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**M E M O R A N D U M**

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*June 5, 2020*

*To:* Governors' Offices  
*From:* National Governors Association  
*Re:* Summer Camps and Summer Learning Opportunities

As states shift their focus from the immediate emergency of COVID-19 school closures toward reopening schools and educational centers in the summer and fall, there has been growing interest in opening summer camps and summer schools to provide opportunities for students' academic and social development. Taking stock of these early deliberations, this memo provides a brief overview of recent governor and state actions in this area as well as relevant resources for opening summer camps and providing other learning opportunities.

**Recent State/Governor Actions**

As of June 5, 2020, twenty-two states have established reopening timelines for summer learning opportunities in the form of either summer schools or summer camps. In many states, such as [Connecticut](#), [Georgia](#), [Iowa](#), [Michigan](#), [North Carolina](#), and [North Dakota](#), governors have issued executive orders or proclamations addressing summer learning opportunities that stipulate the conditions under which these activities can safely open. Additionally, many states, including [Colorado](#), [Indiana](#), [Maine](#), [Oregon](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Washington](#) have published detailed guidance on summer learning opportunities. For example, South Carolina's school reopening and recovery task force, known as [AccelerateEd](#), recently released summer learning [guidance](#) that described efforts to expand the state's existing "Read To Succeed 3rd Grade Summer Reading Camp" so that more young children can catch up academically following the COVID-19 school closures. Governor McMaster plans to use CARES Act funding to pay for the expansion of this summer camp. Additionally, the Missouri Department of Education recently convened a summer school task force to discuss summer school questions and the options available to school leaders. The task force produced this [administrative memo](#) outlining three main recommendations for school administrators as they develop summer school plans. The task force also released this lengthier [Q&A guidance](#) for local education agencies. A complete collection of state orders and guidance on summer learning opportunities can be obtained by contacting the NGA Education Division.

Across the executive orders and guidance that has been issued, there have been several recurring recommendations and areas of focus:

- **Types of Summer Schools and Camps That Can Open:** States which have issued guidance on summer schools and camps have generally focused their attention on how day schools and camps can open safely. For the most part, overnight schools and camps are still prohibited from opening, although a few states like [Georgia](#) have allowed them to open if they meet certain safety conditions.
- **Personnel and Staffing Requirements:** States have issued requirements regarding the presence of trained teachers, counselors, nurses and custodians on site at summer schools and camps.

States have also promoted restrictions related to high-risk individuals, encouraging that people over the age of 65 or people with underlying health conditions not attend or work at summer schools or camps if physical distancing is not possible.

- **Physical Distancing:** States have required that measures be taken to ensure physical distancing whenever possible at summer schools and camps. For example, if students are doing tablework, it is recommended that tables be configured so that there is as much space as possible between students. Where physical distancing is not possible, children and staff members are encouraged to wear masks. Schools and camps are also encouraged to promote activities that do not involve close physical contact among children.
- **Groupings of Children:** For the most part, states have required that summer schools and camps be carried out in a way that promotes small-group work (e.g. groups of 10 or fewer children), although some states have allowed for larger groups (e.g. groups of 25 or fewer children). Additionally, schools and camps are encouraged to keep students and staff in the same groupings throughout the day to minimize social interactions.
- **Meal Services:** States require providers to follow state and local COVID-19 health regulations when preparing meals for summer schools and camps. They are also instructed to avoid large-group congregate feeding by serving meals in classrooms rather than in cafeterias and by encouraging students to bring their own meals when possible.
- **Transportation:** States have encouraged bus occupancy restrictions to avoid crowding on buses. Summer schools and camps are also encouraged to develop detailed protocols for parents to pick-up and drop-off their children to avoid unnecessary interaction on the school site. These protocols might include things like staggered pick-up/drop-off times, the posting of clear signage around the school or camp site to direct traffic flow, and sign-in procedures. Where possible it is also encouraged that students will be brought to school or camp each day by the same parent.
- **Daily Health Screenings:** Providers are encouraged to conduct a daily health screen of staffers and students by asking individuals about their exposure to COVID-19 and any symptoms they are experiencing. If available, thermometers and other diagnostic tools can be used to routinely assess individuals' health.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** Summer schools and camps are expected to follow local and state health regulations with regard to sanitization. This includes procuring and maintaining an adequate supply of cleaning supplies (i.e. soaps, disinfectants, hand sanitizer, etc.), ensuring easy access to handwashing for individuals on site, regularly cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and avoiding items (like soft toys) that are not easily disinfected.
- **Disease Management Plans:** States expect summer schools and camps to establish disease management plans in compliance with state or local health ordinances so that if an infection occurs, community spread is mitigated. Generally, this includes a requirement that schools and camps keep a detailed record of who enters the site each day so that, in the event of an outbreak, successful contact tracing can be executed.
- **COVID-19 Testing For Providers:** Summer school and camp providers and staff should have easy access to COVID-19 testing.

## Other Resources

Supplementing the state resources above, many governmental agencies, research firms, and nonprofit organizations have published relevant resources that would be of value to governors' offices and state officials seeking policy advice about summer learning opportunities.



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The American Camp Association (ACA) has created a [resource center](#) devoted to COVID-19 that includes information about camp operations, health & wellness, online learning, staffing, and communications. The ACA recommends camp providers wait for the CDC to release new guidance on summer camps. Among the resources that ACA will be publishing in May is a [Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance](#), which will be created as soon as the new CDC guidance is released.

In May 2020, the CDC released [guidance](#) on schools and day camps, [considerations](#) for youth and summer camps, and a youth programs and camps [decision tool](#). The CDC also included interim guidance for schools and day camps in a recent [report](#) to support nationwide reopening efforts (see p. 42-45). Generally, these documents suggest that “communities with low levels of COVID-19 spread and those with confidence that the incidence of infection is genuinely low (e.g. communities that remain in low transmission or that have entered Phase 2 or 3) may put in place the practices described [in the document] as part of a phased reopening.” However, some camp providers in cities like [Atlanta](#) have already consulted the guidance and indicated that it did not provide enough clarity to make decisions.

The Idaho Out-of-School Network has released [guidance](#) for child care and school-age services during the pandemic, including considerations for camps and other out-of-school activities. The guidance addresses topics like planning and coordination, the selection of facilities, staffing, health and safety.

This recent [RAND report](#) examines how federal, state, city, and district policies can support summer learning programs. It was published in 2020, but before the pandemic, so it may not be directly relevant to the current situation. However, it may provide some value when thinking long-term about this issue. Relatedly, the 2019 [Shaping Summer Experiences](#) consensus study report by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine may provide useful information. This report can be downloaded from the National Academy of Sciences.

Finally, the [CDC summer camp guidance during the H1N1 flu pandemic](#) provides some useful recommendations that may inform current considerations for states, localities and camp providers.

*For questions or concerns related to the contents of this memo, please contact NGA staff:*

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