 minutes of space/another activity before you try again.



## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

3. If they refuse it, gently use a physical prompt to have them take it.
4. Repeat 1-3 about five times.
  - a. Once your child readily takes the masks from you, go to step 5.



## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

5. Show your child the mask. Say, “Time to wear your mask,” and touch the mask to their cheek.
  - a. If they resist this, try a different spot, like their shoulder.
6. Once they allow you to place the mask on their cheek (or shoulder), praise them.
  - a. Repeat this five times, with breaks in between.
  - b. From the shoulder, move to the cheek. From the cheek, move to step 7.



## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

7. Show your child the mask. Say, “Time to wear your mask” and place it over their nose and mouth.
  - a. *Don’t worry about securing their ears.*
8. As soon as the mask covers their nose and mouth, remove it and provide praise and access to a favorite item/snack/activity.
  - a. Repeat steps 7-8 about 5 times. Then move to step 9.



## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

9. Begin to increase the amount of time you keep the mask covering their face and nose.
  - a. After 5 successful trials (ones where they don't resist or pull away), increase the amount of time slightly.
  - b. Go from contact only to 1 second, to 2 seconds, increasing by 1 second up to 10 seconds.
  - c. Count down for your child so they know how much time is left.



## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

10. Once your child allows you hold the mask in place for them for 10 second, place it fully on their face (so the ear elastics are on) and you are not the one holding it in place.
  - a. Have them keep it on for 10 seconds.
  - b. Do this until your child is successful about 5 times in a row.

## **Phase 2B:**

**For a child  
that mildly  
resists  
wearing a  
mask**

11. Once your child can wear the mask for 10 seconds, increase the amount of time they wear the mask 1-2 seconds at a time.
  - a. Give each new time about 5 successful trials before you move to the next time.
12. When your child can wear the mask for 1 minute, follow the steps for [Phase 2A in the purple slides above](#).

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

1. Consult with your child's BCBA to make sure these steps are right for your situation and your child before starting this program.
2. Show your child the mask.
  - a. If they engage in challenging behavior, keep the mask visible, prompt them to say, sign, or use their AAC device to say, "No" or "Break."
3. Put the mask away only **after** they say "no" or "break."

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

4. Provide praise and say, “Thank you for telling me no. I’ll put it away for now.”
  - a. Give them access to a preferred item.
5. If they do not react to the mask, provide praise and a preferred item.
6. Give about 10-15 minutes of another activity before beginning another trial.

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

7. After about 5 times of them successfully saying “No” with a prompt, begin to wait 1 second before prompting them.
8. After about 5 successful times at a 1 second prompt delay, begin to wait 2 seconds before prompting them.
9. After about 5 times at a 2 second prompt delay, begin to wait 3 seconds before providing a prompt.
10. After about 5 successful times at a 3 second delay, begin to wait for your child to say “no” without a prompt.

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

11. If they cannot say “no” without a prompt, consult with your BCBA for program modifications.
12. Once your child will say “no” without a prompt, move to Step 13.

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

13. Show your child the mask. When they say “No”, you say, “Not yet,” and wait 1 second before putting the mask away.
  - a. If your child waits appropriately (no challenging behavior), provide praise and a preferred item.

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

14. Once your child can wait for 1 second with the mask visible about 5 times in a row, increase the amount of time to 2 seconds.
  - a. Continue gradually increasing the amount of time until your child can wait about 10 second with the mask visible after they said “No.”
  - b. Continue to provide praise and preferred items when they wait successfully.

## Phase 2C:

**For a child who engages in challenging behavior** (aggression, self-injury, tantrums)

15. When your child can wait 10 seconds with the mask in view, consult with your BCBA and discuss moving on to the steps for **Phase 2B in the Red/Orange slides above.**



**Questions?**

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions!

My email is

[TonucciE@plymouth.k12.ct.us](mailto:TonucciE@plymouth.k12.ct.us)