



Joseph H. Firth Youth Center
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March 12, 2020

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Dear Families of the Firth Youth Center:

Throughout the last week, we have received much guidance from the Department of Children and Families and the New Jersey Department of Health as it pertains to the operation of our child care center in regards to the COVID-19 virus. We have implemented hand-sanitation upon arrival procedures, increased daily cleaning schedules, and even instructed staff to switch from our normal “high fives” and “fist bumps” to a “sneaker-to-sneaker” tap in order to follow social distancing practices. The recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Health have been our key source of guidance as we navigate through this new terrain.

Following a conference call with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families this morning, it was clear that we all need to do our part to contain the virus from spreading. In an abundance of caution and a commitment to health and safety of all, it is recommended we cancel all non-essential programs and do our part to avoid congregations of people.

Starting Friday, March 13, 2020, the Firth Youth Center will only offer Before School Care and After School Care, as we know these are programs essential to the well-being of the families enrolled. We will parallel the Phillipsburg School District calendar and continue to offer these programs on days the schools are in session. All other programs will stop until further notice. This is including, but not limited to, the following:

- Drop-In
- Dance Classes
- Karate Classes
- Wrestling Practices
- Relay for Life Meetings
- Lopatcong Youth Wrestling Tournament
- Big Brother/Big Sister Mentoring Program
- Adult Hoops with Mr. Lubbe
- Take Down Tobacco Day Movie Night
- Tween Dances and Fri-Yay Dance

We will still offer “grab and go” lunch on Friday, March 13th. Any child who stops by our building between 12-2pm will be able to enjoy lunch.

We encourage our families to review the Center for Disease Control’s guidelines to talking with children about COVID-19, which can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>. The general principals include:

- Remain calm and reassuring.
- Make yourself available to listen and talk.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.
- Provide information that is honest and accurate.
- Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

The safety of our children, families, and staff is always at the forefront of our minds. As we receive more guidance from State Officials, our families will be notified immediately and proper protocol would be followed.

As always, we welcome our families to contact the Firth Youth Center at any time.

Sincerely,

Kelly Post-Sheedy
Executive Director