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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: April 30, 2021

TO: Licensed Youth Camps

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Cononavirus Memo 38
Residential Camp Guidance and Removal of Group Size

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) provides the following information specific to the operation of residential youth camps during the 2021 summer season. Executive Order No. 11 did not extend the cancellation of resident camp operations that was issued in Executive Order No. 7PP. Therefore resident camps will be permitted to operate during the summer of 2021. The Office of Early Childhood is in close communication with the Governor, the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the state's Emergency Operation Center as preparations are made to end the state of emergency.

Resident camp programs that wish to operate this summer should prepare to do so. The OEC strongly encourages all youth camps to consider the recommendations contained in CDC's most up-to-date guidance found at [Guidance for Operating Youth and Summer Camps During COVID-19 \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0511-covid-19-youth-camps.html) when developing policies and procedures for the operation of their camp during 2021. Specific guidance for residential camps is provided by the CDC on topics such as vaccination, testing, cohorting, daily health screening, ventilation and the development of an emergency operations plan. The CDC also provides the [Youth Programs and Camps Readiness and Planning Tool](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0511-covid-19-youth-camps.html) to support the development and implementation of safe camp opportunities. It is suggested that the CDC guidance be visited often as it will be updated. It is not anticipated that the OEC will implement any additional enhanced requirements specific to residential camps.

The group size requirement of 20 outlined in OEC Memo #18 will no longer be in effect as of May 20, 2021 for both day and residential camps. Camp operators are strongly recommended to continue to limit group sizes and to be aware of the risks of larger cohorts. Cohorting is an important mitigation strategy for all camps. By maintaining smaller cohorts, camps will reduce the number of individuals who may need to quarantine should a COVID-19 case be identified among participants.

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The CDC guidance recommends that campers and staff that sleep together in a cabin, bunkhouse or other quarters, be defined as a “household cohort”. In these situations, campers and staff in the same “household cohort” do not need to wear masks or physically distance when they are together whether indoors or outdoors provided no non-household cohort members are nearby (e.g. in the same building). In all other situations, cohorts of camp staff and children must continue to comply with mask requirements as a mitigation strategy, especially because children are not yet vaccinated. Mask requirements for children in child care and youth camps can be found in [OEC Memo No. 29](#). Mask requirements for adults are contained in Connecticut’s [Sector Rules for Reopen](#). These requirements will continue to be updated.

While it is recognized that engaging in close-contact or indoor sports increases the risk of spreading COVID-19, the challenges that this presents for this type of activity in residential and day camps is also recognized. Although conducting these activities is not prohibited, consideration for the implementation of mitigation strategies such as masks, social distancing, cohorting and improved ventilation in these situations become especially important.

Residential camps are required to follow any current enhanced COVID-19 requirements implemented during the declared state of emergency that apply to all camps and are outlined in OEC memos found at <https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/memos/>. As requirements are loosened, camps are strongly encouraged to continue to implement mitigation strategies such as masks, social distancing, cohorting and improved ventilation to protect children and staff and reduce the spread of the virus.