



MAY 9, 2022

Re: Ending Masking Requirements

Dear parents and colleagues:

We are now over two years into the global COVID-19 pandemic, and we know the challenges your families have faced are almost too numerous to count. We want to thank you for your continued patience and commitment to partner with us to control the spread of the virus in our clinics.

Today, we are pleased to announce that Autism ETC will discontinue the mask requirements in all clinical locations effective immediately.

This decision has been carefully considered over the past few months by our Executive Management Team, and we do not make this or any change to our COVID-19 policies lightly. At this time, our other infection control procedures will remain in place including daily screening and temperature checks.

As always, we want to share with you the factors that have influenced this decision:

- We continue to recognize that the precautions implemented to slow the spread of the virus have had a detrimental impact your child's skill acquisition specifically in the areas of speech and language.
- The community transmission rate and the number of positive infections within our clinics are at an all-time low. The warmer weather should aid in this downward trend.
- The majority of other large institutions similar in nature to Autism ETC have removed masking requirements.
- The vaccination rate at each clinic among our staff is now within the tolerance widely thought to provide herd immunity protection to our employees.
- Though the Centers for Disease Control has not changed its guidance requiring masking for all healthcare institutions, that guidance is now out-of-date in comparison to its more recent guidance for the general population.

While we are pleased that each new wave of the pandemic seems to be more manageable than those which came before, we recognize that the situation could deteriorate once again. If the severity of the pandemic worsens in the months ahead, we will reinstate a mask requirement for anyone entering the clinic. Additionally, we will always remain prepared with additional infection control measures should they become necessary.

We are hopeful once again that the end of the COVID-19 pandemic may be in sight. We ask you continue to partner with us as we all return to our normal lives. Vaccinations and boosters are now available for free to anyone in the US over the age of 5 years old, and we *highly* recommend all eligible individuals receive an appropriate vaccine or booster as soon as possible. Our latest guidance can be found on our website (autismetc.com/covid-19).

Sincerely,

Autism ETC COVID-19 Response Team

