

Camp Happy Days, COCA-I COVID-19 Camp Director Forum

EmJ Juszczak, Camps and Program Director

In 2021, Camp Happy Days ran a Family Camp in lieu of our traditional “kids only” overnight camp. Family Camp ran for 4 days, 3 nights in July.

Meals

- Did you change how you offered meals last year/will you make changes?
 - We offered more outdoor seating to the families around the dining hall. Masks were required in the dining hall unless seated & eating. Snacks around the campsite were prepacked or served by volunteers to the families at special times.
 - Having parents/guardians there really helped keep the flow of meals going. Our adult camper ratio was almost 1:1, allowing it to seem less chaotic at meals.

Communication/Staff Training

- How are you communicating your policies to families, campers, and staff?
 - Primarily through email and phone calls with families. In 2021 when we required full vaccination or negative PCR test, that was a reminder in all communications (email) sent out to families.
- Do you find yourself needing to communicate more frequently?
 - I find myself communicating with families/volunteers more on a one-on-one basis. Answering their specific questions and concerns through phone call, in-person, or via email.
- Did you/will you try anything new (i.e. parent Zoom informational sessions)?
 - We did not. We did some zoom info sessions with volunteers. We will look at “what to expect at camp” sessions closer to the camp this year, but we feel like a lot of people are “zoomed out” and its hard to engage them. We’ve found more comprehensive success with written documents and calls to answer questions.
- Do you find that parents/staff understand the policies?
 - They did. We did remind people often about cohorting and masking indoors or when distancing wasn’t possible, but there wasn’t a lot of pushback from families at the camp. We laid out enough in advance that they knew what they were getting into/what was expected.
- Have you done Zoom staff training sessions?
 - We have, mainly for our virtual camp, but we have done some trainings virtually. I think we plan to do some more of them leading up to camp that can cover what is expected when you arrive at the campsite and initial guidelines we need them to know ahead of time.

Cohorting

- Did you cohort last year/will you this year?
 - Our families were their own cohorts last year. They were able to stay in their own cabins with personal bathrooms to alleviate shared spaces. Volunteers cohorted in their cabins and program areas. When mixing with others, we asked for masking/distancing.
- What did those cohorts look like? How did activities change to allow for cohorting?
 - We shaped a lot of our programs around previous years and the structure from kids only camp.
 - We offered some scheduled programs (cooking, boating), but others were “open program areas” during program area time. These were often outside under tents & fans and spaced out across the campsite.
 - I did see some downsides of keeping families together, especially when they had a larger age range and the teens weren’t always involved with the programs. But I also saw the opposite of families coming together more through programs and spending time together in different areas of camp.