

There has been quite a bit of confusion along with frustration regarding the recent Licensing update - [COVID-19 Licensed Child Care Facilities and Providers \(FAQs\)](#)

The bottom line is: **Children in California over the age of two years are required to wear a mask.** For any questions or clarifications in your specific city/county, we recommend that you check with your local Department of Health as well as your assigned LPA and Regional Office since they will be who checks your facility (and approves any exemptions if you choose to allow exemptions for face masks). We also encourage checking with your insurance carrier. Please also note that things are changing rapidly so what was approved a few weeks ago might not be the same as today.

Here is how the policy reads:

CDPH currently requires all individuals who are two years of age and older to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth, unless they are (1) eating or drinking and able to maintain 6-foot distancing; (2) outdoors and able to maintain 6-foot distancing; or (3) exempt due to a medical condition, mental health condition, disability, hearing impairment, or one of the other exemptions listed in the [guidance](#).

This is mandated by the California Department of Public Health – not Licensing – although Licensing will enforce this if there are any violations to this policy. If we do not follow this requirement and a child or staff member gets infected with COVID-19, we have violated that person's [Personal Rights \(LIC 613A\)](#). The right: *"To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs. (a)(2).* This is a **Type 'A'** violation from Licensing and may even result in a program being closed by the Health Department. This recent change from 'should' to 'required' may be due to the latest information regarding the variant strains that have been detected.

- A new variant of COVID-19, which was first reported in the U.K. and has now been detected in dozens of countries, appears to be much more infectious than previous strains.
- The new strain doesn't seem to be associated with more serious illness, in either adults or children.
- **However, experts say kids are more susceptible to the new strain, which means it may spread more easily within that group.**

[What Is the Impact of the New COVID-19 Strain on Kids?](#)

There has been an increased number of infections in Child Care Centers resulting in Type A Violations being issued. So, even though parents may not want their children to wear a facemask, if an infection occurs the parent may retaliate against us. We must protect ourselves and our businesses!

As we all know – children are quite resilient and adaptable – it may be a bit of a challenge to begin with but once they see that everyone is doing the same it will quickly become 'the norm' for them. Here is a testimony from one of our preschools where that has indeed happened:

"All of our children 2 and above have been wearing masks since June 1st and I can tell you they adapt well. It has become norm and a bit of a fashion show. The parents are the ones that struggle, but they need to remember that this is for the health and safety of all and it is a good thing. We put out this [mask story](#) before we reopened in June so our parents could view it with their child before returning. You may have some parents who fight it at first, but most will thank you."