



Office of Children and Family Services

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NOTICE

To: Facility Managers, Facility Directors and Assistant Directors, Recreation Specialists

From: Felicia A. B. Reid, Esq., *Acting Deputy Commissioner*
Dr. Joseph E. Tomassone, *Acting Associate Commissioner*
Dr. James Horne, *Director, Bureau of Health Services*

Date: November 10, 2020

Re: Recreation at OCFS Facilities: No-, Limited-, and Close-Contact Sports

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DJJOY has been careful to take preventive measures and make modifications to programming to protect the health of youth and staff. This memo will address parameters around youth engaging in sports during recreation.

A. Playing Sports and Games

1. Staff must continue to do recreational programming for youth that focuses on individual skill building and encourages social distance (e.g. streaming/video fitness, video games that encourage movement, etc.), including no-contact sports. **“No-contact sport”** means any sport or game where there is no physical contact between players. Examples include socially distanced dribbling or basket-shooting games, running and kicking games, tennis, and weight training. Skill challenges and healthy competitions with incentives for participation are encouraged.
2. **“Close-contact sport”** means any sport or game that emphasizes or can require physical contact between players. Examples include soccer, tag, basketball, and football. **“Limited-contact sport”** means any sport or game where contact between players is occasional and/or intentional. Examples include kickball, badminton, baseball, flag football, and frisbee games.
3. Youth are permitted to play close-contact and limited-contact sports. **However**, youth can only play close- and limited-contact sports according to the parameters in **section C**, below.
4. If a youth is on quarantine or isolation protocol they cannot play close- or limited-contact sports. If a youth is actively ill, they should not play sports.



B. Masks During Recreation

1. All youth must wear a mask during recreation. Cloth masks are acceptable.
2. All disposable masks must be discarded after recreation. If a youth wears a cloth mask, the mask must be washed after recreation.
3. All staff supervising the unit must wear a mask/face covering at all times and correctly.

4. Staff must give any youth who has difficulty breathing during recreation a time out and excuse them to catch their breath. This may involve a brief removal of their mask; any removal must occur at least 6 feet away from others.

5. Heavy breathing will cause a mask to dampen. If a mask is damp, a youth must receive a new disposable mask and/or replace it with another clean cloth mask. Facilities must be aware that this will mean that youth burn through masks more quickly. Facilities must communicate with BMPS to ensure they have sufficient supply to account for this.

C. Parameters for Sports

1. Youth can play close- and limited-contact sports **only** with other youth from their unit. Units **cannot** mix to play close- or limited-contact sports.

2. Because staff come into the facility from the community, staff are vulnerability points for illness transmission and spread with close contact. Staff **cannot** play close- or limited-contact sports with youth *unless* the sport has been modified to permit at least 6 feet of social distance (making it a non-contact sport).



3. Staff may play no-contact sports with youth, **if** there is at least 6 feet of social distance between staff and youth at all times. Refer to section A, 1 above for guidance.

4. Staff should consider limiting the number of participating players in a close- or limited-contact sport—for example 2-on-2 instead of 3-on-3, or 3-on-3 instead of 5-on-5.

5. Where and while weather permits, youth should play close- and limited-contact sports outside.

6. Any staff or youth not involved in a close- or limited-contact sport should stay 6 feet or more away from the players and must wear their mask. Staff must keep social distance between anyone in practice areas and/or on the sideline/bench.

7. Youth cannot engage in high fives, fist bumps, and other celebratory physical contact.

8. Facilities should consider directing all youth to change their clothing after recreation. If a youth plays in a close- or limited-contact sport, they must change their clothing after recreation.

D. Cleaning and Sanitizing

1. Recreation equipment must be sanitized between uses with an approved disinfectant. This includes game balls, goal posts, weights, any hand-held game item, and (where possible) rims and backboards. Wiping equipment down with water is insufficient.



2. Youth cannot trade pinnies during recreation. Staff must launder all worn pinnies between units' use.

3. Youth must wash/sanitize their hands before and after recreation. Staff must direct youth to periodically wash/sanitize their hands during recreation.

4. Each youth should have their own cup or container of water for personal use. Alternately, if youth use water fountains, staff must wipe down water fountains used during recreation before a youth uses them.

E. Space and Timing

1. Staff should consider shortening the length of close- or limited-contact sport games or putting in more game breaks—both for minimizing contact and because masks can make it a challenge to breathe.



2. The gym should be clear for **at least 15** minutes after a unit finishes recreation.

3. After a unit finishes recreation, staff should wipe down all high-contact surfaces and equipment, including tables, benches, mats, etc., using approved disinfectants.

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