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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye
Commissioner

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TO: Providers of Services to Young Children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #18 REVISED
Youth Camp Guidance

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) provides the following information in response to the many questions and concerns that it is receiving from youth camps pertaining to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This memo provides guidance that is intended for day camps as defined by Connecticut General Statutes § 19a-420, whether required to be licensed or exempt from licensing, including municipal camps. Resident camps, as defined by C.G.S. § 19a-420 (2), will not be permitted to operate during the declared state of emergency unless and until permitted to do so by order of the Governor.

Youth camps should continue to review the memos issued by the OEC that provide important guidance for youth camps including waivers of licensing requirements during the declared state of emergency, additional requirements imposed through Executive Orders that must be met during this emergency and resources to support programs during and following the emergency. These memos can be found at <https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/>

It is important to understand that the COVID-19 emergency is a changing situation, and that as CDC and/or State of CT guidance changes, the OEC will update guidance to providers.

As of June 22, 2020, all operating day camps shall comply with the guidelines in this Memo. All schools are encouraged to permit day camps to use their facilities, provided cleaning and modifications can be arranged in time.

We recognize that deciding whether to operate is a very difficult decision that must be made at the provider level. Individual programs must determine what is best for them given guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local authorities, and their individual business decisions.

Camps considering whether to operate must consider the additional provisions that have been put in place by Executive Order in order to limit the spread of the virus. The following **requirements** must be included in a camp's plan for operating during this public health emergency:

Health Screening

All staff and children are required to be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress.

When conducting screening, the program should consider the following:

- Staff shall wash hands and wear face coverings.
- Staff shall stand at least 6 feet away from the child and parent/guardian or stand behind a physical barrier, such as a glass or plastic window, or partition that can serve to protect the staff member's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced if the child being screened sneezes, coughs, or talks.
- Ask the parent/guardian to confirm that the child does not have a fever, shortness of breath, or cough.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

Camps shall identify, per licensing requirements, a plan for a child or children who develop an elevated temperature or who may become ill, i.e. a "sick room." You are encouraged to develop and review this plan with the Camp Physician or Camp APRN prior to the start of camp. Input from your local health department is also advisable.

Masks/Social Distancing/Workplace Safety

- Use of a mask or cloth face covering for each employee at all times while in the workplace as directed by the [Department of Economic Development Safe Workplace Rules for Essential Employees](#) per [Executive Order 7BB](#) is required.
- Children age 3 years and older are required to wear masks while in child care programs. For implementation information on this requirement and exceptions, the OEC issued [Memo 29, Group Size and Mask Requirements as part of a system of protections against COVID-19](#)
- Instructions for [use of cloth face covering](#) are available from the CDC.
- Appropriate social distancing strategies shall be implemented. Social distancing is required, and may take many forms as outlined by CDC with a dedicated section for "social distancing strategies" in its [guidance for child care programs that remain open](#).
- Camps shall comply with the requirements listed in the [Department of Economic Development Safe Workplace Rules for Essential Employees](#) per Executive Order 7V.

Hand/Respiratory Hygiene/Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection

- Regular hand washing by staff and children with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
 1. Before coming in contact with any child;
 2. Before and after eating;
 3. After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing;
 4. After using the rest room;
 5. Before handling food;
 6. After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated; and
 7. After using any shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards, mouse.
- If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer shall be used. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers should always be supervised by adults.

- All staff shall cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow. Children shall be encouraged, when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow, and soiled tissues shall be disposed immediately after use.
- Protocols for intensified cleaning and disinfection shall be implemented.

Group Size

- Group size shall be limited to sixteen (16) children in one space. Up to two additional children may be added when the following contingencies are satisfied: Up to 18 children will be allowable in a space provided a minimum of fifty square feet of total indoor usable program space is available for each child in the group. Bathrooms, hallways, kitchens and food service areas, refrigerators, heating and cooling units, staff desks, storage units and any space or equipment used for other than the activities of the children shall be deducted from the total indoor usable square footage of program space.
 - The allowance of 16 children per space was effective August 20, 2020 and will continue unless modified. The expanded permission for up to 18 children was effective October 12, 2020.

Reporting COVID-19 Cases Diagnosed in a Child or Staff Member

If a child or staff member who has been present in the program is diagnosed with COVID-19, the camp must notify families and staff of the program about the exposure.

In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the List of Reportable Diseases. Those required to report such diseases must **report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the Connecticut Department of Public Health Epidemiology and Emerging Infection Program (860-509-7994) and the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient** by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease. For weekend and after-hours reports to DPH, dial 860-509-8000. Contact information for the local health department can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Local-Health-Admin/LHA/Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>.

Additional practices to those below may be recommended to the provider in consultation with the local health department or the CT Department of Public Health.

- Contact your local health department or the CT Department of Public Health.
- Determine the date of symptom onset for the child/staff member.
- Determine if the child/staff member attended/worked at the program while symptomatic or during the two days before symptoms began.
- Identify what days the child/staff member attended/worked during that time.
- Determine who had close contact with the child/staff member at the program during those days (staff and other children)
- Exclude the children and staff members who are determined to have had close contact with the affected child/staff member for 14 days after the last day they had contact with the affected child/staff member.
- Conduct appropriate cleaning and disinfection:
 - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.

- Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning or disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Depending on the size of the program and the number of people affected, closure of a particular room in the program (for larger programs) or the entire program might need to be considered.

Specific situations and exposures can be discussed with the local health department or the Department of Public Health (860.509.7994).

Informed Consent

- Camps shall inform and obtain signed consent on the form posted on the OEC website from all staff and the parent(s) of all children enrolled that they have received notice of the following:
 - People who are 65 years and older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions or are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to stay at home. A list of medical conditions associated with a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can be found in [CDC's guidance](#).¹ Individuals and families should consult their healthcare provider to determine whether they have medical conditions that place them at risk.
 - Staff and children living in households with individuals who are 65 years and older OR have higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to stay home.

Transportation

- Prior to providing transportation at the start of the day to any child, such children shall be screened for any observable illness.
- While transporting children in care, the current guidance regarding group size, the wearing of a mask or cloth face covering and social distancing apply.
- The groups of children shall not mix while transporting. Camp planning may consist of neighborhood groupings to allow the same grouping of children throughout the entire camp day.

Pools

Camps may contact their local health department/districts for direction regarding the use of pools during the camp season.

Licensing Waivers

¹ Includes chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised (cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications), severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher), diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis and liver disease. Individuals should consult their healthcare provide to determine whether they have medical conditions that place them at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In an effort to support programs that choose to remain open, the Commissioner has granted several waivers of licensing requirements.

- Licensed youth camps may extend their operating days under the terms of their current license to operate during the period of the declared state of emergency provided such additional operating dates are reported to the OEC. A program may report such additional operating dates by submitting a General Report of Change form found on the OEC website.
- Health records on file prior to the declared state of emergency for children enrolled in youth camps which expire during the declared state of emergency are acceptable. Health records for children that have been attending a legally operating child care program or school that has been temporarily closed due to COVID 19 virus are not required provided the parent attests in writing that the child is up-to-date with physical examination and provides information regarding any disabilities and/or special health care needs.
- Staff training including first aid, CPR, C4K health and safety, and administration of medication training for youth camps that expire during the declared state of emergency will fulfill the training requirements.
- Staff physicals for youth camps that expire during the declared state of emergency are acceptable.

Fingerprints

Per OEC Memo # 27, effective August 3, 2020, background checks required to be completed through the OEC pursuant to Sections 19a-80 (c), 19a-87b (c), & 17b-749k of the Connecticut General Statutes must include submission of fingerprints in accordance with section 29-17a of the Connecticut General Statutes. This requirement applies to youth camps that receive Care 4 Kids subsidy. There is no current requirement to submit background checks through the OEC for youth camps that do not receive Care 4 Kids subsidy.

Licensing Fees

Many camp licenses are due for renewal during the spring and the renewal fee is substantial. During this declared state of emergency, a camp may decide to delay the submission of their renewal application allowing their license to expire and then seek to reinstate such license if a decision to operate is made at a later date. Please note that it takes several days to process a reinstatement application; however, an inspection is not required as part of the reinstatement process provided the camp operated at the same location within the past year.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect the health and safety of Connecticut's children.