

# 2021 CAMP CHECKLIST

## PREPARING TO RUN CAMP WITH COVID-19 STILL LIKELY PRESENT

### ☐ Messaging to Camp Families

- ★ Develop an overall communication plan
  - Set communication frequency with camp families
  - Enrolled Families vs. Prospective Families vs. Non-Enrolled Returners
- ★ Set Expectations for the Summer - the earlier, the better
  - What will be different
  - New COVID-19 Policies and Procedures
    - Testing or Quarantine Procedures leading up to camp
- ★ Be upfront that COVID-19 might still come into camp
  - Despite new precautions for Summer 2021, there's no way to guarantee COVID-19 won't enter camp
  - Parents should understand the risk and also understand how you will still care for their child at camp
    - "COVID-19 may come into camp and we're prepared to stop the spread if it does. Here's how."
    - "COVID-19 may come into camp and we'll take great care of your child if it does."
  - Answer all parent and camper questions as they arise
    - Consider holding Zoom information sessions for your parents (and a separate one for campers) so they can ask questions about policies and procedures
      - Invite medical professionals who are advising you to participate as well
    - Despite all the precautions being taken, camp may not be the right environment for everyone during a pandemic, so be respectful of their decision and provide support throughout
- ★ Explain why you're running this summer (*especially* if you didn't in 2020)
  - There has been an extra year to plan and put precautions in place
    - "We have way more information about the virus now than last year."
  - It's important for the greater community
  - Camp is needed more than ever
    - Kids have been remote schooling for the past year
    - The ability to be outdoors and making new friends has never been more important

### ☐ Messaging to Staff

- ★ Develop an overall communication plan
  - Set communication frequency with staff members
  - New staff members vs. Returners vs. Alums who are returning in 2021
- ★ Be honest
  - They need to know what to expect

- Give them the opportunity to opt out of coming if they are unable to live up to what is needed during this summer
  - Make sure they know the strictest possible protocols
    - You can ease up as the summer goes on, but it is difficult to impose harsher protocols than you originally communicated
- ★ Set Expectations for the Summer
  - “All Hands On Deck” approach
  - Non-negotiable rules
    - New COVID-19 policies they’ll be expected to enforce
      - All staff need to be on board; don’t leave enforcement to just leadership staff
  - Personal sacrifices will have to be made
    - The safety of the camp community is most important
    - The reward is being at camp and making an impact in kids’ lives
  - Outline how staff life at camp will change. This may include new policies and procedures such as:
    - Testing and quarantining before camp
    - Living in specific pods during orientation and during the summer
    - How much more direct time they will spend with their campers, particularly in an initial cabin “quarantine” at the start of each session
    - Restrictions on how they can socialize with other staff/friends at camp
    - Changes in time off
    - Restrictions on visitors and trips out of camp
    - Procedures regarding wearing face coverings at camp, sanitizing, and additional responsibilities to keep camp clean and safe

## □ Staff Time Off Considerations

- ★ How can staff recharge their batteries without breaking the camp “bubble”?
  - Bars, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels...basically anything that has the potential to interact with the public should be off-limits
  - Is there a secluded location either on-site or off-site that could be used as a staff hang out location?
- ★ Consider chaperoning time off
  - Ensures that COVID-19 rules are still being followed, thus not jeopardizing the hard work being put in at camp
  - Ensures no interaction with public
  - Designate a “Director of Staff Life” to help plan time off logistics
    - It’s a full-time job
    - Something as simple as ordering lunch from a local restaurant is time consuming
    - Finding enough staff to chaperone can also be challenging
- ★ Time off suggestions:
  - Beach (areas away from public)
  - Local trails or forest preserves for day hikes
  - Fast food crawl (you’d be surprised how much staff members value normalcy in a crazy summer)

## ❑ Adapt Camp Facilities To a COVID-19 World

- ★ Any activity that can be done outdoors should be done outdoors
  - Indoor transmission of the virus is higher, so re-imagining camp facilities is key
- ★ Some suggestions:
  - Build or purchase more picnic tables as needed to hold meals outdoors
  - Hang string lights outdoors so there is a place to congregate outdoors at night
  - Buy extra tents or canopies to provide shade to hold activities outdoors (i.e. Arts & Crafts)

## ❑ Adapt Camp Programs To a COVID-19 World

- ★ Camp can be just as fun in a COVID-19 world as it was before!
- ★ Don't be afraid to change and adapt camp traditions
  - No single camp tradition is more sacred than having camp operate
  - No single camp program is more important than the camp experience itself
  - Keep in mind COVID-19 protocols and procedures when developing programs
- ★ New traditions may be created
- ★ Better ways of doing things may be discovered
- ★ This is an opportunity to get back to basics and focus on the vital human interactions that camp creates

## ❑ Health Center Considerations

- ★ Evaluate current health center procedures to ensure they are updated to provide a safe environment in a COVID-19 world
- ★ Things to think about:
  - Sanitization frequency of the health center
  - # of health staff needed
  - Policies and procedures if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in camp
    - Communication with parents/guardians
    - Contact Tracing
    - Quarantining and testing of other potentially exposed campers/staff
    - Extra spaces around camp to quarantine in the event there is an outbreak
    - A plan for if the symptoms get worse and camp health center is no longer sufficient in providing care to the patient
  - Consider establishing a relationship with a Telemedicine company
    - Can meet with a health professional virtually
    - Avoids having to go into town for doctors visits unless absolutely necessary -- keeps the "bubble" intact

## ❑ Dining Hall Considerations

- ★ Evaluate current dining hall procedures and arrangements
  - Masks and gloves should be worn by anyone preparing or serving food
  - Highest risk of COVID-19 transmission is when people are indoors and not wearing a mask (i.e. when they are eating)

- Is it possible to eat all meals outdoors, weather permitting?
  - If meals must be eaten indoors, is there sufficient space to be socially distanced?
    - Consider having meal shifts to stagger number of people inside at any time
      - If meals are staggered, take into consideration if additional kitchen staff members need to be hired to account for longer meal times and additional logistics
      - Adjust daily schedule to accommodate additional time
- Evaluate family style vs. buffet style serving
  - The fewer people handling food, the better

## □ **Transportation Logistics**

### ★ How will campers safely get to camp?

- Is it possible to have all campers get dropped off at camp?
  - Safest option, but logistically may not be possible
- If drop off is not possible, what measures can be taken to ensure lowest possible exposure to the virus amongst campers and staff?
  - Coach buses are not well ventilated, so not ideal for campers to be on for extended periods of time, even with masks
  - If camp will be starting in a cabin-based quarantine, consider providing transportation that ensures those quarantines are intact from the beginning
    - Consider providing transportation in 15-passenger vans from a convenient location to camp
    - Minimize airport travel as much as possible
- Communicate with parents transportation logistics
  - All must remain in the vehicle, except the camper when they have been cleared
  - When/where they should say goodbye
    - Ideally in the vehicle, hugs before they get to the dropoff spot
  - Luggage dropoff procedures

## □ **Communicate with your Local Health Department**

- ★ What is your plan to run camp safely in 2021?
- ★ What new policies and procedures are in place?
- ★ What is the process if COVID-19 enters camp? When does the health department need to be alerted?

## □ **Build Relationships with Testing Companies**

- ★ Testing helps identify and isolate COVID-19 cases in camp
  - Lots of testing companies can be backed up due to demand
  - Super important to develop relationships so camp can get results back as soon as possible

- ★ Are you able to procure a Rapid Antigen Test Analyzer to have onsite?
  - Eliminates the need to send out tests
  - Can receive results in 15-60 minutes
  - Not as reliable as PCR Tests, but provides quicker results for suspected cases

## □ Hire Additional Staff Members

- ★ Think about extra staff roles that are needed to ensure the safety of the camp community and keeping the “bubble” intact
- ★ It is difficult to bring in new staff members during the summer
  - If you lose staff members during the summer, it is nearly impossible to replace them without breaking the bubble
    - Are there areas to consider “over-hiring” -- to ensure you have more than enough staff members, no matter what
- ★ Base your counselor hiring ratios on the idea that:
  - New counselors cannot be hired in case of staff departures
  - Counselors should not be moved between pods
  - Counselors will be spending more time with their cabin, depending on how camp program is structured, and will be benefited with extra break time
  - Podding adds additional challenges when utilizing specialists as counselors
  - **Optimal Recommendation:** three counselors or individuals with responsibilities covering each cabin
- ★ Some additional staff hiring options to consider:
  - Extra health center staff members
  - A local driver/errand runner who can pick up supplies locally and deliver to camp
  - A “Director of Staff Life” to plan staff time off
    - This should be a significant portion of someone’s job and is time consuming
  - Designate a “COVID-19 Expert” -- someone who is in charge of staying abreast of the latest science, data and best practices surrounding COVID-19 and answering related questions
  - Additional office staff members - to deal with influx in packages (which may be several times the normal package delivery) and/or parent communication (calls, emails, writing blog updates)
  - Extra kitchen support, especially if changing how you run meals

## □ Be Honest and Flexible

- ★ Information about the virus is constantly changing
  - Set the expectation with campers, parents, and staff that things are going to change between now and summer
- ★ Be prepared to adapt on the fly at camp
  - Even the best laid plans may not go as planned during the summer
- ★ It’s better to be too conservative and cautious -- and then relax procedures as necessary -- than to be too liberal and having lots of potential loopholes