



New Jersey COVID-19 Youth Summer Camp Standards

New Jersey youth summer camps will be open for campers beginning on June 21, 2021 pursuant to Executive Order 149. The opening of youth camps will provide New Jersey families who are in need of childcare services with a viable option in addition to traditional childcare centers. “Youth summer camps” are defined in the Order to include youth day camps required to be licensed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq., facilities operating programs as described in N.J.S.A. 30:5B-3(b)(4), and other entities that provide daily multi-hour programming for youths, without regard to whether the program is subject to the certification requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq., including youth programs operated by municipal agencies. Residential and overnight camps are not permitted to operate pursuant to the Order.

As required by Executive Order 149, the Department of Health has developed these guidelines to govern the operations of youth summer camps. These guidelines set forth protocols governing all aspects of camp operations and describe the steps each camp should take to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread. Please note that given the dynamic nature of this pandemic, this guidance may be modified as the situation evolves and new data becomes available.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance, “[Considerations for Youth and Summer Camps](#),” and an easy to follow [decision tool](#) delineating factors youth camp operators should assess in determining whether to open and guidelines for operating camps safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Health recommends that each youth summer camp facility review the CDC guidance materials to assist with making decisions prior to opening.

COVID-19 Youth Camps Standards

Inspection and Enforcement for Youth Day Camps that are required to be licensed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq.

- Where required by statute, youth day camps, including municipally-operated programs, complete Youth Camp Certificate application form
- Pre-operational inspection from the Local Health Authority (LHA)
- Operational inspection from the Department and/or LHA

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 149, youth day camps are also required to develop policies and procedures that follow the standards outlined set forth below.



Implementation for All Youth Summer Camp Providers

All youth summer camps and youth summer programming operators must develop and implement a COVID Operational Plan that meets the requirements of Executive Order 149 (see appendix), as well as all applicable guidance contained herein. Such Plan should include written policies and procedures for each of the topics listed below. In addition to any requirements outlined in statute and regulation, all summer youth camps are required to submit an attestation form to the Department of Health.

<https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/sanitation-safety/youthcamps.shtml>

I. Staff and Camper Training

Camps should conduct staff training online, when possible, at the season orientation meeting and should update staff on the basic principles of emergency first aid, blood borne pathogens, infection control, hand washing practices, personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 signs and symptoms. For youth day camps that are subject to N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq, preseason orientation meeting shall meet the requirements of N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2(d). Details can be found at

<https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/sanitation-safety/youthcamps.shtml>.

Additionally:

1. The health director must have knowledge of COVID-19 symptoms and current guidance documents from the New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service found at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/>
2. Policy regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) use and training
3. Instruct campers on safe practices while attending camp
4. Access these training resources:
 - a. [Infection Prevention Audit Tool](#)
 - b. [Contact Tracing Awareness Training](#)
 - c. [Infection Control Resources Document](#)

Staff should also be trained in all of the protocols outlined below.

II. Screening and Admittance

Persons that have a fever of 100.4° or above or other signs of COVID-19 illness should not be admitted to the camp. Facilities should encourage parents and staff to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. In order to effectuate this policy, camps should institute the following protocols:

- A. At designated entry points, campers and staff must be screened for fever or signs of COVID-19 illness prior being permitted to enter the facility or participate in camp programming.

Symptoms related to COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches



- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Daily health surveillance screening for campers/staff must be conducted and results documented when signs and symptoms of illness are observed.

Isolate and remove any campers or staff if symptoms are related to COVID-19. Follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/>

III. Face masks, Infection Control and Social distancing strategies

A. Face coverings and gloves

Staff and campers shall, at minimum, wear cloth face coverings when social distancing of 6 feet between individuals and/or assigned groups cannot be maintained, except where doing so would inhibit that individual's health. Additionally, staff and campers are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings unless (1) doing so would inhibit the individual's health, (2) the individual is in extreme heat outdoors, or (3) the individual is in the water.

Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.

Staff should perform proper hand washing and use gloves. Staff should wear gloves when handling or serving food to campers.

Camps must supply their staff with such cloth face coverings and gloves.

B. Infection Control Strategies

All youth camp programs shall implement the following prevention and mitigation strategies to slow and limit COVID-19 exposure and spread:

1. Consider staggering drop off and pick up times to avoid large groups from congregating in one location.
2. Communicate and educate staff, parents, and campers in COVID-19 safety measures including:
 - Staying home when ill
 - Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
 - Wearing face coverings
 - Avoiding touching your face as much as possible
 - Reporting illnesses and symptoms to the camp Health Director or other healthcare personnel at the camp immediately
3. Face coverings are encouraged to be worn by campers and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult to maintain. It is understood that face



coverings may be challenging to campers (especially younger campers) to wear in all-day settings such as camp.

4. Handwash and hand sanitizers stations should be provided in numerous areas around the camp, and hand sanitizer should be provided to staff.
5. Implement enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures using EPA approved disinfectants and following [CDC guidance](#).
6. Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
7. Institute infection control procedures for areas around the camp, including entrances, dining areas, restrooms, and other areas prone to congregation
8. Limit any non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible. Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
 - a. Visitors shall be required to wear cloth face coverings while visiting the youth camp unless doing so would inhibit the individual’s health. If a visitor refuses to wear a cloth face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual by the business at the point of entry, the youth camp must decline to allow them to enter.
 - b. Avoid group events, gatherings, or meetings where social distancing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained. Limit group size to the extent possible.
 - c. Avoid activities and events such as field trips and special performances.

If the camp becomes aware that an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the camp should immediately notify [the Department of Health-Youth Camp Project](#), local health officials, staff and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. Camp administrators should implement a policy to prepare for when someone tests positive for COVID-19 that include, at minimum:

1. Written protocols detailing the camps COVID related response for symptomatic staff and campers including:
 - a. Establishment of an isolation space
 - b. Adequate amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) available, accessible, and provided for use
 - c. Methods to assist in contact tracing including records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff and daily attendance
 - d. Surveillance
 - e. Immediate notification to the Department of Health-[Youth Camp Project](#) and the Local Health Department (LHD) of those who test positive
2. Written protocols to address a positive case
 - a. Readmittance policies follow [CDS guidance](#), found at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-QuickRef_Discont_Isolation_and_TBP.pdf and



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

- b. When an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the camp should immediately notify local health officials, along with the Youth Camp Safety project and can return when they clear isolation.
3. Actions to take in response to individuals exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath) while on-site
 - a. Immediately separate the ill person from the well people until the ill person can leave the camp. The caregiver attending the ill camper and the camper should wear a face covering; try to maintain social distancing within the care area.
 - b. Staff members should be sent home and advised to follow, [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)
 - c. Follow additional [Guidance for Camps](#) issued by the DOH's Communicable Disease Service (CDS) and the CDC
4. Actions to take in response to notification that a staff or camper has tested positive for COVID-19
 - a. The camp health director shall contact their [LHD](#), State Health Department, Youth Camp Safety Project, for guidance.

Local health officials in consultation with CDS recommendations, will provide direction if a camp closure is warranted, following the identification of positive case(s) at the youth camp. The duration may be dependent on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community and the number of close contacts the camper had. Staff and children are discouraged from attending another facility if the camp is closed.

- b. Staff should help camp administration in identifying close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases. This should be done in conjunction with the LHD
- c. Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).
- d. To reduce the risk of exposure, wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.
5. Actions to take on returning a staff or camper after COVID-19 Diagnosis or Exposure
 - a. Close contacts and/or sick staff members or campers should not return to camp until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.

IV. Protocols for Facility and Buildings Management

- A. Ventilation:** Camps must ensure that their indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating, ventilation and air conditioning ("HVAC") systems where appropriate.
 - i. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component
 - ii. Open windows if A/C is not provided



- iii. Filter(s) for A/C units must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations

B. If multiple entities operate programs out of a shared facility, those entities must coordinate to arrange staggering of activities to minimize intermingling between groups of campers

- i. Install physical barriers where necessary
- ii. Signs delineating 6 feet for social distancing, frequent handwashing etc.

C. Policy and procedures for cleaning and disinfection:

- i. Close shared spaces such as dining halls, if possible; otherwise stagger use and [clean and disinfect](#) between use
- ii. Routine daily cleaning or as much as possible of common surfaces such as playgrounds with shared playground equipment (staggered use) and rooms (ex: countertops, restrooms, etc.)
- iii. Cleaning of shared objects
- iv. Plans to ensure that an adequate supply of cleaning supplies is maintained
- v. Procedure for deep cleaning that follow [CDC guidelines](#) for reopening a camp closed due to the identification of positive case(s) as recommended by CDS

D. Post signage

- i. Pictures to show [social distancing](#), [handwashing](#), [face coverings](#), and [other prevention methods](#) are recommended

- E. When campers need to be evacuated, social distancing should be maintained as much as possible.

V. Attendance

The attestation form will require camps to designate the camp setting as either an “indoor”, “outdoor” or mixed facilities camp to address limitations imposed by Executive Orders. The CDC guidance recommends restrictions on mixing of groups within the camp setting to reduce potential transmission and facilitate a simplified method of contact tracing. In line with these recommendations, camps are required to predetermine operations as either primarily indoor or outdoor camp, which require different protocols.

A. Indoor and outdoor requirements

1. Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that groups include the same group of children each day and that the same staff remain with the same group of children each day. Ideally, try to keep groupings developed on the first day intact throughout the duration of the camp session or season whichever is longer.
 - i. Restrict mixing between groups. Camp operators should minimize camper movement between groups.
 - ii. Groups shall stay together and if interactions with other groups occur, social distancing must be maintained between groups.



- iii. Staff and campers must social distance and wear face covering especially when social distancing cannot be maintained

B. Indoor camp requirements

- i. Staff to camper ratios 1 adult:1 counselor:10 campers (ages 5-17)
 - 1. Do not to allow intermingling between groups. Designated groups of campers must remain unchanged day to day and not be allowed to intermingle between assigned groups.
 - 2. Indoor designated camps should not allow intermixing of groups while children are outside.
 - 3. Follow [DCF guidance](#) for childcare centers licensed as both a youth camp and childcare center where appropriate and are not contrary to the Youth Camp Safety Standards.
 - 4. Staff ratios for campers under five years of age must be maintained according to the New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Standards
 - a. Campers with ages from 2.5 through 4 must be supervised by one counselor for every 7 children.

C. Outdoor camp requirements

- i. Staff to camper ratios 1 adult:1 counselor:20 campers (ages 5-17)
- ii. Outside canopy/tenting/cover accessibility required
- iii. Summer camps need to ensure that precautions are taken in consideration of inclement weather and emergencies:
 - 1. Outdoor designated camps that elect to occasionally move indoors due to inclement weather or similar event, as opposed to cancelling session, should ensure proper indoor space to contain campers while following social distancing protocols.
 - 2. Groups of campers should remain unchanged day to day and not allowed to intermingle between assigned groups.
 - 3. Staff ratios for campers under five years of age must be maintained according to the New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Standards
 - a. Campers with ages from 2.5 through 4 must be supervised by one adult and one counselor for every 14 children.

Restrict attendance to states that have opened youth camps.

VI. Protocols for Transportation Services

- A. During bussing/transportation to and from camp, encourage social distancing by maximizing space between riders and maintaining space between the driver and the passengers
 - i. A staff person should accompany the driver on all transportation routes to ensure safety and social distancing
- B. Face covering must be worn by all staff onboard buses
- C. Face coverings are encouraged to be worn by campers as feasible and required in times when social distancing is difficult to maintain. It is understood that use of face coverings may be challenging for younger campers.
- D. Open windows, except during inclement weather, to encourage ventilation
- E. Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected between each use



VII. Documented policy and procedure for food service

A. Social distancing

Camps should avoid communal dining where possible and consider serving meals in separate rooms if possible. If feasible, have campers bring their own meals. Camps must make appropriate accommodations for food storage. Additionally, mealtimes should be staggered to ensure separation of groups and avoid congregation.

B. Hygiene and sanitation

1. Clean and sanitize surfaces between each meal service, pursuant to the protocols outlined [here](#)
2. No self-service or buffet style dining
3. Encourage proper hand washing before and after meals
4. Use disposable food service items (utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.

VIII. Activities

A. Documented policy and procedure which outlines permitted and prohibited activities

- i. Prohibit any off-site activities and field trips
- ii. Stagger outside play events for individual camp and coordinate outside play between camps sharing the same building (Ex: school site location)
- iii. Prohibition on contact sports or inter-group competitions.
- iv. Playing competition matches/games where players from separate camps/regions/locations gather to compete is prohibited.
- v. Sporting activities must be conducted in an outdoor setting.
- vi. “Skills and drills” activities that do not involve contact and can be social distanced are not prohibited.
 1. Focus on team skills and drills
 2. Focus on individual skill building
 3. Limit the time players spend in proximity to each other
 4. Increase breaks and hydration activities
 5. Follow CDS guidance regarding pool operations
- vii. Educate campers and staff on sports etiquette regarding social distancing and hygiene (i.e., no spitting, high-fives, handshakes, etc.)
- viii. Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected (i.e., soft or plush toys)
- ix. Clean, disinfect and air-dry equipment after use



- x. Recommend face coverings for appropriately aged campers during activity, if appropriate and not in extreme hot weather

IX. **Questions or Concerns**

- A. Questions or concerns on the content, interpretation or application of this guidance can be directed to the Department of Health – Youth Camp Safety Project at 609-913-5115 or email at youthcamps@doh.nj.gov

School districts that are operating “youth summer camps” as defined in Executive Order No. 149 should continue to follow the relevant rules, regulations, and guidelines of any athletic conference of which they are a member, e.g. the NJSIAA. In addition, youth day camps that are otherwise subject to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq. must submit and application and receive a Certificate of approval from the Department.



Appendix

Minimum Elements of the COVID-19 Summer Camp Plan

- The CDC decision-making guidance chart attached to your plan for summer camp 2021 youth camp season.
- Ensure the health director is appropriately credentialed, is always on-site, and has knowledge and training in infection control (noted above) and COVID-19 Sign and symptoms
- Ensure that youth camp is also licensed by DCF as a childcare center if you have campers under 2 and half years old.
- Ensure that your camp does not offer residential and/or overnight services
- Designation as an indoor or outdoor camp or both
- For those camps that are required to seek certification prior to operation, apply to the youth camp project at least 2 weeks prior to start of camp activities
- Ensure that the camp has no off-site activities
- Ensure that camps prohibit contact sports
- Ensure that staff and campers are educated on social distancing, hygiene (hand washing, cough etiquette), proper use of face coverings and staying home when sick
- Adequate postings of signage encouraging hand hygiene, social distancing and COVID-19 prevention materials?
- Drop off and pick up procedures
- Temperature screening and health surveillance activities at entry for staff and campers
 - a. Exclude symptomatic staff/campers from site (provide isolation area for staff/campers who are already on-site that are exhibiting signs and symptoms)
- Groups of campers (maximum of 10 indoors and 20 outdoors)
- Ensures food service avoids communal dining and stagger mealtimes
- Sick staff/camper policies
- Routine cleaning and disinfection frequencies (deep cleaning prior to opening and after periods of closure due to positive cases)
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Where transportation services are provided, ensure appropriate sanitation and social distancing procedures



References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Considerations for Youth and Summer Camps*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html> (accessed May 21, 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again: Appendix F INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND DAY CAMPS* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf> (accessed May 19, 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Considerations for Youth Sports*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html> (accessed May 24, 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Youth Programs and Camps Decision Tool Public Health Considerations for Reopening Youth Programs and Camps During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-programs-decision-tool.html> (accessed May 19, 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Water and COVID-19 FAQs: Information about Drinking Water, Treated Recreational Water, and Wastewater*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html> (accessed May 9, 2020)

Environmental Health & Engineering Inc. (2020, May 18). *Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance: Prepared for American Camp Assoc. and YMCA of the USA*. (Retrieved from: <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business/camp-operations-guide-summer-2020>)

New Jersey Department of Children and Families. (2020, March, 25). *Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities*. https://www.nj.gov/dcf/news/DCF-Health-Safety-Standards_for_Child-Care-Centers.3-25-20.pdf (accessed May 26, 2020)

New Jersey Department of Children and Families. *Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities*. (May 29, 2020)

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/news/Final.CC.Health.and.Safety.Standards.pdf>

Return to work and isolation criteria

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-QuickRef_Discont_Isolation_and_TBP.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

Email the Youth Camp project with any questions at youthcamps@doh.nj.gov