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## UNH Researchers Offer Tips for Parents About Summer Camps During COVID-19

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(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2020/06/08/unh-researchers-offer-tips-parents-about-summer-camps-during-covid-19)

DURHAM, N.H.—Summer camps everywhere are facing the difficult decision of whether to open this year. For families the challenge is choosing whether to let their children attend. Several experts at the University of New Hampshire have developed a tip sheet meant to help parents navigate the available information and guide them to make informed and comforting decisions whether to send their children to day or overnight camp during the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic.

“As stay-at-home orders are being relaxed, it’s normal to have concerns around safety when it comes to summer camps,” said Jayson Seaman, associate professor of recreation management and policy.

“Parents—including myself—naturally have questions about how camps will address the coronavirus and how it can affect children’s health as well as their camp experience. Current guidelines focus mostly on educating camp directors so we thought parents could benefit from this information since it isn’t an easy decision.”

Seaman and his colleagues, Larry Barker, field specialist for UNH Cooperative Extension and manager of the Barry Conservation 4-H Camp in Berlin, N.H., and Semra Aytur, associate professor of health management and policy, compiled information from national, federal and state agencies into one comprehensive and easy-to-use guide (<https://extension.unh.edu/resource/parent-questions-about-summer-camps-amid-covid-19-restrictions-and-answers-they-should>). The fact sheet, which includes information from the American Camping Association (ACA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is intended to inform parents and outline some of the key questions they should be asking including;

- How will social distancing be accomplished?
- How will camp facilities and equipment be cleaned and disinfected?
- Will camp staff and campers be required to wear PPE?
- To what extent will people be allowed to come and go from the camp?
- How will campers and staff be monitored for infection?
- Do children need to be tested?



- Will quarantine be expected for out-of-state campers?
- What happens if a child becomes sick while at camp?
- How will refunds be handled?

The authors stress it is important for parents to ask questions and understand how camp guidelines could impact their children’s experience. Parents should never feel badly about being apprehensive or asking a camp for details especially since each camp is different.

“A good camp will welcome these questions,” said Seaman. “Camp directors and youth development professionals recognize that kids need camp more than ever this year. Those that have decided to open are working hard to modify their programs in response to the pandemic while still giving kids a memorable camp experience.”

The experts advise parents to stay in touch with their summer camp and continue to monitor national, state and local guidelines because conditions will continue to evolve throughout the summer.

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