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ACNC Day Camp Opening Plan During COVID-19 Pandemic

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The objective of this opening plan is to outline the safety measures that Audubon Community Nature Center (ACNC) is implementing to decrease the risk of transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which causes COVID-19, in order to operate summer Day Camps.

ACNC wrote this plan based on CDC Guidelines, White House recommendations, and the *Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance* created for the American Camps Association and the YMCA of the USA by Environmental Health and Engineering, Inc. In addition, ACNC referred to New York State recommendations for health and safety.

ACNC recognizes that state and local regulations and requirements for re-opening must be met prior to the camp operating. They also recognize that the region being served should be in Phase 2 or 3 of the federal guidelines outlined in *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again.*

Purpose of Day Camp

The primary purpose of Day Camp is to provide a safe space outdoors for children to connect to the natural world. Multiple studies verify that time spent outdoors in unstructured activity is good for children's mental, emotional, and physical health. In addition, camp settings also allow for social growth as children learn to interact with others in positive ways, learning vital communication and self-regulation skills.

This year the purpose of Day Camp has become even more important in giving children the time to engage in "normal" childhood activities, outdoors, in a safe setting with their peers. Additionally, Day Camp will give parents and families a healthy break from quarantine and stay-at-home conditions. Day Camp also serves as child care for many parents who return to work in New York State's Phases 1 – 4 of re-opening.

Giving children the opportunity to have a "normal" part of summer may be the most important effort ACNC can make in giving back to their community during this pandemic. ACNC also gives parents the reassurance that their children are actively engaged in the real world rather than staring at a screen, which has been too often since school moved online this spring.

Description of Typical Camps

ACNC camps run Tuesday through Friday (four days), from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Each session maintains a 2:12 adult/child ratio, except for the preschool camps which maintain a 2:10 ratio. One adult is typically a Nature Educator or Education Intern for ACNC, the other adult is often a volunteer. Counselors and assistants stay with the same group, or cohort, all week. The maximum number of children ACNC has at camp during any one time is 48, though 36 is normal, split between three or four cohorts.

Camps are nature-based, with much of the time spent in free exploration outdoors. Indoor lessons often precede the outdoor time, and rain-plans involve indoor crafts or activities.

ACNC Day Camp typically runs three sessions of camp each week, occasionally four. Each cohort is based in their own room and does activities in their space, on the grounds, as a single group. This is referred to as their base, or headquarters. The cohorts usually come together for large group games, lunch, and end-of-day Sharing Circle.

Within each base, each child has their own space for their belongings, usually a chair or a cubby.

Areas and materials shared between groups include the Nature Center exhibits, restrooms, and craft supplies. ACNC does not provide food to campers, they each bring their own lunches, snacks, utensils, and water bottles.

As you'll see below, ACNC is proposing modifications to deal with some of the normal operations in order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

Facilities

ACNC Day Camps are held within the Nature Center or under one of the two pavilions on the property. The Nature Center is equipped with an HVAC system that is in use year-round with regular maintenance including filter changes.

The water system is a well, and the water is mechanically filtered to remove minerals and then sterilized using a UV filter. The filter system is checked daily to ensure good working condition and mechanical filters are changed at intervals during the year. The UV bulb is changed annually.

During camp the building is cleaned daily.

This year, in response to COVID-19, the building will not open to the public while Day Camp is in session. In addition, non-camp staff and volunteers will use separate areas of the building from camp staff and campers.

Considerations in Deciding to Open Camp

ACNC considered the physical health risks of holding camp, their ability to mitigate those risks, and the balance of those risks with the benefits of Day Camp. We also took into consideration the mental and emotional tolls that quarantine and stay-at-home orders are having on local community members, adults, and children alike.

From a peer-reviewed compilation summary of scientific articles released May 8, 2020 (https://dontforgetthebubbles.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-data-8th-May.pdf) the following supports a lower risk of severe illness for children:

> *"COVID-19 appears to affect children less often, and with less severity, including frequent asymptomatic or subclinical infection. There is evidence of critical illness, but it is rare. The role of children in transmission is unclear, but consistent evidence is demonstrating a lower likelihood of acquiring infection, and lower rates of children bringing infections into households."*

Also, in a recent article in the New York Times, scientists stated that the risk in outdoor areas is significantly lower than in indoor spaces (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/us/coronavirus-what-to-do-outside.html):

> *"I think outdoors is so much better than indoors in almost all cases," said Linsey Marr, an engineering professor and aerosol scientist at Virginia Tech. "There's so much dilution that happens outdoors. As long as you're staying at least six feet apart, I think the risk is very low."*
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> *"I think going outside is important for health," said Julia L. Marcus, an epidemiologist and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School. "We know that being outdoors is lower risk for coronavirus transmission than being indoors. On a sunny, beautiful weekend, I think going outside is indicated, but I also think there are things to do to reduce our risk."*

ACNC does not offer situations where children gather in high density, such as swimming and locker rooms, boats, or sports with equipment. In light of the lower risk to children, the small cohort size, the predominantly local attendance sphere, activity types, and the seemingly low transmission of COVID-19 from children to adults, ACNC has opted to offer Day Camp.

ACNC did modify its usual attendance parameters slightly, including limiting enrollment to residents of Chautauqua and Warren counties, and reaching out specifically to the parents of children with underlying health issues. Campers from outside of Chautauqua and Warren counties may only attend camp if they have been in Chautauqua or Warren County for two weeks prior to their camp session, as they will have quarantined for the recommended two weeks.

ACNC is also following the development of a condition now termed *pediatric multi-symptom inflammatory syndrome,* which is a rare disease that affects children and may be related to COVID-19.

Response and Management of Possible, Probable, or Confirmed COVID-19 in a Day Camper or Day Camp Counselor

In the event that an employee working with Day Camp or a Day Camper is diagnosed with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, ACNC will begin its mitigation plan. The Camp Director will handle all communications with parents/guardians.

Employee (copied from Organization Re-Opening Plan: if you change one, change the other).

The employee is to remain home for a minimum of 14 days, and until the last three days are symptom free. Employees may continue to work from home if they are able, but are able to use sick days for their quarantine.

Any volunteer testing positive must suspend volunteering for a minimum of 14 days, and until the last three days are symptom free. All volunteers must get permission from ACNC to resume volunteering.

ACNC will use its daily wellness check records to contact trace any other staff, volunteer, or customer that the ill individual came into close contact with in the last 2 days at minimum but at most two weeks. This information will be available to the County Health Department to assist in their contact tracing. The Executive Director will notify those who have come into close contact with the individual that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Those affected employees and volunteers are asked to stay at home in isolation until they get tested and receive a negative result.

ACNC will thoroughly clean and disinfect all areas and equipment used by the individual. If possible, the areas and equipment are not used for 24 hours.

Day Camper

In the event that a Day Camper or a Day Camper's household member is symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19, ACNC will implement the following process:

- Any Day Camper who shows a symptom of COVID-19, will be isolated from other campers until a family member is able to come and pick them up. Symptoms include:
    - Fever of 100.4° F or higher
    - New or worsening cough
    - Shortness of breath
    - Chills
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Nausea or vomiting
- Any Day Camper whose household member is diagnosed with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 will be isolated from other campers until a family member is able to come and pick them up.

ACNC will take the following steps:

- ACNC will assign an adult, likely another educator or the Camp Director, to stay with the camper. This adult will don appropriate PPE, including, but not limited to a face covering and gloves. The Day Camper will be given a face covering if they don't have one.
- The counselor, wearing a face covering and gloves, will gather the camper's belongings, place them in a plastic bag, and give them to the camper.

- The adult will escort the child out of the building with his/her belongings once a parent or guardian arrives.
- The counselor will remove all PPE, wash hands, and return to their camp. They will take the rest of the campers outdoors.
- After the camper is picked up, the adult cleans and sanitizes the headquarters and the assigned restrooms for that cohort. If possible, the areas and equipment are not used for 24 hours before cleaning.

In the case of personal illness, the camper is to remain home for a minimum of 7 days, and until the last three days are symptom free.

In the case of a camper's household member having a probable or positive case of COVID-19, the camper is to remain home for a minimum of 14 days, and until the last three days are symptom free or until the household member's test comes back negative for COVID-19.

- Since camps are typically only four days, this does extend into any session the camper may be registered for in coming weeks. In addition, the individual and members of their household must be symptom free for three consecutive days before returning to any camp session.
- ACNC will give refunds for any complete weeks of missed camps, minus t-shirt and membership fees, but will not pro-rate for days within a week missed. Parents may also move their registration to a week later in the summer if possible.

ACNC will use its daily wellness check records to contact trace any other staff, volunteer, or campers that the ill individual came into close contact with in the last 2 days at minimum and at most two weeks. This information will be available to the County Health Department to assist in their contact tracing. The Executive Director will notify those who have come into close contact with the individual that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Affected employees and volunteers are asked to stay at home in isolation until they get tested and the test results are negative, or for a minimum of 14 days and until the last three days are symptom free. Campers and the counselor in the same cohort may continue at camp for the week if they wish, staying as isolated from others as possible.

If a Day Camper or household member of the Day Camper has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, the Day Camp Director will change the schedule so that the affected cohort is as isolated as possible. This means that no other adult will join the group for activities, such as lunch supervision, and the cohort will not use any shared spaces. Counselors in the affected cohort will maintain an increased sanitation schedule and physical distancing.

Counselors of an affected cohort will not take a role in Day Camp for the following two weeks, isolating at home until they are cleared to return to work by the Camp Director. See the above employee section for details.

Communications

Preparation Communication

Before operating camps, ACNC notifies the fire department and local health officials so they know the camp is operational.

ACNC trains staff every year in camp policies and procedures and will do so this year as well. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual Harassment Avoidance Training (State mandated)
- Code of Conduct for ACNC
- Child Safety Policy
- Emergency Procedures
- Basic First Aid, CPR, and AED training (staff only)
- Appropriate interactions with youth of different age levels
- Special Considerations of Campers (allergies or disabilities)

In addition, this year ACNC will train staff, interns, and essential volunteers on:

- How to talk to campers about COVID-19 and address concerns
- Proper Handwashing
- Cough etiquette
- COVID-19 specific information (information, symptoms, precautions, etc.)
- Physical Distancing
- PPE
- Sanitation procedures

ACNC will hang posters related to hand washing, cough etiquette, and COVID-19 symptoms in restrooms, camps bases, and in the lunch area.

ACNC will also post information on the camp website and send emails to parents/guardians with the same information.

Parent Communication

Prior to camp

ACNC will notify parents of all camp procedures, changes to usual camp activities, and schedules of drop-off or pick-up. The Education Coordinator/Day Camp Director will send via email and have available on the website the list of precautions that ACNC is taking throughout the summer, as well as any updates to those procedures.

ACNC will send home a “What to Expect” document to share with their children about changes to camp this year and what they should expect upon arrival. This will ease any anxiety that children may have arriving at camp under such circumstances.

ACNC will inform and seek consent from all parents to conduct daily, non-invasive health monitoring (asking questions, taking temperatures, if necessary) of campers. This includes a question of parents if anyone in the household or anyone with whom the child has had close contact has tested positive for or shown symptoms of COVID-19.

ACNC understands that new routines are hard for children, especially the idea of physical distance. ACNC staff will train campers on expected behavior while at camp and send parents those expectations ahead of time.

ACNC will give refunds for any camp session cancelled by the Sunday prior to camp for COVID-19 related concerns. ACNC will not give refunds for days of camp missed during the week of camp, or if ACNC sends your camper home for health concerns.

ACNC requests relevant health information for all campers upon registration. This year, ACNC will specifically look for any conditions that may put a child at higher risk from complications of COVID-19. The Camp Director will call the parents of those children and have a personal discussion to assess the situation.

For higher-risk campers, ACNC will request that parents consult their child's pediatrician about the risks of attending camp and get a recommendation from them. If the physician approves camp, ACNC will require a written document from the medical office.

ACNC will also have parents sign a waiver acknowledging that they are sending their child to camp with other children in the midst of a pandemic. While the risk is fairly low, and ACNC is mitigating risk wherever possible, there is the chance that their child could contract COVID-19 or another contagious disease while at camp. They will acknowledge that they will not hold ACNC responsible if their child gets ill.

During Camp

ACNC will notify parents of any change to schedules and operations, especially in the instance that camp is dismissed early or a positive case of COVID-19 is confirmed among campers, staff, or essential volunteers.

Parents may reach out to the Camp Director at any time with concerns or questions.

Camper Communication

Communication with campers starts upon check-in. ACNC will send a "What to Expect" document to parents two weeks prior to camp so they can communicate with their children what to expect on the first day as it will be different than check-in in other years.

Orientation on the first day consists of going over ACNC rules and expected behaviors, and this year is no different. Campers will take a tour of their designated areas and go over emergency procedures.

Campers will also attend training sessions on how to properly wash hands, use hand sanitizer, and maintain physical distance. Counselors will go over cough etiquette and what to look out for if they aren't feeling well. All of this "training" will be age appropriate.

Camper are welcome to talk to counselors anytime about how they are feeling about everything. Compassion and conversation are key elements of mitigating the effects that restrictions are causing, and this is especially true for children.

Local and State Health Officials

ACNC will gladly share information with health officials about absenteeism, suspected cases, confirmed cases, or any other information they request.

Day Camp Interim Management for COVID-19

For the 2020 season, ACNC will continue to divide the campers into cohorts no larger than 12 but but will modify use of the Nature Center, restrooms, and groups activities. The following changes will occur:

Check-in on Day One

- Parents are asked to wear face coverings.
- ACNC will mark areas on the sidewalk in 6-foot intervals to keep families distant while waiting in line.
- ACNC will stagger check-in time for camps, timing them 20 minutes apart for the first day.
- Check-in will occur outdoors, under a tent (if weather requires) by the map kiosk, with the Camp Director.
    - Families will answer a series of questions for an initial health screening.
    - Families will pick up their t-shirt (if ordered).
    - Families will learn of any balance due.
    - Families will take their child to the base entrance where they will meet with the counselors.
        - Auditorium uses the side door by trash cans
        - Fireplace Room uses door by pollinator garden
        - Exhibit Hall goes to the backyard
        - Urban Pavilion meets under the Nature Play Area pavilion until all campers are present
- At base, a counselor (wearing a face shield) will take a child's temperature and record it on the check-in sheet.
- Parents will not enter the building/base, dropping their campers off at the door if not sooner.

Daily Operations

- The pre- and post-camps will stay with a designated adult, usually the Camp Director, for the duration. Campers will only use the restroom that their assigned cohort uses and will

maintain distance from other campers if they are not in the same cohort. The Camp Director will encourage campers to maintain distance if they are from different cohorts.

- Cohorts will stay in their assigned base if they aren't outdoors. Use of the exhibits is prohibited as there is no way to effectively clean things or provide a long enough latent period between use.
- Bases are not adjacent to each other:
    - Base 1: First floor Auditorium with assigned first floor restroom stalls
    - Base 2: Second floor with assigned second floor restroom
    - Base 3: First Floor Exhibit Hall with assigned first floor restroom stalls
    - Base 4: outdoor pavilion with two port-o-potties
- Bases are large enough that each child's "work" station will be more than 6 feet from others.
- Each cohort uses the same set of restrooms and assigned stalls for the duration of camp. Customers and volunteers are not permitted to use the restrooms assigned to campers. Staff has an assigned restroom stall in both men's and women's rooms on the first floor. Staff will sanitize hands **before** using the restroom as well as thoroughly wash hands after. Staff will **not** use the restrooms while campers are using it.
- ACNC requires face coverings for all employees and dedicated camp volunteers while in the restrooms.
- Cohorts will avoid other groups and not come together for larger activities.
- Each cohort will have their own set of general craft supplies, and each camper in the cohort will have his/her own set of basic supplies (pencils, scissors, markers, etc.) in a caddy.
- Each cohort will have their own set of "toys" to play with while outdoors. Groups will not share these items with other groups, and counselors will sanitize them at the end of the day.
- Each cohort will have a set of cubbies so each camper has a designated space to keep his/her items. Counselors will not handle campers' belongings, or if necessary to do so, will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately afterwards.
- Cohorts will eat lunch at staggered times, at the same tables in the pavilion daily. The Day Camp Director who supervises lunches will sanitize areas between groups.
- Counselors will limit activities that result in campers having to change clothes. This will, in turn, lower the amount that the changing areas are used. If counselors do plan activities that involve changes of clothes, only one group per day will do so.
- Counselors will keep daily records of any person with whom their cohort comes into close contact.

End of Day

- Campers will not meet as a large group for end-of-day activities.
- Campers will pack all of their own belongings with no assistance from counselors, except in the case of the pre-school campers. Counselors will use hand sanitizer before and after assisting a camper.
- Cohorts will stagger dismissal so only one cohort of campers is leaving the building at a time. Parents will wait in a designated pick up zone outside the camp base for their

children. Parents are asked to wear face coverings at pick up as other parents will be in the pick-up zone.
- If parents are picking up children from more than one cohort, they may move from one pick-up zone to the next.
- Counselors and assistants will clean and disinfect camp-specific base areas at the end of the day. This includes tables, chairs, and shared items. High touch areas (door knobs, light switches, etc.) are cleaned nightly by the cleaning crew.
- Counselors will clean and disinfect and toys or tools that the group used that day.

End of Week

- Counselors and assistants will clean and disinfect the regular above-mentioned items and areas. Items in children's cubbies will not be touched to allow the three days of time to pass, the length of the virus's viability on surfaces.
- Any lost and found items will be cleaned and disinfected, sealed in a bag, or discarded as appropriate.
- Rooms will be aired out to the best extent possible.

Camp Health Screenings

As mentioned earlier, ACNC always collects health information on campers that may be needed in case of emergency. This information is kept confidential, shared only with counselors the week that a child is attending camp. The records are then shredded to protect confidentiality.

As registration has been open for camps since January, it is impractical to have parents or guardians resubmit that information two weeks prior to camp. Rather, a pre-camp health screening email will be sent along with the "What To Expect – First Day" email, two weeks prior to camp.

The pre-screening email will ask parents to contact the Nature Center with consideration of the following:

- If possible, take the camper's temperature daily for two weeks prior to camp to ensure that they do not have a fever.
- Self-screen the camper for COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, cough, shortness of breath, chills, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, nausea, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting) in the previous two weeks.
- Assess other household members for the same list of symptoms.
- If the camper has travelled outside the adjacent counties (Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties, NY and Warren, Erie, and Forest counties, PA) in the last two weeks.
- If the camper has come into close contact with anyone diagnosed with, tested for probable positive case of, or quarantined for COVID-19.

Upon arrival to camp on the first day, part of check-in will be to answer similar questions to those in the pre-screening email.

Staff will monitor campers during the week, paying close attention to any child who says they aren't feeling well. If a child is suspected of having any contagious disease, he/she will be given a face covering, and separated from other campers. If symptoms are severe or strongly indicative of COVID-19, ACNC will contact the parent or guardian and ask that the camper be taken home or to a physician's office. Depending on the symptoms and the physician's response, ACNC may ask the household to stay home until the risk of infectious disease has passed or until the test for COVID-19 returns negative. See the above section "Response and Management of Possible, Probable, or Confirmed COVID-19 in a Day Camper or Day Camp Counselor" for more details.

Counselors will collect a list of individuals that the sick camper came into contact with for any previous camp days up to one week. Counselors should also trace contacts for campers that become ill and were at camp the week prior. CDC guidance defines close contact as anyone person within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes. This is information that the health department will use for contact tracing if the individual does get confirmation of a COVID-19 diagnosis.

PPE

All counselors and dedicated camp volunteers should wear face coverings when interacting with their cohort **and** when social distance cannot be maintained. The exception to this is if there is a hearing-impaired child in the camp that relies, in part, on lip reading to accurately understand communication. If a clear mask in unattainable, the counselors will remove their mask when interacting with that child, while trying to maintain social distance.

While indoors at their base, camper stations are more than 6 feet apart. Counselors will wear their face coverings at all times.

ACNC staff recognizes that young children often rely on facial cues to accurately assess communication and to feel reassured in certain cases. As such, counselors are permitted to remove their face covering if they feel it is necessary for them to effectively communicate to or comfort a camper.

Face coverings are not required outdoors, as the dilution rate of the virus on outdoor settings is so high that transmission is unlikely. In an oft-cited study, of 1200 cases traced to origin, only 1 was found to have occurred outdoors and recent data indicates that many people are continuing to contract the virus while staying predominantly indoors, though the methods of transmission are unclear.

> "The virus load is important," said Eugene Chudnovsky, a physicist at Lehman College and the City University of New York's Graduate Center. "A single virus will not make anyone sick; it will be immediately destroyed by the immune system. The belief is that one needs a few hundred to a few thousand of SARS-CoV-2 viruses to overwhelm the immune response."
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> Pandemic life is safer outdoors, in part, because even a light wind will quickly dilute the virus. If a person nearby is sick, the wind will scatter the virus, potentially exposing nearby people but in far smaller quantities, which are less likely to be harmful.

(https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/us/coronavirus-what-to-do-outside.html):

Counselors must have face coverings around their necks at all times outdoors in order to use if a camper is within 6 feet of them.

Travel Camps

ACNC offers two travel camps, normally limited to 11 participants, but this year limited to 10 to comply with New York State guidelines. These camp sessions travel to other outdoor areas, not indoor facilities. These camp sessions will require the use of public restrooms and so ACNC will train both campers and counselors on safe use of public restrooms. All campers in travel camps will carry disinfecting wipes with them, provided by ACNC.

While travelling in the van, campers and counselors are required to wear face coverings for the duration of the trip.

Campers will sit assigned seats on the way to the destination and the way back to limit shared touch points such as seat belts, armrests, cupholder, etc.

Counselors will disinfect the van between trips.

Counselors and campers will follow all other recommended behaviors while at the destination as far as physical distance, sharing supplies, face coverings when not distanced, and interactions with others outside the camps.

Safeguards

ACNC does employ and use volunteers that are high risk, with underlying health issues. ACNC will make sure that those staff members and volunteers are aware of where camp bases are, where campers are going to be during the week, and what equipment camps are using. Those at risk can then avoid those areas and that equipment until it is sanitized.

The Nature Center is closed to visitors and customers during Day Camp hours to eliminate any cross contamination. ACNC staff will thoroughly sanitize spaces used for rentals before camps take place.

Counselors, when taking lunch breaks, will eat outdoors if possible and maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet between other employees. Best practice is for counselors of different cohorts to eat in separate areas, or on the same sides of tables, 6 feet or more apart.

Definitions and Terms

Wash their hands = Wash their hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds

Hand Sanitizer = hand sanitizer consisting of 60% alcohol or higher

Cohort = one camp group that stays together for the duration of camp, includes campers and counselors