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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: April 23, 2020 REVISED May 18, 2020 REVISED June 3, 2020 **REVISED June 25, 2020**

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.

Day camps that were operating as of May 5, 2020 may continue to operate and shall implement the guidelines contained in this Memo. Other day camps, not currently operating, may not begin operation until June 22, 2020. Staff training may begin before June 22, 2020. 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. Instructions for [use of cloth face covering](#) are available from the CDC. Executive Order 7BB does not require the use of face masks by:
 - anyone for whom doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition;
 - a child in a child care setting;
 - anyone under the age of 2 years, or an older child if the parent, guardian or person responsible for the child is unable to place the mask safely on the child's face.
- 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 no more than 14 children.

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. 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

In an effort to support programs that choose to remain open, the Commissioner has granted several waivers of licensing requirements that apply to youth camps during the period of the current declared state of emergency. These waivers will cease when the declared state of emergency ends.

- 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 and immunization 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 and immunization records for children that have been attending a legally operating

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.

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 immunizations 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

Additionally, Executive Order NO. 7E included a provision suspending required fingerprinting. Accordingly, new prospective employees in youth camps that receive Care 4 Kids subsidy are not required to submit fingerprint cards for the purposes of criminal history records checks. When individuals are unable to access fingerprint collections services, the comprehensive background checks performed by the OEC are modified to remove fingerprint-supported state and national criminal history records checks for the duration of the declared state of emergency. Youth camps that receive Care 4 Kids subsidy will be required to submit a DCF Authorization form to the OEC for all staff members so that background checks based on name and date of birth may be completed. The submission of fingerprints at a later date may be required upon request by the OEC when the declared state of emergency ends. This modification 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.

Youth camps that have submitted an application and fee to cover the 2020 summer season (June 22, 2020 through September 7, 2020) but then determine that the camp will not operate at all during the 2020 summer season, may submit a request from August 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 for an application fee refund. Due to the fluid nature of this emergency, many camps have not yet made a decision or may modify a previously made decision on whether to operate. Therefore the OEC is asking that refund requests not be submitted before August 1, 2020. Such requests may be sent to Youthcamps@ct.gov and must include a statement that the camp has not and will not operate during the 2020 summer season. Such requests will be processed by the OEC after August 31, 2020.

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