NEWS RELEASES
NEWSLETTERS
BE A TEACHER CAMPAIGN ASSETS
CLASSROOM CHRONICLES
LEADERS LAGNIAPPE
VIDEOS + WEBINARS

Select Language ▼

LOUISIANA CHARTS COURSE FORWARD FOR SUMMER ACTIVITIES, CHILD CARE

May 13, 2020

Louisiana Department of Education and Louisiana Department of Health Issue Phase One Health and Safety Guidelines for Childcare Centers and Summer Camps

BATON ROUGE, La. -- As the State prepares to enter Phase One on the Roadmap to a Resilient Louisiana PDF (will open in new tab), the Department of Education and the Department of Health have outlined the next steps for the safe operation of childcare centers, as well as summer camps, summer school, and summer extracurricular activities.

Childcare centers and entities offering summer programs for K-12 students must adhere to certain protective measures (will open in new tab) set by the Office of Public Health (OPH), including:

- Social distancing, achieved by maintaining small, static groups that minimally interact with other groups;
- Assessing and monitoring students for symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, and/or sore throat; and
- Practicing frequent environmental cleaning and hand-washing.

The guidance includes appropriate group sizes for each phase of reopening. In Phase One, groups should be limited to 10 people including adults. For childcare centers and entities offering summer school, camps, or extracurricular activities, the occupancy rates currently approved for the facility apply. Adjusted occupancy rates are not applicable, as these entities must adhere to strict social distancing and other health and safety measures specific to childcare and summer school or camp settings.

Under OPH guidelines (will open in new tab), adults and children should wear cloth masks, if they are able. Children under 2 years old and individuals with severe breathing difficulties should not wear masks.

"Allowing access to summer camps and summer school is critical so parents can return to work and so that children can continue with their education, but opening these facilities can still carry a risk because of how easily COVID-19 is transmitted in congregate settings. For this reason, we must move forward with caution and guidance to keep each person safe," said Dr. Courtney N. Phillips, secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

Additionally, supplemental guidance has been issued to support school system leaders seeking to operate summer programs and child care providers seeking to continue or resume regular operations.

"The supplemental guidance is designed to show our educators, whether they are teaching summer school or providing early childhood care and education, how to navigate these protective measures in real-life settings," said Acting State Superintendent of Education Beth Scioneaux.

The summer programming guidance details how to adhere to social distancing measures while setting up indoor and outdoor activity areas, how to screen children for symptoms of COVID-19 as they enter the facility, how to ensure healthy food preparation and meal service, and how to properly implement isolation measures if a student becomes sick. For example, the guidance includes a requirement to wash hands at arrival, at least every two hours, before and after meals, before and after outdoor activities and at the end of the day.

The child care guidance includes drop-off and pick-up procedures for children and families, recommendations for spacing children during nap time, and steps to ensure the proper washing, feeding and holding of children. For example, the guidance recommends reducing the number of toys in classrooms and having multiple changes of clothes at the center for infants, toddlers and their teachers to ensure clothing can be changed if the need arises.

View the K-12 Summer Camp, Summer School, and Extracurricular Activities Supplemental Guidance. (will open in new tab)

View the Child Care Supplemental Guidance. (will open in new tab)

The measures and supplemental guidance were reviewed by the Resilient Louisiana Commission (will open in new tab), which is charged with examining Louisiana's economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic and making recommendations for more resilient business-related activities and commerce in the coming months.

The Commission includes a task force structure dedicated to specific sectors of the economy, including education and workforce. Within the Education and Workforce Development Task Force, there are subgroups focused on K-12 and early childhood education. The subgroup members include local superintendents, childcare center directors, advocates, and members of the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

# # # # # #