



All Together Now NH



alltogethernownh.com

Hello!

We hope you are all well and enjoying some summer sun and fun outdoors! We are writing to provide you with some information/resources that might be helpful for your child as schools are working on plans for what learning will look like in the fall 2020. I would love to know how your school district has decided to proceed and how you think your family will access school this coming school year. Feel free to contact me to discuss any concerns.

This summer, we have been closely following data, studies and recommendations from various sources to make recommendations to schools to best meet your child's needs. Please know we are working closely with school districts to secure appropriate PPE for staff working with children with hearing loss. This includes clear face masks and clear face shields. We are also presenting solutions for the fog factor of this clear PPE and cleaning protocols for DM/FM use to be presented to staff should districts/families be in school settings.

Clear window face masks, or clear face shields may be considered as an alternative to cloth masks. Both allow access to an individual's mouth area for speechreading. Below are some options we have found for clear face masks and clear face shields if you feel this might be helpful for you to wear when communicating with your child when out in the community.

Suggested vendor and product for clear masks:

- ADCO Communication Window Mask (washable/reusable)
<https://adcohearing.com/collections/adco-standard-window-masks-with-headbands>
- Clear Mask
<https://www.theclearmask.com/product>

Suggested vendor and product for face shields:

- G-FORM: Youth and adult size plastic face shields. Foam cushion and band at crown for comfort.
www.G-form.com Contact Turk Giovanucci Mobile: 617-688-5141 Email: TurkGava@mac.com
- Rapid Response: Humanity Shield: A full shield that doesn't obscure the face
www.rapidresponseppe.com

Also, Northeast Deaf and Deaf of Hearing <https://www.ndhhs.org/> has information on how to get your family a free clear mask for any person in NH with a hearing loss. If you feel this would help your child please follow the link for an email address to use to request one be sent to your home.

If you have not already had your child practice wearing a face mask, we encourage you to do this over the summer. Many adults with hearing loss that we have spoken to report difficulty using masks with elastic loops over their hearing aids. (See information tips at end of this letter.) Here are five quick tips on how to wear a mask with hearing aids (taken from Boys Town, *How to Wear a Mask with your Hearing Aids*, May 18, 2020):

1. Pull back any long hair into a bun or with an elastic tie
2. Rather than looping the elastic of the mask on the ears, utilize button extensions for the mask (which can be made or bought).
3. Obtain a mask that has four strings and ties behind the head rather than worn with elastic on the ears.
4. Check that the hearing aid is still in place during and following removal of the mask.
5. Remove your mask at home in an open area so if the hearing aids fall to the ground it can be found more easily.

We understand this may be a stressful time for you and your child. Again, please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. As this process continues to evolve we value your input.

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Wearing a mask with your hearing aids



Clever tips to protect your ears and hearing aids while wearing a mask



1. If you have long hair, pull it back into a bun and loop the elastics around the bun.



2. Create a "mask extender" out of fabric or ribbon about 4 inches long. Buttons sewn on either side allows for a place to put the elastic other than your ears.



3. Sew 2 large buttons onto a soft headband, placing the buttons to line up with each ear. Looping the elastic around each button will take the strain off your ears.



4. Use masks with string or ribbons that tie in the back. There are YouTube videos on creating masks that tie, which puts absolutely no pressure on the ears.

Communicating when wearing a mask



Speak slowly, clearly and at a normal volume.



Rephrase remarks when not understood.



Take turns when speaking.



Make sure hearing aid users have them on.



Keep background noise in the room to a minimum.



Face each other (at a safe distance).

When removing your mask...

Check to make sure hearing aids are still in place after removing a mask as they may come off with mask removal.

